

TROOP HISTORY

80TH. RECONNAISSANCE TROOP
80TH. INFANTRY DIVISION

WORLD WAR II

PREFACE

The 80th. Reconnaissance Troop, 80th. Infantry Division, was originally organized as the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments, 159th. And 160th. Infantry Brigades which were organized at Camp Lee, Virginia in August 1917; served overseas in WW I and participated in battle. These organizations returned to the United States and were demobilized at Camp Lee, Virginia, (159th. Infantry Brigade Headquarters) and Camp Dix, New Jersey (160th. Infantry Brigade Headquarters) in June, 1919.

In order to perpetuate the history and traditions of the Headquarters Detachments, 159th. And 160th. Infantry Brigades, they were, under the provisions of Section 3a, National Defense Act, reconstituted as Headquarters and Headquarters Companies, 159th and 160th Infantry Brigades and were redesignated the 80th. Reconnaissance Troop, 80th. Division Pursuant to letter from the War Department dated 30 January 1942.

The 80th. Reconnaissance Troop, 80th. Division is entitled to silver bands for it's guidon. The silver bands are engraved Somme Offensive, Meuse Argonne, Picardy and Lorraine.

TROOP INSIGNIA



The yellow color in the background of the Insignia combined with the Saber denote that the unit is basically Cavalry. The Lightning signifies the rapidity with which movements are performed by the Troop. Symbolizing the alertness and reconnaissance function of the unit is the head of the Pioneer Scout. On the Scroll is the motto "Find the Foe", this expresses the purpose of the Troop.

80TH. RECONNAISSANCE TROOP, WWII
CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY
PART ONE

- 15 July 1942: Troop activated at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, per General Order # 1, Hqs. 80th. Infantry Division, dated 15 July 1942. Captain H. B. Wilson, first commanding officer. 2nd. Lts. E. J. Anselmi, M.J. Camp, R.W. Hill, E.C. Scholz, J.C. Smudin assigned and joined S.O. #1, 80th. Infantry Division, 15 July 1942.
- 6 August 1942: Capt. H. B. Wilson relieved of command, transferred to Southern Aviation Training School, Decatur, Alabama. 2nd. Lt. E. C. Scholz assumed command.
- 16 August 1942: Private Nelson died.
- 18 August 1942: Captain Tom Matlack assigned and joined S.O. # 33, 80th. Infantry Division. 2nd. Lt. E.C. Scholz relieved of command.
- 20 August 1942: 2nd. Lt. Paul L. Smith assigned and joined.
- 1 October 1942: Lts. Miles, R. C. Zimmer assigned and joined.
- 10 October 1942: 2nd. Lt Brown, 313 F.A., 1st. Lt Smith, 315 F.A., 2nd. Lt. Bellamy, 317 Infantry. 2nd. Lt. Henry, 318 Infantry and 2nd. Lt. Kilguss, 319 Infantry attached, S.O. # 73, 80th. Infantry Division, 12 October 1942.
- 15 October 1942: 2nd. Lts. Monohan, Warren, Stewart, Know, Jarr, Tubbs and Buccino attached, S. O. # 75, 80th. Infantry Division.
- 20 October 1942: 1st. Lts. Dunn, Kerr, 2nd. Lt Cobb, assigned and joined, S.O. # 80, 80th. Infantry Division. Captain Moody, MC attached for duty per S.O. #79.
- 23 October 1942: 1st. Lts. Znigradski and Fink, attached for duty, S.O. #47 80th. Infantry Division, 13 October 1942.
- 24 October 1942: 2nd. Lts. J.B. O'Connor, W.A. Simpson assigned per S. O. # 84, 80th. Infantry Division.
- 31 October 1942: 2nd. Lt. Mathis assigned and joined, S. O. # 90 , 80th. Infantry Division.
- 4 November 1942: 80th. Reconnaissance Squadron (Provisional) disbanded per S. O. # 91, Hqs. 80th. Infantry Division.
- 21 December 1942: 1st. Lt. Kerr assumed Command
- 22 December 1942: Capt. Matlock relieved per S. O. #300, Hqs. 4th. Service Command.

4

Page 2.

31 December 1942: 2nd. Lt. Mathis transferred to Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky.

3 January 1943: 2nd. Lt. Scholz transferred to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

13 January 1943: 2nd. Lt. Miles transferred to AAF Navigation school, Monroe, La.

23 February 1943: Beginning this date the 80th. Reconnaissance Troop participated in Division maneuvers in the Lynchburg, Tennessee area.

26 April 1943: 2nd. Lt. Simpson to Army Air Corps., Berry Field, Nashville, Tennessee.

12 June 1943: 2nd. Lt. Wagner assigned and joined per S.O. #135, Par 2, 80th. Infantry Division.

15 June 1943: Troop moved from Troop area to administrative bivouac on mile North of Camp Forrest, Tennessee.

22 June 1943: 2nd. Lt. Cobb transferred to AAF Classification center, Nashville, Tennessee W. D. S.O. #40, par. 9 .

23 June 1943: 80th. Reconnaissance Troop moved to bivouac area five miles South of Murfreesboro, Tennessee prior to Tennessee Maneuvers.

9 August 1943: Troop reorganized in accordance with T/O 2-27 dated 15 July 1943 as of 12 August 1943 per G.O. #12 Headquarters 80th Infantry Division , dated 12 August 1943 as of 12 August 1943. Authorized strength 149 E.M. , 6 Officers.

25 August 1943: Troop moved from Lofton, Tennessee to Gallatin at completion of eight weeks 2nd. Army maneuvers.

2 September 1943: Troop moved from bivouac area S.W. of Gallatin to entrain at Gallatin station.

4 September 1943: Troop detrained at Camp Phillips, Kansas, 2030 C.W.T.

29 September 1943: 1st. Lt. Anselmi transferred to P.M.G. School, Fort Custer, Mich., per W.D. S.O. #265 par 10, dated 1 October 1943.

