



117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association

[www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org)

102d CAV (Mecz) 38<sup>th</sup> CAV (Mecz) 117<sup>th</sup> CAV (Mecz) 50<sup>th</sup> CAV RCN SQDN 50<sup>th</sup> RCN 5<sup>th</sup> RCN 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV 1-102d CAVALRY  
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**President's Message Spring 2016** 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.

It is quite an honor to be selected to serve our Association - I thank all our members for their support. It has been twenty years following the leadership of General Wondrack and Colonel Dougherty, so I will use our mission statement as my guide.

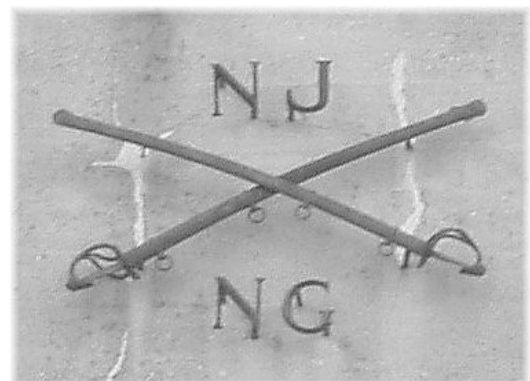
The Spirit of our Association includes sharing what the current, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry is planning and doing. We had a chance to see where the Squadron has been for the past two years with LTC Jeff Brownlee, and LTC Tim Coakley introduced himself, as well as where the Squadron is going during its next training cycle in readiness for deployment, during our February 22, 2016 meeting. Our members were heartened during our November 13, 2015 meeting, when the 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Squadron Officer/NCO Association formally joined with our Association, after sharing the Spurs and Sabers Dinner Dance with us as our annual reunion for the past several years (and again October 14, 2015, at the Grand Summit Hotel).

It was a surprise during our September 11, 2015, meeting that fourteen years had passed since the terrorist attacks against our country. We all thought back and reminisced where we were and realized we were now a nation at war. I would like to have all our members share their respective histories with us, and ask that at each meeting we have three members present their military backgrounds, so that all of us can share that spirit. In the meantime, I invite more articles to be published in *The SPUR*, as I am preparing an article about Russia's preparation of new weapons and doctrine for the "New Generation War", as seen in Georgia in 2008, and now in Ukraine since March 2014.

Therefore, we will share where the Squadron has been, where it is now, and where it is going, together, while sharing our friendship and camaraderie. I look forward to seeing all of you at Squadron and Association events. Do not miss them, because we will miss you.

Show 'em The Way!

LTC Michael P. Hrycak ,USA, Retired  
President, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association  
(michaelhrycak@yahoo.com)





**Message from the incoming SCO** We are the Cavalry. It has been in my blood since taking command of Alpha Troop sixteen years ago. It is an honor to be back with the Squadron. The Squadron has a proven record of accomplishment and is prepared for another year of excellence. We continue a challenging training year with three key tasks. First, to master the art of leadership with the HHT staff at the Warfighter Exercise in April, second to validate the expertise and professionalism of the NCO corps as they demonstrate the readiness of their squads and sections to accomplish the recon mission, and third for all Troopers to remain ready at all times to deploy for our state and federal missions. No matter the branch or MOS, background or history, race, creed, color, or gender, when you are in the Squadron, you are a Cavalry Trooper. Whether it is the scout on an OP, the mortar-man providing fires support, our D Co. cooks keeping us fed, or the mechanics keeping the trucks on the road, we are all Cavalrymen. We are the leading edge of the Brigade Combat Team and we carry on the traditions of the New Jersey Cavalry. I would like to give a special thanks to Jeff Brownlee for

handing off the best unit in the Brigade Combat Team in great shape. The Cav will continue to lead the way. I would also like to thank the members of the association for their past and future support - you are the Squadron's ties to our heritage.

*Show 'em the Way!*

Timothy Coakley  
LTC, AR, NJARNG  
Commander, 1st Squadron 102d Cavalry



Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel G-1, NJARNG

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**Message from the outgoing SCO** Whenever you take Command regardless of the level of command, your goal is to improve on the successes of the previous Commander and to move the unit to the next level. As I reflect on the last two years, I believe we have done that. The Squadron continually improved on our Personnel Readiness, Training Readiness, and our Logistics Readiness. The past two years we have excelled in NCO Professional Development Schools, MOSQ, and promotions. The Squadron conducted multiple training missions over the past couple of years, to include National Training Center (NTC) rotations. We supported the State of New Jersey multiple times for Domestic Operations, Pope Mission, and weather events. Units focused on Equipment Readiness and increased the Operational Rate of the Squadrons equipment over the past couple of years. Based on Unit Climate Surveys and other surveys the Unit Cohesion and Esprit de Corp is higher in the Squadron than many other units in the New Jersey Army National Guard.

The Squadron is poised for a successful training year 2016. The focus will be on Squad Level Proficiency and the Staff will be conducting a Warfighter Exercise to Support the overall 50<sup>th</sup> IBCT Training Objectives. There will be challenges this training year but I am confident in the Squadrons ability to navigate the hurdles.

As I leave Command, I know that I am leaving the Squadron in good hands with LTC Tim Coakley. He is a true professional that will continue to move the Squadron forward. Tim, good luck and best wishes with the Command.

I am truly proud and honored to have served as the Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron 102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. It is a unit made up of outstanding Officers, NCOs, and enlisted troopers. Thank you all for your outstanding leadership and hard work.

