



NJ Cavalry and Armor Association

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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165th Issue (post WWII)

Spring 2020



President's Message

Hello fellow New Jersey Cavalry and Armor Association members. I hope and Pray that everyone along with your families and friends are safe and healthy during this Coronavirus Pandemic which has befallen our world. As you are all aware that this crisis has affected everyone within the USA and locally the Governor has issued a "Stay at Home" Executive Order thus cancelling our Quarterly gathering at the Armory. With most of us huddled at home trying to enjoy our retirements we have come to learn that technology has gained many new ways of communicating. We now have ZOOM, GOOGLE MEETINGS, Facebook has become more widely used and INSTAGRAM along with other applications that I have no idea exists.

With all of this in mind, Senior (Old guys) Members have been discussing leveraging this new technology to conduct the 12 June 2020 Meeting, since I do not anticipate the Lockdowns of the Armory to be lifted by that date. So please ensure I have your email address (send to me at col.daniel.t.mahon@gmail.com) so we can send you info on "How To" be in attendance with all of the other member who will participate in our First Official ZOOM online experience in our Association's history. I have done several of these ZOOM meetings with our son's and their work locations and other affiliations which I belong.

Many events have occurred since we last got together, the Squadron has returned from Deployment, Christmas time Activities, Anticipated Yellow Ribbon Events which were interrupted by COVID-19 and a tremendous briefing given during the Feb 2020 Association Meeting in regards to a battle, not yet completely declassified, one of our gallant Troops conducted in the Area of Operations vicinity of Somalia. Our history continues to build on exploits of our Citizen Soldiers. The Essex Troop had invited our members to West Orange Armory to hear a speaker of WWII History talk of many things both Associations were involved in during that war and to attend a Somerset Patriots baseball game. BUT AGAIN they are anticipated cancellations/postponements.

We have been in discussions with our many friends located in Montrivel, France and they have asked for our support in them becoming a French Government recognized organization, of which we as an Affiliated Organization would need our support, we of course will say Yes. In other areas of concern, with permission of you the membership, we are looking into some date changes (which are driven by our By Laws) of future Meeting dates to coincide with the Squadron Battle Assembly dates (Drill Dates) to foster a closer unity with the current serving members. So as you can see there are many things to get your input pro/con and just to try to normalize our comradery. In closing I feel great sorrow in passing on some sad news of the passing away of wives of our original members, Debbie DiBelardino loving wife of SFC Louis DiBelardino and Grace Wetzel loving wife of CSM Henry Wetzel, both after long battles with cancer. Please keep these two wonderful ladies, who not only supported their husband's long careers but also loved and supported the soldiers of the 5th Squadron 117th Cavalry.

SHOW EM THE WAY.

Show 'Em The Way!

Daniel T. Mahon, Colonel, Retired, USA

col.daniel.t.mahon@gmail.com



Squadron Commander's Message:



“Since we’ve demobilized from Jordan and Somalia, the Squadron has been actively engaged in reintegrating with our families and employers while continuing with our Title 32 mission. Specifically we have many of our Troopers working in the COVID-19 Response Force for the NJNG, staffing the VA Veterans Homes and engaged in various support and C2 functions throughout NJ. As we do this, the Squadron continues to excel in everything we take on. What I ask from everyone going forward is that we continue to take care of our Troopers, families, and friends in these especially challenging times.”

“Everyone stay safe and healthy!!”

Show ‘Em the Way!

LTC Omar Minott,

1-102nd Cavalry Squadron Commander



NOTE: The Spur will be published electronically to all members, unless a hard copy mailing is requested. Please send your updated information and The Spur publication requests to SSG Martinez and MAJ Harty at (732)499-5662, 117thcavmemberships@gmail.com or to the Headquarters 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry, Armory, 500 Rahway Avenue, Westfield, New Jersey 07090



From the Editor – MAJ Ryan C. Bailey Welcome Home Troopers! Special

Thanks to every deployed Trooper who took the time to attend our last regular meeting. In your lockdown you can travel together with Your Troopers this month to Somalia 2019 & France 1944, for highlights from Cavalry History.