5 November 1943: 2nd. Lt. George P. Rork assigned and joined from C.R.T.C.

17 November 1943: 2nd. Lt. Robert O. Cleary assigned and joined from Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, per letter order 300.4 G.N.M.Q.C., dated 13 November 1943.

18 November 1943: 2nd. Lt. Eugene P. Ramsey assigned and joined. Per S. O. #304, Par.7, Hq. Cav. School, Ft. Riley, Kansas.

5

Page 3.

28 November 1943: Troop entrained at Camp Phillips, Kansas in preparation to moving to C-A.M.A.

1 December 1943: Troop arrived and detrained at Yuma Railhead, Yuma, Arizona.

3 January 1944: Capt Kerr ordered on S.D. to Hq. 80th. Infantry Division. 1st. Lt. Hill assumed command.

28 January 1944: 2nd. Lt. John R. Danley transferred to Staff and Faculty Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas.

12 February 1944: Troop departed Camp Laguna, moved by motor convoy to Palen Pass, California maneuver area.

25 March 1944: Troop Departed C-A.M.A. moved by rail to permanent change of station to Fort Dix, N.J.

29 March 1944: Troop detrained at Fort Dix, N. J.

21 April 1944: Tech. 4 John P. Egan died of injuries received in training.

FOOTNOTE

The record of 80th. Reconnaissance Troop activities (Parts one and two) are transcribed from manuscripts that I received at the 80th. Division reunion on September 3/5, 1998 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The stateside history (Part one) has been re typed verbatim. The Troop History that reflects it's Overseas activities (Part two) is believed to have been prepared by 1st. Lt Eugene P. Ramsey as supported by the photocopied page that follows this page. **The Troop is indebted to Russell Berdell, a member of the Troop in WWII, (now deceased) for his persistence in seeking to obtain this 80th Recon Troop History. Russell is reported to have spent 41 years writing and phoning various sources before his Congressman discovering these documents in the National Archives.** The Overseas History beginning on page 5 has been copied with only minor word changes by me to hopefully improve it's readability. The meaning and intended content of all sentences and phrases have been maintained as they appear in the manuscript given me.

**Joe H. Hege, Jr., Transcriber, a
Former Member, 80th Recon Troop**

53

80 DIV

HEADQUARTERS 80TH RCN TROOP

8 January 1946

INVENTORY OF RECORDS: Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, N.J.

Unit inactivated under authority of R 1-6

ITEM NO.

DESCRIPTION

1

Unit History

Inventory by:

Eugene P Ramsey
EUGENE P RAMSEY
1st Lt., Cavalry

80-2470

1944-45

2ND PART OF II

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NOV 29 1946

26223
master

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80TH. RECONNAISSANCE TROOP HISTORY OVERSEAS PART TWO

Camp Kilmer was a scene of thousands of bustling, marching troops, unprecedented inspections of everything imaginable, shots, last minute training, 12 hour passes, brief calls home for the last time and the final preparation for the trip overseas. The 80th. Reconnaissance Troop and all other elements of the 80th. Division sifted into well coordinated camp the week of 18 June 1944 and were swallowed and disappeared in the strict censorship regulations to come out only as the "#4924".

The Troop gathered lazily in the hot sunshine and hidden under equipment as they awaited 2000 hours to begin the march to the railhead that important day - the 30th of June 1944. It's a good thing Mike Towarnicke kept his accordion handy, for that music seemed to lift the heaviness that hung in the railroad coach as the long train moved swiftly by the lighted windows and stores of New Jersey.

The train slowed, lurched to a stop, a half confusion in the cars as the many heavy and cumbersome pieces of equipment were again adjusted in place and the men began moving clumsily out onto the darkened platform. No one knew exactly how far we stumbled to reach the ferry, but an estimate from any that lugged that load would conservatively say "five miles". Straps cut into the shoulders, sweat ran freely over the body but everyone managed to shuffle onto the lower deck of the ferry, plop down in place and disregard the "no smoking" signs.

Strains of martial music coming from the pier moved tired heads in that direction as we closed in beside the Queen Mary, and the exciting rhythm of "Over There" seemed to give us enough energy to waddle onto the pier for a brief pause and enjoy coffee and donuts. A feeling of excitement passed through the Troop as they moved single file from the shores of the United States and moved silently into the bowels of the second largest ship afloat. No one had to be told to hit the bunk that night after that short but tiresome trip, the first lap of a long journey.

The Troop became scattered about the ship, assigned separate chow hours according to the location of quarters, given daily duties and had the first example of the English diet when kidney stew stared them in the face the first morning at breakfast. Little freedom was allowed throughout the ship until after the harbor was cleared that first afternoon, 1 July 1944. The trip was uneventful except for one day when heavy seas were encountered and the few who could navigate had the run of the ship while the others were contesting who could throw that English style food the farthest with the mostest. A scene like that is always funny to everyone but the contestant and the contestant usually wasn't particular which floors and walls he decorated.

On the 6th. Of July the constant vibrations of the turbines on this huge ship suddenly stopped and anchor was cast in the Firth of Clyde, disembarking was completed by eleven o'clock that night at Glasgow, Scotland and odd-looking British trains were boarded. Six men were assigned each compartment and the usual coffee and donuts were passed out before moving out. The most noticeable thing at the time was that it was almost 2330 and darkness was just beginning to descend on this northern country.

The southern trip took all night and a great part of the next morning to reach the small town of Knutsford, near Manchester, England. The Division was now scattered for many miles throughout that section of England as a safety precaution against air attack.. We found we were to be stationed at Mobberly Hell, but the distinguish sounding name proved to be nothing more that a tent camp in a pasture, with neissen huts for bath houses, and the same kind of a structure for Mess Hall and Kitchen. During the three weeks there, we found out why the sun never sets on the British Empire (it never rises). English oddities were noted with amusement but should never be questioned, the book said. Pubs proved to be about the same as drinking watered beer in a funeral parlor or a doctor's waiting room, but the Bird in Hand and Roebuck's still played host to half the troop. Left hand driving was a nightmare for the first few days and more understanding could be procured from the road signs if they were read upside down and backwards. Passes were scarce but most of the men got out by showing they carried their rain coat which always proved of some value whether it rained or not. However, when a surprise formation was called at midnight Sgt. Small blew the whistle loud enough to be heard in Wilmslow, England and men appeared in a surprising array of available clothing to make it in time. Some actually were sleeping at the time.