*Show 'em the Way*

Saber Six Out.  
LTC Jeffrey K. Brownlee, SCO  
1-102nd Cavalry  
50th IBCT NJARNG





**Editor's Message** - must be very brief, no room for me to be wordy! I believe that not being able to attend meeting in NJ is limiting my effectiveness as your Editor of *The SPUR*. I have had almost 10 years to accomplish my personal goal as Editor – to tell the stories of our WWII veterans and the three fine cavalry squadrons they so honorably served and led – the 38<sup>th</sup>, 102<sup>d</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons (*Mecz*). The mission has been accomplished in the 45 or so issues of *The SPUR*. As important, our *WWII Unit Histories* and other supporting documents have been edited and posted in our “Official” web site <[www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org)> .

Few, if any cavalry squadrons were in theater and fought as many days as these three. You can read this for yourself in the posting in the WWII Units Histories page “**WWII American Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and Armored Reconnaissance Battalion Profiles**”

It is time for me to retire! I ask for a younger member to accept the post. WWII stories can certainly continue. Readers want to know more about post WWII and current operations and Troopers! Who will carry forth the mission? Please contact me to discuss and/or volunteer. I will give you the knowledge and templates to make it an easy transition. My email is [notie@msn.com](mailto:notie@msn.com) and telephone number 910-420-2968. Home address: 28 Oxtan Circle, Pinehurst, NC 28374.

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**117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association meeting November 13, 2015** Pledge of Allegiance – 2000 hrs. Moment of Silence. Old Business: Treasurer – Spurs and Sabers Dance, collected \$8,400, cost \$7,200 – great success and attendance. Quartermaster – new hats - \$20, new framed lineage prepared 18” x 24”; Heritage Room – received financial support for new pictures from Westfield Foundation; Awards – need nominations – Samsel Award – outstanding officer; Maloney Award – outstanding NCO.

New Business: Committee to run concurrent *117th Cavalry Association* and 1-102nd Officer/NCO Association – Pres. Dougherty felt that there is no need for change in bylaws; 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Association president, CPT Steve Pruser (Squadron S6) organizations want to join together. Pres. COL Dougherty stepping down after 15 years as Association president – incoming president LTC Michael Hrycak. LTC Bill Morris (past Squadron Commander) made an award presentation to COL Dougherty provided by *16 Prospect* (Assn). 1-102<sup>nd</sup> drill 5-6 December 2015, Christmas Dinner Sunday, 6 December 2016 – Westfield Armory. Move to Conclude Meeting- 2025 hrs.

Attendance: *Bill Gruss, Don Kondroski, Art Maggs, Dan Mahon, Wilber A. Pome, Bill Morris, Pedro Martinez, Scott Murkowski, Robert Apgar, Robert Ryan, Gerry Infantino & wife Ann Marie Infantino, Danielle Bracco, John Rowe, Michael Hrycak, James Anglim, Ryan Harty, Jim Dooley, Jennifer Silva, Angelo Panzarino, Kevin Murphy, Ken Mahan*

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**117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association meeting February 12, 2016.** Pledge of Allegiance – 2000 hrs. Moment of Silence –SFC Joe Ingraham; SSG Teloda; SFC Bill Lewis; SSG Ron Manning; SFC Bob Bolan; SSG Harry Gramsammer. Old Business: Membership- SGM Mahan – 200 + members, still mailing Spur at \$0.71/piece, will catch up one day. Treasurer- SFC Bill Gruss – collected - \$1,363.05, spent - \$2,342.00. Balance - \$7,440.00. Quartermaster – hats - \$20, or bonus hats (missing “e” in Show em The Way!) free to all members attending. Heritage Room Reorganization Committee – Co-Chairmen CW5 Frank Mnich; LTC Bill Morris; Members: LTC Mike Hrycak; CPT Jim Anglim; 1LT Bob Freeman; SGM Ken Mahan; SFC Don Emery; SFC Don Kondroski. Committee to run concurrent *117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association* and 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Officer/NCO Association – TBD.



**SFC Dale McTighe has been named recipient of the First Sergeant Bill Maloney Trooper of the Year for 2015.** He is a 23-year veteran of the New Jersey Army National Guard and now serves as the head logistical NCO of the 1-102d Cavalry. SFC McTighe started his career as a medic in Troop B, 5-117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1993. During his distinguished career in the NJARNG, he has served in the 5-117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 3-112<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, 250<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion and the 1-102d Cavalry as a medic and logistician. SFC McTighe has deployed twice in *Operation Freedom*. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Bronze 2 Oak Leaf Clusters and the Army Achievement medal with a Silver Oak Leaf Cluster as well as the Iraqi Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars and the Global War on Terror Service Medal. Congratulations to SFC

Dale McTighe for his selection as the Frist Sergeant William B. Maloney Trooper of the Year for his exemplary commitment and support to the troopers of 1-102d Cavalry and his distinguished career in the NJARNG.



**First Lieutenant Robert Freeman has been named recipient of the COL Harold Samsel Junior Officer of the Year for 2015.** He is a 19-year Army Veteran, serving on active duty as a Bradley Crewman in 1-5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (He as a member of *Operation Joint Forge*, Stabilization Force 5 (SFOR 5) Bosnia Herzegovina Feb-Sept 1999) and in the NJARNG as a member of the 1-114<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and a recruiter. During his time with the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, he was promoted to SSG in August 2004, selected as NJARNG Non-Commission Officer of the year 2006, promoted to SFC in 2008. In 2009, he attended Officer Candidate School and was selected as the Distinguished Honor Graduate of his Officer Candidate Class. 1LT Freeman currently serves as a platoon leader in Troop C 1-102d Cavalry. His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation medal and the Army Achievement Medal as well as the Air Assault Badge

and Master Recruiter Badge. Congratulations to 1LT Freeman for his selection as the COL Harold Samsel Junior Officer of the Year for 2015.

