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HEADQUARTERS
36TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MECH)
APO 230 U. S. ARMY

AFTER/AFTER ACTION REPORT
PERIOD
1-30 NOV 44 AR 1944

Robert E. O'Brien Jr.

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Commanding.

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1 - 9 November; The Squadron continued in its mission along the SIEGFRIED LINE in the MONSCHAU FOREST maintaining a defensive screen. The boundaries of the assigned sector remained the same as at the close of October running due north from a point one mile above ROCHERATH, BELGIUM. Troop A, 102nd Cavalry Squadron bordered on the left (north) and elements of the 4th Infantry Division on the right (south). On November 4th, the 9th Division replaced the 4th Division. The command was disposed with Troop B on the left, Company F in the center and Troop A on the right. The Squadron Command Post was situated on the main road one and one half miles out of ROCHERATH to the north at (983068).

Continual improvement was made on the MLR by changing the location of some of the positions to provide better fields of fire and concealment; sand bagging and providing overhead cover; digging communication trenches; laying barbed wire entanglements along the entire front and around the outposts; and installing a system of warning trip flares.

The operation of deeply penetrating and aggressive patrols from each unit on the line resulted in a minimum amount of enemy patrolling thus preventing his discovery of the location of the Squadron MLR or outposts.

On the morning of the 9th elements of the 1st Battalion, 395th Infantry of the 99th Division began to move into the area to affect relief of the entire squadron in its prepared positions. Except for 2 Troop C outposts the changeover was completed by 1930A hours, and the Squadron made preparations to proceed upon a new mission the following morning. An officer quartering party from each troop was dispatched under Captain Frink, S-2.

In addition to keeping the Squadron MSRs in good repair during the period the attached 2nd platoon of Company B, 146th Combat Engineer Battalion swept roads for mines in the forward areas in preparation for mounted operations; removed enemy booby traps from road blocks at (003099); constructed a culvert in the Troop C area; and built a 1000" M.G. practice firing range. In most cases offensive anti-personnel mines along the outpost line were removed and replaced with M49 trip flares. All small arms and automatic weapons of the platoon were practice fired.

Headquarters and one platoon of Company A, 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion (S-P) remained in anti-mechanization positions east of Squadron Headquarters. One platoon continued in battery providing indirect fire support. One section was attached to each of Troop B and Company F until the 3rd when that platoon was relieved and replaced by one from the 628 Tank Destroyer Battalion (S-P). After receiving relief orders on the 4th the entire company proceeded on its new mission making a night march. Enroute the orders were revoked and the company returned to the Squadron area arriving at daybreak and resuming positions against possible enemy mechanization. The company was relieved on the 9th except for one platoon and a section which prepared to move out with the Squadron. Troop A continued to defend in its portion of the line maintaining contact on the south first with Company A of the 22nd Infantry Regiment then with Co I 39th Infantry Regiment.

During this period the Troop A patrols made few close enemy contacts but only observed Germans at a distance, sometimes putting down artillery on them with unknown results. Patrols reported the discovery of hostile machine gun positions which had been recently improved at (013088) and (012083). While inspecting his MLR Captain Buensle, the Troop Commander narrowly escaped injury when a Robot Bomb fell and exploded 150 yards from him. The Troop was relieved on the 9th by elements of the 395th Infantry and assembled in preparation for new mission.

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With a section of M-10 Tank Destroyers attached Troop B defended on the left maintaining contact with Troop A, 102nd Cavalry and interlocking its fields of fire on the MLR with that unit and with Company F on its south. The Troop command post was situated in the forest at (977088).

On the 2nd and 3rd of November the 1st and 3rd platoons of Troop B reconnoitered the Troop A area in vicinity of the lodge (003102) in preparation for taking up positions there during a proposed diversionary demonstration supporting a 9th Division attack to the south. The plan for this attack was later revoked. On the same day a patrol from Company F 102nd Cavalry Squadron ran into an enemy anti-personnel mine field in the Troop B area suffering two casualties.

