

117th Cavalry Association

www.117th-cav.org

102d CAV (Mecz) 38th CAV (Mecz) 117th CAV (Mecz) 50th CAV RCN SQDN 50th RCN 5th RCN 5-117th CAV 1-102d CAVALRY
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President's Message Our February 7 meeting of our 117th Cavalry Association will have a busy agenda. The highlight of the meeting will be a presentation on the roles and missions of the Reserve Officer Corps by LTC Sam Welch. He is a career Armor Officer and currently serves as Professor of Military Science for the Scarlet Knight Battalion of Rutgers University. There are 100 plus cadets in his program and over 60% of them are members of the New Jersey Army National Guard.

LTC Patrick du Tertre, Army of France, a longtime member of our 117th Cavalry Association and leader of the US Committee of the *French Will Never Forget*, an organization dedicated to telling and remembering the service of US service members and the liberation of France will also be making a short presentation of their organization's commemoration of 9/11 in Paris.

Also on the agenda for February's meeting will be a special thank you to all the volunteers of the Family Readiness Groups of the 1-102nd Cavalry. Under Danielle Bracco's leadership, they did a fantastic job with both the Annual Casino Night and the Family Christmas Party, and the leadership of the Nutley NJ VFW for their sponsorship of B Troop's Annual Holiday party.

Congratulations to SFC Joseph Toomey for being named the 1SG William B. Maloney Trooper of the Year for 2013. The Northern NJ Chapter of the Association of United States Army (AUSA) sponsors this award and it recognizes the service of the outstanding Trooper of the 1-102nd Cavalry. 1SG Maloney had a long and distinguished career in the New Jersey Army National Guard. He served in both the wartime 102nd Cavalry and was a long time member of the 5-117th Cavalry and a Founding Member of the 117th Cavalry Association.

Our "Share our Story" initiative continues to tell the story of New Jersey's Cavalry. The latest project was made possible by a grant donated by the First Region of the Association of the United States Army. It is a 20" x 30" picture of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry taken in 1915 at New Gretna, PA and today's 1-102nd Cavalry taken this summer at Fort Pickett, VA. Framed copies will be presented to LTC Bill Morris and his troop commanders at our February 7th meeting. A digital copy is now located on our web page (www.117th-cav.org). Visit the page and share it with your friends.

Seventy Years Ago: On the 20th of November 1943 the 38th Cavalry joined the 102nd Cavalry Regiment replacing the 2nd Squadron which had deployed to North Africa and on January 2, 1943 the 102nd Cavalry Regiment was re-designated the 102nd Cavalry Group. There was a cross-leveling of personnel and many officers and NCOs of the 102nd were transferred into the 38th Cavalry. Individuals from both squadrons were sent to U.S. and British Army Service Schools in preparation of the upcoming invasion. The 102nd Cavalry Group was reorganized into the configuration of 2 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons and a group headquarters. Each Squadron had 3 Reconnaissance Troops (A, B, & C) and Assault Gun Troop (E) and a Light-Tank Company (F) plus a Headquarters Troop. This would be the organization of the 102nd Cavalry Group and the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) throughout the remainder of WWII.

Seventy years ago this February the 117th Cavalry had just completed a one of a kind mission. On December 30, 1943 LTC Charles Hodge, the Squadron Commander, was called to AFHQ in Algiers and given a very secret verbal mission directly from General Eisenhower. The 117th Cavalry was ordered to proceed by forced march to Marrakech, Morocco. This would be a rapid 1,100 mile march due west over the Atlas Mountains. Their mission was to protect Prime Minister Winston Churchill from an attempt by German Airborne troops to kidnap him. British Intelligence had uncovered a plot to kidnap him. He was recovering from pneumonia in Marrakech. The 117th Cavalry completed the trip in 51 hours a record time for a movement of that nature. When they arrived, Troop E, the assault gun unit surrounded Churchill's Villa. The squadron headquarters was also established there. Troops A, B and C were out posted around the town and 24-hour surveillance was maintained for almost a month until the Prime Minister recovered and returned to Great Britain. By February, the 117th Cavalry had returned to Algeria and was preparing for combat in the Italian Campaign.

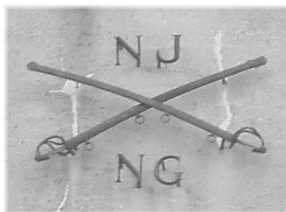
February 2014 marks the completion of LTC Bill Morris's tenure of command of the 1-102nd Cavalry Regiment. The change of command ceremony will take place on Saturday February 22nd at 1 PM. LTC Morris will relinquish command to LTC Jeff Brownlee. We would like to thank LTC Morris for his leadership, special outreach to the Westfield Community and his continued and ongoing support of our 117th Cavalry Association and all of New Jersey's Cavalry and Armor Community. Through his thoughts, deeds and actions, he certainly *Showed the Way!* We would also like to welcome LTC Brownlee and congratulate him on the assumption of his new command.

Please continue to show your support in your sponsorship of our 117th Cavalry Association newsletter "The SPUR." Many of you have made and continue to make donations to help pay the cost of publication and its mailing.

Thanks to all of you for your generosity in support of our association's many initiatives in support of our membership and the 1-102nd Cavalry. Looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting on 7 February 2014.

Show 'em the Way!

COL Dennis Dougherty USA Ret.





LTC Bill Morris, SCO 1-102nd Cavalry It seems impossible that the last time I wrote to you, we had XCTC in front of us, and now, we are 6 months out from Annual Training yet again. I am one for looking forward, but for a moment, let us look back at what we accomplished.

