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NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF ACTION

Still engaged in a mission assigned at the latter part of the previous period, the 80th Reconnaissance Troop had only one platoon committed to action on 1 December 1944. The 80th Division was driving eastward toward their boundary which ran along a north-south line PUTTELANGE-LOUPERSHOUSE-FARSHVILLER-FARBERSVILLER and employed the 2nd Platoon on the extreme right flank in a reconnaissance mission.

The platoon, after being held up in late November by heavy enemy fire in the vicinity of HENRIVILLE, swung south on 1 December 1944, bypassed the town and worked east of CAPPEL before being forced to dismount by increased enemy artillery. Company D 702nd Tank Battalion was attached to the Troop to add punch to the reconnaissance and was working in conjunction with the 2nd. Both units pulled back and set up an OP north of CAPPEL after the enemy artillery had halted them. Dismounted patrols were sent in three directions, one northeast toward FARBERSVILLER where the enemy was known to have many entrenchments, another southeast toward the road connecting FARBERSVILLER and LOUPERSHOUSE, and another toward PUTTELANGE, the extreme southern hinge of the Division zone. All three patrols were successful in developing enemy positions without physical contact. However, enemy artillery and mortar, directed at the platoon OP, injured two men: Pfc Chalmer L. Reed and Pvt Freddie E. Forren. Activity of the enemy who was apparently firmly entrenched in positions prepared for them by forced labor, was negligible except for constant harrassing artillery and mortar fire. Observation posts on high ground in the northeast corner of the Division zone gave the enemy a commanding view of much of the Division's sector and permitted observed artillery to be laid on our troops. The 1st Platoon, in reserve at LACHAMBRE, relieved the 2nd on 2 December 1944 and immediately set up an OP west of HENRIVILLE which picked up enemy activity along the entire front. Vital information concerning the disposition of enemy troops was reported through the OP. The 3rd Platoon, completing a four-day rest at LACHAMBRE, took the Troop's secondary mission of maintaining liaison with the 5th Infantry Division driving due east on the north of the Division, and sent one section to CARLING, 5th Division Headquarters.

On 3 December 1944, however, the Troop was relieved of all previous missions and directed to maintain contact with the 2nd Battalion 318th Infantry, attacking eastward toward FARBERSVILLER, and the 6th Armored Division driving north from PUTTELANGE toward the same objective. The 1st Platoon put sections with headquarters of both units and kept the third section in a Platoon CP near HENRIVILLE. As the situation grew more complex on 4 December 1944 another platoon, the 3rd, took over part of the assignment in order to facilitate the flow of information into all headquarters concerned. Enemy resistance grew fierce but continued pressure by our armor and infantry drove them out of FARBERSVILLER, FARSHVILLER and LOUPERSHOUSE on the 4th. Retreating to the northeast, the Germans nevertheless clung desperately to their high ground south of MORSBACH where the Division's north and south boundary came to a point in a pinch-off maneuver that brought the 6th Armored Division on the south and the 5th Infantry Division on the north, abreast for an assault to the east.

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With only a small pocket of the zone left to clean out, the Division ordered a reconnaissance of the area by the Troop. The 3rd Platoon took the mission and proceeded north on 5 December 1944. They advanced uninterrupted, liberated BETTING LES ST AVIN and set up in that town, operating foot patrols into the high ground to the northward. The patrol worked, by stealth, through occupied territory and returned with valuable information concerning enemy entrenchments and artillery positions. Heavy artillery concentrations were again put down at BETHLEHEM, HERTVILLER, and FARBERSVILLER. The 2nd Platoon, working under a mission similar to that of the 3rd, penetrated to HERTVILLER without incident. At 0600 7 December 1944 the two platoons were still in those areas and the 1st Platoon maintaining liaison between an oval and infantry units of the Troop went into Division reserve. Before the 1st Platoon could get out of KORBACH, however, an enemy artillery barrage landed there near Lt. George P. Berk, the platoon leader, Sgt Robert L. Fisher, and 1st Lt. John J. Thompson.

The movement to HERTVILLER started at 0700 7 December 1944 and by noon the entire Troop was assembled and set up in that town. From that date until 16 December 1944, the Troop was engaged in rehabilitation of personnel, maintenance of motors, weapons, signal equipment, and all personal equipment. Technical training in radio receiver and procedures was conducted. Through the entire rest period nightly entertainment was supplied through Social Services and by 16 December 1944 the Troop was fully rested and prepared for action.