Much time had been spent carving the waterproof treatment from the vehicles and with everything loaded and everyone accounted for, the road march for the Marshaling Area just outside of South Hampton, England was begun at 1100 on the 31st. Of July. This march covered approximately 218 miles and brought us to the proper destination at 0500 hours the next morning. Last minute equipment was issued, more numbers were added to the vehicles for shipment and at 0300 hours on the 2nd of August everyone was rudely awakened and made preparations for reaching the port at South Hampton, England by 0600.

The column of vehicles pulled in beside a Liberty Ship and after a short wait, the big boom began reaching out again and again to pick heavy half tracks off the ground, swing them through the air and deposit them in the hold. By three that afternoon, the Troop and equipment was once again on the move. A convoy was picked up the next morning and by that evening, 4 August 1944, we had our first view of the memorable Utah Beach, France that was still a scene of many moving ships, men and machines as hundreds of ships were unloaded as fast as possible with the important elements of war needed to support the breakthrough the 3rd. Army had achieved. Impatiently we awaited our turn and unloading began at noon on the 5th. Of August 1944 and was completed the following day, August 6, 1944.

The troop moved out of the confusion of the beach area to a bivouac outside the village of St. Jores, France for the final briefing and getting equipment ready for the first encounter with the enemy. After carrying gas masks and associated equipment for two years and struggling through numerous gas drills by the numbers, it was all turned in. Preparing for that first battle is a strange experience that keeps the mind revolving over thousands of questions that can only be answered with the first exchange of fire. Hundreds of battle tips received from all sources flash off and on when the orders to move out are received and the convoy rolls out of the pasture and down the road through St. Jorges, France, past the IP in the direction of Montigny, France.

That afternoon of 8 August 1944, the Troop convoy moved through Pierres, France and witnessed their first totally destroyed city. Buildings all over the city had been shaken from their foundations and spilled out onto the streets. At 1800 the column was stopped by General Summers and the Troop received a change of mission and were now to proceed to LeMans, France in advance of a reinforced combat team.

We more or less assumed that LeMans, France has already been taken so we traveled all night, experienced half scared, feeling of our first enemy air attack, and by morning went busting down the road to LeMans, France damn confident of ourselves until we began passing burning tanks and freshly killed krauts. Upon reaching the outskirts of the city and finding a battle still in progress on August 9, 1944, we pulled off the road and laid around watching elements of the 90th. Division flushing hordes of enemy out of nearby bushes without realizing we were lounging around almost in the midst of a heavy battle. Finally orders came through to move back to a tactical bivouac east of Vaiges, France.

A mission came through the next day, 10 August 1944, and the Troop began working in advance of the Division in the direction of Argentan, France. The Third Platoon picked up the Troop's first enemy prisoner from a friendly civilian and later that day grabbed six more prisoners.

On Sunday 13 August 1944, the 2nd. Platoon received the first casualties while reconnoitering a road cleared previously by another unit. Like an electrifying shock one vehicle blew up then in quick succession two more vehicles were demolished upon striking mines. **Sammy Romano, Edward Grutzmacher and Clarence Williams** were **killed** instantly and several others were wounded. Those first casualties are hard to take. The stark reality that the enemy is no longer a dream but a cold blooded, living breathing group of men who had just taken the lives of fellows we had lived with for so long, makes one mad at first that slowly tapers off with the thought that we have to continue on, that there will many more days like this, many more being killed, it's a hell of a job but from then on it was definitely we or they.

The Troop continued the advance toward Argentan, France and out posted the Division sector as the Infantry moved in and engaged in their first fierce fighting to close the southern arm of the Faliase, France trap on Von Kluge's 7th. German Army. Friendly air roamed the skies, pouncing on and destroying hundreds of enemy vehicles and by the 20th. Of August, Argentan, France fell, and with it died the German Army in a mass grave.

A few days rest at Alemenaches, France, days of laying in the warm sunshine and swiping persistent bees off the food, days of re-packing equipment and the Troop moved out in advance of the Division for a long march across France. Those were the days when we realized "to the victor belongs the spoils" for the French gave the miles long column the most enthusiastic welcome conceivable. Streets were lined in villages and cities with children, men and voluptuous women, waving, crying, yelling "Viva L'Americainique". Volleys of tomato es, eggs, bottles of champagne, wine and cognac were gladly thrown in the Jeeps and Armored Cars and in exchange for the sincere gratitude cigarettes and candy was passed out freely along the route of the march. For 350 miles, through

Chantenay, Mezersy, Ecommy, Le Grand luce, LaChatre, Moitroire, Verdome, Moree, Orleans, Chateaufneuf, Bellegrade, Montargis, and Sens, France, the Troop traveled fast met no opposition and thoroughly enjoyed the ride which was far removed from a war we had read about.

At this stage the Division began closing with the enemy and the Platoons were given the mission of locating and holding two bridge sites on the Seine River in France. Upon moving towards the Aube River, France with a similar mission, the Troop now held the distinction of being the lead element of the entire Allied advance to the South West. One mile south of Mourleaus, France the 3rd. Platoon met the enemy and inflicted numerous casualties, capturing an army camp of 50 large buildings and an Ammo dump. The same day, the 1st. Platoon captured three enemy planes in their sector and along with elements of headquarters platoon captured two German trains of parachutes and equipment.

