



The Spur  
117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association



**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:** September 22, 2007 was a great day at the Westfield Armory. It was the Freedom Salute to welcome home New Jersey’s newest veterans, the members of Troop C, 5<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry of the New Jersey Army National Guard. Troop Commander Captain Kevin Welsh and First Sergeant Wayne May led the troopers onto the drill floor. They were greeted by the Adjutant General of New Jersey, Major General Glenn K Reith; Andy Sabezsky, Mayor of Westfield; LTC Dean Spenzos, Commander of the 2/102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry and most importantly by their friends and families. Also present were many members of our 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association, there to show their thanks and appreciation to our newest veterans just returned from their service in Iraq. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the colors of Troop C were furled, cased and retired. Troop C, the last remaining unit of the 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was inactivated. It was consolidated back into the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry

from which the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry had been created from in 1943. When the ceremony was over, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association member Bob Lutz, an Essex Trooper called to duty in 1941 and an original 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry member talked of his wartime experiences with Captain Kevin Welsh. Both men shared a common thread - the “Class of 41” and the “Class of 05” mobilized New Jersey National Guard Cavalrymen who proudly served their state and nation when called to do so.

The Regimental Colors of the 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry will be retired on December 15, 2007 at 1000 hours at a Squadron Formation at the Westfield NJ Armory. The 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry will be redesignated as the 2/102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry (RSTA) and become a part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (NJARNG) of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division (NYARNG). I would hope to see many of you who have served in the 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and precursor units during your career to attend the ceremony. Please plan to attend.

November is a time to remember the service and sacrifices of all our veterans. In keeping with this theme, we will salute all our members. When you look at our membership you will see individuals who have served in all our nation’s conflicts from the Greatest Generation who served in WWII, our veterans of the forgotten war Korea, Vietnam Vets whose service is only recently being recognized and honored, Cold War Veterans who stood guard in Europe and the hot spots throughout the world, Desert Storm Veterans who returned freedom to Kuwait and our newest veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War On Terror.

Another bit of good news – Congress has enacted a new regulation that all who have served in our military may render the hand salute, while in civilian clothes, to the Flag of the United States of America, in lieu of placing one’s hand over the heart. In addition, per AR 670-1, retired soldiers are encouraged to wear their medals of all categories, full sized or miniature on the same location as with military uniform, with appropriate attire.

See you all on Friday, November 2 2007 at 7:30 PM at our next meeting of our 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association at the Heritage Room of the Westfield Armory. Bring a fellow veteran with you!

Show ‘em the Way!

*Dennis*

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**From the Editor Phil Notestine** I will limit my contribution and remarks to the following articles to save space! Lot’s of good stuff in this issue! Don’t forget to read the latest **Spur** and **unit WWII histories** <http://www.117th-cav.org/>

**Association Meeting 7 September 2007, Westfield Armory** Association president Dennis Dougherty led the meeting. LTC Mike Hrycak gave a report of his duties and experiences advising and working with Iraqi and Coalition forces during his 12 month tour in Iraq. He offered some great insight as to the success and difficulties of setting the Iraqi Nation on the path to stability and solidarity with the West and other regional nations in the fight against extremism and civil destruction. Among others, Mike was thrilled to meet and work with Ukrainian troops, especially when he learned that the colonel he came to know so well was a Ukrainian Cossack! Mike's heritage is also Ukrainian Cossack, those fabled cavalymen of the steppes. The meeting was very well attended, by the following in order of sign – sheet: Bill Gruss, Bob Apgar, Ken Mahan, Bob Lutz, Bill Maloney, Dan Melso, Frank Mnich, Dan Kondrowski, Dave Ellis, Rich Luciano, Clement McCurdy Sr., Herbert Holmes, Jack H. Nafus, Joe Manto, Guy Haddix, Ken Wondrack, Donald B. Emery, Louis DiBelardino, John Crescenzi, Robert Richardson, Bill Merring, Frank Patrick, Dutch Gauthier, Rochus E. Lawrence, Mike Handley, Michael Hrycak, LT Marta Biskup USNR, Mauro Fierro, Arnold Lasher, Don Tracy, Dan Mahon, Chris Sands, John Suiter, Dennis Dougherty.

**Class of '41 Luncheon 10 October 15, 2007, Gibbs Hall, Ft. Monmouth NJ** Bob Lutz, who organizes these events opened the meeting by introducing COL (Ret) Dennis Dougherty, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association President who told the group about recent events including the reception of the returning Troop C, 5/117<sup>th</sup> CAV after 22 months of active Federal Service including 16 months in Iraq (see report in this newsletter). He also told of an AUSA meeting of the Northern New Jersey Chapter at Rutgers where the ROTC program will be featured. Bob Lutz also spoke of members ailing and of those who are off to "Fiddler's Green", God Bless them. Dennis Dougherty and Ken Mahan told of the forming of the 2/102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry (RSTA) which includes the merging of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Armor and the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Ron Fahey, past president of the Essex Troop Association spoke about their activities (many of those attending are both Essex Troop and 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association members). Phil Notestine spoke of *Spur* plans and the development of a military-collegiate ring for the Association. He has worked with a vendor to develop an appropriate design and showed one that he has purchased for himself, in advance of a final approval by the association. The ring was admired by all. He also passed around a picture (below) of an M-8 "Greyhound" Armored Car used by the Recon Troops of the WWII cavalry squadrons and other recon units, such as those of the WWII tank destroyer battalion recon companies. A fully operational M-8 is owned by Brian Bancale of Sussex Boro, NJ. A member of the Military Transport Association, Brian invites any and all to come up and see it. Attending the luncheon in order of sign-in: Bob Lutz\*, Don Tracy, Bill Maloney\*, Ron Fahey, Stan Krenkowitz, Ken Mahan, Bill Merring, Charlotte Merring, Frank Wiswall\*, Dennis Dougherty, Jack Ferguson\*, Jack Coogan, Harold "Smokie" Owen\*, Joyce Owen, Phil Notestine, Jim Kane\*, Bob Pcoroba\*, Frank Prettyman\*. Good food, good comradeship!