New Business. 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Squadron Commander – LTC Tim Coakley – addressed the members – joined NJARNG after 4 yrs. active duty as Armor Officer; commanded A Troop 5/117 Cavalry (LTC Hines commanding); became AGR, deployed to OIF, Camp Bucca; Commander of recruiting- Jt. Force HQ's; after 16 years back to 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Squadron as Commander – preparing for split AT, Scouts at Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA, with Cmd & Staff participating in Warfighter – preparing for Ready Year (to deploy) 2019. 1-102<sup>nd</sup> Change of Command – Westfield Armory, Sunday, 21 February 2016 1400 hrs. – all Assn members invited. Other new business – CPT Barry, former A Troop Commander, planning on taking trip to France and follow path of Squadron during WW II. Move to Conclude Meeting- 2040 hrs.

Attendance: *Jerry Infantino, Ann Marie Infantino, Rochus E. Lawrence, Ed Barry, Kevin Murphy, Frank Mnich, James Giacchi, Stephen Pruser, Dannielle Nugent-Pruser, Pedro Martinez, Joe Manto, Ron Nier (2-1/2 hr. drive home), Emil Allgeier, Don Tracey, Ken Mahan, Art Maggs, Vince Tirri, Ryan Harty, Don Kondroski, Danielle Bracco, Bill Morris, John Blake, Tim Coakley. Bill Gruss, Michael Hrycak, James Anglim.*

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Contributed by COL Dennis Dougherty:

**215th Tank Battalion** was constituted 5 July 1946 in the New Jersey National Guard as the 215th Tank Battalion (90mm Gun) and assigned to the 50th Armored Division. It was organized and federally recognized on April 11, 1947 with its headquarters located at Teaneck with elements at Belvidere, Riverdale and Teaneck. It was reorganized on March 1, 1949 as the 215th Medium Tank Battalion (90mm Gun) On March 1, 1956 the headquarters was moved to Riverdale, relieved from the 50<sup>th</sup> Armored Division and consolidated with the 50<sup>th</sup> Armor as a parent regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System.



Distinctive Unit Insignia was approved for wear on 5 April 1955.

COAT OF ARMS

SHIELD: Or, on a saltire couped vert, two battle lances of the field.

CREST: That for the regiments and separate battalions of the New Jersey Army National

Guard: On a wreath of the colors (or and vert) a lion's head erased or, collared four fusils gules.

MOTTO: *Think- Decide - Act.*

Symbolism: The colors yellow and green are for Armor. The couped saltire, taken from the arms of Bergen in the Netherlands, alludes to Bergen County in the northeastern part of New Jersey, originally settled by the Dutch and the area where the battalion was organized. The lances were weapons used by heavily armored mounted knights-symbolize the nature and assault mission of the organization, the green being the lists or fields of combat.

Over the years, the Teaneck NJ Army National Guard Armory has also been home to the following units of the NJ Army National Guard. 215<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion, 104<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Main Support Battalion, and the 250<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion The Riverdale Armory has been the home of the 3-104<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron, 3-113 Infantry and the 2-113 Infantry Battalions.

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*Final installment – CAVALRY ON THE SHOULDER – The 38<sup>th</sup> CRS and the Defense of Monschau (Believed to be written by COL R. E. O'Brien)*

By noon, relative calm had settled over the squadron area. Two separate company size attacks had been driven off. German patrols were observed and fired on at a long range, but no attack came. Snipers continued to harass the

squadron. Movement could be observed around distant German bunkers indicating the arrival of fresh troops. The squadron was certain that the German attacks had not run their course. In the afternoon, the 102d Cavalry Group reinforced the squadron with A Company, 146<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer battalion. The company was met by LTC O'Brien and directed to reinforce C and B Troops with a platoon of engineers each. The rest of the company was placed in reserve on the hill above the town where their fires could overwatch the approaches to the town.

Another group of reinforcements arrived that afternoon which indicated the seriousness of the situation. These were six machine guns and crews from the 186<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion. The artillerymen realized that their own survival depended directly on the cavalry's ability to hold the line, and thus culled through their gun crews and dismounted their anti-aircraft machine guns to add to the squadron's defensive firepower. These desperately needed additions were added to SSG Bielicki's hard-pressed 2d tank platoon in the center of town, allowing the grateful tankers to remount their machines.

As darkness fell on 16 December, the enemy did not disappoint the troopers of the squadron as the strongest attack thus far emerged from Imgenbroich at 1700. This attack was spotted almost immediately by artillery observers from the 186<sup>th</sup> FA who immediately brought down the full power of 155mm battalion on the massed Germans. The results were both physically and morally devastating, and the Germans were unable to reorganize in the gathering darkness to continue the attack.

Throughout the night, the squadron continued on full alert and the Germans continued attempting to probe for a weakness in the Monschau defense. At 2200, a C Troop listening post identified a large group of Germans advancing once again down the snake road. Immediately the area was lit by 60mm illumination rounds from the troop's mortars. The silhouetted Germans were then subjected to murderous interlocking machine gun fire as E Troop and the 62d FA added the weight of their 75mm and 105mm howitzers.

The attacking force, estimated to be at least a company or more, was cut to pieces and disintegrated back into the dark forests.

A half hour of quiet followed before B Troop outposts reported enemy movement in the vicinity of the Stillbusch draw. The sequence of events was repeated. Mortars illuminated the enemy who was then subjected to direct fires from B Troop and indirect fire from E Troop. The Germans, again pinned in the darkness, lost heart and withdrew.

Unaware of the major enemy attacks to their south, the 38<sup>th</sup> Squadron remained vigilant throughout the night. Tensions rose before dawn when Germans employed searchlights to point at the low-lying clouds reflecting artificial illumination over the dark pine forests of the border region. Reports came in from all the troops reporting German aircraft flying low over the area. Reports of paratroopers being dropped came from both subordinate troops as well as over the radio nets from the 102d Cavalry Group headquarters.