Long days kept the men moving constantly from dawn to dark with little time for rest or food. Performance of the missions was being conducted with great speed, things went smoothly and then disaster struck. *Carl Kredel and Harry Tucker* were wounded and a day later the 3rd. Platoon ran into a well laid trap in which John Bosetin was **Killed** and Gerrity, Makrancy, Lakey, Lenner, Hershberger, Rueben Anderson, Sellers and Kochan were taken Prisoner. Shortly later Albert Abood was **killed** when a friendly vehicle struck a mine. The absence of these men meant a great loss to the Troop as they continued on to the Moselle River, France.

The Division made preparations for crossing the strongly held Moselle River in France and on the 12th of September 1944, a bridgehead was forced and a five day battle ensued which swayed back and forth as the enemy counter attacked again and again. The Troop Command Post and trains were almost caught in a strong enemy attack on the 15th of September 1944, and managed to escape with little loss of equipment but *Captain Hill* was wounded in the encounter.

Captain Smith took over the reins of the Troop and the situation became complex for all three Platoons, who had previously been ordered to reconnoiter east from the Moselle River, France bridgehead, now found themselves practically cut off and receiving intense enemy fire in their respective areas. Through successful maneuvering, the 2nd. And 3rd. Platoons were able to return to the west bank of the Moselle River, France without casualty. The 1st. Platoon, however found themselves in a more precarious position and were forced to take a round about route in their effort to return, in which they met elements of the 4th. Armored Division, pointed for them in their rampaging manner of waging war and eventually returned to friendly lines escorting 1000 4th. Armored Division prisoners. One casualty was inflicted during that mission when *Wilbur Meyer* was hit and forced to be evacuated.

The bridgehead was slowly expanded and on the 8th. of October 1944, the Division attacked to clear the enemy from three commanding terrain features in the areas. The three Platoons were assigned to each of the three Infantry Regiments for the relaying of information to Division Headquarters which proved to be one of the finest coordinated attacks the Division had accomplished to date.

Upon the completion of the attack, the Troop was placed in Division reserve in the vicinity of Moray, France. Extensive maintenance of vehicles and equipment was conducted in that area and the housing situation was taken care of through the construction of an unprecedented array of dug in shelters, equipped with home made stoves, lights and music tapped from the few available radios at hand. During the extended reserve status for most of the Troop, several members were required to occupy an advantageous Command Post on Mont ST. Jean, France which commanded a view of a greater part of the German lines east of the Seille River, France.

The weather began turning chilly, and feet were continuously cold from tramping in the damp sloppy mud. Beards and Moustaches were the style and there really were some beauties adorning many faces until one day they weren't considered quite proper and the razors were put to work. Passes were frequent to Nancy, France and Custines, France was visited daily for beer, and other things.

Suddenly on the 7th. Of November 1944, the Troop moved out after dark and it was learned the Division would attack the next day with many radios of the Troop again attached to Infantry elements for liaison purposes. The Air Corps roared overhead in full support, the rumbling of tanks clogging every road meant that once again we were on the move in an effort to reach the Saar River, France.

The attack proceeded rapidly as planned and by the 9th. Of November 1944 the Division had established several bridgeheads over the swollen Seille River, France. The pursuit followed closely on the heels of the attack. The 1st. Platoon continued their liaison duties with the Infantry, experiencing difficulties following their off-the-road moves, but nevertheless continued to carry out their mission efficiently with all three Regiments. The Germans continued delaying actions which kept the 1st. And 3 Platoons occupied developing the situation.

By the 15th. of November 1944, the 3rd. Army's strategy was evident as elements to the north of the Division were closing on the fortress city of Metz, France in an enveloping move. The 80th., Protecting the rear and right of the XII Corps, halted in position south of the Foret De Remilly, France and engaged the Troop in patrolling the north Flank. Aggressive patrolling was continued through the 19th. Of November 1944 by the 1st. And 2nd. Platoons and completed while the 3rd. Platoon at Vittoncourt, sent one section into Chanville, France and found it unoccupied by enemy forces. Their missions completed, all three Platoons moved back int Vittoncourt, France during the night and prepared to move in advance of the Division the next day.

Dismounted patrols were frequent in the following days as the Troop moved through Falquemont, France and the enemy resisted determinedly in the old Maginot line fortifications. The Platoon located numerous enemy positions, and while reconnoitering the 1st. Platoon located and attacked a strong enemy patrol killing four and taking seven prisoners in the skirmish. The following day the 2nd. and 3rd. Platoons trapped another enemy patrol of 12 men and wiped them out completely. It later developed, by the capture of a German Battalion commander, that this patrol had been sent out to scout American positions in order that enemy defenses could be prepared to meet the inevitable attack.

The prospects of indulging in a real Thanksgiving dinner were practically nil until the last minute when the kitchen crew came forth with the turkey and the trimmings. It was necessary to eat in shifts, a section coming off the line at a time, until almost everyone had indulged in the famous American dinner.

The Troop was relieved of it's reconnaissance mission as Division troops took all their objectives within the Maginot line. Later during the night each platoon was directed to destroy a junction box of the Maginot's communication system by demolition, and while attempting to complete this mission Sgt. Herbert Marchall was killed as the result of the explosion.

Constantly the Platoons were kept moving, blocked by floods, harassed everywhere by enemy artillery, hindered by cold, rainy weather that made the going that much rougher. An epidemic of flat tires spread throughout the Division area and the Troop received more than it's share. Three flats in one day was not uncommon and one vehicle had as high as seven.

By the 7th. Of December 1944, after a series of engagements with the enemy and fierce fighting in the vicinity of Betting, Henriville, and Farberviller, France, the Troop was relieved of all missions and ordered to assemble in Merlbach, France for rehabilitation of personnel and equipment and a rest which was needed by all personnel. Entertainment was furnished by Special Service, several men obtained passes, beer was plentiful, food was eaten from tables once again and the hot showers never felt better. After a rest like that everyone is reluctant to move back on the line again, and the Troop was no exception.