(\*attending members of the Class of '41)

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**The Ring can be ordered today** from the vendor *JOSTENS* by contacting Mr. Wren Bartee, Jostens Military Sales, 2812 Northaven, Corinth, TX 76210. Telephone 940-497-4536, email [bartee@att.net](mailto:bartee@att.net) Mr. Bartee served in the US Army cavalry in Germany, post WWII. He is a true Texan, growing up in West Texas wrangling, roping, branding and such. Since I have already paid for the bezel design, which is the wording around the stone "NJARNG 117<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY ASSOCIATION" your costs will be as follows: 10 karat yellow gold, w/blue Spinel stone \$415.00, (ladies \$310.00) or gold tone Questa, blue Spinel stone \$209.00 (ladies \$209.00). Options – encrusted crossed sabers \$15.00, full name engraving inside \$15.00. Shipping and handling, per ring \$5.95. Spinel is a gemstone related to the ruby. If the association decides at a future time to have different wording on the bezel, a new bezel-casting fee will be \$127.00 or more for the initial casting, a one-time charge. Ring bezel wording can be changed by returning the ring for the same cost of a new bezel design (each). I will bring the ring to the November meeting.

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**Westfield Armory 22 September 2007 – C Troop, 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry furls, folds and retires the troop guidon** during a welcoming ceremony for the returning troopers who were called to Federal Service for 22 months, of which 16 months were in Iraq. See related article in President’s Message and one by CPT Kevin Welsh, following. From a “report” to COL (Ret) Harold Samsel by recon sergeant (Ret) Bob Lutz, who served together in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry and the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) from 1940 ‘til November 1945. Paraphrased by your editor: *“I attended the Welcome Home ceremony of Troop C, 5/117<sup>th</sup> CAV, back from Iraq. About 25 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association members were there, but I think that I was the only WWII member. For many of us, but especially for me, it was a very emotional experience. The troop marched in and took their seats. All were called to attention as the National Anthem was played and a lovely young lady sang, so beautifully. Followed by an invocation a Chaplain. Speakers were (if I remember correctly) the State Adjutant General, CO of 5/117<sup>th</sup> CAV, C Troop CO CPT Kevin Welsh and the Mayor of Westfield. The names of the six C Troopers who were awarded the Bronze Star were called and they came to attention. Many troopers wore the new Combat Action Badge, similar to the infantry Combat Infantry Badge. The C Troop guidon was furlled, folded and presented to the 2/102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry CO, as the last of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry units were brought into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. The program was concluded with a prayer and the playing of some fine military music. Some of our favorites, as I remember. I will admit that I was in tears for much of it, especially when I was brought over to meet with some of the C Troopers, including CPT Kevin Welsh, recon SGT Joe Quigley and 1SG Tony Freda (who just returned from Afghanistan). They all expressed their admiration and appreciation for our WWII service, saying that our sacrifices exceeded theirs. However, it is true that these men are older than most of us were, and have established careers and families. So, for many, it was also very tough. These true patriots, in my opinion, are not respected and appreciated by our liberal media and liberal population of our country! I have enclosed the program and Phil Notestine has taken some pictures. I hope that they tell the good story. Regards from Marie and me!”*



[Editor – these are a few of the pictures that I took. I use these to show some of the very sincere emotion that we all shared, but none compared to those of WWII 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry scout sergeant Bob Lutz, a Class of '41 member, our association historian and my dear friend. I called over the Squadron CO to introduce him to Bob, informing him that Bob was a WWII vet of the 117<sup>th</sup> CAV. The colonel was visibly moved and called CPT Welsh over to meet Bob. No more words needed. I also introduced Bob to another scout sergeant, Joe Quigley of Boonton NJ. I had met his wife Crystal when she and other ladies of the FRG attended an association meeting. She told me that Joe was a scout. I was a scout section sergeant for a good bit and I knew that Bob was a scout sergeant for his many months of combat in WWII. The picture on the right is SGT Quigley and Bob Lutz, two good scout NCOs - 'nuff said]

Troopers, remember that it was the WWII 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Group, sent to North Africa and later made a separate unit – the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz). So, once again - the 2/102 Cavalry!

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## **REPORT FROM CPT WELSH AS REQUESTED BY SPUR**

### **Mission**

In October 2005, TRP C 5/117 Cavalry was mobilized for participation in OIF 4 as part of the 1BCT, 34ID (MN) RED BULLS. The 1/34<sup>th</sup> was assigned the mission of Theatre Security Brigade, and was trained to conduct 'Full Spectrum Operations' including Base Defense, Convoy Logistical Patrols, Combat Reconnaissance Patrols, and Civil Military Operations. Troop C participated in each of these mission types. The initial deployment was to last from March 2006 until March 2007, but a mission extension saw the Brigade deployed until June. Troop C returned to FT Dix for demobilization on 19 June 2007, having served 16 of 22 months in the Iraqi theatre of operations.

### **Effectiveness of training in USA**

TRP C arrived at its mobilization station, Camp Shelby, MS in October 2005. Possibly because of the importance of the Brigade's mission, mobilization training lasted 6 months, concluding in March 2006. During that time, the Troop received training on all relevant tasks it could hope to be assigned in theatre. The intent of mobilization training is to prepare the unit for its first 30 days in theatre; beyond that the unit learns from its left seat-right, right-seat (LS/RS) ride RIPTOA, and own mission time in country. Training at Camp Shelby was adequate in preparing the Troop for its upcoming deployment. While improvements to training could have been made, Camp Shelby was still suffering from second order effects of Hurricane Katrina which had hit just months before.