The 2nd platoon of Troop B commanded by Lt. Yontz was reconnoitering to the northeast at 1100A hours on the 4th when the point party under S/Sgt Whittard arrived at the edge of a draw (000103) on the far side of which a party of Germans was spotted filing out of the woods. Without having been seen the point deployed and taking up concealed positions held its fire until the 18th German in file saw S/Sgt Whittard and shouted a warning. The sergeant shot him, whereupon the point opened up with intense small arms fire at a range of 40 to 50 yards. The balance of the platoon came up and joined in. At this moment Lt. Zolner, the F.O. with the patrol, adjusted an artillery concentration in the woods out of which the enemy party had emerged. All 18 of the Germans were killed or wounded. Although the Germans returned fire and managed to get one machine gun into operation no casualties were suffered by the 2nd platoon. One wounded corporal was carried to the Squadron aid station where he stated that his patrol had consisted of 20 picked men from all units of the 77th Battalion and that it was the only one of its type in operation along the 102nd Cavalry Group front. No enemy patrols were encountered after this engagement.

Troop B was relieved at 051500A November by Troop C and assembled near the Squadron Command Post in the area vacated by Troop C at (934062). The balance of the period was devoted to an intensive training program as well as a detailed property show-down inspection conducted by a board of three officers.

Troop C continued training in Squadron reserve with its platoon bivouacs positioned so that they provided a line behind Troop A and Company F. The command post occupied the farm house on the northern outskirts of POCH RATH, BELGIUM at (987064). Having been previously familiarized with the terrain and positions by platoon patrols, the troop relieved Troop B in all of its positions on 5 November and carried on in the defense of that sector.

On the 6th Lt. Coleman with his 3rd platoon and 6 men from Troop B searched the area at (000103) where 18 Germans had been ambushed on the 4th by Troop B. Although they found conclusive evidence of the action that had taken place, the area had been cleared of the dead and wounded. On 8 November a friendly civilian espionage agent from Corps Hq was escorted through the MLR before daybreak. He returned that night with valuable enemy information. Except for two outpost positions Troop C was relieved at 091300A by Co C, 1st Battalion of the 535th Infantry, and prepared for movement on a new mission.

Troop E remained in battery in support of the Squadron at (953060) 2 1/2 miles southeast of LILNEORN, BELGIUM. Besides missions which were called for by the units on the line, nightly harassing fires were put down. On the night of 7 November Lt Allen, executive officer, conducted a class in artillery forward observation methods for the officers and NCOs of Troop B. This was followed on the 9th by sensing practice with actual firing on targets forward of the MLR.

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Company F continued in the defense of the central sector with one section of tank destroyers attached. All of the company's light tanks were disposed in the vicinity of the command post at (987075) covering the roads against possible attack by hostile mechanization. The MLR and outpost positions were maintained by normal dismounted infantry means such as were being used by Troops A and B on its flanks, although its sector was smaller than theirs due to the lesser number of personnel in the organization of the light tank company.

A patrol led by S/Sgt Bielicki discovered a German machine gun nest at (999091). After fire from the 62nd F. A. had been adjusted upon it the position was assaulted by the patrol but the occupants had fled and were lost in the woods. Other daily patrols made no further contacts except for individual enemy soldiers observed in the distance.

On the 7th Lt. Pepper, Executive Officer, returned to duty from hospital after having been treated for injuries sustained in October.

Company F was relieved by Company A, 395th Infantry and prepared for movement upon a new mission.

Operating from an infirmary set up in a farm at (979050) in ROCHEPATH, the Squadron Medical Detachment carried on with routine duties including the treatment of the sick in quarters and the conducting of daily sick call. Typhoid vaccine inoculations of all personnel in the squadron was commenced on the 4th of November and completed on the 7th.

Headquarters and Service Troop (Rear Echelon) operated from WIRTZFELD, BELGIUM (956045) and continued to supply and service the Squadron. The Squadron Motor Maintenance platoon completed a successful experiment in the lowering of the 50 cal machine gun ring mount on the M3 armored car turret, which greatly shortened the silhouette of the vehicle and made the machine gun more effective against ground targets.

During the period 2 movies and a GI show were presented for personnel of the Squadron available to attend. Gratuitous issues of cigarettes and tobacco and PX rations were distributed. Soldier voting facilities were closed and submitted to the 102nd Cavalry Group Voting Officer on November 8th. On the 4th 59 enlisted men on DS with the Squadron for training were returned to the 1st Replacement Battalion and 50 new ones picked up and distributed to Troops A, B, C and Co F.