On the 17th. Of December 1944, the Division was ordered to take up a position on the 3rd. Army's right flank, and the Troop moved out in convoy to Guising, France. The stay in that sector was short lived however, for as stories began to drift in of the huge German push in the north, interest was directed that way and suddenly orders were received to move at once to Luxembourg. Late in the afternoon on the 19th. Of December 1944, the Troop proceeded northward. With the use of headlights throughout the night a steady speed was obtained and on the 20th. Of December 1944 the capital city of Luxembourg was reached. The natives of the city welcomed the Troops pouring in with great relief and the hospitality received by everyone was unexcelled. A rest that night, and once again the Troop began their reconnaissance and liaison missions which greatly speeded the coordinated moves of the Division as they struck into the southern flank of Von Runstedts major drive and succeeded in driving the enemy to the north bank of the Sure River in Luxembourg.

The 2nd. Platoon took up position in Schieren, south of Ettelbruck, Luxembourg and kept a vigilant watch on enemy positions in and around that town. Shortly later they were joined by the remaining two Platoons. On the 28th. of December 1944 the Troop was attached to the 318th. Infantry and went on line to defend the extreme right sector of their zone along the southern bank of the Sure River. Severe enemy artillery barrages continuously fell among the positions to add to the misery of the snow and extremely cold weather.

On New Year's Eve, December 31, 1944 the first casualties of our Battle of the Bulge were sustained

when Larkins and Johnson were captured while manning a forward outpost by a German patrol.

The battle to depress the bulge moved into high gear with the beginning of January 1945 and the enemy were slowly pushed back only after clinging tenaciously to every bit of high ground, every rock, every tree. Heavy snow blanketed the ground and life at the front was almost unbearable. Water froze in canteens, and many feet froze in boots. Trench foot was a rarity in the Troop but quite common elsewhere along the front. Million-dollar wounds were just exactly what the name signified, for anything was better than suffering up there, constantly evading the whistling rounds of artillery or the wailing, screaming mimi's. It was a fight against the weather as well as the enemy and many men were lost to the Troop. The continuous enemy artillery finally found it's mark on the Troop and struck the building where the 2nd. Platoon was billeted in Esch, Luxembourg. **Killing T-5 Carl Hunt** and **Cpl Robert Wilcox** and *wounding several others*.

The Division had succeeded in getting a bridgehead across the Sure River in Luxembourg and enlarged it with an attack on Goesdorf, Luxembourg. The Troop was immediately assigned the task of maintaining contact with advance headquarters of the Infantry Regiment and the 26th. Division on the left flank. In addition the 3rd. Platoon set up a road block guarding the vital bridge at Heiderscheidergrund, Luxembourg against enemy infiltration. The 2nd. Platoon set up an OP east of Buderscheid, Luxembourg situated sections in Dahl and Buderscheid, Luxembourg and ran periodic mounted patrols through the three points. The 1st. Platoon operated a road block protecting the approach to the 319th. Infantry's bridgehead along the Sure River in Luxembourg and then later relieved the 3rd. Platoon on their road block. Operations were seriously handicapped by the raging snows, limiting visibility and tying up roads.

The Troop was attached to the 319th. Infantry on 17 January 1945 as that regiment prepared to attack north and seize Nocher, Luxembourg, the apparent hinge of the enemy line south of the Wiltz River, Luxembourg. Bitter fighting ensued as the struggling infantry pushed forward. Black powder pocked the deep snow marking the hits of enemy artillery, and the enemy dead marked the path of the hard won advance. As the Regiment took over Nocher, Luxembourg, the Troop guarded the flanks and maintained contact between both sides. The 1st. Platoon set up northeast of Dahl, Luxembourg operating an OP and maintaining contact with periodic patrols to I Company in Nocher, Luxembourg and the 1st. Battalion on Hill 55 and Dahl, Luxembourg. The 3rd. Platoon set up on the left flank, out-posting between Dahl and Nochor, Luxembourg and physically contacting K Company at regular intervals. Two road patrols were conducted by the 2nd. Platoon, one from Goesdorf to Nocher, Luxembourg and another from Dahl to Buderscheid, Luxembourg where the adjacent Division's flank was contacted. The operation was again hampered by the heave snow and extreme cold. *Several casualties* were sustained in the 1st. Platoon when an anti-personnel mine was exploded during routine patrol duties.

With a general withdrawal of German forces from the area east of Wiltz, Luxembourg occurring, the Troop was immediately assigned a task of establishing contact with enemy elements and reconnoitering the area to Wilwerwiltz, Luxembourg. At this time Task Force Talbot was formed by the Division with the Troop being attached to the force as a reconnaissance element.

The Platoons moved out on the 23rd. Of January 1945 in advance of the Task Force and moved ahead without interruption to a point just west of the Clerf River, Luxembourg where they were halted in place by intense enemy fire. The enemy threw plenty that day and the weather added to the casualties. **Pfc. Carl Shelor** was **killed** while on a reconnaissance patrol and *several others were wounded* by the continuous enemy artillery. That day will never be forgotten as one of the worst the Troop ever encountered.

Infantry elements met stiff resistance along the river line but broke through on the 25th. of January 1945. The Platoons followed up with screening missions on the flanks and on the 26th of January, a six-man patrol of the 1st. Platoon entered Munshausen, Luxembourg shortly before dark surprising and capturing 31 prisoners.

With the end of January 1945, the Battle of the Bulge had finally been won and relief of the Division was effected by the 17th. Airborne Division. The Troop left shortly for Fishbach, Luxembourg and were placed in Division reserve as the allied line prepared for the next phase of the battle of Germany - the assault of the Siegfried line.

Fishbach, Luxembourg was the scene of an extended rest while the Troop remained in Division reserve. The day we pulled in there we found it to be a quaint little village perched on the side of a hill and buried in snow, as everything else in Luxembourg was at that time. A break in the weather gradually lowered the deep snow and raised the rivers which were to complicate operations somewhat. The welcomed rest came and went with the insertion of nightly patrols into the curriculum.