Looking forward to seeing you again soon. All my best to you & yours.

Show ‘Em the Way! ryan.c.bailey@hotmail.com

New Jersey Cavalry & Armor Association Minutes February 7, 2020

President Mahon began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. It was followed by a moment of silence for those who had passed away since our last meeting to include SGM Ken Mahan, LTC Claude Cook and COL Mark Tucci, who was not in the squadron but in the NJ National Guard for many years.

The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.

In order to get to our guest speakers more quickly, normal committee reports were suspended for the meeting. A few quick points were raised.

1. Mike Hrycak completed the paperwork to officially change the name to the NJ Cavalry and Armor Association.
2. Members were reminded to update their email addresses and pay their outstanding dues.

Vice President Bill Morris made some introductory remarks on the importance of the contributions of every generation to the squadron and that those contributions need to be recorded and passed on. He introduced CPT London Nagai. CPT Nagai was the C-Troop Commander during their deployment to Somalia.

CPT Nagai's Report We do thank the Association for all that they are doing. There is a high degree of Esprit De Corps that goes into being 1-102nd. It has been joked about there being a fine line between confidence and maybe having too much ego. But, Esprit de Corps is needed to go into a situation like Somalia with the confidence to be able to accomplish the mission. C-Troop of the 102nd has always toed that line very closely. You can see it in the way that people come into the unit and they understand that the bar has been set a little bit higher, and it's because of folks like you. So I really do appreciate everything that you set up for us prior to even leaving the door, prior to us even getting to Fort Dix or Texas. People knew that when you joined the Cav, that there was something that you had to prove right from day one.

That came to fruition when we initially got our mission from Colonel Minott. I can't say enough good things about LTC Minott. We were told that we had a hundred Thirty-One slots to fill. As you know, C-Troop is a very small company mostly 11 Bravos, Infantry. LTC Minott said, "Whatever you need, we are here to support you." Because of that we were able to bring a platoon of 19 Deltas with us as well as a squad plus of field artillery soldiers, MI soldiers, mechanics and everything that the Cav had to offer. The reason this is so important is because during the time of the highest intensity, every Cav Asset was used to defend our base and the citizens on it. We didn't know that going in but we didn't want to go in there with a normal Infantry attitude; we just want all people who could shoot a weapon straight. We wanted people who could recon, who could go silently, who could stake out for long hours for days at a time. We knew that we needed to use every bit of training that we had gotten on the home side and in country. When we got there we were essentially given a blank canvas.

This mission was very nuanced. It was a Special Forces mission prior to us getting there. By the time we got there, the area had developed to the point where we as Calvarymen and reconnaissance soldiers understood that the battlefield was changing and that the old ways were

no longer going to work. So what we did is we sat down our platoon sergeants and platoon leaders and we literally just opened up the reconnaissance handbook and we reviewed our SOP's. We literally said, this worked at Ft Dix, there is a reason why, this worked at Picatinny, and there is a reason why. We took all of that and said these are the tactics that every Cavalryman needs to know, needs to own and needs to understand.

Now, we have to place it in Somalia. So that battle drill one alpha where we need to flank left or right, we may only be able to do a 45 degree flank because the terrain is so bad. Those hide sites that we set up for our vehicles, we might not be able to set up camo netting, so we may need to set up a larger herringbone in order to make sure we have proper cover and concealment. So all those things went into that in order to get what the army calls defense in depth. I think that the most eye opening thing that we learned was that it actually called for a Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop. So when we opened up the unified land operations, we thought that we were smarter than everyone else but right there in the pages in black and white it said you are going to use an Alpha troop to do this, a Bravo troop to do this and a Charlie troop to do this.