10 November: Leaving small parties to assist the relieving battalion in learning the sector peculiarities, the Squadron began movement in a heavy snow storm to its newly assigned area in vicinity of MONSCHAU and MUTZENICH, GERMANY, the first elements clearing the I.P. at 0730A hours. The unit commanders accompanied the Squadron Commander and the S-3, Major Edgerton, on a personal reconnaissance leaving at 0600A.

By 1300A all units of the 24th Cavalry Squadron had been relieved except for Troop A and the 38th Squadron was again in position on a defensive line extending approximately 9000 yards from MONSCHAU through MUTZENICH to a point above KONZEN STATION, GERMANY, with 102nd Cavalry Squadron on the left (north) and the 3rd Battalion of the 395th Infantry on the right (south). Lt. Peterfreund reported as liaison officer from the 395th Infantry Regiment. The Squadron took over for its command post the postoffice at MONSCHAU.

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Captain Goetcheus, commanding officer of Detachment I-4, of the American Military Government of the MONSCHAU District reported to the Squadron Commander and outlined policies regarding civilian-soldier relations. During the period the Squadron occupied the area this Detachment was most cooperative and helpful.

Troop A proceeded to vicinity of KONZEN STATION and relieved elements of Troop B, 24th Cavalry Squadron with the 3rd platoon around the station while the balance of the troop remained in assembly near FRINGHAUS (939265) waiting to relieve Company A 297th Engineers the following day. To familiarize them, twenty men were distributed among the engineer positions extending NE from the station. Its attached Tank Destroyer platoon was disposed covering the main routes of approach.

Separating into platoons at a break-down point Troop B relieved Troop B, (less one platoon) 24th Cavalry Squadron in their prepared positions on the right of Troop A with the troop command post in the woods at (933228), 1 1/2 miles west of KONZEN, GERMANY.

Arriving in MONSCHAU 1200A hours Troop C commenced relief of Troop A, 24th Cavalry Squadron in prepared trenches on the hill directly above the eastern edge of the town. While the trenches were being occupied Pvts. Holzman, De Rensio and Moon were wounded by one round of a hostile mortar concentration which fell into the trench. The troop command post was established in a house at (942184).

Troop E took over from its corresponding unit of the 24th Cavalry Squadron and the six assault guns went into battery in readiness to support the Squadron.

Company F assembled at the town hall in MONSCHAU from where tanks were dispatched to outpost the town at its approaches from the north, south and the draw from the east where the attached section of tank destroyers were employed. The company headquarters occupied a house at (942184) and an excellent maintenance shop was procured in an empty garage.

The Squadron Medical Detachment found and occupied excellent accommodations for an infirmary in a large house next door to the post office.

The attached platoon of the 146th Combat Engineer Battalion billeted in an unoccupied tavern in the town and began assisting the troops with plans for installing barbed wire and trip flares.

Headquarters and Service Troop (Rear Echelon) established itself in a partially abandoned factory at (785265) in SIPEN, BELGIUM.

22-30 November: The Squadron continued to maintain a defensive screen on the line MONSCHAU-MONTZENICH-KONZEN STATION. During this period all positions were steadily improved and alternate emplacements prepared. The work of installing heavy barbed wire entanglements continued until the entire front was covered and all outposts and positions encircled. The entire sector was found to be heavily

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planted with friendly anti-personnel mines fixed with trip wires. In most cases these were replaced with warning ground and rocket flares.

The nature of the terrain in this sector was entirely different from that in the previous wooded area occupied. Visibility was good up to ten miles under clear atmospheric conditions and this was enhanced by the continuous presence of snow on the ground. Activity by work parties and patrols was limited to darkness and periods of mist and fog.

A field telephone system was immediately put into operation with a BD-72 switchboard at Squadron Headquarters. Communication was established between all headquarters including those of adjacent units with supporting radios on listening watch in the event of failure. During the period an estimated 50 miles of wire were laid, much of which was used to replace that destroyed by shell fire. The wire crews consisting of two engineer soldiers of the attached platoon and the troop communication sergeants and electricians performed an excellent job of maintenance during all times of the day and night and often under heavy shelling and direct enemy machine gun fire.