The Squadron emerged during XCTC as the premier example in the Brigade Combat Team of fully integrated Mission Command from the Command Group, to the Maneuver, Fires, Sustainment, Intelligence and Signal. Our flow in the ops center was second to none. The evaluators from First Army and our peers in other units remarked on our layout, atmosphere and tactical proficiency. Of note, improvements were seen across the board, and consistently we had the best signal and fires sections in the BCT.

When those evaluators reviewed the preparedness and mind-set of our Reconnaissance Troops, they found units that were ready to train and learn. Units that were not "getting back to basics" but that were far ahead of the collective training proficiency of their peers. While they stressed recon fundamentals they were able to complete the missions that each training lane set forth faster or slower (sometimes slow means better, and slow always means smooth - and smooth always means fast) than their peers with the highest level of tactical proficiency they'd seen. More than anything else, the Squadron HQ and the Recon Troops showed up ready to learn. While I laud our preparedness and excellence, we have to be realistic that there is always a lot to learn and a devil's share of things we must improve upon. Both these levels had a noticeable humility that meant even the most brutal after action review was met with a desire to do better and a noted improvement on the next try. If you don't know, that's a golden trait in building a unit of excellence.

The Forward Support Company emerged from their validation with comments like "the best Support Company we've seen", or "the most tactically proficient FSC" and "those guys pull their own security...well!" Even though all the work that goes into validating their platoons in tactical tasks they still have to do their regular mission. They are one of the few elements in the Cavalry that, while training, still has to perform sustainment. They fixed HMMWVs and trucks, fed and transported troops, moved ammunition and fueled the squadron. They repaired machine guns and diagnosed other ground systems. You cannot beat that in my book. I am very proud of our Sustainers, "Always Forward" Delta, good work.

All of that training is just another brick in the storied building we are working on. This year we are focused on specific improvements we need to make in all of the four major pieces I just talked about. We want to more fully integrate fires, perform sustainment with greater tactical awareness and conduct stealthy reconnaissance at a tempo that both feeds information requirements but remains undetected. Each of those descriptions cause one to visualize a recon battalion that's focusing on staying within the band of excellence and still improving.

February will bring the Squadron Change of Command. Please welcome LTC Jeff Brownlee as you have welcomed me and give him your loyalty and followership. He will find things to improve; always be moving forward and seeking those improvements.

I am grateful to have such an opportunity to lead and to be led and guided by the best staff, commanders, NCOs and Soldiers I have ever served with. You are truly a unique organization, I am proud to be part of the Cavalry Alumni and being with active and retired members who continue to contribute and be affiliated with the 1-102nd Cavalry.

"Show 'Em The Way"

LTC Bill Morris, SCO
1-102nd Cavalry
50th IBCT NJARNG





Command Sergeant Major Scott E. Mechkowski has been appointed the fifth Command Sergeant Major of the 1-102nd Cavalry. He is a native of New Jersey, and a graduate of Colonia Senior High School, Class of 1983. He entered the United States Army in April 1984, completing Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Bliss, Texas.

He has served in a variety of leadership positions including Air Defense Crewmen Schofield Barracks Hawaii; Air Defense Crewman Team Leader Schofield Barracks Hawaii 1/62 ADA, Military Policeman, Ft Polk Louisiana, 258 MP CO. He also served as a Special Operation Team Member for the 258th MP Detachment while serving at Ft. Polk; Squad Leader, 50th Military Police Company; Squad Leader, Troop B, 5-117th Cavalry as an M-1 Abrams Crewman; Squad Leader Company C, 102nd Armor; Platoon Sergeant, 1-102nd Cavalry, Instructor at the Technology Training Center, Ft. Dix, SGI Instructor at

the 254th Regiment, Sea Girt New Jersey; Course Manager for the Military Police Academy, 254th Regiment; Operations Sergeant 328th MP CO, Cherry Hill, New Jersey, First Sergeant Troop B, 1-102nd Cavalry, West Orange, New Jersey and also served as the Operations (S3) SGM for the 1-102nd Cavalry prior to his appointment to CSM 1-102nd Cavalry. He is employed with the Department of Homeland Security as the Assistant Field Office Director for Enforcement and Removals Operations, 26 Federal Plaza, NY, NY. He has also been assigned to Headquarters in the multiple capacities as the Chief for Fugitive Operation, Chief of Staff for Assistant Director for Removals, Chief of Career Management Training Unit, and Staff Officer.

The CSM is currently in Class 40, Command Sergeants Major, graduates March 2015. Military and Civilian education includes: Warrior Leader through Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses, First Sergeants Course Phase 1, Small Group Instructors Course, Chaparral Missile Maintenance Course, Battle Staff Course, Military Police Instructor Course, M-60/M-1 Armor Crewman's Course, Special Response Team Course, Direction Data Management Course, Video Tele-Training Instructor Course, Demand Reduction Managers Course, Defensive Tactics Instructor Course (FLETC), Physical Fitness Instructors Course (FLETC).

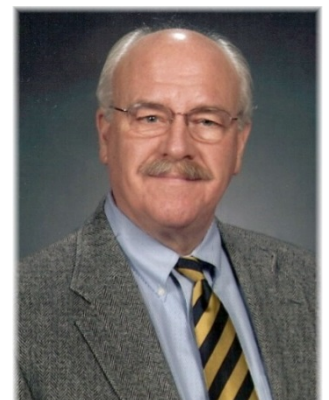
Operational and OCONUS assignments include: Iraq (OIF 8-9). His Domestic assignments include Schofield Barracks, HI. Fort Polk, LA. He has also been assigned throughout the State of New Jersey since October 1990.