### **Integration with 167th Cavalry Squadron and 34th Brigade**

Troop C was assigned to the 1-167 Cavalry Squadron, out of Nebraska. The 1-167 currently had one of its own organic Troops deployed and was down in strength. Troop C provided the 1-167 with a fully capable cavalry troop and allowed the 1-167 to complete its strength requirements. The 1-167 Cavalry leadership welcomed the soldiers of Troop C into their ranks and treated us as one of their own, in *most* cases. Overall there was a seamless transition into their ranks and very little integration difficulties. After deployment, the HQ of the 1/34<sup>th</sup> was stationed at Talil, while the 1-167 was pushed forward to Balad. Because of the separation, there was little direct involvement with the Brigade outside of information succession down from the 1-167.

### **Evolution of activities to accomplish missions in Iraq**

Prior to mobilization, the NJ state military leaders did an outstanding job of coordinating preparation to deploy. By the time Troop C arrived at Camp Shelby, the soldiers had most of what they could have hoped for in from of support from the state. In addition, the Troop had reached its peak of 110% operational strength allowed during mobilization. This was allowed because it is assumed that during the mobilization process, a unit will loose about 10% of its strength due to medical or administration reasons. Once finally consolidated at Camp Shelby, the 1-167 re-tasked organized it's assets, and while the Troop lost some of its equipment from the state cross-equipping other Troops within the Squadron, it also gained equipment brought on from Nebraska which it did not originally have. This was a needed move to cross level the Squadron and make it fully mission capable. While at Shelby, no less than 2 RFI refits prepared the Troop with the most modern personal OCIE equipment for the soldiers. Operational and mission gear was transferred over from our RIPTOA unit once we finally settled in Balad. While training we received at Camp Shelby was adequate in preparing us for our first 30 days in theatre, the preparation did not stop after we deployed. Once the Main Body arrived at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, 7 days of acclimatization and further weapons and vehicle training continued. Finally, the Troop's LS/RS Ride with elements of the 101<sup>st</sup> in Balad completed the transitional training it would receive before learning more on its own.

### **Response and effectiveness of subordinate leaders and troopers**

There existed a great diversity of background within Troop C when we came together during pre-mobilization in New Jersey. Soldiers from across the state, of many ethnic backgrounds, of all social classes, and all walks of life formed the body of the Troop. In some cases, this could work against a unit. In the end, I believe it was one of the Troop's greatest sources of strength and resource. We had subject matter experts in civilian careers who could oddly enough relate their experiences to many of the wartime and civil military missions we were tasked, and we were able to work the issues with a great deal of baseline knowledge from many different angles. By allowing and encouraging input from all levels in the early mission planning stages, everyone felt as part of the overall team and the Troop bonded nicely. Final planning recommendations came from the key leaders before the final course of action was decided. It was always my intent to tap the resources of the Troop in any way I could to support mission success; no one, not even the Commander has all of the answers. Throughout most of the deployment, morale remained high, but there were definitely times when we struggled. Repetitive mission sets and long durations of static operations began to take its toll on the Soldiers. Leadership challenges became more prevalent and there were some discipline issues, but nothing outstanding and not unlike any other deployed unit. The most difficult however was the news of the extension. Morale within the entire Brigade at this time suffered. Within the Troop, routine tasks that we had done over and over had again become difficult; but the greatest stressors to the soldiers during this time came from home. After a month or so, the Troop recovered, but I do not believe that we ever fully returned to the very high state of morale that we had carried before.

### **Communications and support from USA**

Enough credit cannot be given to all of the folks and organizations back home who supported Troop C during their mobilization and deployment. There was no doubt about the amount of work that was being done on our behalf, particularly by the Family Readiness Groups (North and South), the Family Assistance Coordinators, and the host of others. The frequencies and amounts of care packages that we received were unbelievable, and we were often quite overwhelmed. There is no doubt that Troop C received more care packages than any other Troop within the Squadron. My sincere thanks to everyone who took even a moment from their day to think of the soldiers there in Balad.

### **Reassignment and integration of all into new slots**

A few months before redeployment I began to screen the Troop for their intentions upon their return to the states. After 22 months, there were many employment and career concerns, both within their civilian jobs and returning to their former units. The 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron had reorganized as the 2/102 RSTA while we were in country, and there were many questions as to availability of slots for the returning Soldiers. A spreadsheet was composed asking the soldiers what their interests would be upon return, highlighting their top 3 choices. Once complete, this was sent back to the 2/102 leaders for review. Acceptable slots were found for virtually every soldier, with most receiving their first reassignment choice. The reassignment will come full circle during our first drill back with the 2/102 on 22 SEPT when representatives from all Battalions within the Brigade will be present to welcome soldiers into their ranks.

**Casualties, Valor awards and Purple Hearts, Promotions** Being deployed did not prevent the soldiers from within the Troop from promotion. Virtually every soldier who became eligible for promotion was promoted, and I think roughly half the Troop became eligible at one time or another. Some of our junior enlisted soldiers received more than just one.

Casualties were sustained throughout the 1-167; some soldiers did not return home. Within Troop C, we were fortunate in that, while we did sustain a number of crippling casualties, all did return home. Our Soldiers did a great job looking out for each other and maintaining situational awareness; there was no doubt to the seriousness of each mission.

There were a number of Valor awards and Purple Hearts. 5 soldiers received Bronze Stars. About half the Troop earned their Combat Action Badges.

#### **Homecoming event**

There was a fantastic Homecoming event hosted by the State on (need to confirm date). Families, support groups, State military and civil officials, and many news agencies were all present to welcome home both Troop C and D FSC. Many awards and certificates of appreciation were issued, and guest speakers paid great respect to the soldiers and their sacrifices, and to the families. It was a wonderful event. A final SALUTE will be paid on 22 SEPT, whereupon the colors of Troop C and the 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron will be cased, recognizing the 2/102 RSTA as the new Cavalry Squadron within the State.

