

MILITARY POLICE PLATOON 70TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 461, U.S. Army

9 March 1945

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Military Police Platoon, 70th Infantry Division, arrived at the Division C.P. at St. Jean Rohrbach, France, 5 Feb. 1945, after a four days journey from Marseille, France. This movement, was accomplished by our organic motor transportation, and was completed without any mishaps. The trip was our longest motor march and much valuable experience in column movement was acquired. This report is a narrative of the activities performed by the Provost Marshal, and Military Police Platoon, from the time of arrival in the Division sector until the end of February 1945.

2. ORGANIZATION:

The final phrases of our organization under T/O & T/E 19-7, dated 28 March 1944, was completed prior to our departure from Camp Myles Standish, and upon debarkation at Marseille, France, up to our arrival at the Division Command Post, found the following key personnel, Major Calvin S. Wisman, Provost Marshal and Commanding Officer of the Platoon, 1st Lt. Walter C. Berger, Traffic Section Leader, and 2d Lt Donald Battaglia, Police Section Leader. The key enlisted personnel consisted of, S/Sgt Sidney E. Whitman, Platoon Sergeant; Sgt. Wilford T. Dial, Traffic Section Sergeant; and Sgt Fred B. Bangert, Police Section Sergeant. The organization of three officers and sixty-eight enlisted men is further compiled in attached organizational roster as Annex No.1. On 6 Feb. 1945, orders were issued for our platoon to reorganize under T/O & T/E 19-7, dated 12 Sept. 1944. The officer personnel was increased from three officers to four and 2nd Lt. Nathan Howard, who was commissioned on the field of battle while serving with Company E, 274th Infantry Regiment joined us and was assigned as Police Section Leader. Lt. Battaglia was assigned to the Traffic Section, and Lt. Berger was assigned to Platoon Headquarters. The enlisted personnel increased from sixty-eight to one-hundred and two enlisted men. Our traffic Section was increased from three squads to five squads, and the Police Section increased from two squads to three. On 9 Feb. 1945, we received our first reinforcements, namely: Pvts. Cunneran, Wood, Demyan, Driever, Fowler and Sink, joined our platoon. Pvt. Thomas P. Cunneran was evacuated to the Clearing Station, 70th Inf Div, on 12 Feb. 1945, and returned to duty on the 16th of Feb. Our enlisted strength was increased to seventy-eight men on 16 Feb. 1945, when Pvts Hill, Carroll and Hunt, joined our organization. On 17 Feb. 1945 Cpl Lewis C. Green, was transferred to the Det. of Patients, Seventh Army, diagnosis; nose infection. Sgt Kuschel, Pfc. Hill and ten privates, joined on 19 Feb 1945. On 22 Feb. 1945, our enlisted personnel totaled ninety-six enlisted men. Sgt Richard O. Cannon and Tec 5 Clarence D. Burns, and seven privates were assigned to this unit. The following promotions were announced on 23 Feb. 1945; Cpl George Tretakis to Sergeant, Pfc's Robinson, Tyson, Stivers, and Schoenfeld, promoted to corporal. Pfc. Keith R. Caldwell was promoted to Technician Fifth Grade. Sgt. Strang, Cpl. Dillenback, and three privates, arrived from Hq 2nd Reinforcement Depot, plus the return of Pvt. Carroll from Det. of Patients, Seventh Army, brought our strength to one hundred and one enlisted men on 28 Feb. 1945. Annex No. 2 is attached to show organization as of 28 Feb. 1945.

3. TRAFFIC CONTROL

The first phase of Traffic Control was the acquisition of road maps, the construction of overlays, and continual road reconnaissance. The control of traffic on the MSR (N-74) was handled by Sgt Albert J. Drake's squad, with one-half of the squad Hellimer, and one half at Puttelange. Each half squad established a control post and operated frequent motor patrols on the MSR and adjoining roads. Both axial and belt roads in the division sector were patrolled 24 hours a day by

unit personnel and vehicles. Sgt Raymond E. Jobling and his third squad traffic established a control post at Road Junction N-3 and GC-94 in Merlebach, on 13 Feb. 1945. This squad operated continuous patrols in the nearby area. Information in regard to all motor columns moving through our division sector was acquired from the G-4 traffic section, and assistance in regard to direction and information is being furnished to these column commanders by patrol units from this organization. Condition of roads and bridge data acquired through patrolling of these roads is reported to the G-4 traffic section. All traffic personnel were informed as to the location and direction to all units and installations in the division sector at all times.

4. STRAGGLER CONTROL

The first straggler line was established extending from Welferding, and running laterally through Ipling, Hundling, Metzling, Farschviller, and Merlebach. The straggler collecting points were established at Merlebach and Hundling. Fixed posts were maintained on a 24-hour basis along this line, and constant patrolling along the line and to the front and rear by motor vehicles assisted in the control of stragglers patrolling. Individuals who were lost or who had left their units were brought to the collecting point, and from there returned to their respective units. This line was established on 17 Feb. 1945, prior to our division's attack, approximately eight stragglers were returned to their units during the first five days of action.