The Division prepared to take up position on the 3rd Army's right flank on 17 December 1944 and the Troop moved by administrative convoy to GUIRING, France, to outpost an assigned sector and establish contact with adjacent units. The 1st and 2nd Platoons were employed in the mission and on 18 December 1944 they had picked up considerable information regarding dispositions of the 44th Infantry Division on the 80th's right flank and the 87th Infantry Division driving northward on the division's left. The mission was barely completed when the Troop received orders to move, along with the remainder of the Division, to the LUXEMBOURG front where the full-scale West offensive had taken hold and penetrated for several miles.

The Troop assembled in ETTRE on 19 December 1944, prepared for and administrative march, and left at 0530 for the new sector. An all night march, movement made faster by the use of headlights, brought the Troop into the capital city of LUXEMBOURG at 0700 20 December 1944. Upon arrival the Troop was assigned the task of reconnoitering to the east in order to develop the situation. Information was lacking because of the Germans' quick successes but by 0700 21 December 1944, the three platoons, working an area extending from south of GROVENMACHER to MARCH, made no contact with enemy forces and had determined positions of many friendly units in the sector.

The Division's three Regiments, moving northward from LUXEMBOURG to meet the offensive, took position on the 21st and the Troop was ordered a dual assignment of maintaining liaison with the Infantry Regiments and Division and to contact the 90th Reconnaissance Squadron of the 10th Aired Division south of ETTLEBRUCK. Both missions were completed with satisfactory results and communication was speeded up considerably as Division headquarters attacked

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successfully and drove elements of the 352nd Infantry Division back across the SURE RIVER on the left flank. Heavy enemy resistance on the right, however, was encountered and the enemy held fanatically to the town of ETTLEBRUCK despite constant artillery and aerial bombardment. On 23 December 1944 the 2nd Platoon was ordered to cut out that sector, observing ETTLEBRUCK and surrounding terrain. They took up position in SCHIEREN, emplaced two 50-caliber machine guns, observed and executed considerable movement in the vicinity of ETTLEBRUCK. On 24 December 1944 the 3rd Platoon, relieved of its liaison mission, took up position in the same vicinity.

For the next two days, the three platoons carried out this same mission. On 25 December 1944 a two-man patrol worked its way across the river, scouted ETTLEBRUCK's business section and found it to be unoccupied.

The advance of the Division's Infantry on the left flank had been so rapid and successful that 200 enemy troops were pushed out off behind our lines in the woods north of ETTLEBRUCK. In order to prevent a break-out of the enemy, the Troop was ordered to strand the roads in that sector and wipe out any resistance found. All three platoons were engaged in the operation with mounted patrols being maintained continuously over the area from platoon CP's at FOULEN and MERZIG. No contact was made with the reported forces and on 27 December 1944 the 2nd Platoon sent a strong dismounted party through the woods in their sector. Still no contact was made and the Troop was relieved of the mission.

The Division temporarily took up the defensive, with lines running through WARGEN-WELSCHELD-KEMMEN-N RUMMELT along SURE RIVER, and on 28 December 1944 the Troop was attached to the 318th Infantry and ordered to defend the extreme right sector of their zone.

The Troop relieved elements of the 86th Reconnaissance Squadron in that area on the 29th of December, cutting and defended the high ground south of ETTLEBRUCK. Contact was maintained on the right with the 203rd Reconnaissance Squadron. Considerable enemy artillery fell on the positions, manned by personnel of the 1st and 2nd Platoons and reinforced by the 3rd. No casualties, however, were suffered. Enemy patrols were active in the area and on 31 December 1944, shortly before daylight, a German scout patrol, evidently dressed in US uniforms, english-speaking and apparently well-versed in the situation, worked their way to one of our outposts and two men, Pfc Joseph T. Jenkins, and Pvt Laurence B. Johnson, were taken prisoner.

At 0700 31 December 1944 the platoons were relieved of their attachment to the 318th and they immediately reoccupied their positions at MERZIG. All three, however, were alerted before daylight for a mission on the Division's left flank that was to begin on 1 January 1945.

Paul L. Smith
PAUL L. SMITH
1st Lt., Cavalry,
Commanding.

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