**Operations Statistics: NORTH ENTRY CONTROL POINT – Vehicular traffic 182,702 Personnel traffic 400,667 CONVOY LOGISTICAL PATROLS – 60 MISSIONS 10,352 MILES (Balad to Speicher, Balad to BIAP) COMBAT RECON PATROLS 94 missions 2,809 miles (terrain denial, screen, clear zone) CIVIL MILITARY OPERATIONS 24 missions, 294 miles, 4 villages (Water treatment, road repair, medical assistance, humanitarian relief, school resupply)**

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***Continuation of the WWII History of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) as compiled by Major David Russen, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Group and an interview with our own association member (and past president) 1SG (Ret) William (Wild Bill) Maloney (BS Valor & PH), E Troop (Assault Gun) platoon sergeant who was with the outfit from 1940 until his discharge in late 1945. Here we return to the saga began in the this Fall issue of The Spur. First, excerpts from letters recently received:***

*LTC (Ret) Bill Lake writes the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Group shipped out to the UK in September 1942, not '43 and that it was not he that led the advanced party on 7 June 1944. Then a CPT, Lake was the CO of E Troop, LT Hicks was the exec and it was Hicks that Maloney accompanied. Lake was to take over command of Troop A in September 1944, and was discharged in late 1945 as a CPT. He then joined the NJARNG and retired as CO, 215 Tank BN. Lake joined the 102<sup>nd</sup> in 1937, and is a Class of '41 member. He is very proud of their WWII record, and the wonderful men with whom he served. He now lives in Vero Beach, FL.*

*Charles B. Pierce, another Class of '41 member says that he didn't know that Bill Maloney was old! Pierce was born in St. Elizabeth Hospital, Elizabeth NJ on 16 August, 1921. Pierce claims that it was the Headquarters Platoon of the 102<sup>nd</sup> that landed on 7 June, 1944, Omaha Beach and spent the night in slit trenches while the Luftwaffe flew over all night. Pierce was the XO and the CO was CPT Bill Clifford, who was wounded by the end of July. Pierce became CO for 2 days until he was wounded by a mortar shell. He was in hospital in the UK for 3 months and then on limited duty for 10 months before assuming command of an MP Company in late 1945, as a captain. He rejoined the NJARNG, West Orange as XO for LTC Newt Brown, a battalion commander. Business caused Major Pierce to move to Florida, ending his military career. Pierce lives in Houston, TX.*

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From 22 June until the breakthrough in the ST. LO sector over a month later, the Squadron held the static line between the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions and maintained the initiative by patrolling aggressively to the south. The plan of operation called for two Troops on the forward outpost line and one in reserve. Troop E shelled VIDOVILLE and other probable assembly points south of the ST. LO ROAD. The assault guns went into four gun battery firing position for the first time from the 29th of June until the 8th of July except for three days when the platoons were again attached to the Reconnaissance Troops and during these three days approximately 2000 rounds were fired with telling effect at machine gun nests, strong points, various German supply and personnel concentrations and opposing artillery batteries. All units on the line were directed to remain constantly on the alert to thwart any counter-thrusts from the south or east.

On 11 July, while elements of the 2nd Division assaulted Hill "192" the Squadron held the line to their left flank and maintained contact with the 5th Division on the opposite side. Friendly artillery from both these divisions and V Corps pulverized the enemy on the hill in the greatest mass artillery concentration yet seen by this unit. From that day until July 26th the Recon. Troops, with active tank and assault gun support, held their sector of the forward line and patrolled to the ST LO ROAD and beyond.

On 26 July, after month of sparring for position and keeping the Germans dispersed all along the line, the combined weights of the 2nd and 29th Divisions were thrown at the ST LO sector. The German line bent, cracked and finally broke, and as the 2nd Division poured through the gap, the 102nd Cavalry Troops A, B and C with platoons of E and F attached, protected their right flank. Twenty minutes before "H" hour, F Company went on a quick sortie toward ST PIERRE LE SIMILLY to soften up the enemy's forward hedgerow defense network and inflict as many casualties as possible, while assault guns of Troop E fired heavy concentrations to cover the sneak thrust and withdrawal.

During the early weeks of July, while the 102nd Cavalry was fighting in the FORET de CERISY, four members of this Squadron began a long and energetic search for the solution to the grave problem presented to the forces of the First United States Army by the hedgerows in the terrain over which they were operating. By working in the closest collaboration, Major Arthur C. Person, Major, then Captain, James G. Depew, Captain Stephen M. Litton and Sergeant Curtis G. Culin developed a device to be mounted on light and medium tanks, which would enable the track laying vehicles to pass through hedgerows, dirt fences or other embankments which would otherwise be impossible. Constructed from German scrap angle iron, the hedgerow cutter, officially named "*Rhinoceros*", afforded the only successful solution to the problems of hedgerow warfare then being encountered in France; and its subsequent adoption by this Squadron's Company F and other armored units materially contributed to the Army's advances. The four men directly responsible were later awarded the "Legion of Merit" for their outstanding contribution to the military service. Tank drivers, Tec 4 Harmon S. McNorton, and Private John Hughey who drove the first tank with the Rhino in hazardous test run, and the welders, Tec 4 Wesley A. Hewitt, Tec 5 John Jessen and Tec 5 Ernest Hardcastle who installed the device, all made inestimable contribution to its eventual success and were awarded the *Bronze Star* for meritorious service.

The first real tests, made under combat conditions, were during and after the ST. LO "Breakthrough". The veil of secrecy, which had been carefully kept, was lifted on this date and by the time the Americans broke through the German wall, all tank units, then on the line, had installed the new "Rhinos". Their devastating success was proven during the next two weeks beyond doubt.



