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 AUTH: Ltr 5th AB, 19 Mar 45  
 DATE: 9 April 1945  
 INIT: *JEH*

HEADQUARTERS  
 85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED  
 APO 255

*sup*

9 April 1945

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY  
 (Reference: Par 19, AR 345-105, G-3)

MARCH 1945

**DOWNGRADED TO:  
 CLASSIFICATION REMOVED**  
 BY AUTHORITY OF TAG *LTC*

a. Campaign of GERMANY

b. Lessons in Action

1. Personnel ██████████

	Off	WO	Date	Initials
Killed	0	0	EM	
Wounded	8	0	6	
Injured	0	0	0	
Missing	0	0	0	
Captured	0	0	0	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	

*1 Feb 46* ----- *HEP*

2. Vehicular

- (a) Car, armored, M8, No. W-6032632, was hit by enemy artillery and completely burned.
- (b) Car, armored, M8, No. W-6034108, was hit by AT gun and abandoned.
- (c) Carriage, motor, 75mm Howitzer, M-8, No. W-4032655, hit mine and was abandoned.
- (d) Truck, 1/4 ton, 4 x 4, No. W-20150956, hit mine and was abandoned in the face of an AT gun.

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c. Commanders:

SQUADRON COMMANDER: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Lt. Col. GEORGE C. BENJAMIN, #23422, Cavalry.

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE TROOP: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain PAUL O. PETERSON, 01010111, Cavalry.

TROOP A: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain SEYMOUR B. SCOTT, 0306938, Cavalry.

TROOP B: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain LOREN L. VIHOND, 01012532, Cavalry.

TROOP C: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain GEORGE W. BASQUEZ, 01012910, Cavalry.

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TROOP D: 1 March 1945 to 1200 13 March 1945 - 1st Lt. THOMAS R. JONES, 01012338, Cavalry.

1200 13 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - 1st Lt. EDWARD J. MC GANN, 01012549, Cavalry.

TROOP E: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - 1st Lt. PETER M. SCOTT R, 01012349, Cavalry.

COMPANY F: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain JOHN T. SCHWARZ, 01010396, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain MEYER FBI SER HALL, 0425804, Medical Corps.

d. Attachments - None.

Assignments - None for the Squadron as a whole. Troops A, B and C, however, assigned together with one platoon of assault guns each (E Troop) to COA, COB and CCR respectively, until 10 March and after 30 March 1945.

e. See map and overlays.

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f. Ammunition Expenditures.  
(1) Squadron less detachments expended no ammunition.  
(2) Records are not available for expenditures of detached elements of Squadron.

g. The Squadron (- A, B and C) saw no action as a unit during the period. Prior to 10 March and the completion of operation "Grenade" 85th (-) was in division reserve with no mission assigned, other than general control of occupied areas. For activities of troops with the Combat Commands during the period to 10 March see attached report.

From 10 March 1945 to 30 March 1945 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was given the mission of occupying an area vicinity VIERSEN (see overlay)

The principal towns (less VIERSEN and DUKEN) were garrisoned and a house to house search was made throughout the area for enemy soldiers, agents, weapons and other war material. Traffic blocks were set up to control civilian and military traffic and the area was patrolled twenty-four hours a day.

31 March 1945 saw the Squadron minus A, B and C enroute to cross the Rhine.

- (1) Not applicable
- (2) " "
- (3) " "

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- (4) Not applicable
  - (5) " "
  - (6) " "
  - (7) " "
  - (8) " "
  - (9) " "
  - (10) " "
  - (11) For a description of the problems of "occupation" see Section Y.

**h. Comments**

**SECTION I**

- (1) (a) Morale: The morale was generally excellent for the following reasons:
1. Mail service is becoming more regular after the Christmas package rush.
  2. All troops were billeted in good buildings when tactically possible.
  3. War news on all fronts affected the morale to the good more than any other factor.
  4. Satisfaction of having so successfully accomplished the Rier River and Cologne Plain operation was equally important in the up-swing of morale with par 3.

(b) Discipline: There were three (3) cases of non-fraternization tried before a special court-martial and one (1) case for which a general court-martial was recommended and has not yet been brought to trial. The special court-martial found all three defendants guilty of fraternization with a German civilian.

(2) Reinforcements: Have received seven officers and thirty-three enlisted men. In general the quality of all has been very satisfactory. One troop commander in particular stated that although his reinforcements had not been introduced to combat, all men classed as 733 (armored car crew member) had a well rounded training so that they could be easily adapted to all positions in the reconnaissance platoon. The rate of return of former members of this unit from hospitals has been satisfactory.

(3) Awards and Decorations: One award ceremony was held during which two silver stars and three bronze stars were presented by the Commanding General 5th Armored Division.

