

dup

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

4 November 1944

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, APO No 255, U S Army.

Transmitted herewith is Report After Action Against the Enemy, and unit journal for the month of October 1944.

For the Squadron Commander:

PAUL E. HOBBS,
1st Lt, Cav
Adjutant

- 3 Incls.
- Incl 1 - Report After Action Against the Enemy
(in quadruplicate)
- Incl 2 - Unit Journal.
- Incl 3 - MESSAGE FILE.

605-711.2

9573

**DOWNGRADED TO:
CLASSIFICATION REMOVED**

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG LTC

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

4 November 1944

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 10, AR 345-105, C3)

1 Feb 46
Date

HSD
Initials

OCTOBER 1944

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

1. Enemy Situation.

a. During the month the enemy had disposed three battalions of the 1056th Regiment along the line east of Monschau, Hofen, Alzen to Wahlerscheid. From Wahlerscheid south, the 77th Infantry Battalion was holding the sector from that town south to vicinity F 0110.

b. Enemy was occupying fortifications in this sector and had also dug in on the high ground in his sector.

c. Enemy had estimated 4 to 6 81mm mortars per battalion and had in the entire sector 6 or 8 pieces of artillery believed mobile caliber 75 to 150 which he fired sporadically as single guns.

d. Enemy was generally content to defend and hold his fortifications but on occasion attempted to probe our lines with patrols up to 20 - 30 men strength.

e. Enemy was well supplied with automatic weapons and although his soldiers were mostly stragglers, convalescents and overage, they were welltrained and battle tried and in the few contacts they made with our forces, displayed ability to fight well.

f. Enemy used a considerable number of T mines in trails and fords and various types of antipersennel mines in likely avenues of approach.

g. Enemy patrols took advantage of darkness, dusk, or dawn and fog to attempt to infiltrate our lines and was generally quiet on clear days.

2. Terrain and weather.

a. The terrain along Hofen afforded excellent observation of the enemy, but the high ground to the northeast which the enemy held also gave him excellent observation of our positions and also all available avenues of approach. To the south of Alzen the area is wooded on both sides of the border, gives practically no observation in any direction and offers very limited fields of fire. Enemy used the cover of the woods for ambush patrols.

b. The weather during the period was marked by considerable intermittent rain and fog and poor visibility. Precipitation made the secondary roads difficult for all types of vehicles and cross country movement was almost impossible, consequently vehicular movement was limited to hard surfaced roads.

3. Civilian population.

During the first few days civilian population remain in Kalterherberg and

while it was necessary to evacuate 5 or 6 civilians who were suspected it was finally determined that none were guilty of espionage. During the rest of the period Kalterherberg, Hofem, and Alzen were evacuated and no civilians were contacted in our area.

4. Effectiveness of Enemy Information.

a. Estimated 90% of enemy information was obtained from Prisoners of War. This information was very complete and accurate. Other information was obtained by use of observation posts and field artillery liaison planes. Actual observation of patrols proved generally of little value in obtaining enemy information.

SECTION II - Action.

1. Mission.

a. To form a counter-reconnaissance screen in the assigned sector to deny the enemy knowledge of the disposition, movement, and plan of troops in this area - namely V Corps.

b. To patrol aggressively seeking to increase our knowledge of enemy disposition, plans, and movement.

2. General Plan of Action.

a. Principal action consisted of patrolling, either combat or the "sneak and peep" variety, depending on the situation.

b. Missions have been progressive being based on the most recent reports received.

3. Headquarters to which attached; Command Post Locations.

a. (1) 1 October 1944, the 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized (less Troop C with the third platoon Troop E) was attached to Combat Command A, 5th Armored Division, with Squadron Command Post at Hoscheid, Luxembourg.

(2) Troop C with third platoon Troop E attached to Combat Command B with mission of screening area from Wallendorf south to Grundhof.

(3) At 011200, orders were received attaching the entire Squadron to 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron; attachment effective 020600 October.

(4) 3 October 1944 - Squadron Command Post and Company F moved from Kalterherberg to Hofen.