Awards and decorations include the *Bronze Star Medal*, *Four Army Achievement Medals*, *Army Commendation Medal*, *National Defense Service Medal*, *Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal*, *Southwest Asia Service Medal*, *Iraq Campaign Medal*, *Global War on Terrorism Service Medal*, *NCO Professional Development Ribbon (numeral 4)*, *Army Service Ribbon*, *Overseas Service Ribbon*, *Superior Unit Award*, *Drivers Badge (wheel/track)*.



Phil Notestine, Editor Happy New Year 2014 to all! I must be brief; we have a packed issue as we close 2013. I am sorry that we cannot include the continuation of the *Battle of Montrevel-Malafretaz* in this issue, as there was just too much timely info that had to be covered. We should be able to continue in the Spring 2014 issue.

Cadet Leo Matthews, USMA West Point is in his third year and an exchange student at USNA Annapolis. Cadet Matthews is the grandson of WWII veteran T4 Edward C. Matthews *Bronze Star – Valor* (deceased), Troop B, 102nd Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz). While in high school, Leo was inspired by his grandfather's WWII military service. He did sound research and wrote a paper of merit. He applied and was accepted into the USMA where he has excelled. Leo and Association Member Harry Yeide (*Steeds of Steel, The Tank Killers, First to The Rhine*) were able to meet for dinner in Annapolis in October. Harry was impressed by Cadet Matthews and gave him copies of the 102nd CAV WWII History and Journal.



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Notes from the September and November Meetings of the 117th Cavalry Association, Tying up loose ends 2013 September 21, 2013 was a buzz of activity. It was the *Annual Stable Call* of the 1-102nd Cavalry and our September meeting of our 117th Cavalry Association. We started the evening by recognizing the service of members of the Family Readiness Groups of HHT 1-102nd Cavalry and D/250th FSB. The following FRG members were recognized as Honorary Members of the 117th Cavalry: Ann Bergin, Chris Bradley, Michelle Chmura, Carol Dannevig, Tom Pickett, Jen Silva, Jeff O'Connor, Tom O'Donnell and Amy Lovoto. During the past year, they have given hundreds of hours of volunteer time in support of the troopers of 1-102nd Cavalry.

LTC Bill Morris Commander of the 1-102nd Cavalry followed with an update of the squadrons activities at this

year's Annual Training at Ft Pickett, Virginia and it's exemplary external evaluation by the 1st US Army. Next on the agenda were presentations by Company D and B Troop. D Company's presentation dealt with the role of logistics in support of the 1-102nd Cavalry and B Troop conducted a presentation on the book *Gates of Fire* by Steven Pressfield. During the presentation, the B Troopers compared the qualities, character, and lessons learned from the famous "300" Spartans at the Battle of Thermopylae with the current Soldiers and Cavalry Troopers during the last 12 years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All in all the members of both our 117th Cavalry Association and the 1-102nd Cavalry had a great night sharing ideas and exchanging stories. We finished out September with our *Spurs and Sabers Dinner Dance*. All who attended had a fantastic night. It was a great opportunity to renew friendships, meet, and socialize with troopers old and new (Take a look at the pictures in this issue of the Spur).

November was another busy month. The highlight of the November 8th meeting was a presentation by MAJ Bill Nance PhD. of the History Department of the United States Military Academy. He spoke about the 117th Cavalry's role in *Operation Nordwind*. His presentation gave us all a better understanding of how the fight went down, and what role the 117th Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz) played in this pivotal battle that actually involved more Axis troops than the *Battle of the Bulge*.

Two new membership initiatives were approved at our November 2013 meeting of our 117th Cavalry Association \$10 Membership Now Available! New membership category of membership dues has been established specifically for E5-E1 members of the 1-102d Cavalry. They will now be able to become a member of our 117th Cavalry Association for \$10 yearly dues. Our members will now be able to pay their dues using their **Pay-Pal** account. Just log on to our 117th Cavalry Association Web page www.117th-cav.org and follow the prompts for **Pay-Pal** payment.



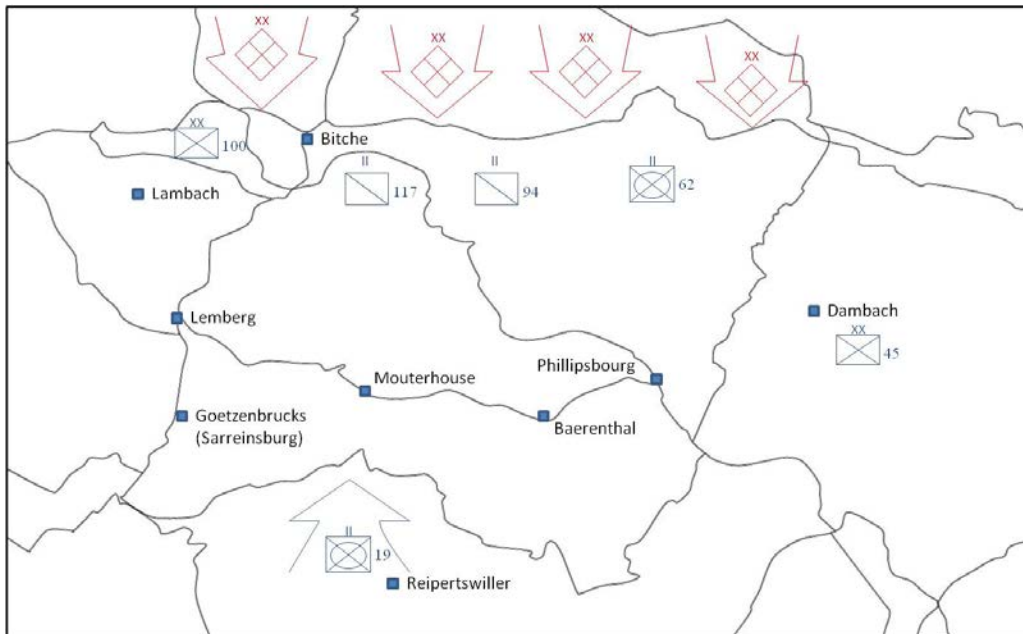
MAJ William S. Nance, PhD USMA - The 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) and Task Force Hudelson have been unfairly treated in most histories of *Operation Nordwind*. Many of the works dealing with the subject gloss over the contributions of the cavalry task force, or malign it with accusations of a nearly pusillanimous retreat that dangerously exposed the flank of XV Corps. The reality is that despite horrible weather conditions, extremely rugged terrain that prevented mounted maneuver, and being outnumbered by at least four to one, Task Force Hudelson did exactly what the U.S. Army expected of cavalry – it delayed the enemy advance, inflicted casualties, shaped the battle, and then passed the fight to follow on forces.