At 0400 enemy movement and noise was again detected by the Troop C forward listening posts. Artillery of E Troop responded rapidly and once again, the enemy seemed to have been driven off at a small price. This effort was just the prelude for the major enemy push which was about to come.

In the overall scheme of the Ardennes offensive, the first day had not gone well for the Germans anywhere except to the immediate south of the 38<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. There the Germans appeared to be on the verge of a breakthrough in the area of the 14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the 106<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. This was the southern portion of the 6<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Army sector; to exploit these successes the Germans required a solid shoulder in the north. A shoulder whose northern hinge was the town of Monschau. Thus, on the morning of the second day, the Germans were determined to achieve the objectives, which their attacks had failed to obtain the day prior.

The Germans began their attack with a heavy artillery preparation, which began at 0615. The cavalrymen were not surprised and the German artillery found the troopers deep in their holes and basements. If anything, this artillery bombardment was even more powerful than the first. However, after the previous days fighting much of the psychological impact was lost. The troopers were particularly disdainful of the German rockets, which although they made a great noise, were less feared than conventional artillery.

The initial German effort followed close on the heels of the artillery fire. German infantry assembled under the cover of darkness and the artillery in the draw to the east of Mutzenich. As the artillery lifted, they moved rapidly across the fields toward the railroad embankment and first platoon of F Company. The five M5A1 "*Stuart*" tanks of F Company immediately took the exposed infantry under fire with canister 37mm cannon fire and machine guns. The attack began to falter in the crossfire as E Troop and the artillery battalions came into play. In the coming light, the Germans began to withdraw from where they were pinned into the safety of the draw. This movement was slow and deliberate and the Germans suffered greatly from the continuing accurate artillery.

As light began to break across the battlefield and the last rounds chased the Germans retreating toward the draw, the main German attack of at least two battalions made the most serious and coordinated effort to this point in the battle. The main effort of the attack was aimed at the center and south of the Troop positions, a point which had not been threatened yet in the battle. Simultaneously, a supporting attack was launched once again down the snake round against the C Troop positions defending the approaches into the town itself.

B Troop was commanded by Captain Joseph R. Sain, a solid performer. The German pressure against B Troop was constant and steady. As with previous attacks, interlocking-crossing machine gun fire, and artillery hampered the German advance. The Germans, however, were in much greater strength than before. They slowly and methodically searched out the dead space where the machine guns could not reach while their own artillery fired in support. Eventually the German advance elements discovered a gap of about 200 meters between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d platoons of B Troop. Approximately one company of about 70 Germans penetrated this gap and sprung into the Troop rear ... threatening the aide station, troop mortars, and troop command post, and overrunning three artillery observation posts. The Germans then took cover in a copse of woods where they could threaten the squadron's rear and await reinforcements.

The actions of the Troop Commander were swift and decisive. He immediately radioed the squadron commander who ordered the assistant executive officer, Captain Robert E. Meyer, to lead the reserve engineer platoon, and two F Company tanks to B Troop's assistance. With these reinforcements and the 2d platoon, the troop counterattacked. The counterattack was led from the front by LT Weldon J. Yontz and SGT Charles E. Oxenham of B Troop's 2d platoon. In a sharp vicious fight at close range, the Germans were pushed out of their position and forced to fight their way back to their own lines. Two E Troop forward observers, SSG William F. Fisher and SGT Charles Sullivan, set down their rifles in the midst of the fight, set up their radio, and adjusted the guns of E Troop onto the retreating Germans. The Troop was able to reoccupy and establish its original lines by 1100.

At about 1030, a prisoner was taken to the squadron commander. This prisoner indicated that the current attacks, which the squadron was just barely containing, were just the prelude to the main attack, which would come in the afternoon. This information prompted LTC O'Brien to request reinforcement from the 102d Cavalry Group. The group's other squadron, the 102d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, had not been attacked, and so the group released its reserve, A Company of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, and a platoon of tanks from A Company of the 10th Armored Battalion. These forces reported to the squadron commander about 1130, after the crisis in the B Troop sector had passed. The infantry company was ordered to patrol the wooded areas behind Troop B for German stragglers, and then establish a defensive line behind Troop B. The tanks were placed in squadron reserve.

The importance of the attack on Monschau to the German high command was underscored at about 1130 when German aircraft made a rare appearance over the front in daylight. The German Me109 fighters made numerous passes on the US positions and then continued back to their own lines at high speed. Despite the surprise of the air attack, the squadron was able to respond with a screen of anti-aircraft fire resulting in at least one aircraft being shot down. The "kill" was officially credited to Corporal Fitzpatrick of the B Troop headquarters platoon.

As B Troop counterattacked the enemy penetration in the center of the squadron sector, the enemy continued to attempt to mount a threat against C Troop in the south and capture the town. The German attempts, however, continued to be unsuccessful because of the artillery at the squadron's disposal. Accurate artillery continuously broke up the German attacks before they could get started. Twice, separate company size attacks were directed at C Troop but could not get past the artillery.

At 1200 the Germans, for the first time probed forward from Menzerath with armor. Four enemy armored vehicles, likely Mark IV Assault Guns of the 326<sup>th</sup> Division assault gun company, began to move forward towards the squadron. They were immediately identified by SSG Walter Zuckoff, an E Troop observer positioned in the C Troop trenches. He quickly coordinated for fire from both E Troop and the 155mm howitzers of 189<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion. A curtain of steel descended on the German armor and three tanks were quickly destroyed, or immobilized and abandoned. The fourth tank withdrew into the protection of the town.