(5) 6 October 1944 - Troops A and C relieved by 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and reported to Division Trains, 5th Armored Division.

~~a. (1) 12 October 1944 - 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment~~

b. (1) 2 October 1944, Squadron moved to Kalterherberg, Germany and took up position there and east through Hofen to contact Company F, 110th Infantry Regiment on the left and the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized on the right

(2) One battery 400th FA Battalion in support. One platoon 801st AB battalion and two platoons Company B, 146th Combat engineers attached.

(3) 3 October 1944 - Squadron Command Post and Company F moved from Kalterherberg to Hofen.

c. (1) 12 October 1944 - 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment takes over entire sector except that held by C Troop, 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized takes over sector (951118 to 963109), formerly held by 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. Command Post at 937106, Southeast of Kalterherberg. All attachments reverted to parent units.

(2) 19 October 1944 - Command Post moved to 925096.

d. (1) 22 October 1944 - 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized reverted to control 5th Armored Division effective 230600A. Relieved 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in sector from 945113 to 953120. Command Post at Kalterher-

berg (928135).

(2) 27 October 1944 - Troop A relieved from attachment to Combat Command A, 5th Armored Division.

(3) 30 October 1944 - Troop C relieved from attachment to Combat Command B, 5th Armored Division.

4. Assistance from Supporting Units.

a. Artillery support has been constant. Targets for artillery were frequently found by our patrols when weather conditions grounded liaison planes. A defense plan for this sector was completed in conjunction with a "Final Defensive Fires" plan from 400th Armored FA Battalion.

b. Since approximately 25 October 1944 two platoons of the 115th AAA Group have been supporting this sector with their fire, which has proven very effective against ground targets as evidenced by two statements by prisoners of War taken nearby.

(1) 29 October 1944 - Prisoner of War stated "he had high respect for our AAA fire. States that most of the fire went over his particular position but because sometimes the whole hillside was sprayed, it was almost impossible to do any work during daylight hours".

(2) 1 November 1944 - Prisoners of War stated "They were in a position about 50 yards from our lines. They did not receive artillery fire there but every day there were casualties from our mortar, rifle grenade, and AAA fire".

5. Special Weapons Used.

a. One Browning Automatic Rifle, found when this unit moved into Hofen, proved to be invaluable. Every effort has been made to borrow more of these weapons, but without success.

b. As a substitute automatic carbines are proving very satisfactory.

c. Use of Grenades.

(1) In the heavily wooded terrain, grenades of all types, rigged as booby-traps were used. Traps were set out at night and removed in the daytime.

(2) In our troops sector (Troop D) nine enemy patrols were stopped by mere booby traps. One patrol consisted of approximately twenty enemy.

6. Communications.

a. Difficulty was at first experienced due to the unwieldiness of the SCR 509. It requires two men to carry this set and some little time to set it up for use. Also, continuous communication is not possible with this set which makes it very undesirable for use by patrols. This problem was solved by borrowing several SCR 300 radios from the infantry.

SECTION III - Chronological Account.

1 Oct - Squadron continued screening mission vicinity Hoescheid. Enemy mined a culvert just north of Hoesingen during the night, estimated 50 lb charge of explosive. Enemy continued his interdictory fire of the road vicinity Hoesingen. Squadron continued outpost and patrol activity. Patrol had fire fight in which two enemy were killed and one taken prisoner vicinity 8455.

2 Oct - Squadron moved to new sector and took new positions along east road of Hofen, Germany. Squadron CP at Kalterherberg. No enemy activity.

3 Oct - Squadron forward CP moved to Hofen. Enemy remained on the defensive but interdicted Hofen with artillery and mortar fire. Our patrol attempting to move east was stopped at 968154 by small arms fire and mortar fire. Another of our patrols captured one PW from the 317 Tng and 84pl Bn.

4 Oct - Our artillery commenced interdictory fire of likely avenues of approach to our positions and also fired at enemy vehicular movement moving south from Rohren with good effect. No other enemy contacts were made.