SECTION II - Not applicable.

SECTION III - No comment.

SECTION IV - Supply and Maintenance Matters.

No comment. No outstanding or unusual occurrences were reported relative to performance of old or new equipment under

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54

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battle conditions, and no unusual supply situations occurred.

#### SECTION V - Civilians.

Management and control of civilian population between the Rier and the Rhine proved to be less troublesome than was anticipated. Generally the civilians were passive in their reaction to our occupation and after a few days became almost cooperative. Party leaders above the rank of blockleiter had departed for parts unknown and in most cases taken party records with them but reliable informants were found in most towns so that questionable persons were quickly placed under surveillance.

During the first few days, a stringent curfew was enforced but this proved to be needless and a curfew from 1800 to 2700 with circulation confined to the Landkreise was put in effect with good results.

Government of small towns was left in the hands of the incumbent burgemeisters with assistance in many cases from the parish priests who were most cooperative. Reliable civilians designated as village policeman proved to be energetic in their enforcement of our regulations.

Displaced personnel proved to be quite a problem. Seeing freedom for the first time in years and undisciplined with a thorough hatred of Germans and Germany, displaced personnel were inclined to become freebooters with the Germans their prey. It was found that by providing these people with shelter, food and adequate guards plus persuasion now and then from the muzzle end of standard U. S. small arms convinced them that the correct mode of behavior was an orderly one and that this Army would not countenance any looting, pillaging or general disorder even though the victims be our enemies.

Activities in combing the areas for weapons, demolitions, pigeons, radio transmitters and concealed German soldiers was carried on without any resistance on the part of civilians and it is felt that with a few exceptions, civilians cooperated to the fullest extent in complying with these orders.

The following cases are illustrative of the type of problems which confronted our unit in the maintenance of security and civilian order in Germany:

1. During the first week of occupation stores of enemy ammunition including small arms, grenades, artillery and various types of demolitions were found in the area and were picked up by supply section in order to forestall the use of any of these means by civilians for sabotage purposes.

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2. On 17 March 1945, a civilian informant showed our CIC agents the location of an underground telephone cable which ran through KREFFELD across the Rhine. This was cut and information of its location given to Signal personnel.

3. On 23 March 1945, 20 four pronged metal "tire stabs" were found in a vacant house. Investigation revealed that they had been left behind by German soldiers, that the civilian owners were innocent of their existence. The "tire stabs" were confiscated and turned over to G-3.

4. During the night of 24-25 March 1945, one of our patrols hit a trip wire which had been strung across the road in the village of VENE. The trip ignited a flare or incendiary which shot across the road but did no damage. A thorough investigation made by CIC led to the conclusion that the installation was probably built by U.S. Army personnel as a practical joke. It is significant to note that in the course of investigation the civilians cooperated 100 percent, because of fear of reprisal by the U. S. Army. The respect that the German people have for the military, a respect built up by the Germany Army, should not be disregarded. It is felt that this reaction to the force of the armed service is a valuable weapon in the hands of the U. S. Army.

5. During the period, over 20 U. S. Army enlisted men were apprehended and turned over to their respective commanding officers for fraternizing with civilians. These men were mostly from service units which apparently had not convinced their men of the importance of maintaining security in Germany. It is felt that because they have not actually fought the Germans, that it is difficult for men of service units to develop the proper mental attitude. For this reason it is believed that more time and effort should be spent in indoctrinating men of service units on these two subjects.

The following conclusions have been arrived at as a result of our operations as occupying troops during the period.

1. A firm, courteous military enforcement of regulations is the best method to use in controlling civilian population.
2. Preplanning for the care of displaced personnel, adequate guards and an immediate but brief indoctrination course for all displaced personnel should be instituted as soon as practicable.
3. Constant and active investigation by CIC agents of all possible saboteurs must be made in all areas occupied by our forces.
4. Security training of all Army units, including service units should be continuous.