And because LTC Minott and the state had the wherewithal to give us those assets prior, we were able to essentially fake a squadron. When I say fake a squadron, it is that we saw over time with all these missions that the enemy actually thought that we were projecting a force far greater than we had. We were getting reports back about a hundred vehicles at a time, 200 soldiers moving out of the base at a time. We only had a hundred and thirty, but because we were able to project our force by using all those squadron assets to include mortarmen, snipers, 19 deltas, infantry. We were doing feints and decoys and all the things that we had learned had talked about, but we were now applying it to the real world. And that proved to be incredibly useful as time grew on. The thing that really stuck out to me when we began doing these operations and these missions is that no other conventional force had done it before, we were literally breaking ground on areas that had never been stepped foot on by an American soldier.

Word starting passing up to higher and higher commands from all the big units that you hear about on TV that needed to get stuff done. Slowly but surely we were getting emails saying "Hey are you the New Jersey National Guard". At first it was one or two and then it was three or four. And then over time it was, Hey, the New Jersey National Guard is running missions down there if you need anything in East Africa. And then it was, hey call these guys because there is an actual Troop down there who is doing all this. So all that information that people thought was unavailable because of the terrain and the disposition of forces down there, soon became available because of the NJ Army National Guard.

That was all they knew us as the New Jersey National Guard until a four star came down and said "Hey, I heard you guys are doing missions down here" and asked essentially who approved it?' He said this is the threat, this is what we are seeing, at the base there has been attacks out here before. I told him, "We are a reconnaissance troop. Yes we are very proud to be the New Jersey National Guard but when you get right down to it the guy in the trenches is a Cavalryman. He knows how to do this." The general said prove it. And I had to brief him, and about 30 minutes into it, he said "Roger, anything you need to do you got my approval."

And that turned us into going on patrol into places that had never been before patrolled by American forces. To include civilians and all of these indigenous folks coming to us saying you are the Americans and you're finally here. The lethality part was proved during the attack but prior

to that it was well building, health clinics, and bringing food and water to these displaced citizens. And because of that good will that we built, they actually helped us during the attack by saying these guys are coming here; we see that there are enemies over there. So everything that we had done whether on purpose or by sheer good luck proved itself on September 30th, 2019.

On September 30th we were attacked. That fight occurred on the 30th but was won years and years and years ago. From the minute that these soldiers joined that 102nd, was when these soldiers began being trained. Every time that a platoon sergeant got on somebody's ass because they were not doing the right thing, every time a platoon leader messed up on an op order and had to redo it, that is when the fight was actually being won. On September 30 it just so happened to be that we finished it on that day, They wound up attacking us with the largest bomb that the Somalis had ever seen, which is a feat in and of itself. They came after us wave after wave and within 2 minutes you had every squadron asset on top of that objective. Whether it was our FO's, who were calling for fire. Or our medics who were pulling guys off the line, giving them immediate first aid or our 19 Deltas who were flanking in vehicles with our dismounted infantry, in the towers with the snipers every piece and MOS of the squadron was there. And as COL Morris said in spirit you were all there as well.

What happened was that these (our) guys obviously won the fight, Thank God. But the beautiful part for me is that every little bit of training that we had talked about and saw prior that was considered the non-tactical part of being a soldier came to fruition. Literally NCO's going to Soldiers to say that you need to drink water right now, it was every medic pulling guys off and saying, I need to take 30 seconds to stop, it was squad leaders running back for ammunition. We went through like 10,000 rounds of ammo in less than 30 minutes and constantly refilling. Platoon leaders coming to me and saying this is where we are on the battlefield; this is where we need to maneuver. The first sergeant on the line next to every single guy telling them to slow their rate of fire, we are going to get through this. It was all those little mundane things practice here at Ft Dix and on drill weekends applied and it ultimately won the fight.