5 Oct - At dawn under cover of fog enemy sent a strong patrol of estimated 25 men against the southern part of our line. His patrol was supported by inaccurate mortar fire. Patrol was repulsed by our coordinated fire from mortars, machine guns and 37mm cannon fire from our M-8 Armored Cars. A similar attempt was made at noon against our northern sector and was quickly repulsed by our fire.

Our patrols were able to penetrate to vicinity 959177 where we received heavy small arms fire from pillboxes in that vicinity. Our artillery continued night interdictory fire.

6 Oct - Our artillery fired observed fire at enemy dismounted men with good effect. In our southern sector, during night of Oct 5 - 6, enemy patrol tripped one of our booby traps. Two enemy were killed, the balance of the patrol left, leaving behind six bazookas and ten rifles.

7 Oct - Enemy interdicted Hofen and Kalterherberg with estimated 150mm artillery. Our engineers started its mission of destroying unoccupied pillboxes and our TD platoon fired on occupied pillboxes with some effect. Enemy patrolling remained inactive.

8 Oct - Our artillery, TD platoon and Assault guns fired effectively with the artillery liaison plane in observation, targets: enemy dismounted men. At night our artillery fired at enemy vehicles heard moving south from Rohren with good effect. Enemy continued interdictory fire of Hofen but his patrols remained inactive.

9 Oct - Our artillery continued to fire at dismounted enemy, our fire being adjusted by our observation posts with good results. Enemy continued his interdictory fire with what was estimated to be 75mm or 88mm self propelled guns. Several three or four man patrols attempted to infiltrate our lines but our assault guns dispersed them quickly.

10 Oct - Our artillery continued to fire at dismounted enemy and our engineers continued to destroy unoccupied pillboxes. Our patrol contacted enemy platoon vicinity 9517 and the area was shelled by our artillery with unknown effect.

11 Oct - The was quiet except for heavy 81mm mortar fire by enemy on area 964150, probably observed fire. It was necessary to employ artillery on the enemy mortar position to enable our troops to move out of the fire. Two casualties resulted.

SECTION III - Chronological Account (contd)

12 Oct - Enemy remained quiet, contenting himself with interdictory mortar fire and small arms fire at our liaison plane when it tried to locate the mortar positions. In the afternoon Squadron moved to new sector south of Kallterberg and took up new positions with similar mission.

13 Oct - Squadron improved its positions and sent out patrols to reconnoiter new sector which was found to be extremely wooded. Enemy road blocks, undefended were found on all roads leading to Kallersheid.

14 Oct - Enemy remained passively defensive. Our patrols were able to reach positions of observation on several pillboxes without enemy contact.

15 Oct - Enemy inactive. Our ambush patrols captured one M4 from 77 Inf Bn. Tellermine in creek bed destroyed one of our 4 tons and caused one casualty. Our patrol located enemy road block defended by machine guns and mortars. Four enemy killed. Two uncharted bunkers with barbed wire and mines reported. Same patrol spotted small plane similar to our liaison plane taking off. Study of aerial photo reveals air strip.

16 Oct - No enemy contacted.

17 Oct - Two patrols sent out with mission of removing road block previously reported. Both patrols ran into enemy ambush parties in vicinity of road block. In fire fight we suffered two casualties plus one officer missing in action. Enemy using American M1 rifles and one man observed wearing American helmet, another a GI wool knit cap.

18 Oct - Patrol returned to vicinity of enemy ambush. No enemy were contacted.

19 - 21 Oct - No enemy contact made by patrols during this period.

22 Oct - Orders received changing our sector to that held by the 102nd Cavalry Squadron and returning us to 5th Armored Division's control. Change completed by 230600L.

23 Oct - Patrol reports shack in our sector site for small enemy ambush party. Our artillery interdicts this site that night.

24 Oct - Reports from our patrols are negative. COA directed our artillery fire on enemy mortar position. Artillery scared out dismounted enemy and sounds of vehicle movement toward Bohren were heard.

Enemy patrol spotted working in toward line held by B Co, 17th Inf. In same sector enemy vehicle (possibly a tank) driven off by our artillery.