5. PRISONERS OF WAR

The Division Prisoner of war collecting point located at St. Jean Rohrbach, was operated by twelve enlisted men from the 377th Military Police Escort Guard Company. On 7 Feb. 1945, we took over the operation of this collecting point with the twelve enlisted men from the escort guard company assisting us. The Police Section of our platoon was assigned this task, with Lt. Nathan Howard and Sgt Fred B. Bangert in charge. Efficient operation of this collecting point necessitated the acquisition of additional transportation to expedite the evacuation of these prisoners. The 70th Division Quartermaster Company furnished us from one to three 2 1/2 ton trucks with drivers solely for the evacuation of prisoners of war. The evacuation consisted of transporting these prisoners of war from the regimental collecting point to the division collecting point. The division M.I.I team located at our division collecting point processed all prisoners of war. After which they were evacuated to the Army collecting point at Hampont, France. From the period 17 Feb. to 24 Feb. 1945., approximately 1,400 prisoners of war were evacuated from regimental to army collecting points. On 22 Feb. 1945, a peak load of about 400 Prisoners of War, were evacuated. About 1,800 Prisoners of War were processed through the collecting point during this period. The searching and constant guarding of these Prisoners of War was effectively carried out. When feeding the prisoners of war was necessary, it was accomplished by the use of "C" rations. The twelve enlisted men from the 377th Military Police Escort Guard Company were relieved on 28 Feb. 1945, and fifteen enlisted men from the 142nd Military Police Escort Guard Company arrived to assist in the guarding and evacuation of prisoners of war.

6. CIVILIAN CONTROL:

The Military Police rendered assistance to Civil Affairs in their enforcement of regulations effecting the circulation of civilians. A civilian collecting point was operated in conjunction with the prisoner of war collecting point by the Police section, who were responsible for the security of civilians. Suspicious civilians and violators of regulations are arrested for loyalty check, and during the time required for checking and disposition, they are secured at the collecting point. An average of about 25 civilians were processed daily at the collecting point.

7. POST CONTROL:

The security and control of the interior of the Division Command Post plus parking regulation enforcement, and blackout, compliance was taken over by our platoon on 11 Feb. 1945, and consists of the following organization. The entrance to the division commanders office, and the entrance to the war room, were guarded at all times by men from the Police Section. The entrance to the command post off Highway; N-74 is also manned twenty-four hours a day. On 16 Feb. 1945, a detail from 70th Division Band rendered assistance for this duty when our police section was busily engaged in evacuation of prisoners of war from the regimental collecting points. This detail of twelve men were released on 26 Feb. 1945.

8. SUPPLY

Upon arrival at the division command post our organization was completely equipped in accordance with T&O & T/E 19-7 dated 28 March 1945, plus the addition of our organic transportation that we received at CP-2 in Marseille, France. Organization under our new T/O & T/E 19-7, dated 12 Sept. 1944, necessitated the immediate requisition and acquisition of T/E equipment. Sgt Wendell D. Sparks our Supply Sergeant, started the necessary action to equip the additional enlisted personnel that were to join our unit. Close co-operation with the supply branches resulted in fulfilling our supply shortages. It has been difficult to acquire some high priority organizational equipment but substantial substitutes were received.

9. MOTOR VEHICLES

Our organization arrived here with our full number of vehicles less one 3/4 Ton Weapons Carrier that carried a high priority, and one 3/4 Ton Command and Reconnaissance car, plus three 1/4 ton, 4x4 Trucks, which were issued in lieu of the above. Tec 4 Donald E. Walters, our motor mechanic, set up his garage, and with the aid of Pfc Keith R. Caldwell, started the performance of 2nd Echelon maintenance. Our big problem at this stage was the repair of numerous flat tires caused by shrapnel, nails and other sharp objects, which were plentiful on all roads. Tire patching equipment was at a premium, and field expedience proved very successful. At the close of the month of February we had thirty-one vehicles all in running order and had covered over 26,000 miles in patrolling and evacuating of prisoners of war and routine trips.

10. GENERAL

The Provost Marshal visited, and was visited by, the Provost Marshals of nearby units, exchanging many points and ideals on methods of operation. Continuous contact was maintained with the Division staff, with a daily visit made to the G-1 and G-4 offices.

During this period all personnel of the platoon were billeted in buildings which gave good protection from the weather.

The helmets for all members of the platoon were painted with the letters MP in front and rear, and the Division shoulder sleeve insignia on each side of the helmet.

Soon after our arrival, Pfc McAfee and McDonald, were assigned as permanent guards to the Division Commander. Pvt Nikka was assigned as permanent guard to the assistant division commander.

(Signature)

Calvin S. Wisman

Major, C.M.P.,

Provost Marshal & Commanding