

70th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop Narrative Report  
(After Action Report)  
March 1945

On 5 December, 1944, while the Troop was preparing for overseas movement, 2nd. Lt. Nick Chocas, 0-1032007, was ordered to Horseheads, New York, as Troop supply representative per File: 370,5, Par. 1, 27 November, 1944. Upon completion of 7 days' TD at Horseheads, Lt. Chocas proceeded to Boston POE to continue his duties.

19 December, 1944, 1st. Lt. William G. Mitchell, 0-1032033, was ordered to TD, Boston POE, to act as advance party for the Troop pending its arrival at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

All packing and crating were completed 19 December, and loading of TAT was completed that day by Lt. Minihan, 211400 December, 1944, the 70th Reconnaissance Troop departed Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo, with a T/O strength of 6 officers and 143 enlisted men as shipment 1508-S. The Troop traveled by rail via St. Louis, Chicago, Port Huron, Ontario, Buffalo and Albany to the Boston POE. Due to unforeseen transportation problems, the Troop arrived 10 hours late at Camp Myles Standish 232200 December, 1944, with its full complement of officers and men.

Lt. Mitchell returned to duty 240600 December, and that day the Troop began final preparations for movement overseas. During the following two weeks training and immunization were completed, necessary records were accomplished, and all personnel were supplied with special items of winter clothing. Every effort was made to complete equipment of the Troop in terms of its T/O&E. Overseas delivery of shortages on requisition at the time of departure was promised.

Having completed his duties at the Boston POE, Lt. Chocas returned to duty with the Troop 30600 January, 1945. 6 January, 1945, S/Sgt. Mervin A. Kaltvedt., 6935486, being sick with pleurisy in the Sta. Hosp., Cp. Myles Standish, LD, was transferred in grade to the casual detachment BNPE per AR 615-200. 7 January, 1945, Sgt. James R. Reed was promoted to S/Sgt. and made Platoon Sergeant of the First Platoon to replace S/Sgt. Kaltvedt. Sgt. Lundy was transferred from headquarters Platoon to be 1st Platoon Scout Sergeant, and Sgt. Palmer was transferred from Scout Sergeant to AC commander and leader of the 1st Platoon's second section. Headquarters Platoon thus became short one man.

The 70th Reconnaissance Troop departed Cp. Myles Standish 80800 January, 1945, by rail for the BPOE., and sailed there from 81730 Jan. aboard the U.S. Army Transport, SS Mariposa for overseas duty in France. The Troop sailed as Shipment 1508-S with a strength of 6 officers and 142 enlisted men. During the crossing, the sea was relatively calm and, the weather was generally cloudy, foggy and rainy: Sunlit days were interrupted by rain squalls. We sailed without convoy, and our crossing of the Atlantic was uninterrupted. Near the Azores a patrol plane picked us up and shortly thereafter we received an escort of one destroyer, The escort continued with us through the Straits of Gibraltar, along the coast of Africa., and across the Mediterranean. Weather on the Mediterranean was bright and pleasant, and the sea was calm.

181000 January, 1945, the 70th Reconnaissance Troop, Shipment 1508-S, arrived at Marseilles, France. The Troop debarked and traveled by motor convoy approximately 20 miles to the Delta Base Staging Area, CP#2, co-ordinates 40.7-32.7, Map Eastern France, Sept., 1944, 1:50,000. We arrived at 1430A and went into bivouac.

During the days that followed we improved our living conditions and received and unpacked our impedimenta. Vehicles were prepared for combat as soon as they arrived. Living and working conditions were difficult because of continuous rains and attendant mud, and because of the cold and intensity of the north wind which blew over the bare hilltop of the bivouac area. Somehow the men remained in good health and spirits. Weapons were prepared for combat and vehicular

weapons were mounted. Radios were tested and installed. Ammunition was received and issued. T/E shortages due to unfilled requisitions and losses in transit were placed on requisition. The reconnaissance platoons undertook training in foreign map reading and in vehicular reconnaissance as soon as their equipment was ready. Troop preparation was needlessly delayed because of repairs to and replacement of equipment made necessary by the exceedingly careless handling of equipment by dock personnel at Marseilles during unloading of the ship bearing our impedimenta.

30 January, 1945, the Troop received three medical corpsmen to be attached unassigned for duty and administration from Hq. Spcl. Trs., 70 Inf. Div. per VCOG 70 Inf. Div. as follows: Hood, Charles R. 34143334, Cpl., MOS 861; Colman, Carl B., 391374333 T/5, MOS 861; Haman, Wilhelm, 38131270, T/5, MOS 409.