I am obviously super proud and the first sergeant is obviously super proud but we are obviously super biased. You all should be incredibly proud. In the moment it was obviously pretty hazy, chaotic and fast, but there was not a soldier there that afterwards did not have that come to Jesus moment when we did the AAR and debriefs. When the Generals swarmed down again, they asked the soldiers what is the thing that you learned most during that fight and to a tee they all said that we didn't realize how much the training we did back home would affect us now. I wasn't thinking about anything, I was just thinking that this is what we do at Ft Dix, I am doing it here. They literally said I didn't see anything around me, I just knew that a team leader was going to put ammo here and I was going to shoot here. The medics were pulling guys off like it was a training event. There were guys who literally thought it was a training event because of how many drills we had actually done prior to that but that goes to show what muscle memory can do for you and what training can do for you. There was nothing more palpable than the pride that those guys had when they walked off the line and everything was calmed down. You would not find a soldier that wouldn't leave with I am C Troop.

I will leave you with two stories. We had an unmanned aircraft that was coming for a crash landing. One of CPT Freeman's Air Force Soldiers came up to our hide site and said hey Soldier you have to come down, there is a bird coming in, it is going to crash land. And the Soldier looked at him and said General Order number one "I will not quit my post unless properly relieved." So

the Air Force guy turns the corner and says I just called your platoon leader and says that you are good to go. And the private said, "With all due respects sergeant, I will not leave until my platoon leader comes to relieve me." in the end he wound up not getting hurt. That was the level of discipline when the bullets weren't flying. That was him saying I take my job seriously as I can and that is from training stateside.

And then you move to the battle. We were with a bunch of Special Forces guys, they were all amazing soldiers and we loved working with them but everyone knew that when the bomb went off that C Troop was in charge, we were there to defend the base. So that bomb went off and you had everyone running to the bunkers. I remember a soldier telling me afterwards it seems like it is out of a movie. One of the SF guys is trying to get all the soldiers into the bunker, and he said a soldier turned around to him and said I am C Troop and then took off into the distance to go to his fighting position. But that was how serious those guys were but it didn't start over there it started here in Westfield and in Dover.

CPT Nagai made two presentations to the heritage room

1. The bumper of the vehicle used in the attack. It was the largest piece that was left.
2. A large knife made from a stolen fence post. It was presented to the unit from one of the interpreters.

COL Morris closing Remarks

- 1) Trust is the Coin of the realm -Trust is the foundation of all army operations
- 2) Doctrinal mastery is important because it allows you to know when it doesn't fit and needs to be altered to the existing situation.

First Sergeant Greenberg's Remarks

1SG Greenberg remarked that there was a high level of trust in the unit. The unit as a whole felt that the guidance that was given from the officers and senior NCO's was the best decision for that situation. Many of the soldiers have remarked on missing being with the unit now that they are back.

Westfield Chief of Police and Battalion Chief Remarks

Talked about the enthusiasm in planning the home coming from McGuire AFB to Westfield. Multiple police departments wished to be involved. Westfield police depart have wrapped car #49 in honor of the 102. The 102 will be further honored by being the Grand Marshall at the Memorial Day Parade.

COL(ret) Dennis Dougherty and LTC Minot presented Lt Nicholas Priessnitz with the COL Harold J Samsel Junior Officer of the Year Award. He was given the award for retraining an engineer platoon into top flight security forces maneuver platoon. This platoon provided day to day security for the operations in Jordan.

SFC Jason McAvoy was presented with the 1SG William Maloney NCO of the Year Award. He was presented with his award for coordinating with Special Forces for the base defense in Somalia.

President Mahon again stressed the valuable contributions to the squadron from the family readiness group. They ran the Annual Casino Night and the Children's Christmas Party and provided refreshments to the night's meeting.

Family Readiness Group reminded members that the 11th Annual Casino Night will be 21Nov20.

Ed Barry presented the Heritage Room with a Troop D Air Guidon that was absent from the collection. CPT Barry provided the Guidon at his own expense.