The Squadron crossed the ST. LO Road on the 26th and pushed through ST. PIERRE LE SEMILLY toward CATIGNY. Troop A lost four of its five officers in the two days of bitter dismounted hedgerow fighting. Tanks directly supported the dismounted attack and assault guns engaged direct fire targets blocking the route of advance. PLANTRO and CATIGNY, on the 28th, proved tough obstacles, but as the Reconnaissance Troops gradually pushed the enemy east, the toll of German dead mounted by the minute. The Squadron's casualty lists swelled by 47, over half from Troop B, as the men paid dearly for each hard fought yard. The Squadron Commander, Major Arthur C. Person, and the Executive Officer, Major George S. Saunders, were both wounded in the frontal attack. Major Richard A. Jameson assumed immediate command.

### **M-5 Light Tank with "Rhino" blades**

For the next two days the Troops mopped up remaining enemy pockets in the area through which they had just attacked, and complete reorganization and re-equipment was carried on to bring the Squadron back up to strength.

July 31st, the unit assembled and moved south again to the vicinity of TORIGNY SUR VIRE to await new attack orders. The wait was short lived as the Squadron was ordered to quit the town on the morning of the 2nd of August to screen the advance of the 2nd Division attacking toward VIRE. Two major obstacles lay between the Division and its objective - the Vire River and Hill "204". Major Jameson's mission was to seize and hold a bridge across the stream, secure the high ground on the opposite bank, then continue on to VIRE. Strongly entrenched German infantrymen blocked the general American advance to VIRE and it was the Squadron's task to help obliterate the obstacle.

**Standing - Wilbert, Bauer, Gentry; Kneeling - Maloney, Mibbleson & Fogerty. M-8 SP 75 with "Rhino" blades. Note the rag hanging from 75 MM howitzer, tarp over open turret. "Wild Bill" with pistol →**

Troop B, with supporting F company tanks and Troop E assault guns moved across the river first to assault the hill under direct enemy fire of all arms, while



Troop C took up defensive positions on the near side of the stream. Troop B was to attack up the left side of the hill and Troop A was to pass through their positions to the right flank. The forward momentum of the lead elements was stopped about three quarters of the way up the slope and until Troop A passed through them to outflank the Germans, the attack seemed to be stalled below the crest. Before the enemy retreated in disorder down the reverse slope of the hill, three tanks and various other vehicles were destroyed beyond repair and several tanks, armored cars, half tracks and 1/4 ton trucks were immobilized by the terrain, mines or enemy fire. 33 casualties were sustained in the battle and the vehicular losses necessitated an almost complete re-equipment for some of the platoons.

On August 3rd, after eight days of almost fanatical resistance by the enemy, the Squadron pulled back to SOURDEVAL to reorganize and rest. Major Francis J. Skidmore assumed command of the Squadron on this date. In just over one week upwards of one seventh of the unit's strength was temporarily or permanently lost as 24 men were killed or died of wounds and 90 more were wounded or missing. Troops A and B bore the brunt of the casualties as they lost 58 and 37 men respectively. In cold, impersonal warfare, results are not judged so much by casualties sustained as by enemy men and equipment knocked out, miles gained and direct or indirect aid given to the units on the flanks and to the rear. With these factors in mind, the Squadron proved itself in this period beyond doubt.

From the 3rd of August to the 10th, the troops were held in reserve and sent on occasional patrols to reconnoiter enemy positions to the south and east.

10 August - The enemy's orderly withdrawal of two weeks previous had by this time developed into a rout. Troops B and C, plus tanks and assault guns attached, were given the mission of reconnoitering, in force, ahead of the 9th Infantry Regiment and later in the day protected the flanks of that unit. For the next six days, the Squadron was alternately attached to the 9th, 23rd and 38th Infantry Regiments acting chiefly as flank security against German units trapped in the Falaise Pocket. In fast open warfare on the southwest corner of the "horseshoe", the Troops probed into the enemy's flanks and rear and inflicted innumerable casualties on the trapped Wehrmacht troops. Hostile artillery and aircraft were extremely active but the number of casualties inflicted in Squadron personnel was notably light.

From the 16th of August to the 22nd, enemy activity was slight as this unit followed the swiftly advancing American spearheads in an administrative march toward SEES, France. There, Troop B received the special mission of screening the advance of the French 2nd Armored Division, which was to march into the city of PARIS. The remainder of the Squadron received orders to screen the advance of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division to the same city and by the 24th of August, the Troops reached the outskirts of the French Capital with but moderate enemy resistance being encountered in the swift eastward dash.

Troop C had the mission of reconnoitering the 4th Division objective, CORBIEL, a few miles south of PARIS proper. German resistance seemed comparatively light in the vicinity, so the Cavalry Troop was ordered to take the city itself. In a perfect example of fire and movement, the Troop swept around the left flank of the comparatively weak enemy force and took the city with but one casualty. CORBIEL was the first town of any size liberated by any element of this Squadron and the reception accorded the Troop C men was tremendous. As night came on, the troop out-posted the town and awaited further orders to cross the Seine river and proceed north into PARIS.

August 25th was both a great and disastrous day for the Squadron in one of those all too frequent paradoxes of war. Troop B, after sending several patrols into PARIS was ordered to assemble at the first light and move into the city in strength. At 0930B, the lead vehicles entered the outskirts, meeting but sporadic mortar and sniper fire as they proceeded to contact a task force of the French 2nd Armored Division at VERSAILLES. By 1530B, the entire Troop assembled at the ARC DE TRIOMPHE and bivouacked within sight of the famous French memorial to the "UNKNOWN SOLDIER" of World War I.