Task Force Hudelson consisted of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (CRS), the 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (from the 14th AD) and the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion (also of the 14th AD). Arriving in their positions on 23 December 1944, the Task Force spread out over ten miles of extremely broken, forested terrain. The 117th CRS would hold the left linking up with the 100th ID around Bitche, the 94th CRS (under command of the 117th CRS) would hold the center, while the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion maintained the right portion of

the zone, tying in with the 45th ID at the town of Dambach.ⁱ

Task Force Hudelson took over the old positions of the 106th Mechanized Cavalry Group on 23 December. The 117th CRS would hold the left linking up with the 100th ID around Bitche, the 94th CRS (under command of the 117th CRS) would hold the center, while the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion maintained the right portion of the zone, tying in with the 45th ID at the town of Dambach. Overall, the task force front was about ten miles of extremely broken, forested terrain.ⁱⁱ The next week would be spent reinforcing and improving positions.

At 0100 on the morning of 1 January, elements of four German *Volksgranadier* Divisions struck Task Force Hudelson aiming for the Saverne Gap as part of Operation *Nordwind*. This assault had the intention of seizing the gap and linking up with another German assault striking the center of the XV Corps line farther west in an attempt to encircle part of XV Corps as well as threaten the rear of the rest of the Seventh Army (see Map).ⁱⁱⁱ



The forward positions of both the 117th CRS and 94th CRS soon found themselves engaged with heavy German forces. In fact, the Germans had committed approximately 10,000 infantrymen against the approximately 2300 infantry of Task Force Hudelson and the rightmost regiment of the 100th ID, a ratio of about four to one.^{iv} Despite a desperate defense supported by artillery, by 0330 the cavalry found themselves outmatched and the 117th CRS' commander ordered a withdrawal. Unfortunately, due to slippery conditions, battle damage, and enemy capture of roads, the forward cavalymen were forced to abandon a large amount of equipment. Additionally, the 117th Squadron had been under orders (presumably from Task Force) to not start their vehicles during the night to maintain noise discipline. This meant that many vehicles would not start in the extreme cold and had to be left.^v

The squadron established a new defensive line, approximately two miles to the south. Reinforced by the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion, the cavalry held this line all morning against successive waves of German attacks. As the day progressed, German infiltration to the east had seized the towns of Mouterhouse and Baerenthal to the east of the squadron. The loss of these towns unhinged the cavalry position (as well as forcing the 117th CRS headquarters to flee). Subsequently, the cavalry and 19th Armored Infantry Battalion retreated another three miles to hold a five mile line from Goetzenbruck to Reipertswiller.^{vi} The 117th CRS was relieved on 2 January by the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th ID, and sent to the corps rear to recover. The squadron had taken only 39 casualties, but vehicles losses were extreme with 12 armored cars, 38 jeeps, 6 light tanks, and two halftracks reported as lost.^{vii}

In 24 hours of combat, the troopers of the 117th Cavalry and Task Force Hudelson had accomplished their mission. While unable to hold the initial line of resistance, the cavalry delayed the enemy and developed the battle in such a manner that the Germans would only be able to make minor gains after the 1 January fighting. While fighting withdrawals rarely get much notice, they are often the reason behind successful defensive stands.

The 117th Cavalry earned their pay on New Year's Day 1945 and deserve for their achievements to be remembered by following generations of cavalry.

ⁱ Robert Lutz, 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) in World War II (117th Cavalry Association), 45.

ⁱⁱ Lutz, 45.

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Engler, *The Final Crisis: Combat in Northern Alsace, January 1945* (Bedford, PA: Aberjona Press, 1999), 98.

^{iv} Keith Bonn, *When the Odds Were Even* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1994), 193.

^v Anecdotal from members of the 117th Cavalry Association who had firsthand contact with survivors of the battle.

^{vi} Lutz, 47-51.

^{vii} COL Harold Samsel, *Operational History of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (MECZ) World War II* (2nd Printing, 1983), Part II: Bitche Action, 11. While acknowledging the fact that this narrative is taken from the unit or from recollections of the unit, the timelines provided by XV and VI Corps do not substantially differ from these reports.



My Father's Footsteps When a river cruise trip from Paris France to Normandy came up a year ago, my wife Sue and I signed on with several friends. The initial trip was for a leisurely trip on a smaller river cruise boat down the river to Normandy Beaches area and then back to Paris. Realizing the prospect of being in France I decided to extend the trip for several days so we could rent a car and drive south, several hundred kilometers, to the town of Montrevel-en-Bresse, which was one of the towns liberated by the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz). and where my dad, SSG Ed Leonard was taken prisoner during the war.