Members and Guests Present: Frank Mnich, Mitch Carrado, Dan Mahon, Paul Greenberg, London Nagai, Jason Macavay, Robert Angelini, Matthew Mulick, Donald Kondroski, Jiunn Wu, Kevin Murphy, Angelo Panzarino, Bill Gruss, James Anglim, Chris Sands, Michael Hrycak, John Kieslor, Daniel Sullivan, Denis Dougherty, Danielle Bracco, Bill Morris, Chris Bradley, Jenn Silva, James Pressman, William Merring, Tom Merring, James Russo, Chris Battilomo, Burim Regjaj, John Blake, Bob Freeman, Pedro Martinez, Michael Duelles, Keith Gibbons, Art Maggs, Ed Barry, Nick Priessnitz, Stephan Pruser, James Lacey, Omar Minott

***NEW JERSEY CAVALRY AND ARMOR ASSOCIATION HERITAGE ROOM COMMITTEE
PROGRESS REPORT SPRING 2020***

We are no longer holding workshops on Wednesdays; however, we continue working on the remaining milestones of displaying, sorting, categorizing, logging, and labeling all items for accountability. If you would like to be a part of this historical effort, please contact Frank Mnich 732-985-5758 or COL Bill Morris 609-784-6003. We will gladly welcome any assistance.

UPDATED - ONGOING PROJECTS and COMPLETED RENOVATIONS:

- We have now displayed a large picture frame with the many Streamers which have been awarded to our unit. This display is located on the right wall as you enter the back room area.
- Our German Nazi Flag, which was reframed and is now hung on the right inside wall as you enter the back room area, now displays a framed narrative story alongside it explaining the flags remembrance and importance to our association.
- We have now completed the project of replacing the entire electrical wiring system above the drop ceiling in the bar area. This has been a slow but very professionally done task and has finally been inspected and signed off as approved by the state electrical inspector. For their untiring assistance in this time-consuming task, our thanks go to Art Maggs and Ed Barry.
- We also have displayed five new framed pictures of unit personnel taken in various locations which have enhanced and improved the overall appearance on the walls of our bar area.
- We are still awaiting a reply from our Regional Chief Armorer, Frank Martinez, who has submitted a state request to have a professional contractor clean the outside of all the building's windows

but is now presently working with a unit Trooper who has volunteered to complete this task for us. Updates on this issue will be forthcoming as they are received.

-To be more uniform, we are still looking into having additional camouflage covers made for all remaining stools that do not have camouflage coverings.

-Presently, we are working on a wall project to recognize and honor SGT Curtis Grubb Culin III, a native of Cranford, NJ, for his credited invention of the hedge-breaching device fitted to Allied Armored Vehicles during the Battle of Normandy. SGT Culin received the Legion of Merit for his contributions.

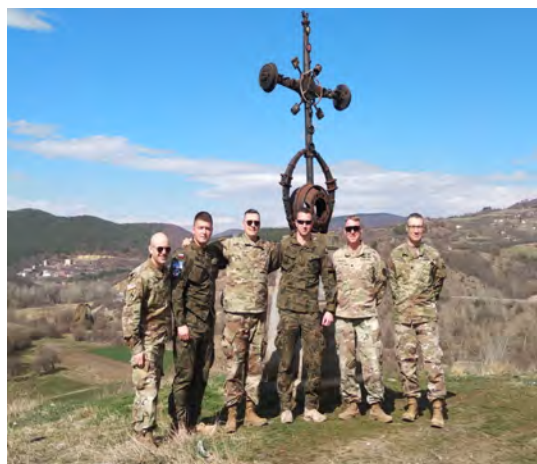
-We are still in the process of sorting out and categorizing many loose pictures. We will then further proceed to label, file, and organize them for easier identification and more secure accountability.

Respectfully submitted by Co-Chairmen, COL Bill Morris and CW5 (Ret) Frank Mnich

From The Front: Kosovo Force Deployment for 44th IBCT HQ

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph McNamara, Cavalry Trooper and Former Commander of HHT & C Troops of the 1-102nd Cavalry, led our Brigade Headquarters through a series of Multi-National NATO exercises of his own design. Assigned as Regional Command-East Chief of Staff, Joseph repeatedly brought the Fundamentals of Reconnaissance to bear in creating a more capable partnership force within regional Command East, Kosovo Force Rotation 26 for the United States Contingent, led by HQs 44th IBCT, NJARNG, with Colonel Robert W. Hughes Jr. Commanding.