Troop C had in the meantime crossed the SEINE on a hastily constructed 7th Corps pontoon bridge east of CORBIEL to become the first unit of the Squadron to gain the east bank of the river in that sector. As the Troop proceeded north toward PARIS, the 2nd platoon led the column of march. They were moving across flat, open terrain when the platoon encountered a carefully camouflaged enemy ambush consisting of approximately 200, well concealed infantrymen, an undisclosed number of machine guns and bazookas, and an 88mm artillery battery. The Germans virtually surrounded the 2nd platoon and when they opened fire, the Troop C men were completely at their mercy. Four men were killed, twelve badly wounded and three armored cars and four 1/4 ton trucks were destroyed before the rest of the Troop could be deployed to support the greatly outnumbered force. With the fire of all the Troop weapons and two Troop E assault guns concentrated on the numerically superior German unit, the enemy was forced to retreat in disorder, leaving 125 men killed or wounded and 28 prisoners of war.

It was during the bitter fighting that Captain William T. Haley earned the Distinguished Service cross for his heroism in locating, treating and evacuating the wounded men under fire, and Captain Milton J. Hull won the *British Military Cross* for his superb leadership of Troop C.

Troop A and other elements of the Squadron had crossed the SEINE RIVER shortly after C and the forward units assembled and bivouacked near NANDY. The following morning this entire force re-crossed the SEINE and moved north of LA VILLE DU BOIS, a suburb of PARIS, to await the return of Troop B.

Three days later the Squadron was ordered into PARIS and formed the honor guard for a parade commemorating the liberation of the French Capital. General DeGaulle and other high- ranking officers and dignitaries of France and the United States led the triumphant march from the ARC DE TRIOMPHE to the CHAMPS ELYSEE. Troop C provided the personal escort for the Army Group Commander and General DeGaulle and their staffs as the balance of the Squadron guarded and out-posted the PLACE DE CONCORDE.

### **PARIS! A Troop, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) 29 August 1944 >**

The following day, August 30th, the unit displaced forward from their assembly area to LE BOURGET Airport, to await further orders to proceed eastward.

The Squadron left LE BOURGET on the 31st and for the next five days moved generally northeast, trying to contact the enemy's rapidly withdrawing rear guards. Troop B was attached to V Corps Forward Headquarters and provided security until relieved by Troop A twelve days later. On 4 September, the mission was to reconnoiter and secure any bridges over the MEUSE RIVER in the unit's zone.

Each Reconnaissance Troop had two assault guns from Troop E and five tanks from Company F in support as the Squadron approached the last natural barrier before BELGIUM. A railroad bridge spanning the river was the only means of crossing found in the Squadron zone and while elements of all Troops set up security on the west side of the stream, dismounted patrols from A and C reconnoitered to the high ground on the far side. At 2000B one Troop C platoon made a successful crossing on the railroad ties and set up their vehicles to defend the eastern end. Most of the balance of the unit crossed just before darkness set in.



The following morning the Squadron assembled on the east bank of the MEUSE and at the first light, Troops A and C, with two assault guns each, were given the task of forming a reconnaissance screen in front of the 8th Infantry Regiment ordered to advance eastward. The French-Belgium border was crossed at approximately 2200hrs 5 September 1944. Elements of the very well organized Belgian Maquis were contacted and they turned over 29 American and Allied airmen to Squadron Headquarters. These men, forced down over Belgian soil, had been sheltered from the enemy, in some cases for months. Belgian guides were directed to accompany the Troops and escort the unit through their country to the German border. From the 5th of Sept. to the 10th, the screening mission remained the same, and although several delaying forces were engaged and destroyed, only slight resistance was encountered.

*Maloney tells of his M-8 SP crew catching a dreaded Tiger tank as it began to climb a slope. Maloney ordered rapid fire with WP (incendiary), blasting the rear area - engine & fuel tanks, lighting her up, blazing fiercely – reported here:*

On September 6th and 7th, Troop E's assault guns attached to A and C Troops, did a magnificent job as they destroyed a Tiger Tank, 2 self-propelled guns, 4 half track personnel carriers, a 150mm rifle and several trucks and smaller vehicles. It was estimated that the number of enemy killed or wounded in the two attacks amounted to well over 150. On these same two days, Troop A lost four men killed in separate engagements at VIVY and PALISEUL. At VIVY, the enemy sent two companies of infantry to attack the Troop zone. The cavalrymen opened up on the attacking column with every weapon at their disposal and before the Germans could extricate themselves from the deadly cross fires, Troop assault guns and automatic weapons of Troop A had destroyed all vehicles and killed upwards of 35 men. 17 prisoners were taken during the brief engagement.

**TO BE CONTINUED.....**





## Membership Update – SMG (ret) Ken Mahan



Trooper! Look at your address label! If the date is not Sept. 08 or later, you are **behind** in your dues. Your subscription to THE SPUR is going to run out because of non-payment of dues. A sample of label:

**SEPT 08**

**KENNETH L. MAHAN  
12 W. WALNUT ST.  
METUCHEN NJ 08840-2616**

### To Members behind in their dues, you will have date circled in RED!

This is the only notice you will receive. Send information and/or dues to me at the Metuchen address shown above. Annual dues are due in September; regular dues are \$15 annually. Make checks payable to **117<sup>th</sup> CAV Assn.**

**Note:** If you have an e-mail address, please send it to me at [KMAHAN117@AOL.COM](mailto:KMAHAN117@AOL.COM) . We are in the process of compiling an e-mail list of members and we want to include you.