Despite the setback of their armor, the Germans were still determined to take the town and continued to cautiously move their infantry forward. Eventually they were able to establish a protected machine gun position within a few hundred yards of the US trench lines. In this position, they could not be affected by the cannon of the 2d Platoon of F Company's Stuart tanks, or by the small arms coming from C Troop's trenches. SSG Bielicki's tankers, who had already proven their ability to fight dismounted, once again climbed from the protection of their vehicles. Three men, led by SGT James B. Martin, closed within a few yards and destroyed the machine gun position with hand grenades. Another German managed to establish himself in a house 70 yards from C Troop. An M10 tank destroyer from the 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion moved into position and destroyed the house and the German position, with direct fire from its 76mm gun.

Meanwhile the battle continued to be pressed against B Troop. After their first successful penetration was destroyed, the Germans reorganized and renewed their attacks attempting to repeat their earlier success and gain the squadron's rear area. Waves of Germans charged across the open fields in front of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d platoons to be engaged by the dismounted machine guns of the Troop. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d platoons of F Company fired over the heads of B Troop with canister rounds and machine guns, and of course the artillery continued to come down. Despite heroic efforts, the German infantry were unable to make a dent in the defense.

The coming of afternoon gradually brought some respite to the squadron as the Germans apparently reevaluated the situation, reorganized, resupplied and considered their next move. That move came at 1700 as several companies of infantry began a stealthy approach across country through the broken terrain and fields from Imgenbroich.

This move was made at dusk along what the Germans believed was a concealed approach. Unfortunately, the approach had been anticipated and was observed by a forward observation team of the 155mm equipped 186<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion. Within minutes, the Germans found themselves the target of the big guns as the battalion volleyed all of its eighteen tubes as fast as they could be reloaded. The battalion fired high explosive shells armed with the new proximity fuses. This devastating fire ended the Germans last daylight attempt to take the town.

The Germans were anything if not tenacious, and Monschau was a vital objective in not only the division plan, but to the entire offensive, which was now almost 48 hours old. So, despite their heavy losses, the Germans determined to make one more major attempt to take the town, open the road to Eupen, and unhinge the American defenses in the north which were firming up around the 99<sup>th</sup> Division on the Elsenborn ridge southeast of Monschau. At 2200, approximately two companies of German infantry began to move silently down the snake road against the C Troop positions in Monschau. Again, the attack was observed by a listening post which quickly reported the action to the Troop Commander, Captain James W. Farmer. The Troop's 60mm mortars opened the action as they fired illumination rounds. The glare of the mortar-fired flares floating under their parachutes caught the Germans in the same open killing fields where the daylight attacks had failed. Once again, the interlocking .50 caliber and .30 caliber machine gun fire, joined by the machine guns and 37mm cannon of 3d Platoon F Company's M5A1 tanks, cut the German infantry down where they stood. The day's experience was further repeated as the attacking infantry went to ground only to be subjected to the accurate and deadly artillery of E Troop and the 62d Field Artillery Battalion. As the mortars continued to light the field, the Germans pulled back. A half hour later, another German company was detected approaching B Troop and met with the same fate. Although the squadron did not realize it at the time, this was the final German effort to take Monschau.

The next morning, 18 December, the squadron commander met with the commander of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The 3,000 man strong 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment had moved into assembly areas to the east of Monschau during the night, and was now assuming responsibility for the defense of the town. The 38<sup>th</sup> Squadron was detached from the 102d group and temporarily attached to the infantry. Initially it was the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment's plan to leave the squadron in place and back them up with the infantry regiment, however, LTC O'Brien made a strong argument that the squadron had been fighting continuously for three days, against a numerically stronger enemy and across a wide front. He insisted that the infantry assume a portion of the defense of Monschau. This was agreed to by the commander of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry and that morning infantrymen of the 47<sup>th</sup> relieved Troop C and 3d platoon F Company in Monschau. This allowed the squadron to consolidate its defense on Menzerath Hill.

As the 38<sup>th</sup> Squadron shortened its line and prepared to serve hot chow to the troopers, the attentions of the Germans shifted southward. Unable to penetrate through the Monschau, the Germans shifted their focus to the town of Hofen, 3 kilometers south, defended by the 3d battalion, 395<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 99<sup>th</sup> Division, commanded by LTC Butler. The German's main efforts against Hofen began on the morning of 18 December. The infantrymen experienced the same tactics used against Monschau: a short but very sharp artillery barrage followed by waves of infantry. Unlike the cavalrymen, however, the 99<sup>th</sup> Division was a relatively new division to the theater, had not been in place as long, and did not have the organic light tanks, machine guns, and artillery of the squadron. The German attacks were more successful and the German infantry were eventually able to gain the town itself and the fighting eventually became a desperate battle at close quarters.

Although by the time of the German attacks against Hofen, the squadron had been relieved by the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry, not all of C Troop had pulled out. SGT Joseph J. Poll, who in his armored car was designated as liaison from the squadron to the infantry, was positioned on the outskirts of Hofen. In addition, many of the squadron and the forward artillery observers remained in their positions to assist the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry with requests for artillery fire. Many of the observer teams could see the approaches to Hofen. Thus as the 3d battalion, 395<sup>th</sup> was hit by the Germans, SGT Poll found himself in the midst of the fight, and the artillery observers of the squadron were in position to observe it. SGT Poll, positioned on the left flank of the battalion, found himself alone and holding a significant portion of the infantry line of defense. The 37mm cannon, .50 caliber and .30 caliber machine guns of his M8 Armored Car packed significant firepower as he and the other three

members of his crew worked all of the weapons systems against the attacking Germans. As important, SGT Poll's radio provided a vital link to the squadron's E Troop and through them to the three supporting artillery battalions, all of whom could range to Hofen.

The fight in Hofen was a close event, but with key contributions by SGT Poll, and the supporting artillery efforts, the infantrymen held the town. The Germans attacks were finally broken when more than three battalions of US Artillery were brought down on the town itself and on top of the US positions. The dug-in Americans rode out the barrage, which destroyed the exposed German infantry. Thus with the assistance of the SGT Poll and E Troop, the 3/395<sup>th</sup> held Hofen and the Germans last gasp on the northern shoulder of the Bulge ended.

