

## CHAPTER 9

### SICILY AND ITALY, RETURN OF THE HORSE

Wars should be fought in better country than this.<sup>1</sup>  
—Major General John P. Lucas

While troopers of the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron provided security during the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, little did they know they know how the decisions being made there would affect them during the remainder of World War II. The Combined Chiefs of Staff concluded that Sicily should become the target of the Allies' next amphibious invasion. By securing Sicily they could consolidate their growing control over the Mediterranean sea lines of communication and possibly knock Italy out of the war. At a minimum, the Allies hoped the capture of Sicily, placing them only two miles from the tip of the Italian peninsula, would assist the Soviets by diverting even more Axis resources to defend Italy and the southern edge of the Third Reich.<sup>2</sup>

The fighting in Sicily led to Italy in September 1943. Colonel Hamilton H. Howze, a veteran of the fighting in North Africa and a cavalryman, succinctly captured the action there from the perspective of a mounted warrior.

Of my service in Italy I'll omit much. There were many weeks on that peninsula during which the fighting occurred in such tightly forested mountain terrain that there was no possibility for the proper employment of large armored forces. Often we were consigned to the role of general reserve...tank forces as compared to the infantry, had it easy. The close terrain of Italy kept us often unemployed

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino. The United States Army In World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1969), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, assisted by Martin Blumenson, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy. The United States Army In World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2002), p. 52.

while the infantry divisions spent long, uninterrupted, and often punishing months in the line.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of the terrain seriously impacted the ability to conduct mounted operations. Small towns and cities established in classical and medieval times often occupied the high ground for defensive purposes. The mounted avenues of approach into these cities and villages were often steep and winding with chariots and mules in mind, but decidedly not military vehicles.<sup>4</sup> While Colonel Howze's tankers may have had it easy relative to the infantrymen because of the terrain, the mechanized reconnaissance men were afforded no such break and saw continuous service in Sicily and Italy, even if not mounted or conducting reconnaissance oriented missions.

The continued campaigning in the Mediterranean was not extremely important to the development of mechanized ground reconnaissance. The last major change in the organization of ground reconnaissance units took place in 1943 while fighting continued in the Mediterranean. Units like the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were unable to implement the changes because they were still fighting. The Army also published refinements to the existing mechanized reconnaissance doctrine prior to Operation HUSKY, but made few changes prior to the invasion of Europe in June 1944. Continued campaigning did prove the worth of the existing formations, but also revealed their shortcomings. In this respect, the remainder of American involvement in the Mediterranean theater was most important for those who had opposed the wholesale replacement of horses with vehicles. To some extent, the remainder of the Mediterranean campaign validated some of their prewar beliefs and certainly gave them hope for the return of their beloved horses. In all fairness to the die-hard horse advocates, even the Army was not convinced that horses were no longer necessary. One month prior to the invasion of Sicily, Army Ground Forces ordered the Cavalry Replacement Training Center to have 1,100 "horse and horse specialist" trained by August and September.<sup>5</sup> While some future troopers at

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<sup>3</sup> Howze, *A Cavalryman's Story*, pp.83-84.

<sup>4</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 53. This reference is specific to Sicily, but the same can be said of the terrain in Italy and the impact it had on military operations.

<sup>5</sup> Headquarters Cavalry Replacement Training Center, Fort Riley, Kansas, "Increase in Horse Type Trainees," 8 June 1943, folder AFG 475 Cavalry, box 1057, entry 55, RG 337, NAIL.

Fort Riley continued to learn to ride horses and play the bugle, the only cavalrymen fighting in Europe that summer rode on iron ponies.

For the Americans, the campaign in Sicily, which lasted from 10 July-17 August 1943, was disproportionately led by former cavalrymen in the general officer ranks. Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. commanded the U. S. Seventh Army. Major General Lucian K. Truscott commanded the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division and Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen continued to command the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. Major General Hugh Gaffey, who had served as Patton's Chief of Staff during Patton's brief stint as II Corps commander in North Africa, took command of the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division in May 1943. The non-cavalry officers rounding out the American contribution to Operation HUSKY included Lieutenant General Omar Bradley as the II Corps commander, Major General Troy Middleton commanding the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and Major General Eddy Manton who still commanded the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.<sup>6</sup> With the addition of the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron as a corps asset, the total contribution of mechanized reconnaissance forces was limited to the divisional cavalry troops in each of the infantry divisions and the armored reconnaissance battalion organic to the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division. Opposing Patton's Seventh Army and Montgomery's Eighth Army was General Alfredo Guzzoni's Italian Sixth Army a collection of 200,000 Italian soldiers with an additional 50,000 Germans.<sup>7</sup>