The night of 1 February, 1945, Pvts., Hamm, T. J., and Gillum, James C., were injured in a vehicular accident while enroute to the Staging Area from Marseilles and were evacuated to the 70th Sta. Hosp., Marseilles, sick, LD. 2 February Pvt. Hamm returned to duty. Pvt. Gillum remained in the hospital and was subsequently dropped.

The Troop broke its bivouac 3 February, 1945, and made ready for a motor march to the 70th Div. front. Cold rain and fog beset us the night of 3-4 February and we moved out 40740 February in dense fog over muddy roads to Aix en Provence. The Troop moved in two march units, one commanded by Lt. Mitchell and one by Lt. Koefod. Two AG M8's with crews were attached to the 270 Engineers for purposes of the march. One attached M8 developed motor trouble and was left behind by the Engineers to be towed to Marseilles for repairs. That M8., commanded by Sgt. Cicio, rejoined the Troop at Freyming 10 February.

3 February, 1945, the Troop's five half-tracks, each loaded with Troop equipment, were put aboard flatcars in Marseilles for shipment by rail. A detail of 25 men under Lt. Minihand accompanied them and joined us in Freyming. Enroute, one half-track was detached from the train and returned to Marseilles because the flatcar bearing it developed a hot-box and was in danger of being destroyed by fire. The detached half-track was subsequently re-shipped from Marseilles and last heard of at Blaineville: It is considered lost in transit. Lt. Minihand and his detail departed Marseilles 4 February.

At the close of the first day's march, the Troop bivouaced for the night at St. Rambert Airfield, St. Rambert, France, at 1800. A 9 ton truck driven by Pvt. Slyzinski dropped out of convoy during the afternoon of 4 February due to a breakdown. It was brought up during the night and forwarded to the 901st Ordnance Co., Lyon, for repairs. T/4 Monthey, T/4 Sheets and T/5 McCaslan accompanied the truck to effect repairs and to drive the truck to our destination. En route they were misdirected and nearly drove into the German lines at Sasreguemes: They were turned back at the Saar River bridge by American soldiers on guard.

50800 February the Troop resumed its march to the North and made bivouac that night at Dijon, France. The day's march was made in fog and rain over muddy roads without incident. Bivouac was without benefit of shelter in snow and slush in a city park during a night of light rain.

60800 February the Troop departed Dijon for Epinal, arriving there at 1400 to refuel before going into bivouac at 1700. Cover for the night was provided in a textile mill furnished by its local owner. The Troop was met at Epinal by Lt. Drivers, Ln.O., 70 Div. Hq., who furnished directions and strip maps for the next day's march to Puttelange, France.

The Troop left Epinal at 0800 7 February in a single march unit under Captain Beaver, and marched alone to its destination. Enroute the Troop's destination was changed from Puttelange to Merlebach, France. In Merlebach, the Civil Affairs Office directed the Troop to billets in the suburb

of Freyming. A CP was established there (Q 322608, Map E. France, 1:50,000) at 1700. A guard was organized and the area secured for the night. The people of the district were not unfriendly and were quick to co-operate and do as directed.

8 February, 1945, was given to improvement of quarters and to administrative matters such as repair and cleaning of Weapons and equipment following the motor march. A motor pool, supply room and like installations were effected. Sgt. Drassal, who had been placed an TD with Headquarters Company at Delta Base Staging Area 4 returned to duty with the Troop.

9 February the three reconnaissance platoons began reconnaissance of the Division front for purposes of orientation as follows: 1st Platoon; zone of 276 Inf., vic. Kerbach 2nd Platoon; zone of 274 Inf., vic. Lixing 3rd Platoon; zone of 275 Inf., vic; Grosbliederstroff These orientation, and training activities were continued daily till 12 February when the Troop received its first combat missions. While on a reconnaissance of the 275 Inf. front, vicinity Grosbliederstroff, France, 10 February, with their platoon, T/5 Jack B. Parsons and Pfc. Albert L. Happy were SWA by AP mines of unknown origin. 11 February both were relieved from assignment and transferred to Det. of Pats., Hq. 7th Army. That same day Sgt. Gregoire was evacuated for treatment of a foot infection. He returned to duty 15 February.