The reconnaissance troops were authorized exchange of 60MM for 81MM mortars on 25 November leaving them with 4 81MM and 2 60MM. Training of gunners and forward observers was begun at once. The mortars were dug-in and registered in coordination with the artillery concentration plan. The 60MM mortars were placed to be used for projecting illuminating flares in front of the OPL.

On the 11th of November Troop A completed the relief of Company A, 297th Combat Engineer Battalion and occupied an area centering around KONZEN STATION, GERMANY with Troop B, 102nd Cavalry Squadron on its left and Troop B, this squadron on its right. The character of the terrain over the entire troop sector consisted generally of open rolling country broken by cultivated fields and pastures bordered by hedges. These were not of the Normandy type of hedgebank but were merely interwoven shrubs offering concealment but little cover. The broad highway emerging from the German held town of KONZEN 700 yards to the front was out by a friendly mine field and road block as well as by an enemy road block. This was adequately covered by the attached platoon of self propelled Tank Destroyers and the MLR cross fire.

To improve observation and to gain better fields of fire along the final protective line the MLR was moved forward on the 17th. At first light on the morning of the 13th Lt. McCray detected a 6 man German patrol approaching his newly occupied strong point position in a house at (952233). He warned all members of his platoon to hold their fire and directed his machine gunner at a window to follow the patrol in his sights. When the enemy emerged from the concealment of a hedge into open ground only 70 yards from the house, the lieutenant directed the machine gunner to place a short burst in front of and behind the patrol. This pinned them to the ground. Further bursts fired in the direction of any movement eventually caused them to lie still. Thereupon Lt. McCray ordered them to rise and come toward the house. All six of the Germans left their weapons and surrendered. One was slightly wounded in the leg.

A third platoon outpost captured one German on the night of the 21st. He stated that he had become lost from a reconnaissance patrol. At first light on the 23rd a member of a hostile patrol carrying a pack radio was captured near KONZEN STATION. A deserter surrendered to the 2nd platoon 27 November.

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Pvt Bellotti was killed on November 19 from the accidental explosion of an anti-personnel mine which he was removing.

The Troop A command post displaced forward on the 22nd to (949236) near KONZEN STATION to provide room for elements of the 5th Armored Division to move into supporting positions to the rear in the event of enemy counter attack. Patrols continued to operate by day and night with few close enemy contacts. Cpl Pace with four men made a night patrol to CR (948228) and verified the fact that houses there were occupied by the enemy. Another night patrol under Cpl Grove worked its way to within 75 yards of a house at (949227) and observed Germans in and about the place. Artillery and mortar were brought down on both of these positions. During the period listening posts were manned during darkness and foggy weather at (961256) (948228) and (952225).

Troop B continued to improve its positions on a 3500 yard front with Troop A on its left and the 2nd platoon of Company F on its right. On the 13th the platoons were shifted from the positions taken over from the 24th Cavalry Squadron so as to close a 1500 yard gap between the 2nd and 3rd platoons. This gap had been covered by lateral patrolling through a wooded area containing anti-personnel mine fields. Again on the 20th of November the entire troop MLR was advanced out of the woods thereby shortening the line by 500 yards and allowing for interlocking bands of fire on the final protective line. The troop command post moved from the woods to a house in MUPZENICH, GERMANY at (932201).

Troop B patrols were active by day and night making few close enemy contacts but gaining much information regarding the enemy, his movements and his installations. One 3-man patrol commanded by acting Sgt. Staffanson proceeded into KONZEN to determine the location enemy positions there. Arriving at a point on the main road (951224) at first light, a German sentry challenged them to halt. Staffanson, in the lead, shot and killed the challenger, after which three machine guns fired upon him. He ordered his men to withdraw while he engaged the enemy and in so doing was hit and fell and is now missing in action. The two men were able to return safely and accurately plotted four enemy positions.

After a patrol had found the pill box at (944207) to be unoccupied, on the night of the 22nd the Troop B commander, Lt. Sain, with a party consisting of nine of his men and Lt. Krupnick, the engineer platoon leader, and nine of his men, proceeded through a system of enemy anti-personnel and anti-tank mines to the pill box. They placed a charge of 200 pounds of TNT and completely demolished the box. Again on the 28th a pill box at (945213) was destroyed. Sgt. Cowham, in charge of the demolition patrol, narrowly escaped injury when a German anti-personnel mine was tripped as he crossed over the dam at (944211). Investigation revealed the area around the dam and pill boxes to be covered with a pattern of mines. Near both pill boxes several Teller mines were exploded by sympathetic detonation.