OPERATION JEWELLED DAGGER is a Multi-National exercise conducted across the Joint Operations Area and involving successive phases of long range reconnaissance missions, aerial reconnaissance and air movement of forces from several nations throughout the Area of Operations in support of NATO's readiness and relevancy on the Eurasian Land Mass. This culminating exercise for U.S. Forces within the Former Yugoslavia subsequently led the redeployment of forces upon successful Handover, Turnover processes. In the final days of our deployment to The Eastern Mediterranean Theater, we were thankfully able to prepare our successors from Oregon, 41st IBCT, ORARNG & redeploy Stateside for COVID Response OPS.



KFOR 26 Regional Command-East's Joint Implementation Commission conducted approximately 200 Ground and Missions in support of the safe and secure environment of Kosovo. L-R: MAJ Jessie Barnes, JIC Deputy Commander, CPT Marcin Gołoś, RC-E Ops, MAJ Ryan Bailey, RC-E Ops, CPT Adam Kuchta, RC-E Ops LTC Dennis Stiles, JIC Commander & LTC Brian Stramel, JIC Commander Incoming JIC CDR, Recon Mission in the North of Kosovo including elements of the Polish Army's 25th AIR CAV BDE, 44th IBCT & 41st IBCT, ORARNG.

Reconnoitering our History, a Cavalry Retrospective By Lauren Leonard Tracy



When I emailed Gilles Guignard out-of-the-blue this August, I didn't expect much. My aunt and uncle, Sue and Ed Leonard, had put us in touch after Gilles hosted them in 2012, but neither had heard from the other since. Ping! Less than two hours later I had a response from Gilles. Yes, he would love to meet us for a visit to Montrevel, where my grandfather Edward J. Leonard fought. And did we need a ride? Or a place to stay? I was overwhelmed with his hospitality, and had a good feeling about the adventure ahead.

Some background on Gilles - Gilles is a friend of the Spur, and a veritable expert on the US Army in Southern France. As he would explain to us, while you can read endlessly about the invasion of Northern France during WW2, relatively little has been written

about Operation Dragoon in comparison, and even less about the Battle of Montrevel. Gilles loves the challenge of piecing together first-hand accounts, interviewing locals, hunting for buried treasure where battles once raged, and bringing to life history that would otherwise be lost. When Sue and Ed decided to make the pilgrimage to Montrevel in 2012, they were connected with Gilles via the Spur.

Seven years later - five years after my grandfather's passing - I planned to make the same pilgrimage. Armed with a map my grandfather drew and annotated with details of the battle, we met Gilles and his mom Suzy at the train station in Bourg-en-Bresse. They spotted us immediately, and their warm faces and eager smiles put us at ease. It was the first feeling of serendipity on an almost unbelievably serendipitous day.

My grandfather has been a personal hero of mine and just about everyone in my family for as long as I can remember. In his 70s and 80s, he began sharing memories of his tour in WW2 after being mostly stoic and quiet on the topic for much of his life. In 2008, my brother Mike Leonard began sneaking a tape recorder in during lunch dates and recording chats over his kitchen table. It seemed once his memories began to flow, they could not be stopped. And we didn't want them to. We loved listening to his stories.

We capitalized on this windfall of memories and signed him up for the Rutgers University Oral History project. Thanks to this, we now have over 60 pages of his life story transcribed, and a recording of him telling it in his own voice. Over the course of several hours, he details his childhood and tenure with the 117th Cavalry, B Troop - from New Jersey, to England, to North Africa, Italy and France - with the story reaching a crescendo at the Battle of Montrevel, September 3rd, 1944. There he courageously fought alongside 150 US Cavalrymen for 12 hours against the 11th Panzer Division (3,000+ men), and later was captured and taken prisoner. He remained a prisoner for the next nine months before escaping in May 1945. Throughout his oral history - and in many kitchen table chats before - he mentioned wishing to return to Montrevel. Montrevel represented a turning point in his life, and he lamented not having gone back when he was younger and more physically able.