12 February, while elements of the reconnaissance platoons were reconnoitering the Division rear areas in preparation for possible defensive operations the Troop received orders to send out three night patrols, one from each regimental front as follows: 1st Platoon; front of 276 Inf., vic. Forbach, 2nd Platoon; front of 274 Inf., vic. Lixing, 3rd Platoon; front of 275 Inf., vic. Grosbliederstroff. All missions were successfully accomplished., and similar night patrols were assigned 13-15 February. Each night patrol was preceded by daylight reconnaissance of the area concerned. 14 February, while reconnaissance elements were preparing for assigned night patrols, the Troop mission was changed. That night the 1st and 2nd Platoons relieved "L" Co. 276 Inf. at 2000A in Emmersweiler, Gemany: The 3rd Platoon relieved one Platoon of "G" Co. 275 Inf. in Welferding, France, at 2200A. All patrol missions for the night were cancelled, except that of the 3rd Platoon to make a reconnaissance of a portion of Highway No. 61 south of Grosbliederstroff along the west bank of the Saar. 15 February was spent by all platoons in manning OP's and in improving and establishing positions. At noon the 3rd Platoon went under Division control for tactics but not administration.

Now holding portions of the 70 Division front lines, the reconnaissance platoons undertook Division missions as follows: a. 1st and 2nd Platoons; Hold Famersweiler, Germany, maintain liaison between the 70 Div. (276 Inf., "GI" Co.) and the 101 Cav. Gp., reconnoiter vicinity Marienau, France. b. 3rd Platoon: Hold portion of Welferding., France; maintain liaison between the 70 Div. (275 Inf., "G" Co.) and the 63 Inf. Div; reconnoiter to north along Highway 61 toward Grosbliederstroff. 14 February, the Troop CP was moved to Q346637 (Map E. France 1:25,000) « mile south of Emmersweiler. 15 February the CP was improved and telephone communication with Division Headquarters was established. Rear OP remained in Freyming.

Liaison, Patrol and OP activities were continued by all platoons 16 February.

The first death due to enemy action occurred 171900 February, when Pfc. Robert E. Grogg died of wounds received during a patrol skirmish in Marienau, France, at 1645. He was accompanied on patrol by Lt. Chocas and Pfc's. Baker and Eldridge. The day was cloudy with heavy fog. Under cover of the fog, the 3rd Platoon was able to move 2 miles north of Welferding and set up a CP in a huge cave (Q493609) which was occupied by 81 civilians. The Platoon received artillery fire from the east bank of the Saar while making the move, but received no casualties. The 63 Division fell behind the 70th during the attack, and the 3rd Platoon was continuously there after on an exposed flank.

18 February the 3rd platoon established 2 OP's On high ground in the vicinity of the cave and continued its liaison mission. At 1500 that afternoon they observed 7 German tanks in a counterattack against the 63 Div. The counterattack was broken by artillery fire: two Germans observed on a knocked out tank were fired upon by the 3rd platoon. The 1st and 2nd Platoons in Emmersweiler continued liaison, patrol and OP activities.

Three Germans with a machine gun were observed by the 3rd Platoon OP in a trench the morning of February 19. Lt. Minihan fired on them, killing or wounding one: the Platoon received small arms fire in return. The afternoon of the 19th, approximately 20 Germans, with three machine guns, were observed taking up a defensive position against the advance of the 63 Div. This enemy position was immediately taken under fire by the 3rd Platoon on its own initiative. The fire of two mortars and four LMG's pinned the enemy to the ground and enabled the infantry of the 63 Div. to take the position without loss of time or casualties. About 1600 the Platoon moved into Grosbliederstroff to maintain contact with the 275 Inf. and received artillery fire while moving into the town. During the day, the 1st and 2nd Platoons continued their liaison and patrol activities.

Company "G", 275 Inf., was relieved in Grosbliederstroff 20 February by the 3rd Platoon which was ordered to defend the town in addition to its other missions. Machine guns were emplaced and armored cars were set in defensive positions. At 2300 the Platoon was directed to push north to protect the right flank of the 275 Inf. in its attack the forthcoming dawn. Sgt. Penich and his section were dispatched to contact the flank of the 275 Inf and to locate and prepare positions for the remainder of the Platoon. The 1st and 2nd Platoons continued their liaison and patrol activities.