A four man patrol led by Cpl Brown occupied a listening post at (945216) and another covered the road between (960216) and (948211). Both patrols distributed "surrender" circulars and copies of the Stars and Stripes, and reported the sound of vehicular movement and lights in IMBROICH. On Thanksgiving night a patrol under Cpl Berselle discovered a reported pill box at (944202) to be an enemy occupied house. The assault guns were adjusted on it scoring six direct hits after which no movement was observed.

Troop C continued in its trench positions on WONSCHAU hill coordinating the

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MLR with the positions of Company F whose 1st platoon was on the left (north) and its 3rd in the draw on the right (south). During the period a strong machine gun position was dug-in under cover of darkness well forward and was flanked by listening posts farther out with a commanding view of the terrain to the front which consisted of treeless, rolling country overlooking the enemy held town of MENZARATH, GERMANY to the direct front and the Dragons Teeth of the SIEGFRIED LINE running off to the northeast. The entire front and outpost positions were secured by barbed wire entanglements and warning trip flares.

On the 25th a night reconnaissance patrol proceeded along an assigned route to set up a listening post in the house at (952189). Approaching the house from the north Pvt Roland West stepped on a German AP mine which severely wounded him. After administering first aid to the wounded man Sgt Benedict, the patrol leader, in attempting to lift him set off another mine which killed Pvt West and severely wounded the Sgt. Aid men were summoned and brought in the casualties which also included Pts Halcy and Panek.

A Troop C daylight patrol under S/Sgt Brown of the 1st platoon went as far as (962191) near MENZARATH on the 23rd and discovered heavy barbed wire and AP mine fields. The following day Cpl Ridge took a patrol to the same area making a more extensive reconnaissance and discovered a hostile observation post on which they adjusted artillery fire. On the 28th a night reconnaissance patrol led by Cpl Jones found 3 enemy occupied houses at (94486) and a defended mine field at (947192). This patrol also saw an 8-man German patrol moving west and attempted to trap it between the outposts and themselves without success.

On the morning of 24 November S/Sgt Joseph Brown was killed by the accidental discharge of an aerial warning flare which he tripped off while inspecting his outpost positions. S/Sgt Brown had been under consideration for a battlefield promotion to 2nd lieutenant and had been commanding the 1st platoon since the evacuation of Lt. Summers due to illness. The platoon was taken under command of Lt. O'Brien with S/Sgt Llewellyn as platoon sergeant.

Troop E dug-in its FDC and organized an offensive and defensive concentration plan which was registered. All fires were coordinated with the 62nd FA Battalion which was also in support of the Squadron, being attached to the 102nd Cavalry Group. Forward Observers from both units were established among the OPL and went with patrol missions. Lt. Slovacek and 3 men took up a forward observation post with the left (north) outpost of Company I, 95th Infantry (94341816) on the hill south of MONSCHAU offering an excellent view of the right portion of the Squadron sector and the draw in front of MENZARATH. On the 20th a forward OP was established under cover of darkness at a Troop C outpost (945186).

Throughout the period the assault guns and the 62nd FA Battalion completed many direct support fire missions which were adjusted by forward observers, patrol leaders, and outposts, scoring direct hits and causing known casualties and destruction to the enemy. PW reports revealed that Germans were killed and wounded by direct hits on mess formations, distributing points and strong points in the vicinity of KONEN and IMGENBROICH and on hostile patrols and observation posts. Nightly interdiction harassing missions were fired most of which were planned on the strength of information received from patrols, S-2 and PW reports. A total of 5332 rounds were fired by the assault guns of Troop E during this period.