Enemy horse drawn artillery neutralized by our artillery.

One of our 4 tons fired on by enemy patrol.

25 Oct - No enemy contacted by our patrols.

26 Oct - One of our patrols contacted enemy at house opposite our sector and directed fire from our assault guns on target.

Other patrol spotted tracks and other evidence of enemy patrols.

SECTION III - Chronological Account (contd)

It was decided at this point that our troop on the line would send out a patrol daily with the mission of ambushing enemy operating patrols against our sector, while the other troop would send out the usual patrols to reconnoiter the enemy line.

This plan was followed through 31 October 1944.

115 AAA fired on enemy PB's and surrounding area. PW taken by CGR several days later described this fire as being very effective.

27 Oct - Ambush patrol spotted eight enemy but was unable to engage them. The other patrol found fresh signs of enemy activity in the sector (i.e. footprints, cigarette butts etc) and observed three enemy leave pillbox east of Algen with messkits and enter small patch of woods nearby. Our artillery interdicted this spot during the night and 115 AAA fired on it several times the following day.

28 Oct - Ambush patrol negative. Other patrol found observation tower at 96634 blown by enemy. Several other towers were found in this area some of which show signs of occupancy.

Patrol spotted two pillboxes, one uncharted and showing no damage from our artillery. 115 AAA fired on this pillbox that night and our artillery put concentrations on it for several days following.

29 Oct - Ambush patrol in fire fight with six enemy. One enemy soldier wounded or killed. Other enemy soldiers carried him away during fight.

Other patrol fired on three enemy laying wire. Killed one man. We suffered no casualties.

Patrol was able to observe fire from AA and reported it as being effective.

30 - 31 Oct - Both patrols report all quiet. No contact with enemy. Our artillery and 115 AAA continued interdictory fires in this sector.

2 Incls.

Incl 1 - Annex "A"
Incl 2 - Annex "B"

GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

Annex A
Summary of Strength and Casualties
October 1944

	Asgd Strength 1 October 1944			Asgd Strength 31 Oct 1944		
	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Headquarters	9	1	44	9	1	46
Hq & Sr Troop	3	2	76	3	2	78
Troop A	4	0	122	4	0	134
Troop B	5	0	127	4-0		133
Troop C	5	0	125	4-0		132
Troop D	5	0	127	4-0		137
Troop E	4	0	93	3-0		104
Company F	5	0	85	5-0		89
Medical Detachment	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2-0</u>		<u>12</u>
TOTALS	42	3	811	38	3	865

Casualties (55th-)	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Killed	1	0	3
Wounded	3	0	7
Missing	1	0	0
Known Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	5	0	10

Enemy Prisoners of War Captured by our forces: 8

Annex "B"
Commanding Officers
October 1944

Squadron Commander:

1 October 1944 to 1600, 17 October 1944 - Major John P. Gerald, 023009, Cavalry (killed in action 17 October 1944)

1600, 17 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Major George C. Benjamin, 023422, Cavalry.

Troops of the Squadron:

Headquarters and Service Troop:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Paul O. Peterson,
01010111, Cavalry.

Troop A:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt. Fred A. Forsgren,
01010173, Cavalry.

Troop B:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Kenneth M. Hayes,
01010128, Cavalry.

Group C:

1 October 1944 to 1200, 15 October 1944 - Capt John R. Vance,
01010690, Cavalry (Transferred to Headquarters and assigned
duty as S-3)

1200, 15 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt. George W.
Basquez, 01012910, Cavalry.

Group D:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt Edward J. McE. Gunn,
01012646, Cavalry

Group E:

1 October 1944 to 2000, 1 October 1944 - 1st Lt. Peter C. Mumwell
01012058, Cavalry (Wounded, Non-Battle, 1 October 1944 evacuated
to hospital).

2000, 1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt Peter M.
Sautter, 01012549, Cavalry.

Company F:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt John J. Schwarz,
01010396, Cavalry.

(over)

Medical Detachment:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Meyer
Friedenthal, 0425804, Medical Corps.