Just as in the invasion of North Africa, mechanized reconnaissance troopers saw early action on 10 July 1943 as American forces came ashore. A single platoon from the 3<sup>d</sup> Reconnaissance Troop crossed the beachhead near Licata only eighty minutes after the initial infantry assault waves. No sooner had they landed than the division dispatched them west along the main coastal road to provide early warning of a counterattack. The single platoon was able to secure a large bridge wired for demolition before the retreating Axis forces could destroy it. They also gained and maintained contact with the enemy until an infantry regiment relieved them

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<sup>6</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Blumenson, *Patton Papers 1940-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), p. 275.

the next day.<sup>8</sup> The single cavalry platoon performed well in its minor role in the largest amphibious operation of World War II, but in no different capacity than had already been demonstrated in North Africa.<sup>9</sup> Company B of the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion came ashore late that night and during the following week supported Combat Command A as it drove inland toward Naro.<sup>10</sup> The single troop from the armored reconnaissance battalion busied itself during the first eight days with patrolling and observation post duties. Early encounters with tanks and 88 mm cannon led to losses and the failure to advance their reconnaissance effort.<sup>11</sup> The manner in which this company was employed and its early performance also mirrored what had already been seen in North Africa.

To the east, II Corps focused elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions on Gela.<sup>12</sup> While the landings had proceeded smoothly at Licata, the Germans conducted a vicious counterattack aimed at the Gela beachhead. It was from this embattled beachhead that the 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Troop started what they would characterize as a very different type of campaign. Whereas in Africa they had “roamed far and wide” in the conduct of their duties for the division. In Sicily they continued to conduct reconnaissance and security missions, but with a greater

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<sup>8</sup> *Cavalry Reconnaissance, Number Five* (Fort Riley, Kansas: The Cavalry School, [1943 or 1944]), pp. 1-6. Captain Alvin C. Netterblad, Jr., commanded the Third Cavalry Troop during the Sicilian campaign and prepared this selection, with its numerous footnoted references to doctrine, for educational purposes at Fort Riley, Kansas.

<sup>9</sup> A small element from the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron performed a similar mission at Gela, the other major landing site. Operation Report, 10 July 1943-March 1944, folder CAVS-91-0.3, box 18231, entry427, RG 94.

<sup>10</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Disney, “Reconnaissance in Sicily, Activities of a Reconnaissance Battalion from the Landings at Licata and Gela to the Entry into Palermo,” *The Cavalry Journal* (May-June 1944), p. 11 and “Report of Operations, 82d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1-31 July,” Hell on Wheels Historical Records, 1963-1965; 1941-1945 folder, box 7, White Papers. Lieutenant Colonel Disney commanded the 82d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion throughout the campaign. The author’s first assignment at Fort Knox, Kentucky in 1989 was at Disney Barracks where contemporary tankers and cavalry scouts are trained.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.11-16.

<sup>12</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 194.

focus on mounted routes through the difficult terrain.<sup>13</sup> C Company of the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance came ashore with Brigadier General I. D. White's Combat Command B on 11 July 1943 to reinforce the beachhead then suffering Axis counterattacks.<sup>14</sup> With only a single platoon of the reconnaissance company equipped with vehicles, they could provide little assistance and until the beachhead expanded, this came mostly in the form of dismounted patrolling.<sup>15</sup> The real opportunity for the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was only days away once Patton gained some room to maneuver.