Having discussed the town, the battle, and the capture with my dad many times in the past, the excitement of actually being in the same town began to build as the trip rapidly approached. My dad had drawn a detailed map of the general area from his memory with the locations marked for the municipal building, command post, supply vehicle area and the center of town. He was able to show where the German troops approached from

along with the approach of a light German tank and also a larger heavy German tank. Both tanks were taken out by the 37mm gun on the M8 armored car manned by Renzi and Schmetzer which was located approx. 50 feet from the crossroad intersection in town. From the first time my dad ever explained the battle, we have always referred to that intersection as Renzi's corner part in fact since Renzi was later killed during the battle. To help acclimate myself for when I would be in Montrevel, I looked up the town on Google earth and found the intersection, municipal building and other landmarks that my dad had described from 65 – 70 years ago was almost exactly matching the hand drawn map. We were set to go off on the experience now with all we needed for locations.

Swiss Army veteran Gilles Guignard is a young man who lives in Geneva Switzerland. Gilles is a military historian, a member of the 117th Cavalry Association who befriended us with open arms and guided us throughout the town of Montrevel. Gilles has broad knowledge of the battle in Montrevel as well as landmarks and local history and was helpful in finding us a hotel room in Nyon, Switzerland. We set a date to travel from Geneva to Montrevel and stay overnight to see the town and landmarks.

We arrived in Montrevel and immediately found the people friendly, the countryside beautiful and many of the original buildings still there. You know that the buildings are original because many still show the signs of war due to remaining pockmarks from bullet and shell impacts in window frames, buildings and walls. I was very amazed. The walk through town was so emotional for me. We reached the intersection (Renzi's corner) and I could stand there in the area where my dad positioned next to that armored car, directing the fight so many, many years ago. I could close my eyes, see the light German tank as it raced towards the intersection, and hear the crack of the armored car as it fired on the tank taking it out and killing its commander. Suddenly there was the rumbling sound of a heavy German tank as it cautiously approached the intersection, not knowing that Renzi and Schmetzer were only 50 feet away around the intersection. Slowly the tank rolled into the intersection and as soon as the tank tread was visible and vulnerable, Renzi and Schmetzer fired on the heavy tank taking the tread out and thus disabling the tank from any further approach. Unfortunately, after being relieved from their position in that armored car by two other soldiers, Renzi was killed in battle.

A short walk down the road we found the area where the supply vehicles were destroyed by German tank fire. The location of the town monument to the 117th Cavalry with the names of the American soldiers that died in the battle is currently at this area. Again, I could feel my emotions starting to overwhelm me. Here I stood where men had fought and died and I felt like I personally knew each of them. The sound of explosions and rifle fire rang in my ears and "I was there". It was an unbelievable experience. We did a short ceremony at the monument with several reenactor friends of Gilles who had come to Montrevel that day dressed in WW II American Army uniforms along with M1 rifles, M1 carbine and a BAR. While at the monument for our ceremony, I was so thankful that my dad's name was not inscribed on it but realized the names that were there were still fallen comrades and "family". Being an Army veteran of the Vietnam War ('69-'70) myself, I can well appreciate the togetherness of Brothers in Arms and the rigors of conflict and combat. I was so overwhelmed with emotion and thankful for the chance to be there that day. A short walk to the open countryside showed the area from where the German troops and tanks approached and I was there too.



We met the mayor of Montrevel who took all of us to lunch and also partook in the ceremony at the monument. I felt so inadequate to express my feelings due to my limited memory of French classes in high school, which I truly regretted now. Gilles was again so helpful being the translator but I think the tears in my eyes were sufficient to express my feelings and my thanks for the honored reception in the town by the mayor, the people, Gilles and his friends who travelled to Montrevel that day to help relive my dad's experiences for me. My comment to all was that we were all "family" in this world. We just have different names. We will always be brothers and sisters. It is sad to think people had to die in wars so that we are all here free today to live our lives. There is no greater sacrifice that one can give than to die defending freedom.



It was a day that I will remember the rest of my life. My dad was amazed to see the pictures of the town that he fought in so long ago and he remembered so vividly. My true feeling was that if I was to die the next day, that I would die a happy man having been able to live the experience with my wife, Gilles and my new friends while standing in my father's footsteps... He is and will forever be my "Hero". The 117th



Cavalry's motto of "Show 'em the way" could not be more appropriate as it has allowed me to "be there" in the mist of battle but safe from harm... Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who made it possible.

Ed Leonard, Pompton Plains NJ "My Father's son"



Danielle Korpacz Bracco, president of HHT 1-102nd CAV FRG is flanked by husband Stephen and Dennis Dougherty. Danielle has been tireless and super effective in her leadership and hands-on work. She writes: "December 15, 2013 ...Amazing day today - presented with these today... *Noble Patron of Armor and Order of Saint Joan D 'Arc*...thank you to the Cavalry - I am so happy you let me stick aroundicing on the cake was a *Distinguished Service Award* from the Association of the United States Army" Danielle, you are a Patriot!





From Kenneth D. Quaas about LTC Kenneth L. Quaas, U S Army Retired Thanks so much to all of you who helped make my dad's **Honor Flight to Washington, DC** so special by writing a note in support of his efforts during WWII. He was deeply moved by your sentiments and thrilled to read the letters, which were passed out on the plane ride home. << grandson John, Ken D's wife Isabelle, grandson Matt, "Gramps" and Ken D.