The defense of Monschau by the 38<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was one of the small but significant actions by US troops in December 1944, which in total spelled the failure of the German winter offensive. For its action, the unit was awarded the Unit Commendation, an award that later became the *Presidential Unit Citation*, the nation's highest unit decoration. It was the only Mechanized Cavalry unit so honored in World War II, and it recognized not only the pivotal role the squadron played in the response to the German offensive, but also the professionalism and courage demonstrated at every level throughout the squadron in the battle.



*Edited July 29, 2011 by Philip Notestine  
Donated by LTC (R) Alfred H. M. Shehab  
Who was then 1LT Platoon Leader, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon  
Troop B, 38<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz)*

\*\*\*\*\*



**Membership Update – SMG (Ret) Ken Mahan Trooper!** Look at your address label! If the date is not September 2016 or later, you are behind in your dues. Your Subscription to *THE SPUR* is going to run out, due to non-payment of dues. A sample of label:

**SEPT 16**

**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 regular dues of \$20.00, Associate dues \$15.00 and enlisted E5-E1 \$10.00 are due in September.** Make checks Payable to **117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry**

**Association. Pay Pal** can be used as well – link is on our web site [www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org) **Boosters** help pay for SPUR mailings to WWII veterans and their widows, *not* for your dues! We cannot continue to mail *The SPUR* to lapsed members. Stick with us, we want you as a member, but you must pay your own “freight”. **Email:** Please send your email address to me at [Kennethmahan05@gmail.com](mailto:Kennethmahan05@gmail.com) We are compiling an email list of members and we want to include you. **Association web site:** [www.117th-cav.org](http://www.117th-cav.org) Read past issues of *The SPUR*, look up the WWII histories of the 38<sup>th</sup>, 102<sup>nd</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons (Mecz). All WWII Veterans will no longer pay dues, you will see WWII over your name.

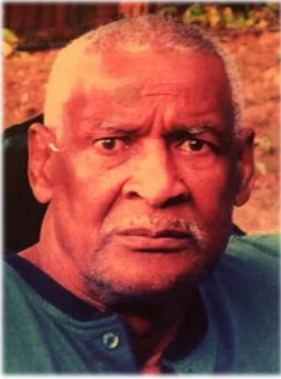
New Member: LTC Timothy Coakley. Members we are dropping due to lack of dues: John Barr, John M. Manfre.

We are looking for help on mailing *The SPUR*, for about 1.5 hours during the day at the Westfield Armory. Let me know if you can help. *Friends of the Cavalry* luncheon will be held April 26, at the “RIVER ROCK” on the Manasquan River, we will meet at noon. If you want to go call me at (732)548-7991 Ken Mahan

### **TAPS**

**William J. Lewis Jr., 81**, of Toms River, died Jan. 16, 2016 in Toms River with his loving children by his side. He was born in Plainfield and had lived in North Plainfield before his move to Toms River over 30 years ago. William was a 20 year veteran of the No. Plainfield Police Department before his retirement in 1980. He was a veteran of the US Army, also served in the NJ Army National Guard for 25 years. He was a former member of the Italian American Club in No. Plainfield, a Charter member of the Watchung Hills Elks Club in Warren Township, Toms River Knights of Columbus and the American Legion, also of Toms River. Surviving are three sons, William of Bloomsbury, Matthew and his wife Karen of No. Plainfield, Steven and wife Lisa of Belle Meade, two daughters, Kelly Lewis of No. Plainfield, Pam Lewis of Bound Brook a brother Henry of Moretown, VT. In addition, four grandchildren, Evan, Hunter, Dylan, and Jared.





**Joe L. Ingram, Sr., 77**, of Highland Park, NJ, died Friday, January 15, 2016 New Brunswick. Born in Madison, GA. A resident of Highland Park for 47 years and formerly of Jamesburg, NJ. A retiree of Brunswick Rubber Co., So. Brunswick for 26 years. A veteran of the U S Army and 5-117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, NJ Army National Guard. He retired with the rank of Sergeant First Class.

Predeceased by parents, two siblings, Willie James Ingram and Ethelene Roland. Surviving are his wife, Eva J. of Highland Park, six children, Robert Louis Cole and Demetria Cole of Atlanta, GA, Debra Jean Fulwood, Joe L. Ingram, Jr., Lisa Marie Ingram and Margaret Underwood, of Highland Park, four siblings, Larry Ingram, Carrie Sue Ingram and Eliza Bell Head, of Atlanta, GA and Eunice Goodman of New Brunswick, NJ, sixteen grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren, multitude of nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

**Harry J. Gramsammer** Bells Labs senior designer, National Guardsman, of Linden SSG (Ret)

Harry J. Gramsammer, 67, a lifelong resident of Linden, N.J., died on Friday, Jan. 15, 2016. Harry was a senior designer for Bell Labs in Murray Hill, N.J., where he worked from 1968 to 2005. From 2006 until his retirement in 2013, he worked maintenance for Genesis Eldercare in Plainfield, N.J. Mr. Gramsammer retired from the U.S. Army National Guard after serving from 1971 to 1991, Troop D (Air) 5-117th Cavalry. He was a member of the American Legion. Harry was predeceased by his brother, Jerome. Surviving are his beloved wife of 44 years, Jeanne Neylon Gramsammer; his loving children, Kristen and Eric; his sister, Cecilia Coglianesse, as well as several nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, contributions to the [American Heart Association](#) in Harry's memory would be appreciated.

