

# 18th Cavalry Writes Open Letter To Medford Friends

"An open letter to our friends in Oregon"

On the completion of basic training at Ft. Lewis, Wash., the 18th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized, moved to Camp White, Oregon, to complete their advanced unit training. It was during this period of training that the boys of the 18th became attached to Medford and surrounding localities; so attached, in fact, that over twenty marriages took place at Camp White during 1944. After a seven month training period there, the 18th Cav. Ren. Sq. Mezz., moved to Camp Maxey, Texas for a three months preparation for overseas training program.

The entire 18th Cav. Ren. Sq. Mezz., crossed the Atlantic along with thousands of other troops on the world famous "Queen Elizabeth." Other than three sub alerts, the trip was uneventful, even though exciting and a new experience for most of us.

**Rest In England**  
We landed in northern Scotland, but didn't get a chance to see the country other than quick glances from the train window. From Scotland, we took a non-stop trip to southern England. There we had a few days rest and a chance to mix with the local population. It was our first chance at freedom in a foreign country and everyone took advantage of it. We had just

learned the money system and had gotten familiar with words like "pub" and "tram" when we crossed the channel to France.

Our stay in France was uneventful other than mud and rain. We patrolled the coast line and were held in reserve in the battle of Brest. As yet, not one of us had fired a shot at the enemy. Not that we like combat, but all of us were on edge and were all out for a combat mission.

One night, we were put on a two-hour alert and told that we had been assigned a mission. We were packed and ready to move out two days before we actually moved. On our convoy to our theater of operation we drove through France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. Most of us would have liked to have stopped in Paris as it looked very tempting from any soldier's standpoint. Naturally, we breezed right through on a rainy morning. We saw the houses on both sides of

## Batista Worried



(Acme Telephoto)  
Gen. Fulgencio Batista, ex-president and former "strong man" of Cuba, now on tour of U. S., tells San Francisco newsmen that he is "very worried" about the situation in Havana where 80 persons have been arrested and charged with plotting to overthrow the government.

the street and the madamoiselles along the sidewalks; that was enough to tempt any of us as we had been bivouaced in rural communities. Up to this time, we hadn't seen the France we had heard so much about. This was our first taste of the old France.

### Patrols Siegfried Line

We moved up on the line relieving an infantry regiment in a comparatively quiet sector along the Siegfried line. Our work consisted of making patrols into the Siegfried line and repelling small attacks. We were part of the bluff along the quiet sector of the Siegfried that every one has read so much about.

Our casualties were low and our living conditions were good compared with the average soldier. The army expression "we had it made" just about sums up the situation until the big drive made by General Von Rundstedt's forces last December.

It was on the morning of December 16, 1944, that we were awakened by a terrific artillery barrage. We had been under artillery barrages before, but we all knew that this was more than just the ordinary shelling we had often received. Our suspicions were correct. When the mist lifted, we could see tanks along the ridge above us. They were firing direct fire at us in support of their infantry which was coming down the hill.

We received orders at 10 o'clock that morning that we must hold our positions at all cost. We were more or less resigned to our fate. The boys took their plight in stride. Instead of the scared, panicky reactions that might have been expected in this particular situation; the reaction was the opposite. The boys were a little set back upon hearing the order, but later the tension gave way to good old American humor. Throughout the day of fighting you might have heard remarks such as: "Say, Jack, how about you firing for awhile so I can take one last look around and smoke a cigarette" or "I'll swear, if I thought Hell was any hotter than this

place, I'd hide and then surrender."

### Troops Cut Off

The reconnaissance troops had been fighting from dawn until three in the afternoon, completely cut off from the squadron. There was no way to get food or ammunition and the only communication was by radio. It was by radio that a little after three o'clock we received orders to run, all blockades and retreat to a designated point, if it were possible. If it was impossible to get vehicles through, we were to destroy them and infiltrate back by foot, under the cover of darkness. It was following this order that C Troop of the 18th, under the command of Capt. John T. Walker, did the seemingly impossible. They not only fought their way out of the encirclement, but brought back all their vehicles that had not previously been hit and did it with but one fatality. The other troops were not so fortunate, as their positions had become more precarious during the ensuing battle.

For three days the 18th and the 32d Cavalry, (which had been in reserve), fought delaying actions until relieved by an armored division and attached units. From December 16 until relieved for reorganization the 18th Cavalry and the 32d Cavalry fought together as a unit, and took up positions along with other elements of the First Army.

Reports gave the 18th Cavalry credit for inflicting over five thousand casualties on the German division facing them in their sector. The German division was so completely depleted that it was taken out of the line and the remaining men used for replacements in other divisions.

### Await Rhine Rush

After a period of reorganization and the training of their replacements, the 18th took up their positions awaiting the big push to the Rhine. After crossing the Roer the objective of crossing the Rhine was in the minds of all the men. Censorship prevents the date, but it can be said that the 18th Cavalry was among those of the first units of the United States army to cross the Rhine.

From the Rhine, and throughout the battle of the Ruhr valley, the 18th Cavalry has taken a combat part. The 18th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, has been commended several times by high ranking officers.

The latest commendation was made by Major General John Millikin, the former commander of the III Corps in the United States. It was with deep pride the boys heard of the commendation, as General Millikin had been their commander when they were training at Camp White.

As this brings us up to date, we will close by saying: from our present position, the passing of each day brings the mountains and beauty of Oregon to a clearer focus.

SGT. JOHN R. BANNISTER  
Tr. C, 18th Cav. Ren. Sq., Mezz.  
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