The whole Honor Flight event was an amazing experience for him, as he got to meet other veterans and tour the war monuments in DC, including of course, the WWII monument, where they were received by a military color guard. It also was an amazing experience for our family, as we gathered at Midway Airport last night with 2,000+ other people, including a full brass band, a drum & bugle corps with bagpipers, a full military honor guard and

even high school cheerleaders to greet the veterans returning from their day in Washington, DC and "welcome them home". The organization created a "parade route" through the airport and the many WWII veterans who were able to make the trip were greeted with cheers, flag waving, posters and banners as people were lined 3 and 4 deep on both sides of the ropes. As these 90-year-old+ men passed by, many of them in wheelchairs, they shook hundreds of outstretched hands. It was a moving experience for all.

My wife, Isabelle, had a chance to talk with a veteran who had helped liberate one of the concentration camps. He still carries pictures he took in his wallet and bears witness by showing them to everyone so that people never forget. These heroes deserve recognition. Your notes helped make this experience even more special for my dad. Please enjoy the attached pictures taken last night at the airport, and again, thank you!

His son, Kenneth D. Quaas



A very special thank you to Danielle Bracco of the HHT 1-102nd FRG and all her volunteers who helped make the **2013 Casino Night** a huge success!! The Family Readiness Groups of the 1-102nd Cavalry and the *117th Cavalry Association* sponsor this annual event that helps to finance Family Readiness Group Activities of the 1-102nd Cavalry throughout the year. Over 400 plus folks attended this year's event. *A donation of \$1,000.00 was made to the 117th Cavalry Association!*



<< Congratulations to newly promoted **CPT Frank Pelaez**. **CPT Mike Curz** promoted him to the rank of Captain, as Squadron Commander **LTC Bill Morris** looked on at the combined Stable Call of the 1-102nd Cavalry and *117th Cavalry Association* meeting in the Heritage Room of the Westfield Cavalry Armory. The promotion ceremony took place September 21, 2013.

The officers of Company D 250th BSB, the Forward Support Company for the 1-102nd Cavalry (**LT Jon Barte**, **CPT Anthony Mapp**, **LT Brian Eromenok**) are all smiles after their presentation of the role of logistics in support of the 1-102nd Cavalry at the combined Stable Call of the 1-102nd Cavalry and *117th Cavalry Association* meeting in the Heritage Room of the Westfield Cavalry Armory. >>



<< **LTC Bill Morris** Commander 1-102nd Cavalry promotes A Troop Commander **Jim Giacchi** to Captain as **COL Mark Pitserski**, 50th IBCD Commander looks on.

Officers and NCO's of Troop B 1-102nd Cavalry (**LT Joe Cecere**, **SSG Mitch Corrado**, **SFC Todd Rose**, **LT Sergio Suarez**, **CPT Ryan Harty**, **SSG Pablo Chavez**) are standing tall after making a presentation at the 1-102nd Cavalry at the combined Stable Call of the 1-102nd Cavalry and *117th Cavalry Association* meeting in

the Heritage Room of the Westfield Cavalry Armory>>



<< During the September 22, 2013 drill of HHT 1-102nd Cavalry, **CPT Ryan Bailey** relinquished command to **CPT Joe Bolcar**. Congratulations and a special thanks to CPT Ryan Bailey for his years of service in both the 5-117th Cavalry and the 1-102nd Cavalry. He *Showed 'em the Way!* Good luck and success to CPT Joe Bolcar on his assumption of command of HHT 1-102nd Cavalry. (Pictured **Captain Ryan Bailey**, **1SG Rowe**, **CPT Joe Bolcar**)



Membership Update – SMG (Ret) Ken Mahan Trooper! Look at your address label! If the date is not September 2013 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 14

**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 **117th Cavalry Association.** **Pay Pal** can be used as well – link is on our web site 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 kmahan117@aol.com. We are compiling an email list of members and we want to include you. **Association web site:** www.117th-cav.org/ Read past issues of *The SPUR*, look up the WWII histories of the 38th, 102nd and 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons (Mecz). All WWII Veterans will no longer pay dues, you will see WWII over your name. **Memories:** In the passing of Arnold Lasner, I will miss his phone calls. Danny Melso was the same way they would call just to talk, They were always interested in what went on in the Unit.

TAPS



Joan F. Spano, age 81, of Whiting, joined her husband Rocco in Heaven Friday December 20, 2013. Born in Elizabeth, she lived in Long Valley, she moved to Whiting in 2003. Joan was a Dietician for Mount Olive High School in Mount Olive, NJ. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Hobart Chapter, No. 63 in High Bridge, NJ. Joan was predeceased by her husband Rocco Spano Jr. in 2011, and her sisters Doris Palmisano and Marie Ruddy. Surviving are her sons Rocco F. Spano and his wife Catherine of Long Valley, and Michael Spano and his wife Dawn of Cary, NC, her daughters Donna Spano and her partner Daryle of Chatham, and Debra Hornung and her husband John of Toms River. Also surviving are 6 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren

James A. Kane Sr., age 97, of Brick, died Dec. 16 at Laurelton Village Care Center, Brick. Born in South Plainfield, he lived there most of his life until moving to Brick in 1985. He was the owner/operator of Kane's Liquors in South Plainfield for many years until retiring. James was a very active member of the South Plainfield community. He was a Volunteer Fireman, sat on the Board of Education, was the Past president of Rotary International and Past Exalted Ruler of the Elks. He was also a member of the Navy League of the United States, Watchung Chapter, the Knights of Columbus, VFW and American Legion. James proudly served in the US Army as a First Sergeant of Company F (tanks) 38th Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz), 102nd Cavalry Group during World War II, participating in battles in Normandy, Belgium and Germany. His valiant service earned him the Bronze Star. He continued his devotion to his country as a member of the 102nd Cavalry Regiment Association, Essex Troop and the 117th Cavalry Association. He was predeceased by his loving wife, Virginia Kane; his sisters, Mary, Barbara, Kathleen and Jeanette and his brothers, John and Francis. James is survived by his son, James A. Kane Jr. of Somers Point; his daughter, Dayle Maloney and her husband, Ronald of Point Pleasant; 4 grandchildren, James A. Kane III, Brian Kane, James P. Maloney and Kelly Travers and two great grandchildren, Jessica and Dylan Kane. He is also survived by two sisters, Sister Jane Kane and Rita Claire Kane.