On the 3rd. Of February 1945, an eight-man patrol, led by Sgt. Araminas became the first members of the Division to cross the raging Saar River dividing Luxembourg and Germany. Crossing by rubber boat southeast of Hoesdorf, Luxembourg at 2300 hours, the patrol operated along the fringes of the Siegfried line, located enemy positions and returned at 0200 hours. Other patrols were carried out successfully, substantiating information received previously and on the 7th of February 1945 the assault of the Siegfried line began under cover of early morning darkness.

Resistance grew, and bitter fighting ensued for several days as the enemy continuously hurled artillery and mortar fire into the Infantry's lines and well directed small arms fire hampered engineer operations to such an extent that no more than a foot bridge could be constructed across the river for several days.

* (At this point in the history of the 80th Reconnaissance Troop is where Joe H. Hege, Jr., a soldier just out of Infantry Basic Training in December of 1944 at Camp Walter, Texas and other soldiers joined the Troop for combat duty in the European Theater of Operations in WW II).

While the Troop was forced to remain in reserve, a contingent of 22 reinforcements arrived on the 8th. Day of February 1945 and their training began with an emphasis on reconnaissance tactics. With the bridging of the Saar River between Luxembourg and Germany imminent, the Troop moved

up to the high ground on the west bank on 18 February 1945. Doughboy tactics were used as the Platoons went on line replacing the 51st. Armored Infantry Battalion while protecting the 80th. Division's north flank.

The long awaited march into Germany was fulfilled on the 21st of February as the Troop crossed the Saar River into Germany at Wallendorf, Germany and proceeded north along the mine-packed western edge of the Siegfried line to take up positions from Roth to Obersiegen, Germany on the north flank of the Division's zone as the Infantry painfully proceeded into the depths of the well fortified Siegfried line.

A quick thrust on the 24th of February 1945 broke the line's defenses and the 4th. Armored Division was again employed in their famous lightning advances and captured a bridge intact over the Enz River near Sinspelt, Germany. Hostile forces then started a general withdrawal of the area, evidently attempting to reach the east bank of the Kyll River, Germany and defend along that line.

With liaison missions, general reconnaissance, and active patrolling, the three Platoons moved in advance of the Division as the tide of friendly lines moved eastward through Germany across the Prum and Nims Rivers of Germany and reached the Kyll River, Germany with little opposition.

Captain Robert Hill, former Troop Commander had returned and again accepted duties as Commanding Officer. The 4th. Armored Division broke away again and headed for the Rhine River of Germany. The 90th Division moving north of the 80th Division and the 5th Division on the south flank squeezed the 80th Division out of the line in the mad dash for the Rhine River, Germany.

A few days relaxation and the division was ordered to roll again, this time to the rear, a change of Army Corps, from the 12th. Corps to the 20th. Corps, a short rehabilitation in Luxembourg and the Division again jumped off to action and drove their powerful wedge of Infantry and Tanks into the Siegfried Line, Germany for a second time.

The terrain in the new area east of Saarburg, Germany was definitely unfavorable. The thick woods and bad roads obstructed by numerous mine fields made Troop operations difficult. The 3rd Platoon moved out to maintain contact with adjacent units on the division's north flank while the 1st and 2nd Platoons moved to screen the flank as the attack was pressed to the east. The towns of Mandern and Waldweiler, Germany were cleared with little trouble. The 1st Platoon circled to the north, patrolling and reconnoitering as the 2nd and 3rd Platoons cleared the woods north of Waldweiler, Germany which put the 2nd Platoon into Steinberg, Germany for the night of the 16th of March, 1945, where they (the 2nd Platoon) received a strong counter attack and were forced to withdraw without casualties.

Early the next morning, March 17, 1945 a new mission was received and the Platoons swung from the north to the south flank as the Division began a speedy pursuit of the enemy. The 1st Platoon grabbed the first big prisoner haul of 150 Prisoners of War. All three Platoons set a fast pace for the Division on the Reichautobahn and moved into Kaiserlautern, Germany on the 20th. Of March, 1945.

With the collapse of this key communication center without opposition, the enemy's defensive plan was shattered west of the Rhine River in Germany. The pursuit was pressed to the east and huge quantities of supplies and equipment was being captured daily, together with hundreds of Prisoners of War who were surrendering at the sight of our Platoon's advancing columns. The 1st Platoon knocked off a column of enemy vehicles south of Kaiserlautern, Germany capturing 7 vehicles and destroying 3 vehicles and taking 28 Prisoners of War. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons reconnoitered south east to Lambrecht, Germany and picked up 22 Prisoners of War during the operation.

A steady stream of allied machines poured towards the Rhine River of Germany day and night. Roads were clogged with every piece of machinery, every weapon available and even huge landing barges roared down the highways in preparation for the coming crossing of the famous Rhine River.

Again the Division swung out of line and the Troop moved north to Ransweiler, Germany for a several day break while the 3rd. Army pushed across, constructing bridges under a heavy screen of smoke, established a bridgehead and the 80th. Division moved back into action again. The Troop became attached to the 319th. Infantry Regiment and moved across the 3rd Army's bridge in the vicinity of Oppenheim, Germany and then swung north to Bischofsheim, Germany on the south bank of the Main River in Germany. Preparations were made for the 319th. Infantry Regiment to cross the Main River and assault the enemy's flank as the 317th Infantry Regiment established another bridgehead across the Rhine River at Mainz, Germany. The operation was carried out successfully on the 28th day of March 1945.

The 1st. and 3rd Platoons crossed the Main River, Germany by ferry and immediately moved out in advance of Infantry forces, reconnoitering routes to the north east in preparation for a new phase of the pursuit. The two Platoons joined forces to assault the town of Medebach, Germany after observing much enemy activity. They first caught an enemy horse drawn column attempting to leave the town and destroyed or captured the complete column. Mortars on Jeeps and 37 MM cannons on Armored cars were put to use and the town was fired until a patrol could gain entrance, followed by the remainder of the two Platoons, which netted a total of 200 Prisoners of War.