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SECTION VI

Commentary Concerning Activities of Detached Elements

1. Troop A - Attached to Combat Command A.
  - a. 26 Feb 45, attached to CGA. Proceeded during darkness of 26-27 Feb to join Command north of Hetterf crossing Roor River at Linnich, Germany.
  - b. 27 Feb 45, - Provided right flank security for Command and liaison with CCR. Rejoined CGA at Erkelens.
  - c. 28 Feb 45 - Continued flank security and liaison with CCR. Moved to vicinity of Hardy.
  - d. 1 Mar 45 - Performed liaison mission with CCR, 102nd and 84th Inf. Div. One platoon guard for Command trains. Moved to east of Vierson.
  - e. 2 Mar 45 - Third Platoon acted as advance guard for 34th Tank Bn. First and second platoons initially right and left guards then liaison with 102nd and 84th Inf. Div. Moved to Hexhofs and Krefeld.
  - f. 3 Mar 45 - Reconnoitered assembly area and routes for Command and performed perimeter defense for the night, in the vicinity of Vluzm. CP located one Km south of Tennisberg.
  - h. 5 Mar 45 - At 0130 assigned mission of proceeding to Brinkhof to protect left flank of CCR. At 1000 reverted to mission of clearing enemy from area Vluzm, Schaephusen, and Rhein. Troop outposted line approximately 1 Km south of Lintfert for the night.
  - i. 6 Mar 45 - Continued assigned mission, patrolling roads, administering Military Government and evacuating displaced personnel. CP moved to Rayen.
  - j. 7-9 Mar 45 - Same.
  - k. 10 Mar 45 - Relieved of assigned mission at 1200. Moved to Vennheide and reverted to Squadron control upon clearing area at approximately 1600. Second Platoon Troop E attached to this troop for entire mission.
2. Troop B - Attached to Combat Command B.
  - a. Route of advance of CCB - generally Hetterf, Katzen, Erkelens, Rheinthalen and Reyd.
  - b. Crossed Roor River at approximately 2300A. Bivouaced in Hetterf that night. Early next morning given mission of protecting right flank of CCB - who moved out shortly after this troop.
  - c. Troop B provided constant reconnaissance on right flank of CCB. Mission was to screen advance of Command and provide timely warning of enemy resistance from the East that might hold up an armored advance, i.e., Anti-tank Guns, and enemy armor mainly. This mission was extremely difficult the first two days due to heavily mined areas and well placed Anti-tank guns, however it was accomplished to the compliments of the Commanding Officer of CCB. Screening and protection on the flank allowed the Command to concentrate on the frontal area only and after the initial breakthrough the objectives of CCB were taken in fast order. Two vehicles were lost to mines and one to anti-tank fire but casualties

**SECRET**

Were light and not serious.

d. Third Platoon Troop E attached to this troop for entire mission.

3. Troop C - Attached to Combat Command R.

a. At 0330 on 27 February 1945, the troop with the first platoon of E Troop attached, was given the mission of marking the route from Frelenberg, Germany through Limnich across the Roor to Hetterf, Germany for the advance of Combat Command R. South of Hetterf, the troop received orders to reconnoiter an assembly area for the Command. This accomplished, the troop was ordered by radio to establish a security screen along the East boundary of XIII Corps, with orders not to cross the Corps boundary except on order and not to extend the screen farther North than the 70 grid line until ordered, maintaining physical contact with the leading element of the left flank of the XIX Corps. This screen was established at 270600 February 1945 maintained until 271600 February 1945 when the troop was ordered to extend the screen from the 70 grid line along the XIII Corps boundary to the town of Wey (F051737), remaining in this position until 282300 February 1945; thence marking the route through Erkelens, Gladback-Rheindahlen to an assembly area 2000 yards South of Hardt. At this position the troop was given the mission of reconnoitering bridge sites on the Niers Canal to provide a route of advance for the Combat Command. From the Canal the troop continued reconnoitering and marking the route through Viersen, Suchtelm, Oedt, Kempen, Huls. At Tennisburg the Command became heavily engaged and had to fight its way through Vulkanheide to 1000 yards East of Neukircherfeld and became bogged down, because the XIX Corps would not allow the Command to utilize the roads through Neers. Darkness having closed in the Commander decided to wait until the moon came up before continuing his attack. At this time, 032300 March 1945, the troop received orders to reconnoiter for a cross country route to Repelen. On this mission one platoon encountered stiff enemy resistance about one and one half miles North of Neukircherfeld, losing one officer and four enlisted men. The information obtained by the patrol influenced the decision of the Combat Command Commander to postpone the attack until daybreak.

b. The Combat Command fought its way through Repelen into Orsey on the Rhine. The route from Rheinkamp to Orsey being under enfilade fire, the troop was given the mission of reconnoitering an alternate route through the woods East of Repelen. The mission was accomplished encountering only small arms fire. That same night, 05 March 1945, the troop was ordered into Orsey to setup a screen North of Orsey to secure the Tank Destroyers at that point. One Platoon was used to establish OP's in the various large buildings and churches in Orsey to direct artillery fire on targets on the East side of the Rhine. Two days later the 295th Infantry relieved the Combat Command and the troop marked the route to St. Tennis for an assembly point.

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*George C. Benjamin*  
**GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,**  
**Lt Col, Cavalry**  
**Commanding.**

- 2 Incls.**
- Incl 1 - Unit Journal.**
- Incl 2 - File of Incoming and  
Outgoing messages.**

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