Edward J. Chrystal, 72, of Springfield, N.J., died on Monday, Oct. 28, 2013, at Overlook Medical Center in Summit, N.J. Born in Irvington, N.J., Edward lived in Newark, N.J., and Union, N.J., before moving to Springfield 38 years ago. He was a deputy fire chief for the City of Newark before retiring 14 years ago after 37 years. He was a member of the BPO Elks Lodge No. 1583 in Union, N.J., and the Watchung Ski Club. He was also a veteran of the US Marine Corps. Edward was married to his wife, Joyce (nee Sabatos), for 50 years, and was the father of Coleen; Edward Jr. and his wife, Georgette; Matthew and his wife, Sarah Chrystal, and Justine Billotto and her husband, Roger. He was also the brother of John and Paul Chrystal as well as the grandfather of seven grandchildren.

Arnold Lasner, 88, of Plainfield, N.J., passed away Oct. 21, 2013. Mr. Lasner, a World War II Army veteran of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron who proudly received the *Bronze Star for Valor* and the *French Legion of Honor*, was the retired owner of Sobel's Ladieswear of Plainfield and a Rutgers College graduate. Mr. Lasner was a master mason with the Theodore Roosevelt Lodge 627 of Elizabeth, N.J., a member of the 117th Cavalry Association of Westfield, N.J., past president of the Queen City Federal Credit Union, past president of the Plainfield Lodge B'rith Abraham/B'nai Zion, and past member of the board of directors, finance and cemetery committees of Congregation Beth Israel. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Estelle; sons, Andrew and Jay; a sister, Aline Sokler, and grandchildren, Ben and Amy.





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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