The drive to Palermo on the western tip of Sicily started in earnest on 13 July 1943 after General Harold Alexander, the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group commander, gave Patton permission to conduct a "reconnaissance in force" toward Agrigento, twenty five miles west of Licata.<sup>16</sup> If captured, the port of Agrigento held the possibility that Patton could discontinue bringing all of his logistics over the beaches and thus increase the efficiency of the army he had ashore. Moreover, with Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army now driving for the island's only strategic objective, Messina, it provided Patton with an outlet to employ his lone armored division in a lightning dash for Palermo.<sup>17</sup>

Lacking a corps cavalry regiment, General Truscott's 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division carried out all of the preliminary reconnaissance in the direction of Agrigento with assets organic to his division in support of the newly created "provisional corps" under the command of Lieutenant General

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<sup>13</sup> Votaw interview, pp. 21-23. One challenge the troopers did face was identifying friend from foe. There was nearly an incident of fratricide as members of the 82d Airborne Division tried to link-up with the beachhead because the cavalrymen had never seen the airborne troopers' uniforms before and almost took them for Germans. This would have been extremely unfortunate given the fact that the United States Navy had already killed a number of the airborne personnel as they flew to their drop zones.

<sup>14</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, pp. 163-174.

<sup>15</sup> Disney, "Reconnaissance in Sicily," pp. 14-17 and "Report of Operations, 82d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1-31 July," Hell on Wheels Historical Records, 1963-1965; 1941-1945 folder, box 7, White Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers 1940-1945*, p. 285.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

Geoffrey Keyes.<sup>18</sup> The 3<sup>d</sup> Reconnaissance Troop played an instrumental role in the early days of the operation, notably, Lieutenant David C. Waybur's platoon holding off the attack of four Italian tanks with nothing more than a three jeep patrol.<sup>19</sup> General Truscott saw to it that the troop's third platoon, which still had not received its own jeeps and scout cars, was mounted on vehicles for the drive to the northwest. Each platoon then served one of the division's three infantry regiments as they probed north to Palermo.<sup>20</sup> Company B of the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion lent its assistance to this effort by continuing to support Brigadier General Maurice Rose's Combat Command A of 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division pushing northwest out of the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division's beachhead.<sup>21</sup> These early ad hoc efforts, in theory, gave way to a more organized reconnaissance effort.

The 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion assembled on 18 July 1943 at the same time the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division pulled together for future use as an intact armored division. The reconnaissance battalion was to lead the way for the "provisional corps," but from the beginning it was at a disadvantage. Company A did not make the trip to Sicily leaving only two reconnaissance troops and the light tank company to cover the entire corps' front as it started north.<sup>22</sup> Although the battalion commander later wrote about how his battalion served in the capacity of a corps reconnaissance battalion, an examination of the manner in which he employed it lends less credibility to this notion. While the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division waited in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 287 and Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 224. Patton not wanting to be outdone by Montgomery, also sought an army command with two corps. Keyes had served as the deputy commander for Seventh Army.

<sup>19</sup> Lucien K. Truscott, *Command Missions* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1954), p. 221. Lieutenant Waybur, already wounded, stood in the middle of the road and fired his Thompson machine gun into the portals of the leading Italian tank, thus forcing it off the road. The remaining tanks departed the area. Lieutenant Waybur received the Medal of Honor for his actions.

<sup>20</sup> *Cavalry Reconnaissance, Number Five*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>21</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 194 and Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Trahan, *A History of the Second United States Armored Division* (Atlanta, Georgia: Albert Love Enterprises, 1946), chapter 2, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Disney, "Reconnaissance in Sicily," p.10, 17.

reserve until General Keyes, the provisional corps commander, committed it on 22 July 1943, the two reconnaissance companies worked for the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division and the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division on 19 and 20 July. Each of the companies was further divided down to the platoon level in the service of their divisions. The reconnaissance battalion commander's account of each of the platoons' action during those two days provides no indication that their efforts were in any way controlled by the reconnaissance battalion headquarters, nor were the actions of the Third Reconnaissance troop integrated into the overall scheme of maneuver. Nonetheless, the platoons were able to overcome relatively light resistance with the weapons organic to their platoons in what the official history has described as "little more than a road march."<sup>23</sup>

Released from the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division, Company C led the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division's final advance into Palermo on 22 July. They were able to identify minefields and pockets of resistance that were easily overcome by Combat Command A.<sup>24</sup> In this respect the battalion contributed to the division's success very much in the manner intended. To the east, Company B, 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion assisted Colonel Sidney R. Hinds in his attempt to capture an Italian battleship believed to be anchored in the harbor at Palermo. The cavalymen's opportunity to write a new page in the history of the American cavalry tradition was dashed once they learned the ship had sailed only the day before.<sup>25</sup> Another patrol from the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion captured General Giovanni Marciani, commander of the Italian defense force stationed in Palermo. With the subsequent capture of General Giuseppe Molinero, commander of the port defenses, the city fell to Patton's rapid thrust that evening.<sup>26</sup> Marching

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<sup>23</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 250 and Disney, "Reconnaissance in Sicily," pp. 17-22.