Reports were received that elements of the American 1st. Army were spearheading down from the north and the Troop was given the mission to attempt contact. That same evening, B Troop, 89th. Reconnaissance Squadron, 9th. Armored Division linked with the two Platoons of the 80th. Recon Troop to complete a solid bridgehead east of the Rhine River, Germany from the British 1st. Army on the North to the American 7th. Army on the South.

A day later a northward spurt began with the objective being Kassel, Germany. The 1st Platoon had a field day on the 30th of March 1945, when they captured 2,500 Prisoners of War in the vicinity of Wehrheim, Germany. After marching them to and fro in an effort to get them off their hands they finally were successful in getting the Military Police to take them for processing.

As the division raced northward on the Reichsautobahn on the left flank of the 3rd. Army, the Troop was ordered to maintain contact with elements of the 1st. Army on the left as they closed the Ruhr.

Germany pocket.

On the 2nd Day of April 1945 the frontal assault of Kassel, Germany began with the enemy counter-attacking again and again to no avail. The 1st and 3rd Platoons to the west of Kassel, Germany encountered determined enemy resistance. Anti-tank and small arms fire had to be overcome to enable the 1st. Platoon to reach Istha, Germany and the 3rd. Platoon cleared Breitenbach, Germany. One Armored Car of the 3rd. Platoon ran into difficulty when it slipped from the road under anti-tank fire and several hours passed before it could be retrieved. During this operation 15 Prisoners of War were captured, two enemy trucks and two 88 MM guns were destroyed.

The strong point of Kassel, Germany was reduced by the Division on the 4th of April 1945 and the Troop immediately swung around to the right and south flank of the Division as the 80th pivoted on Kassel, Germany and began an advance eastward. The Platoons operated Observation Posts to observe enemy movement throughout the high ground east of the city of Kassel, Germany. The 2nd Platoon disrupted an enemy attempt to blow a bridge in that area with a heavy concentration of machine gun fire. Soon after, however all missions of the Troop were canceled, the Division was relieved in the area by the 69th. Infantry Division and the Troop immediately proceeded south east. The new mission consisted of determining the presence and location of enemy forces in the new zone in the vicinity of Gotha, Germany and contacting the 4th. Armored Division there. A hurried reconnaissance proved all areas clear and as the division cleared their new area, the Platoons of the 80th Reconnaissance immediately moved to the north flank to fill a gap between the 80th. Division and their Adjacent unit the 76th. Division.

Company D of the 702nd Tank Battalion was attached to the Troop for operations and once again the attack to the east was continued. On the 8th. Day of April, 1945, the 1st. Platoon made contact with the enemy, the first in this area, and frustrated an infiltration move. The 2nd Platoon repulsed a light enemy counter attack, capturing 6 prisoners and wounding approximately 20 prisoners. The 1st and 3rd Platoons coordinated their operations in clearing the woods in their area, killing several and capturing 15 prisoners. During the action, Sgt. Edward Kammrath, Platoon Sergeant with the 3rd Platoon was **killed** by enemy rifle fire (a sniper's Bullet through the head), while trying to force a surrender from several opposing German soldiers.

Shortly afterwards all Platoons were recalled and assembled back in Gotha, Germany awaiting the opening of the attack on Erfurt, Germany on the 10th day of April, 1945. Determined resistance was met from outlying towns protecting the approach to the city from three sides. By the end of the day the Division had made successful gains, surrounding the city which fell the following day.

The attacks progressed rapidly to the east, with Weimar, Germany falling without opposition. The cities of Jena and Eisenberg, Germany were gobbled up as the Troop raced ahead of the division taking one objective after another bypassed by the 4th. Armored Division as friendly forces consolidated the allied line just west of the important city of Chemnitz, Germany. The 3rd. Platoon had quite a time and somewhat of a break when they were ordered to the city of Schmoln, Germany for the purpose of guarding several key bridges in the area. They maintained law and order there

under the command of Lt. Manielly and Lt. Moe.

Once again the Division was pulled from the line and ordered to a new area. On the 18th of April, 1945 the move to Bamberg, Germany began with the Troop being assigned to maintain law and order in that city upon arrival.

Several days later the Division continued to the south to Hitler's beautiful city of Nurnberg, Germany now a smoking mass of ruins. The constant bombing, climaxed by the recent assault of the city had taken it's toll on virtually every structure. A week in the city gave almost everyone the opportunity of visiting the huge stadiums and structures of interest that once provided the scenes of huge Nazi gatherings. During this time the 2nd and 3rd Platoons took over the mission of guarding an immense ammunition dump several miles south of the city. Extensive maintenance of vehicles and equipment was conducted during the brief respite from battle and then on the 28th of April, 1945 the Troop preceded the division as it moved south to Regensburg, Germany

The Troop was attached to the 318th Infantry Regiment as the move south continued with the 2nd and 3rd Platoons leading all division forces. The two Platoons (2nd and 3rd) picked up 300 Prisoners of War including a Hungarian General and Staff en route to the Isar River between Landau and Deggendorf, Germany.

The 318th Infantry Regiment established a bridgehead across the Isar River in Germany against little opposition. The Troop followed closely on their heels and raced ahead against slight enemy resisting until reaching Braunau, Austria on the Inn River that separates Germany and Austria. The Troop then remained in position awaiting the remainder of the Division as it pulled up on line.

On the 4th of May, 1945, with the activation of Task Force Smith, under the command of Captain Smith and consisting of the Troop, Company D of the 702nd Tank Battalion and 3 assault guns, the force moved into Austria to split any possible enemy resistance in the wake of the remainder of the division forces. The Troop and task force continued eastward until it reached Schwanenstadt, Austria after having captured at least 2,000 Prisoners of War.