**Association web site:** [www.117<sup>th</sup>-cav.org/](http://www.117th-cav.org/)

### New Members

SPC William J. Camp Jr. (Loriann)    SPC Enrique Peralta    SPC Jeffery R. Heine (Christine)    SGT Joseph Quigley (Crystal)    SPC Michael Barreca  
CPT Michael Tarricone    1LT Joseph Mucci    CPT Kevin Welch    SGT David Mull

### *The above members returned from Iraq in June*

Arthur Reinbold    Robert Foster    1SG Tony Freda (Jane)    Mayor Andrew Skibitsky (Mayor of Westfield)  
*(returned from 12 months duty in Afghanistan)*

2LT Ryan M. Harty

*2LT Ryan M. Harty's grandfather was 1SG Frank J. Harty, Class of '41, with 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry (Essex Troop) Was transferred to 38<sup>TH</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) during WWII, Part of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Group (WWII).*

### Change of Address

1SG Wayne May

**On active duty, Medical holding** LTC Michael Hrycak, SGT David Mormack

**Congratulations to BG Stephen J. Hines** Deputy Commanding General, 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. The second Officer from the 5/117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron to make rank of Brigadier General. The First was BG Kenneth F. Wondrack.

**Dues and Booster** Some people don't know the difference? **Dues** are for all members, Active and Associate. **Boosters** are for use to cover cost for Widows and other Associations that get **THE SPUR** - **Not to cover your dues.**

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 FA-08 DORIS & JIM BRODERICK  
 SP-08 DONALD F. CARLSON, (in memory of) MSG GARY D. HADDICAN  
 WI-08 SANTI L. CARNEVALI  
 WI-08 DOROTHY L. CASPAR (in memory of) MY HUSBAND, RICHARD J. CASPAR  
 WI-08 HARRY J. CHRISTOPHER, JR (in memory of) BY SHIRLEY M. CHRISTOPHER (WIFE OF 58 YRS)  
 SP-08 STEVE S. CUP Scout, A Troop 102<sup>ND</sup> CAV (WWII)  
 WI-09 1SG (Ret) DON CHAMBERLAIN in mem. of 1SG PHIL CURRAN  
 WI-09 CLEMENT & JEAN CURRY  
 WI-10 MARIE DARBY in memory of husband CPT JOHN DARBY  
 SP-10 DENNIS DOUGHERTY, COL (ret)  
 WI-10 PHILIP DUNNE, 1SG (ret), TRP A  
 WI-09 DAVE ELLIS, 1SG (ret), TRP D  
 SP-08 WALTER H. ELEY  
 WI-08 MAURO FIERRO  
 SU-08 MANUEL G. FERRI  
 WI-07 LTC (ret) ALAN R. FISHER  
 WI-22 MIRIAM FISHER (W OF WILLIAM E) (IN MEMORY)  
 SP-12 WILLIAM FISHER, JR  
 SP-08 BOB FOLEY  
 WI-08 HENRY & MARION FORSTENHAUSLER  
 WI-21 JOHN FRANTZ, LT A TRP  
 FA-08 WARREN J. GARONI  
 SP-11 BILL HETRICK CHIEF ARMORER (RET))  
 WI-07 JOHN W. HOLTER (IN MEMORIAM)  
 WI-07 JOHN S. HUFF (in memory of) C Troop 117<sup>th</sup> Cav. 1943-44  
 FA-11 CHARLES JOHNSON  
 SP-08 GEORGE F. (FRED) KIMBLE  
 SU-09 JOANN & KEN KLEIN, COL (ret)  
 WI-08 ARTHUR K. KLING (IN MEMORIAM)  
 SU-11 DONALD KONDROSKI  
 WI-07 WALTER & NANCY LAWRENCE  
 WI-10 EDWARD J. LEONARD  
 FA-09 GRACE LILLEY (in memory of husband) EDWARD  
 WI-13 JEAN & SGM (ret) KEN MAHAN  
 WI-08 LTC DANIEL MAHON  
 FA-09 (in memory of) TIM MALONEY  
 SP-08 JOE MANTO  
 WI-09 OSCAR MERBER  
 WI-08 CHARLOTTE MERRING

FA-08 JOSEPH MINNITI  
 FA-10 JUANITA MITCHELL (W OF FRANK)  
 SP-08 JAMES A. MOUSHEGIAN (IN HONOR OF MY FATHER)  
 SP-09 RONNIE NIER  
 WI-12 PHILIP NOTESTINE (in memory of) MAJ JOHN B. COULSTON, TROOPS C & E, 102 CAV '39-'42, 602<sup>nd</sup> Tank Destroyer BN '43-'45  
 WI-07 FRANCES NUGENT (in memory of) MY HUSBAND, WILLIAM B. NUGENT)  
 SP-12 JOYCE & HAROLD "SMOKIE" OWEN  
 FA-08 FOTINOS PANAGAKOS  
 SP-08 HENRY PATTERSON USNR WWII (in memory of) father HENRY A. PATTERSON US ARMY 52<sup>nd</sup> ENGINEERS WWI  
 SP-11 COL (ret) BOB PEARCE & CAROL, (in memory of) RICK APBLET  
 SP-10 TOM PETTY  
 WI-16 COL (ret) TOM PIDDINGTON (in memory of)  
 SU-12 SALLIE LEE PIERCE (WIDOW OF DANIEL LEE, CMH)  
 SP-08 LTC (ret) TONY PLONNER  
 WI-08 DOT & KEN QUAAS, LTC (ret)  
 FA-08 SOLEDAD C. REYNOLDS (friend of) ELDRED BROWN)  
 SP-09 PAUL RIOS  
 WI- 82 MRS. ROBERT D. ROBBINS (in memory of) ROBBIE)  
 FA-14 FRED RODMAN (in memory of brother) WALTER L. RODMAN, F Co. 102<sup>nd</sup> Cav. WWII)  
 SU-11 HAROLD J. SAMSEL, COL (ret)  
 SP-17 JAMES SCANLON  
 WI-08 EILEEN SCHNARR (in memory of) HUSBAND, "WILLY")  
 WI -08 ROBERT J. SMITH  
 WI-09 ELMER K. SQUIER TRP B 117th CAV  
 SP-12 JOHN SUITER  
 WI-07 1SG GEORGE THOMAS  
 WI-10 DON & CHICKIE TRACY, CWO 4 (ret)  
 FA-11 CHARLES A. VIVIANO (50th RECON BN)  
 SP-12 CSM (ret) HENRY WETZEL & GRACE, (in memory of) GEORGE "RED" EMERY  
 SU-08 FRANK WISWALL, LTC USAF (ret) B TRP 102 CAV JAN '41-JUL '42  
 SP-10 MRS. EDWARD J. WITOS, JR (in loving memory of) MY HUSBAND, ED SR  
 FA-19 FRANK A. WOODS SSG TRP A 3RD PLATOON  
 WI-07 JOHN I. ZARING C TRP 117th CAV (in memory of)