<sup>24</sup> Disney, "Reconnaissance in Sicily," pp. 21-22 and Trahan, *A History of the Second United States Armored Division*, pp. 11-12 and "Operations of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon—Company "C," 82d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 10-25 July, 1943," Hell on Wheels Historical Records, 1963-1965; 1941-1945 folder, box 7, White Papers

<sup>25</sup> Donald E. Houston, *Hell on Wheels, The 2d Armored Division* (Novato, California: Presidio, 1977), pp. 174-175.

<sup>26</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 254.

one hundred miles in four days, the drive to Palermo validated the “indispensable role” of the armored division and recaptured the essence of the 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division’s participation in the pre-war maneuvers under Patton’s command.<sup>27</sup> Patton’s diary entry for 22 July 1943 indicated his belief that the drive to Palermo would be studied by “future Command and General Staff School” students as “a classic example of the use of tanks.”<sup>28</sup> He credited his success to a willingness to hold back his tank units until the infantry found the holes in the enemy line through which to send the tanks “in large numbers and fast.”<sup>29</sup> But the success occurred against anything but stiff resistance. The reconnaissance effort remained focused at the platoon and troop level and the concept of corps level reconnaissance was only nominally tested.

The 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Troop’s participation in the Sicilian campaign resumed soon after the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division drove to northern Sicily while 2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division captured Palermo. General Bradley was now prepared to turn his corps east beginning Patton’s race against Montgomery for the real prize, Messina. For the divisional cavalry troops the race continued to be characterized by a prodigious amount of dismounted patrolling in search of bypasses for minefields and blown bridges. Enemy strongpoints continued to pose a problem for the reconnaissance troops with no weapon larger than a 37mm cannon. Borrowed 75mm howitzers from the infantry regiments’ cannon companies provided one solution.<sup>30</sup> Ironically, the 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Troop which had charged off the landing beaches at Licata toward the west concluded its Sicilian campaign moving in an eastward direction and grabbed Patton’s prize, Messina, with a mounted platoon. Fittingly, he was joined soon after by a brother platoon that had been moving dismounted toward the same objective.<sup>31</sup>

The 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron also saw action during the Sicilian campaign. Less the small contingent that participated on the 10 July assault landings, the balance of the

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<sup>27</sup> Houston, *Hell on Wheels*, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers 1940-1945*, p. 296.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

<sup>30</sup> *Cavalry Reconnaissance, Number Five*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

squadron assembled for combat in the last days of July.<sup>32</sup> Proceeding to the front, the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron “filled the gap” between Bradley’s II Corps and the British XXX Corps and secured the flank of Terry Allen’s 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in the process.<sup>33</sup> The 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron supported the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division during its drive on Troina. Troop A captured the town of Monte Femmina Morta on 30 July, providing them a position to watch the Germans defending Troina approximately one mile to the east. Troop B maintained contact with Canadian forces in Agira and continued to move to the northeast, but a large crater just short of the village of Gagliano halted their progress. Unable to repair the crater in the face of German resistance the next day, Troop B moved forward on 1 August after extensive American artillery fire landed on German positions that had denied them passage.<sup>34</sup> Troop C also saw action in Sicily and ultimately pushed out observation posts that gave them a clear view of the German forces withdrawing along the northern coastal road under the constant pressure being applied by 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division.<sup>35</sup>

The squadron’s service in Sicily was characterized by dismounted action, overcoming road block after road block, and often fighting as individual troops and platoons rather than as a complete unit. There were few opportunities for the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion to employ its light tanks during its brief drive on Palermo, but terrain and the nature of the fighting precluded any use of the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron’s light tank company. The closest manner in which they were employed as a corps asset, even when they were directly attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry and the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, was in their capacity of maintaining

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<sup>32</sup> Operation Report, 10 July 1943-March 1944, folder CAVS-91-0.3, box 18231, entry427, RG 94.

<sup>33</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 311, 314.