**Ronald E. Manning Sr., 75**, passed away on Oct. 17, 2015, at his residence in Plainfield, NJ. He attended Elizabeth NJ public schools, after graduating Jefferson HS, He attended and graduated from American Academy of Mortuary Sciences, NYC. He completed his internship at Smith Funeral Home in Elizabeth, NJ. In 1963, he enlisted in the US Army serving two tours in Vietnam in the infantry. He was decorated with two *Bronze Stars for Valor*. He continued to serve in the Army Reserves and the NJ Army National Guard, retiring in 1990 after 20 years as a Staff Sergeant in the 5-117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. He Ronald had a long career with Merck & Company Inc. spanning 42 years. He was a pipefitter/welder, retiring in 2008. During that time, and until 2014, he was a Contracting Funeral Director.

Prior to Vietnam, he married his high school sweetheart. Their son is Ronald Eric Manning Jr., a NJ Paramedic. In 1978, Ronald Sr. married Celeste Roberson. Their daughter Tia Celeste was born in 1980. She is a Pediatric ER Physician in Florida.

Ron and Celeste moved to Plainfield in 1981. Ron was much loved in the neighborhood, helping with plumbing and other problems. He was ready with his snow blower helping seniors, expecting nothing in return. Ron had a great love for children, who loved him in return.

He is survived by his wife Celeste, son Ron Jr. his wife Dr. Marylyn Giorgi Manning; daughter Dr. Tia Manning; four grandchildren, an aunt and a host of cousins, many grands and great grands and friends in great number.

**John F. Ferguson, 94** died January 2015 Spring Lake NJ. John was born Sept. 5, 1920 in NYC. Family moved to Maplewood NJ in 1921. He graduated from Columbia HS, South Orange where he met Helen and married in 1942. He joined the 102d Cavalry Regiment (Essex Troop) in 1941. He was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Signal Corps, transferring to the USAAF serving in air-sea rescue flying in B17 Flying Fortresses especially fitted for search and rescue. These missions were flown from many bases in North America, Iceland and North Africa. John was discharged October 1945. "Essex Trooper" Jack Ferguson was proud of his service. He was an active Essex Trooper, attending meetings and luncheons until he was too infirm.

Jack and his wife Helen raised their two children in Livingston. He was a bank executive retiring from PNC bank in 1992. He was active in scouting and his church. He belonged to several golf clubs. Jack and Helen moved to Spring Lake Heights where they were active in the community. An avid golfer, he played in many tournaments over the years.

Jack was predeceased by his parents John and Jane, an infant daughter Penny, brother Charles, his wife of 70 years Helen, He is survived by son Gary, daughter Patricia, grandson Alexander and his wife Sarah and their children Rebecca and Elizabeth.





### BE A BOOSTER OF THE SPUR

Shown at the left of each name is the last issue and year in which your entry will be published.

SP = Spring, SU = Summer, FA = Fall, WI = Winter

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SP-18 EMIL ALLGIERE  
 WI-26 CHARLES ANGELLO  
 SP-26 BOB & LORRAINE APGAR  
 SU-18 JAMIE AYALA  
 SU-32 ED BARRY (mem. of) BILL BARRY TROOP D (AIR)  
 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 SP-17 BILL BENNERT  
 FA-21 RALPH BOCKINO (mem. of) by wife CATHERINE  
 SP-17 MSG TOM BULLOCK TROOP A 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY  
 FA- 24 JUDGE SANTI CARNEVALI, WWII 102<sup>nd</sup> & 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY  
 FA-16 1SG (Ret) DONALD M. CHAMBERLIN  
 WI-16 LTC (Ret) CLAUDE COOK mem. MSG ROCCO SPANO &  
 wife JOAN  
 WI- 20 STEVE CUP WWII 102d CAVALRY  
 SU-16 LTC (Ret) PETER D'ELIA  
 FA-16 ROBERT A. DENNIN JR. - A FRIEND  
 SU-16 SGM (Ret) JIM DOOLEY  
 SU-16 COL (Ret) DENNIS J. DOUGHERTY  
 WI-18 1SG (Ret) PHILIP DUNN, A Troop mem. wife BETTY  
 SP-16 ROGER ELLERT  
 FA-17 JACKIE ELLIS (mem) MSG DAVID JAMES ELLIS 5-117 CAV  
 WI-17 MANUEL G. FERRI  
 SU-19 CPT (Ret) GERALD D. FISCHBEIN  
 WI-16 LTC (Ret) ALAN R. FISHER  
 WI-22 MIRIAM FISHER (mem.of husb.) WILLIAM E. FISHER  
 WI-17 HENRY & MARION FORSTENHAUSLER  
 WI- 62 JOHN FRANTZ, LT A Troop 5-117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 FA-16 FRIEND OF 117<sup>th</sup> CAV.  
 SU-16 BILL GRUSS & LINDA  
 FA-20 BARBARA HANSEN wife of TOM HANSEN  
 SP-18 LAURANCE HASKETT, WWII - 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY SGT Troop C  
 WI-18 LTC (Ret) JOHN S. HUFF (mem. of) C Troop, 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 '43-'44 mem. HANK EGBERT & BILL CRONE bros.-in-arms  
 WI-18 BILL HYNDMAN (mem. of) CPT PAUL SEIDEL, F CO.  
 WWII 117<sup>th</sup> CAV. *Silver Star, Fr. Croix de Guerre*  
 WI-19 ANNE MARIE & GERALD "JERRY" INFANTINO  
 SP-17 DONALD KONDROSKI  
 WI- 20 LTC (Ret) WILLIAM KALE mem. NJ CAV SOLDIERS  
 WI -24 ESTELLE, ANDREW & JAY LASNER in mem. Arnold  
 Lasner – husband, father – proud veteran Troop B 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 WI-16 Dr. DANIEL W. "TREY" LEE III, (mem. of) CPT DANIEL W.  
 LEE, *CMH*, WWII Troop A, 117<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY RECON SQ.  
 SU-19 1LT (Ret) EDWARD J. LEONARD, *Class of '41*, PSG B Troop  
 117<sup>th</sup> CAV, Montrevel POW French *Legion of Honor*  
 WI-16 SSG (Ret) THOMAS J. LINDSEY & MARY  
 SU-16 GREGG S. LISTER  
 WI-18 C. J. MacNICHOLS  
 SU-16 JEAN & SGM (Ret.) KEN MAHAN  
 SP-18 CSM (Ret) A. A. MAGGS  
 FA-16 BARRY MALONEY (mem) WM B., TIMOTHY MALONEY,  
 ROBERT KLING  
 SP-16 BRIAN & BRUCE MALONEY (mem.) 1SG WM. B. MALONEY  
 WI-20 KEVIN MALONEY (mem.) 1SG BILL MALONEY SR. and  
 My brother TIM MALONEY  
 WI-33 PETE & EDITH MARTINEZ  
 SP-17 PEDRO MARTINEZ  
 SU-16 ED & BETH MATTHEWS (mem. of Ed's father)  
 T4 ED MATTHEWS B TROOP 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV WWII  
 FA-16 WAYNE McCANN  
 FA-19 LTC (Ret) W. SCOTT McCANN  
 SP-29 CSM SCOTT MECHANOWSKI 1-102<sup>nd</sup> CAVALRY  
 SP-23 CW4 (Ret) BILL MERRING & CHARLOTTE