- SP-15 EMIL & MARGARET ALLGEIER
WI-26 CHARLES ANGELLO
SU-15 NANCY ASHFORD & JEANNIE BROWN (sisters)
(mem. father) SSG WM. T. TITTER
WWII B TROOP 117th CAV
SU-25 BOB & LORRAINE APGAR
SU-32 ED BARRY (mem. of) BILL BARRY TROOP D (AIR)
5-117th CAV
FA-21 RALPH BOCKINO (mem. of) by wife CATHERINE
SU-14 THOMAS BULLOCK
WI-14 SGM (Ret) RICHARD T. BURKE
FA-24 JUDGE SANTI CARNEVALI, WWII 102nd & 117th CAVALRY
FA-15 DON CARSON (mem. of) MSG GARY G. HADDICAN
SU-14 DOROTHY CASPAR (mem. of) RICHARD J. CASPAR
SP-14 GEORGE "JIM" COBURN, *Class of '41* USAAF 395th
FIGHTER SQUADRON, 368TH FIGHTER GROUP (Europe)
WI-14 STEVE CUP WWII TROOP A, 102nd CAVALRY
FA-14 LTC (Ret) PETER D'ELIA
SP-15 ROBERT A. DENNIN JR. - A FRIEND
WI-14 SGM (Ret) JIM DOOLEY
WI-13 COL (Ret) DENNIS DOUGHERTY
WI-18 1SG (Ret) PHILIP DUNN, A Troop mem. wife BETTY
SP-14 1SG (Ret) DAVE ELLIS, D Troop
WI-14 ROBERT ELLERT
WI-17 MANUEL G. FERRI
WI-14 LTC (Ret) ALAN R. FISHER
WI-22 MIRIAM FISHER (mem. of husb.) WILLIAM E. FISHER
FA-14 CAROL & WILLIAM FISHER JR.
WI-15 HENRY & MARION FORSTENHAUSLER
WI-14 PATRICK FRANK
WI-42 JOHN FRANTZ, LT A Troop 5-117TH CAV
SP-14 BILL GRUSS (mem. of) SFC FRANCIS SKINNER
WI-13 1SG (Ret) BOB GRZESZCZAK
FA-14 LTC ANDREW HAGUE
FA-20 BARBARA HANSEN wife of TOM HANSEN
SP-18 LAURANCE HASKETT, WWII - 117th CAVALRY SGT Troop C
SP-14 VINCENT HINDRICKS
SP-15 HERB HUBER, WWII 117th CAVALRY T5 Troop E
(Assault Guns)
WI-18 LTC (Ret) JOHN S. HUFF (mem. of) C Troop, 117th CAV
'43-'44 mem. HANK EGBERT & BILL CRONE bros.-in-arms
FA-14 BILL HYNDMAN (mem. of) CPT PAUL SEIDEL, F CO.
WWII 117TH CAV. *Silver Star, Fr. Croix de Guerre*
WI-19 ANNE MARIE & GERALD "JERRY" INFANTINO
FA-15 CHARLES JOHNSON WWII 117th Cavalry Recon
SP-14 COL (Ret.) KEN KLEIN in loving mem. of wife JOANN
WI-24 ESTELLE, ANDREW & JAY LASNER in mem. Arnold
Lasner - husband, father - proud veteran Troop B 117th CAV
SP-15 ROCHUS E. & CELESTE LAWRENCE
WI-16 Dr. DANIEL W. "TREY" LEE III, (mem. of) CPT DANIEL W.
LEE, **CMH**, WWII Troop A, 117TH CAVALRY RECON SQ.
WI-13 EDWARD J. LEONARD, *Class of '41*, PSG B Troop
117TH CAV, Montrevel POW French *Legion of Honor*
WI-18 C. J. MacNICHOLS
WI-14 SSG (Ret) THOMAS J. LINDSAY & MARY
SU-16 JEAN & SGM (Ret.) KEN MAHAN
SU-14 KEN MAHAN for FRG SUPPORT TEAM
WI-14 CSM (Ret) A. A. MAGGS
WI-17 BRIAN & BRUCE (mem.) 1SG WM. B. MALONEY
SU-14 BRUCE MALONEY
WI-20 KEVIN MALONEY (mem.) 1SG BILL MALONEY SR. and
My brother TIM MALONEY
WI-33 PETE & EDITH MARTINEZ
SU-16 ED & BETH MATTHEWS (mem. of Ed's father)
T4 ED MATTHEWS B TROOP 102nd CAV WWII
SP-23 CW4 (Ret) BILL MERRING & CHARLOTTE
SU-15 JUANITA MITCHELL (mem. of husb) FRANK,
Class of '41, PSG B Troop 117th CAV, Montrevel POW
FA-14 CW5 (Ret) FRANK MNICH & JANET
WI-16 1SG (Ret) Troop D (AIR) RONNIE & CONNIE NIER in mem.
MSG ROCCO SPANO HHT 5/117th CAV
SU-14 HENRY NIESE 102nd CAV TRP A 1943-1945 (Stateside)
SP-17 PHILIP NOTESTINE (mem. of) MAJ JOHN B. COULSTON
Troops C & E, *Class of '41*; 602nd Tank Destroyer BN '43-'45
SU-14 LTC (Ret) TOM O'BRIEN, USAF (mem) my Father
SGT JAMES H. O'BRIEN TROOP B (Montrevel POW)
FA-27 JOYCE OWEN wife of 2LT HAROLD "SMOKIE" OWEN,
Class of '41, 102nd & 117th CAV - B & C Troops WWII
SP-16 DR. FOTINOS PANAGAKOS & JUDITH
SP-14 FRANK PATRICK
FA-14 COL (Ret.) BOB PEARCE & CAROL, (mem. of)
RICK APBLET
SU-14 STEVE PETROSKY
WI-14 CSM (Ret) AL PHELAN mem. MSG ROCCO SPANO
WI-16 (mem. of) COL (Ret.) TOM PIDDINGTON, *Class of '41*
FA-15 SALLIE LEE PIERCE (Widow of) DANIEL LEE, **CMH**
SU-19 ANTON and MARILYN PLONNER
SP-14 LTC (Ret) KEN QUAAS (mem) DOROTHEA
WI-13 MSG (Ret) ARTHUR L. REINBOLD Troop D
WI-92 MRS. ROBERT D. ROBBINS, (mem. of ROBBIE)
SP-33 FRED RODMAN, (mem. of brother) WALTER RODMAN
F Company (tanks) 102nd CAV WWII
SU-15 DONALD SAMSEL (mem. of Father) COL (Ret.) HAROLD
SAMSEL, *Class of '41*, 117th CAV WWII FR. *Legion of Honor*
SP-15 SALCIDO FAMILY (in mem. of) 1LT MANUEL SALCIDO
(Ft Jackson '42) 117TH CAV. F CO. KIA Italy June 1944
SP-18 ROBERT SALCIDO (mem of brother) 1LT MANUEL SALCIDO
SP-17 JAMES SCANLON
SU-14 EILEEN SCHNARR (mem) my husband WILLY
WI-16 BILL SEDLAK
SP-15 LTC (Ret) ALFRED H. M. SHEHAB, WWII 38th CAV
SU-14 ROBERT SMITH
SU-15 1LT VINCENT SOLOMENO (mem.) LTC (Ret) JAMES A.
BRODERICK & COL RUDY SAULTER
FA-17 JOHN & MARGARET SUITER
WI-15 1SG GEORGE THOMAS
SP-15 JOE & SABRINA TOOMEY (mem. of) BROTHER
SGM ANTHONY FREDA JR.
SP-15 CW4 (Ret.) DON TRACY & CHICKIE
FA-16 CHARLES A VIVIANO - 50TH CAV RCN SQDN
SP-14 CSM (Ret) HENRY M. WETZEL & GRACE (mem. of)
1SG GEORGE "RED" EMERY
WI-18 LTC (Ret.) FRANK WISWALL, USAF *Class of '41*
B Troop, 102nd CAV '41- '42 Fr. *Legion of Honor*
WI-13 ED WITOS (mem. of) ED WITOS Jr.
WI-27 FRANK A. WOODS, PSG - A Troop, 3rd Platoon
117th CAV WWII
SP-18 MARTHA ZOLLER, FRANK MITCHELL JR. & PAM GUNTER
(mem. of) FRANK & JUANITA MITCHELL
WI-13 SSG SHEILA ZELASKOWSKI
SU-3013 FRG HHT 1-102nd CAVALRY

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3rd ANNUAL SPURS AND SABERS BALL



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c/o SGM (Ret) Ken Mahan
12 W. Walnut St.
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DUES DUE ↓

1ST New Jersey Cavalry



MISSION STATEMENT: It is the continuing objective of *The SPUR* to foster and preserve the Spirit of the 117th 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: 7 February 2014, 11 April 2014, 6 June 2014