<sup>34</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, pp. 330-331. During the fighting at Agira, Staff Sergeant Kisters was wounded five times while attacking an enemy position. He earned the Medal of Honor for his actions thus becoming the first man in the European theater to earn both the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross. Operation Report, 10 July 1943-March 1944, folder CAVS-91-0.3, box 18231, entry427, RG 94.

<sup>35</sup> Operation Report, 10 July 1943-March 1944, folder CAVS-91-0.3, box 18231, entry427, RG 94 and Salter, *Recon Scout*, pp. 129-130.

contact with the British Eighth Army's XXX Corps.<sup>36</sup> Like the divisional cavalry troops and the 82<sup>d</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron experienced nothing new in its employment during the Sicilian campaign.

The relatively short campaign in Sicily generated a few ideas specific to mechanized ground reconnaissance. Based on what he had seen, Patton called for doubling the size of each of the infantry division's reconnaissance forces.<sup>37</sup> He did not comment on how they had been equipped, organized and employed. He also called for the addition of a reconnaissance company to each of the GHQ tank battalions which had become so important for "maintaining the integrity of the armored divisions" by providing infantry commanders with the support they needed, but not at the expense of the mass of the armor division.<sup>38</sup> Patton offered no explanation for why these particular tank units, often in the role of providing direct support to the infantry, needed their own reconnaissance company. Perhaps it was because he already believed the infantry divisions supported by the GHQ tank battalions were already understrength in mechanized reconnaissance assets. Patton saw in the horse yet another solution to the constant delays presented to the mechanized reconnaissance men in the defiles, by the destroyed bridges and other obstacles to mounted movement.

Having commanded an army sized organization, Patton put forth not only his ideas in regard to the proper organization of corps and armies, but hope for those who saw in Sicily the proof that they had been right in regard to the continued role of the horse on the modern battlefield.

In almost any conceivable theater of operations, situations arise where the presence of Horse Cavalry in a ration of a division to an army will be of vital

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<sup>36</sup> Salter, *Recon Scout*, p. 117, 124, 129 and Operation Report, 10 July 1943-March 1944, folder CAVS-91-0.3, box 18231, entry427, RG 94.

<sup>37</sup> Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., "NOTES ON THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN," [no date], Headquarters Seventh Army, APO 758, box 3, Patton Papers, USMA.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

moment. Had we possessed Horse Cavalry in Tunisia or Sicily, not a German would have escaped.<sup>39</sup>

This was clearly a comment on the traditional role of cavalry as a fighting force and not an indictment of the utility of mechanized reconnaissance units on the whole, especially given the nature of the rest of his comments about how armies and corps should be organized. Patton's comments resonated with those who had opposed the wholesale elimination of the traditional cavalryman mounted on a horse. One wonders how men on horses would have fared any better than men mounted on jeeps who were regularly forced to dismount when confronted with artillery, machine guns, and other aspects of the modern battlefield. Perhaps Patton's views were shaped by the action of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tabor shipped to Sicily with 678 Berber soldiers, 117 horses and 126 mules. These French colonials fought well, but gained a greater reputation for their service as superb mountain infantrymen, not for any mounted exploits.<sup>40</sup> Even the Goumiers had undergone a transformation from their earlier days of being a fully mounted unit to one that relied on their animals more for logistics and local reconnaissance. Their locally procured animals suffered the realities of modern war. Many were lost to shellfire, enemy action and even accidents on the treacherous mountain trails where they often found themselves operating.<sup>41</sup> In reality the Goums used their animals in the same manner the Americans had in Sicily and would

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<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., "NOTES ON THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN," [no date], Headquarters Seventh Army, APO 758, box 3, Patton Papers, USMA. In the same document, Patton offered that armies should have two corps each. Each corps should have three divisions. Each army should have two armored divisions to exploit success where armies or corps achieved "break through[s]" or to envelop a flank uncovered "by the Infantry." Patton wrote the same message about army composition and the continued utility of horse cavalry to the chief architect of the American Army during World War II, Lesley McNair. George S. Patton, Jr, to Lesley McNair, 4 September 1943, HQ Seventh Army, folder McN-McQ, box 33, Patton Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>40</sup> Edward L. Bimberg, *The Moroccan Goums, Tribal Warriors in a Modern War* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. 39-43.