Company F was disposed with the 2nd platoon on the left tying-in with Troop B and covering the MONSCHAU railroad station; one section of the 1st platoon on

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the hairpin turn covering the draws to the north and the northeast and the other section at the blown-out bridge and laid on the highway to IMGENBROICH and in contact with Troop C on its right. The 3rd platoon and the attached section of Tank Destroyers outposted the draw entering MONSCHAU from the east and the southern entrance into town. On the 13th the Tank Destroyers were moved to the railroad station. Physical contact was maintained with Company I 395th Infantry on the south. An outpost was established beyond the blown bridge and a listening post farther up the road at (946197). On the 14th Cpl Estes and 4 men attempted to set up an outpost at (943202) but found a German position already there. Artillery fire was called down, driving out the Germans. The house there was again reconnoitered on the 24th by Sgt Sacha who requested 37MM direct fire, driving 3 Germans. Personnel of Troop B later occupied this position. A daylight patrol set out to determine the location of enemy positions in vicinity of (949198). It drew machine gun fire from a pill box at (949196). Sgt Martin, the patrol leader, leaving his men to cover him, circled the pill box and again drew fire from the RJ at (954202). The patrol returned unharmed and reported these enemy positions. Other daily and nightly patrols made contact with small hostile parties without incident. A friendly espionage agent from Corps H₁ was put through the line at a 2nd platoon outpost on the morning of 23 November and returned that night with information regarding enemy installations around IMGENBROICH.

On the 11th Sgt Smith was wounded by shrapnel during a shelling of the town. Sgt Ronci, communication chief, was wounded when he tripped an anti-personnel mine while he was stringing telephone wire to outposts. Pvs Zink and Ragosa were evacuated on the 20th because of wounds sustained from enemy shelling.

On the afternoon of 12 November the platoon leader of the attached platoon of Company B, 146th Combat Engineer Battalion, Lt. William Trescher, was instantly killed by the accidental detonation of a friendly anti-personnel mine which he tripped while on a tour of inspection. Lt. Trescher was regarded as a superior officer and his loss was deeply felt by all members of the Squadron as well as his own men. Lt. Caldwell reported as his replacement.

A platoon of Company A, 112th Combat Engineer Battalion commanded by Lt. Krupnick, replaced the 146th engineers on 21 November and carried on with their work. In addition to maintenance of roads, during the period the engineers laid an anti-tank mine field in the road net entering MONSCHAU from the east; built duck boards for the Troop C trenches; sand-bagged many of the installations including the Squadron Command post; demolished two pill boxes in front of Troop B; constructed removable barbed wire hedge-hogs; strung concertina wire along the front and around the positions; and placed a system of warning trip flares.

On the 30th the engineers suffered six casualties from a direct hit on their quarters by a German 120MM mortar shell.

The Squadron Medical Detachment carried on with its routine duties of caring for the sick in quarters and daily sick call. An excellent infirmary with electricity, steam heat and running water was maintained next-door to the Squadron command post. On 12 November a cross country ambulance with 2 enlisted men was attached from the 53rd Medical Battalion for evacuation service. Aid men remained attached and lived with all their units. Their constant presence greatly increased the efficiency of the detachment.

During the month of November 28 battle casualties and 70 non-battle casualties were processed through the Medical Detachment. Battle casualties consisted of 2

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killed in action, 2 died, 22 wounded and 2 injured. The non-battle casualties were 6 injuries and 64 disease and sickness. The small number of 2 cases of trench foot was undoubtedly due to the close supervision of preventive measures on the part of the Squadron Surgeon, Captain Carter. A number of non-attached soldier patients were treated as well as several German civilians injured from enemy shelling. Typhus inoculation together with the monthly physical inspection of all personnel was completed.

Headquarters and Service Troop (Rear Echelon) carried on with the normal duties of servicing the Squadron from its command post on the outskirts of ZUPEN, BELGIUM. Inasmuch as most of the supply dumps generally centered about this town, S-4 and the Transportation Platoon experienced little difficulty in procuring supplies and equipment. One of the most critical items, vehicle anti-freeze, was not obtainable in enough quantity to winterize more than one quarter of the squadron vehicles until the 26th of the month. Up to that time those radiators which were not protected had to be drained of water nightly, temporarily immobilizing them. By the end of November enough anti-freeze solution was made available to protect all the vehicles of the command.

The system of having the troop supply sergeants remain with the S-4 section and make daily trips to their units continued in operation. The adjutant, Lt. Erwin, assisted by the sergeant major and clerk, operated from the forward echelon while the S-1 personnel section under CWO Sears worked at rear echelon.

The Squadron Motor Maintenance platoon supported the troop maintenance sections which in most cases had covered shops in which to work. The state of vehicle maintenance was excellent due to the fact that few vehicles were in use.