The Troop and task force then proceeded beyond Schwanenstazdt, Austria by capturing a bridge at the edge of the city that crossed the Ager River and came upon an enemy airfield where the enemy personnel surrendered to three members of the Troop. Positions were then consolidated along the line and the Platoons advanced farther east to the Enns River, Austria. The 1st and 2nd Platoons sent patrols across the river in an effort to contact the Russian forces moving westward.

Under Task Force Smith, the Troop assembled on the 6th of May, 1946 and moved into the Bavarian Mountains in the vicinity of Kirchdorf, Austria. Enemy forces originally ordered to defend in the mountain passes soon decided to surrender and the days that followed found them (enemy Forces) filling the roads on foot, on bicycles and vehicles as they proceeded into the hands of the Troop and Task Force.

Page 17

The Troop working out of Garsten, Austria was informed of the formal surrender announcement on the 7th of May, 1945. The official termination of hostilities then took place the following day, May 8, 1945. The Troop accepted all arms of the 6th. German Army which took four days. Confusion reigned in the mixtures of uniforms of many Axis countries soldiers' that then passed through the Troop while it remained deep in Austria following the official end of the war in Europe. (* See footnote Below)

At midnight on the 21st of May 1945 the Troop received orders to move to a new area and proceeded to Unterach on Attersee Lake, Austria. From Unterach, the Troop then moved to Weissenbach on Attersee Lake, Austria. Then on the 13th of June, 1945, the Troop was ordered to Markt Rettenbach, Germany where it remained for a three month's stay. The Troop was then ordered in September of 1945 to the Eibsee Hotel and Lake, south of Garmisch-Partenkirchen near the base of Zugspitze Mountain, Germany and just north of the Austrian border where they operated and conducted a recreation Hotel for R & R for the Division and 3rd Army enlisted personnel.

(* Footnote)

I, Joe H. Hege, Jr. a replacement member of the 2nd. Platoon, remember well that the Platoon arrived in Windischgarsden, Austria late in the afternoon of May 7, 1945 and were informed that the War in Europe would officially end the next day. The 2nd. Platoon remained here for several days and during this time I made pictures of a number of places within the town. My wife and I had occasion to visit Austria, Germany and Luxembourg earlier this year (May 1998) and visited Windischgarsden, Austria On May 12; Unterach and Weissenbach on the Attersee in Austria May 13; the Eibsee Hotel and Zugspitze on May 14; Markt Rettenbach on May 16; The American Cemetery, Diekirch and Ettelbruck, Luxembourg on May 17; Trier, Germany May 18; Heidelberg, Germany May 19; Rothenburg and Wurzburg, Germany May 20; Bamberg, Bayreuth and Nurnberg, Germany May 21; and Dachau and Munich, Germany May 22 and 23 of this year. I had a few pictures of Windsichgarsden, Austria that were made in May of 1945 following war's end and carried them and was quite surprised to return to the City Square and compare the buildings now with my old pictures. The buildings today are almost exactly as they appear in the 1945 pictures. I found places (Buildings) where the Troop stayed in 1945 on the Attersee Lake in Austria, at Markt Rettenbach, and at Lake Eibsee to look almost as they were in 1945. It appears that the Austrians and Germans take more care of their Buildings than what we do in the USA. During our travels in May of this year we drove a total of 2782 Kilometers and made more than 200 pictures. I would be most happy to share our pictures with members of the 80th. Recon at the 80th. Division Reunion now planned for August of 1999 in Greensboro, NC should members of the Recon troop attend.

In transcribing the Troop history, Troop members **Killed** are in **bold underlined type**, members Captured are in underlined Italics, and named members wounded are in *Italics*, and the Names of towns, cities and countries are underlined in Caps and lower case type.

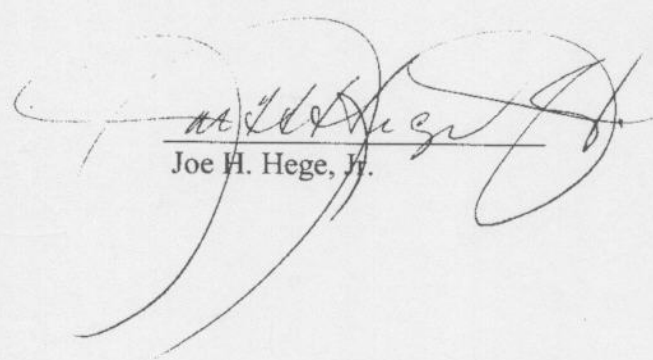
Joe H. Hege, Jr.
Former Member, 80th. Recon, WWII

Footnote # 2

The 80th. Reconnaissance Troop members who have been supplied copies of the Official History are truly indebted to the late Russell Berdell, formerly of Hatfield, Pennsylvania who is reported to have spent many years in working through his Congressman in search of these records. Russell is reported to have said that the Troop History was found in the musty files of the National Archives along some Navy files.

The Troop History has been supplied to all of the known 80th. Recon members who have been a part of the 80th. Division Veterans Association following it's discovery by Mr. Berdell through the efforts of Mrs. Eleanor Schoenly, widow of the late Paul T. Schoenly, also a former member of the 80th. Reconnaissance Troop. The Troop members are indebted to Mrs. Eleanor Schoenly as she continues to serve as Secretary to the 80th. Reconnaissance Troop Post 37 and prepares a newsletter to those currently known living former members of the Troop who are members of the 80th. Division Veterans Association.

The Troop History that preceded this footnote was Copied and edited by Joe H. Hege, Jr. from an earlier copy supplied by Mrs. Eleanor Schoenly. The copy was somewhat difficult to read as the quality of the typing needed improvement and had many strike overs. Slight grammatical changes were undertaken in the interest of improving the readability of the document or in adding language to better define some of the narrative described in the earlier copy. No significant change in the intent or meaning of the document was undertaken in the re-typing of the History.



Joe H. Hege, Jr.