SP-18 RON NIER  
 WI-16 ROMAN MILANOWICZ and BEVERLY  
 WI-16 CW5 (Ret) FRANK MNICH & JANET  
 SP-17 DENNIS & GARY MONAHAN (mem. father) PVT MILLARD D.  
 MONAHAN TRP B 117<sup>th</sup> CAV – POW MONTREVEL  
 WI-16 1SG (Ret) Troop D (AIR) RONNIE & CONNIE NIER in mem.  
 MSG ROCCO SPANO HHT 5/117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 SP-17 PHILIP NOTESTINE (mem. of) MAJ JOHN B. COULSTON  
 Troops C & E, *Class of '41*; 602<sup>nd</sup> Tank Destroyer BN '43-'45  
 FA-37 JOYCE OWEN wife of 2LT HAROLD "SMOKIE" OWEN,  
*Class of '41*, 102<sup>nd</sup> & 117<sup>th</sup> CAV - B & C Troops WWII  
 SP-16 DR. FOTINOS PANAGAKOS & JUDITH  
 WI-16 FRANK PATRICK  
 SP-16 TOM PETTY  
 WI- 16 CSM (Ret) AL PHELAN mem. 1SG ED MURPHY  
 WI-16 (mem. of) COL (Ret.) TOM PIDDINGTON, *Class of '41*  
 SU-19 ANTON and MARILYN PLONNER  
 SU-16 PETER PRICHARD mem. T/SGT JAMES H. SMITH  
 WWII 117<sup>th</sup> CAV F COMPANY  
 SU-16 LTC (Ret) KEN QUAAS (mem) DOROTHEA  
 SP-17 mem. ARTHUR REINBOLD  
 WI-92 MRS. ROBERT D. ROBBINS, (mem. of ROBBIE)  
 WI-38 FRED RODMAN, (mem. of brother) WALTER RODMAN  
 F Company (tanks) 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV WWII  
 SP-18 ROBERT SALCIDO (mem of brother) 1LT MANUEL SALCIDO  
 SP-17 JAMES SCANLON  
 SP-16 EILEEN SCHNARR (mem. husband) WILLIE  
 FA-19 BILL SEDLAK  
 WI- 20 DONNA STINNER mem. SKIP STINNER  
 FA-17 JOHN & MARGARET SUITER  
 WI-20 mem. SSG WILLIAM T. TITTER WWII TRP B 117<sup>th</sup> CAV  
 SP-19 JOE & SABRINA TOOMEY (mem. of) BROTHER  
 SGM ANTHONY FRED A JR.  
 WI-17 CW4 (Ret.) DON TRACY & CHICKIE  
 FA-16 CHARLES A VIVIANO – 50<sup>th</sup> CAV RCN SQDN  
 SU-17 GRACE & CSM (Ret) HENRY WETZEL (mem)  
 1SG GEORGE W. EMERY  
 WI-18 LTC (Ret.) FRANK WISWALL, USAF *Class of '41*  
 B Troop, 102<sup>nd</sup> CAV '41- '42 Fr. *Legion of Honor*  
 WI- 27 FRANK A. WOODS, PSG - A Troop, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon  
 117<sup>th</sup> CAV WWII  
 SP-18 MARTHA ZOLLER, FRANK MITCHELL JR. & PAM GUNTER  
 (mem. of) FRANK & JUANITA MITCHELL  
 SU- 3013 FRG HHT 1-102<sup>nd</sup> CAVALRY

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To become a Booster of *The Spur*, please send \$10.00 for a year of inclusion as a Booster in four issues of *The Spur*. Make check payable to the **117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association** - \$10.00 for each year of support. Mail to **Bill Gruss, Treasurer, 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association, 21 Blake Drive, Clark NJ 07066-1645**. Indicate how you wish to be listed:

**Change of Command**



CSM Scott Mechkowski stands with LTC Jeff Brownlee and LTC Tim Coakley



< Lineage and Honors Plaque presented to LTC Jeff Brownlee

LTC Brownlee and CSM Mechkowski knighted with Order of Saint George >



*The SPUR*  
c/o SGM (Ret) Ken Mahan  
12 W. Walnut St.  
Metuchen, NJ 08840-2616



LTC (Ret) Michael Hrycak  
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Philip S. Notestine  
*Editor*

**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 - Fridays 1930 hours:** April 8, 2016; June 10, 2016; September 9, 2016; November 11, 2016