November - General: Very little enemy artillery fell in the squadron zone until it occupied the KONSCHAU area. During the period 10 to 30 November an estimated 450 rounds of 75 to 150MM artillery fell along the front. In the same period sporadic mortar fire was experienced. Some of the fins found measured 120MM. All outposts and observation posts were on the lookout for enemy gun flashes and constantly submitted shell reports.

Robot bombs passed over almost daily. A number fell in the Squadron area without causing damage but it is believed they were faulty or misdirected since several were to fall in German territory. It was reported that ZUPEN received direct hits of these projectiles.

Unidentified aircraft was heard regularly at night only except for one enemy plane seen on the 25th. Weather permitting, friendly aircraft passed over in large numbers. On the 21st a P47 crashed at (929227) and burned with the pilot. Small orange and black balloons were occasionally seen drifting on the wind towards the enemy. They appeared to be of the type made to rise by means of a heat pot suspended under a bag of light cloth or paper. It is possible that this was a method of communication used by enemy agents behind our lines.

All unit kitchens cooked hot meals of B rations. Whenever practicable cooks were attached to platoons for that purpose. Otherwise 10 in 1 rations were prepared by members of the platoons. Under direction of Tec 5 McCall an efficient kitchen was maintained to feed the personnel of the Squadron Hq forward echelon.

At a formation of available personnel held in ROCHERATH, BELGIUM on 7 November, the following members of Troop A were presented with the award of the Bronze Star Medals by the Squadron Commander:

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Sgt James J. Kyle
Cpl George F. Coombs Jr
Pfc Melvin J. Krueger
Pfc George E. Mabe
Pfc Harley J. Rogers
Pfc Walter I. Abrams

During the month 36 Purple Heart Medals were awarded to members of the Squadron.

The Squadron celebrated the double anniversary of its activation at Fort Bliss, Texas on 15 November 1942 and its embarkation for England at New York City on the same day in 1943. The 30th of November marked the 80th consecutive day that the Squadron had been in close contact with the enemy along the SIEGFRIED LINE.

Technique - The Squadron felt keenly the responsibility of holding the portion of the line entrusted to it. All ranks worked hard to develop a method to effectively defend a wide sector with small forces. Several techniques were developed to accomplish the task.

The first and over-riding principle was that the front must be covered with fire. At first, this task seemed almost hopeless until careful siting of weapons showed it could be done. Attached operations map no. 1 shows how the front was covered by machine gun fire in the woods in the ROCHERATH area. This could only be done by spreading out the machine guns, of which the squadron has a large number, over the front in such a manner that the front was covered. This of course placed the guns in isolated positions susceptible to being overpowered individually by infiltration methods. To counter this capability the guns were sited so that the fire of one gun covered the position of its neighbor. Also each gun was protected by one or two riflemen. It was difficult at first to get the troops to spread out willingly. The tendency was to band together in platoon groups. However, after assuming the spread out formation, the men realized the increased strength of their positions and acquired confidence in them. The desire to keep together disappeared.

Having acquired a firm base from which to operate the next important consideration was to find our enemy and keep in contact with him. This was done by continuous and vigorous patrolling. The enemy defenses were determined and our patrols maintained supremacy over the enemy patrols so that he did not locate our defense.

When the squadron moved to the MONSCHAU - KONZEN STATION line the problem of covering the front was much greater. Operation map no. 2 shows how the problem was eventually solved on this 9,000 yard front. The troops were stretched to the limit, yet it was believed that the front was covered. In this area extensive use was made of trip flares to give warning. The use of booby traps to cover the front was not attempted. The sad experience of other units in suffering casualties from their own traps discouraged their use. The flares proved to be much better, because they outlined the enemy, enabling machine gunners to kill a greater number, than that killed by booby traps. Booby traps also give a false feeling of security, which can be dangerous.

Organization of fire was a technique which was developed greatly to take advantage of the available fire power of supporting artillery and organic mortars and assault guns. The superb radio equipment of the squadron makes this possible if plans are made for such organization of fire.

Thus with machine guns in position, flares placed for warning purposes, and plans made for quick delivery of fire, it was felt by the end of the month that the squadron had a line which could hold for a short time at least until reserves could be brought from the rear.

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