When we got to Montrevel-en-Bresse on September 26th, our first stop was along the North-South road into town, the same road the 11th Panzer Division took as they approached the morning of the battle. Gilles pointed out the location of a barn - no longer standing - where my grandfather and fellow Cavalrymen slept after being taken prisoner the night after the battle. He told the story of the soldiers being woken up there and lined up outside. I instantly recognized the story from my grandfather's account. He had assumed they would be executed. Instead, they were assembled to watch a funeral for the German officer his troop had killed the day before. I was amazed to hear this story - my grandfather's story - from someone I had just met. As

we trekked around the field where the barn once stood, Gilles oriented us to the landscape and the action that took place there: the high ground occupied by the Germans; the East-West road where the 117th's supply vehicles were all destroyed; the main intersection of town, which my grandfather nicknamed "Renzi's corner" for Leopold Renzi, the heroic gunner responsible for that German officer's death, who was killed in battle later that day; and, of course, the hillside where Daniel Lee earned a Medal of Honor for his heroism. The stories I knew began to come alive and intersect with others Gilles had gathered over the course of his research.

Gilles later took us to the town hall. We stood outside and looked at a picture the villagers had taken in the days after the battle of the town hall. In it, you could see damage from cannon fire. This had been where the battle converged at the end of the day and where the Americans ultimately surrendered. As we approached the stucco building, recently renovated inside, Gilles pointed out bullet holes left over from the battle, and patches on window frames in the exact spots where we could see gaping holes in the photograph. It struck me that I had never before seen the physical scars of war like this, let alone ones so personal to my grandfather. As we left, Gilles pointed out that the interior renovations were likely a harbinger of exterior renovations to come. Someday - maybe soon - these scars would no longer exist. As we continued around town comparing photographs from the days after the battle to the present-day landscape, history seemed tangible in a way I had never experienced.

As we sat down for lunch at Le Comptoir, a restaurant recommended to us by the Mayor's office, I was content. The restaurant was full with the warm, friendly faces of locals. A short time into our meal, a woman named Jackie approached Gilles. She had seen us taking photos outside town hall and wondered what brought us there. Gilles explained, and she lit up. She and her husband Cedric were the owners of another restaurant in town where veterans of the 117th had gathered on past anniversaries of the battle. In French, they asked Gilles if I would be willing to sign a guestbook from their restaurant. Gilles translated. "Of course!" I said. Cedric returned a few minutes later with two books. The first was open to a blank page for me to sign. The second was open to an entry dated September 3rd, 1984. The entry was from William McCabe of the 117th Cavalry, B Troop. He had returned to Montrevel for the 40th anniversary of the battle. The next entry was from his wife and daughter, dated September 3rd, 1994, who had returned ten years later for the 50th anniversary. I was moved by how connected I suddenly felt to these people and this place, and how fragile that connection seemed. If not for Gilles and his ability to translate, or a chance encounter at town hall, these connections might have been missed.



I scrawled an entry - through tears - in Cedric and Jackie's guestbook, and Gilles translated aloud. Their faces as Gilles read the entry were windows into the soul of this little town and the sacrifice the 117th made for it in 1944 - while Jackie and Cedric were (at most) young children at the time, in a way their understanding of that day was much deeper than mine had ever been. The town square in Montrevel is named Place du 3rd Septembre 1944 - that day is and always will be a part of the fabric of the town. We hugged and said goodbye and au revoir through a few more tears, and went on our way.