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# TAPS

**JOHN DARBY** – STERLING NJ. PASSED AWAY 08 OCTOBER 2006, AFTER FIGHTING CANCER. SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE MARIE OF 46 YEARS, DAUGHTERS WENDY AND DAWN AND GRANDDAUGHTER KATHERINE. WAS A GUARDSMAN FOR OVER 34 YEARS, SPENDING SOME TIME IN THE 117<sup>TH</sup> CAV AS A CAPTAIN. HE HAD HIS OWN ELECTRICAL BUSINESS BEFORE JOINING MOTOROLA. HE ENJOYED A LONG CAREER AND RECEIVED HONORS.

**ALEXANDER DONALD DICKSON** – CALIFORNIA. PASSED AWAY 20 NOVEMBER 2006. A *CLASS OF '41* MEMBER. SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE ANN OF 28 YEARS AND 3 CHILDREN - CHARLES, AMY GUTH AND HOLLY BOGGIE. DICKSON WAS AN ENGINEER WITH NASA AND THEN WITH TOYOTA. A MEMBER OF TROOP B, 102<sup>ND</sup> CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MEZC). LANDED IN NORMANDY AND FOUGHT THROUGH TO THE END OF THE WAR, FINALLY IN PILSEN, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HE AND ANN, ALSO AN ENGINEER, TRAVELED TO EUROPE AND VISITED SEVERAL LOCATIONS OF HIS UNIT'S ACTION.

**ROBERT R. DUNN** - PORT ST. LUCIE, FL. PASSED AWAY 29 AUGUST, 2007, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE OF 62 YEARS, MURIEL AND SON ROBERT, HIS WIFE BARBARA AND GRANDDAUGHTER CASEY. HE HAD A LONG CAREER WITH ALCOA BUILDING PRODUCTS AS A REGIONAL MANAGER. A MEMBER OF THE *CLASS OF '41*, HE WAS A SERGEANT WITH TROOP B, 117<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MEZC) AND FOUGHT UNTIL VE DAY.

**BARBARA KONDROSKI** – OLD BRIDGE, NJ PASSED AWAY 12 OCTOBER, 2007. WIFE OF SFC (RET) DONALD KONDROSKI OF THE 5/117 CAVALRY AND 117<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY ASSOCIATION.

**WILLIAM O. REPKE** - MONROE TWSP, NJ. PASSED AWAY ON 3 OCTOBER, 2007. SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE OF 60 YEARS, DOROTHY AND 3 DAUGHTERS – GAIL R. FOUST, LISA R. CURTIN AND DONNA L. REPKE. ALSO GAIL AND LISA'S HUSBANDS, 5 GRANDCHILDREN AND MANY NIECES AND NEPHEWS. HE WAS A SALES MANAGER WITH BALCHER BROS. NYC. A *CLASS OF '41* MEMBER. AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE 117<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MEZC), RISING TO THE RANK OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SERGEANT BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFERRED AND COMMISSIONED A 2LT IN THE 36<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION, FIGHTING WITH THEM UNTIL THE WAR'S END, A 1LT. HE WAS AWARDED BOTH THE SILVER AND BRONZE STARS FOR VALOR. ASSOCIATION MEMBERS BOB LUTZ (WHO SERVED WITH REPKE) AND KEN MAHAN ATTENDED THE SERVICES.

**EDWARD H. SMITH SR.** – WASHINGTON TWSP, WARREN CTY NJ. PASSED AWAY 7 OCTOBER, 2007. HE WAS PRECEDED IN DEATH BY HIS WIFE DELILAH. A WWII NAVY VET, HE RETIRED FROM THE 5<sup>TH</sup> TANK BN, 102<sup>ND</sup> ARMORED GROUP, NJARNG, AT THE DOVER ARMORY AFTER 40 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE. HE WAS A MESS SERGEANT. SMITH WORKED FOR THE MORRIS COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT AND SEVERAL OTHER LOCAL FIRMS. HE WAS AN EXEMPT FIREFIGHTER WITH THE BUDD LAKE FD, AND HAD SERVED AS A SPECIAL OFFICER WITH THE MT. OLIVE PD. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE IRON HORSE ASSN, AMERICAN LEGION POST 278, THE DAV DOVER CHAPTER 63. SURVIVED BY 2 SONS, EDWARD JR. AND HIS WIFE CATHY, MICHAEL AND HIS WIFE KAREN, A DAUGHTER HOPE AND HER HUSBAND FRANK LAPORTA. ALSO 3 BROTHERS, WILLIAM, STANLEY AND ERNEST. ALSO 7 GRANDCHILDREN AND 1 GREAT GRANDSON.



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**DUES DUE** ↓

**1<sup>st</sup> New Jersey Cavalry**



**MISSION STATEMENT:** It is the continuing objective of *The SPUR* to foster and preserve the spirit of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association, and to promote and enhance the friendships and camaraderie of our members, who are mutually bound by service and devotion to our country.

**NEXT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS:** (always Friday) 2 NOVEMBER 2007;  
1 FEBRUARY 2008; 4 APRIL 2008; 6 JUNE 2008; 5 SEPTEMBER 2008; 7 NOVEMBER 2008