Before dawn on the 21st, the 3rd Platoon (-), leaving its vehicles under small guard near Zinzing, moved dismounted to a position about 1,000 yards south of Unner. After daybreak, as an armored car was being moved into position in a nearby draw, 11 Germans surrendered to the 3rd Platoon. Approximately at noon, the dug-in positions of the 3rd Platoon were shelled by 88's. Tree bursts wounded T/4 Burkhardt, Cpl. Johnson and T/5 Kopecky. Johnson returned to duty after having a neck wound dressed; Kopecky was dead on arrival at the aid station (Zinzing); Burkhardt was marked "duty" after having a superficial hand wound dressed, but was not returned to his platoon. (Later unconfirmed report has it he was evacuated to the 275 regimental rest area for treatment of mental condition resulting from the action in which he was wounded.) Lt. Mix., Troop Liaison officer, brought new orders to the Platoon --orders to defend Grosbliederstroff. As the Platoon evacuated its positions it was again placed under artillery fire. Sgt. Colleran was instantly killed, and Pfc. Farquhar was so seriously wounded he died at the 2nd Bn. Aid Station, Zinzing. The Platoon returned to Grosbliederstroff and set up defensive positions.

22 February replacements were secured for three 3/4 ton trucks damaged and left on the field under fire the day before by the 3rd Platoon. The night of 22 February all abandoned vehicles and equipment were recovered under fire and evacuated. During the day the three reconnaissance platoons carried out liaison Patrol and OP missions. 22 2100-2200 February the 1st and 2nd Platoons withstood an attack by small arms, mortar and artillery fire from Marienau -with the support of the 884 FA. During the action a patrol of the 2nd Platoon was taken under fire within enemy lines. While withdrawing his patrol across the stream which flows between Emmersweiler and Marienau, Sgt. Dale Ilif rescued Cpl. Woleslagee (*or Woleslagll or Woleslag*)\* from drowning. T/5 McCaffery was wounded during the action and evacuated. Pfc. Sousa was lightly wounded and given first aid treatment. He was evacuated next day.

23-28 February all reconnaissance platoons continued liaison, patrol and OP missions, and began training of replacement personnel for new duties. All replacements received by the reconnaissance platoons were transferred from Headquarters Platoon. No requisitioned replacements have been furnished by Division to 1 March. The Troop is hard pressed to keep reconnaissance vehicles moving due to lack of availability of 600x16 inner tubes (17 600x16 innertubes, initial issue, short). Tire patches are being consumed as rapidly as received. Platoons

receive mortar and artillery fire daily. 25 February the 1st and 2nd Platoons, Emmersweiler, were alerted to repel an expected enemy counterattack, information of which was received from 276 Inf. as reported by PW's. Alerted at 1330, both platoons maintained a state of readiness till the following morning.

22 February the Troop CP was moved forward to Emmersweiler, Germany (Q357652), and the rear echelon was moved from Freyming to Q347638, 1/2 mile south of Emmersweiler. The night of 23 February a cook and a mechanic were sent to each of the reconnaissance platoons as follows: 1st Platoon: T/4 O'Kelly, cook; T/4 Monthey, mechanic 2nd Platoon: T/5 Patterson, cook; T/4 Sheets, mechanic 3rd Platoon: T/4 Ratliff, cook; T/4 Cameron, mechanic

The afternoon of 27 February the 3rd Platoon moved its CP from Grosbiederstroff to Q476646 between Zinzing and Unner. In addition to its mission of liaison between the 70 and 63 Divisions, the Platoon was directed to relieve "F" Co., 275 Inf. and establish OP's and listening posts in Unner (Q4866) and from there south along the west bank of the Saar to Q487649. Complete relief of "F" Co. was effected at 2200 and OP's were set up to guard against enemy infiltration from the north or from the east across the Saar. 28 February, the 3rd Platoon observed and reported an enemy attempt to bridge the Saar at Unner.

During the entire course of the Troop's participation in the attack of the 70 Division, which began 17 February, the Troop (-) has been under the personal direction of the Troop commander. He has visited one or both of the units between which the Troop maintains liaison daily. In addition, he has made frequent visits to the 3rd platoon in an effort to be of assistance to them.

Left short of men because of transfers to the line platoons to keep them at strength, Headquarters Platoon has worked long hours to meet the needs of the line platoons. In addition to its manpower shortage, Headquarters Platoon is short a supply half-track and its contents of troop equipment necessary for supply. Through the entire operation the efforts of Headquarters Platoon have been successful in that there is no instance of a line platoon's lacking any necessary supplies or equipment.

Since 7 February the Troop Liaison Section, in charge of Lt. Mix, has been stationed with Division Headquarters at St. Jean Rohrbach. The section has functioned efficiently to the mutual advantage of Troop and Division.

25 February T/5 Wilhelm Hamann, 38131270, attached medical corpsman, was replaced by Pfc. George D. Dowling, 33932931. T/5 Hamann was physically and mentally exhausted by the strain of combat activities with the 3rd Platoon.

**\* Italics is mine. The last two letters of the name were hard to decipher.**