Gilles took us to one last landmark on our way out of town, the Command Post of the 117th. As we walked up the alley alongside the Command Post spotting bullet holes, we pulled out my grandfather's map. As Gilles pointed around the map to orient us, his finger hovered over a square box in the middle, not far from where we were standing. In it were the names of two men, designating their location that day: O'Dea and McCabe. "McCabe!" I shouted. Gilles looked up. "McCabe!" We knew this was William McCabe, who had visited in 1984 and left an entry in Jackie and Cedric's guestbook. And suddenly time collapsed - here we were in Montrevel 75 years later, with what felt like zero degrees of separation between us and that day, a day that made my grandfather who he was.

We wrapped up the tour with a few moments of reflection at the monument to the 117th in Montrevel. Atop the monument is the crest and motto, "Show 'em the way." I had always loved the plucky spirit of that motto and thought it exemplified my grandfather well. As I stood there, I understood the meaning it holds for the people of Montrevel, for whom the 117th truly lit the way to freedom. At once proud and humbled, I sat and thanked my grandfather for a few moments before departing.

I'll be forever grateful to Gilles, not only for the dogged curiosity that has made him so knowledgeable about the Battle of Montrevel, but also for the kindness and compassion that has helped him forge countless connections among the families and friends of the 117th. While he appears to do this effortlessly, I know he has spent many hours and days like the ones spent with me at the sacrifice of his own free time. In the spirit of the 117th, Gilles truly showed me the way. Words cannot express my gratitude for this.



New Jersey Cavalry and Armor Association Membership Life Membership \$400 for under 55 years old, and \$200 for 55 years and older. Send electronic mail to SSG Martinez and MAJ Harty at 117thcavmemberships@gmail.com or call Headquarters, 1-102 Cavalry 732-499-5662.

Regimental Ballcaps, American Made, In Coyote Brown; OCP ACU Scorpion W2 or Coyote 498. The same color presently worn by our Troopers overseas on the Frontiers of Freedom in the 21st Century. COL (Ret.) Dennis Dougherty, Hats for \$20, and Association crests for \$25.

Of note: MSG (Ret.) Thomas Bullock, who served in A Troop for two decades, is currently residing at Veteran's Haven North, 200 Sanatorium Road, Suite 101, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826 Fax: 908-537-1987 Telephone: 908-537-1999 Toll Free: 877-648-0091.

Submission Deadlines for The SPUR: March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, December 1st. Call for Articles: Contributing Columnists will receive certificates of achievement via email.

Membership Update – SSG Pedro Martinez: Please send an email to me or CPT Harty at <117thcavmemberships@gmail.com> or call the Headquarters 1st Squadron 102d Cavalry (732)499-5662 so that we have your email on file. Send your dues to the return address on this issue.

Annual regular dues of \$20.00 and Associate dues \$15.00 are due in September. Make checks Payable to **117th CAV Association.** Association web site: www.njcavalryandarmorassociation.org/ Read past issues of *The SPUR*, look up the WWII histories of the 38th, 102d and 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons (Mecz). All WWII Veterans and members over 80 will no longer pay dues, you will see WWII over your name.



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 FA-21 RALPH BOCKINO (mem. of) by wife
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 CAVALRY WI- 20 STEVE CUP WWII 102d
 CAVALRY
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 CAV WI-19 BILL & LINDA GRUSS
 FA-20 BARBARA HANSEN wife of TOM
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 WI- 20 LTC (Ret) WILLIAM KALE mem. NJ
 CAV
 SOLDIERS
 WI -24 ESTELLE, ANDREW & JAY LASNER in
 mem.
 Arnold Lasner – husband, father – proud
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 LAWRENCE
 WI-22 TOM PETTY MAJ, RET
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 FA-24, MAJ (RET) JIM SCANLON

SU-21 1SG Ret, Ron Neer in memory of Amil
 Allgiere 20.00 2 years
 WI-20 KEVIN MALONEY (mem.) 1SG BILL
 MALONEY
 SR. and My brother TIM MALONEY Destroyer BN
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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 MEETING - TBD**