<sup>41</sup> Bimberg, *The Moroccan Goums*, pp. 121-123. The Goums were noted for their patrolling abilities in Italy also. Observer Report #110, Major Harold E. Miller, 9 March to 6 April 1944, 110 folder, box 54, entry 15A, RG 337.

in Italy, to move supplies, and certainly not to conduct the kinds of reconnaissance missions envisioned for the mechanized formations then in the field.

During the Sicilian campaign another development helped overcome the inability of the mechanized ground reconnaissance units to gain the operational depth to provide their commanders the early warning they need on which to base their decisions. Major General Lucian K. Truscott, the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division Commander, found a way to overcome the shortcomings of his organic ground reconnaissance assets from inside his division. No one doubted at the end of World War I that airplanes had forever changed how armies would gather information about their adversaries. The notion of mechanized ground reconnaissance had grown out of the need to find an intermediate measure between the fast flying airplane and the still plodding infantryman or horse-borne soldier. Even with the motorization of infantrymen and the creation of mechanized cavalry that gave way to armored divisions, there was still a need to fill the gap between what could be learned from the air and the leading edge of ground forces. Expected to operate day and night and in any form of weather, mechanized ground reconnaissance remained even more important as long as the air reconnaissance assets were controlled above the division level. In the case of the Seventh Army during the Sicilian campaign, they could only expect eighteen tactical reconnaissance flights per day with each flight approximately thirty minutes in duration.<sup>42</sup> The time taken to disseminate the information from the army level, through corps to division level limited much of its tactical value. On a chaotic beachhead, likely to be defended, Truscott wanted to avoid as many unexpected surprises as possible. The answer came from within his division artillery section.

By 1943 the Table of Organization and Equipment authorized each division artillery, DIVARTY, an Air Observation Post, Air OP, for each of their firing battalions.<sup>43</sup> Truscott approved the plan that led to the construction of runways on two Land Ship Tanks, LST, destined to support his amphibious assault at Licata. Not only did the light aircraft organic to the division help adjust rounds, their intended purpose, they also assisted in guiding landing craft to the

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<sup>42</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, p. 107.

<sup>43</sup> Edgar R. Raines, Jr., *Eyes of Artillery, The Origins of Modern U. S. Army Aviation in World War II* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2000), p. 138.

correct beaches and provided timely reports on both the friendly and enemy situation. Before the campaign was complete, they were flying route reconnaissance missions and even helped resupply an infantry unit cut-off during the fighting around Troina.<sup>44</sup> For men like Truscott this was a boon. Even though the idea of using aircraft for route reconnaissance had been pioneered at Fort Knox during the 1930s, the mechanized reconnaissance men were not directly linked to the valuable resource right over their heads. Rather, the mechanized reconnaissance men by and large found themselves fighting on foot for every turn in the road, minefield and blown bridge. It would be no different in Italy, now fully in view across the Straits of Messina. Even with his creative use of air observers to augment his reconnaissance capability, Truscott reached to the past to enhance his ability to operate in Sicily and in the process probably helped to provide the basis for Patton's argument that horse cavalry would have been very effective.

During the drive to Palermo the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division collected more than 400 mules and over 100 horses. Truscott placed Major Robert W. Crandall, a cavalry officer who served in the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment during the interwar years at the same time Truscott commanded the regiment, in charge of what became the Provisional Pack Train and the Provisional Mounted Troop. Lacking specialized equipment and trained personnel, the provisional units were not exactly efficient, but Truscott credited them with speeding his coastal drive to Messina. Cited primarily for their contribution to the logistics effort that kept the infantrymen supplied with food, water and ammunition, the animals also provided some ability to move cross country in Truscott's continued attempts to cut off the retreating Germans. Unfortunately, since the Germans were fighting a delaying action they could wait until the last minute before retreating to the rear on trucks behind the protection of yet another road block or blown bridge.<sup>45</sup> Committed in such small numbers, there was little the few mounted men could hope to achieve, but their actions did attract the attention of the horse advocates. Their actions also convinced General Truscott it was worth the shipping space to take this provisional unit along to Italy.

After the conclusion of the Sicilian campaign the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division reorganized its provisional mounted units for service in Italy. The organization grew to include a pack train for

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-163.

<sup>45</sup> Truscott, *Command Missions*, pp. 230-231.

logistics, a pack battery for fire support, and a troop of “mounted infantrymen” for reconnaissance.<sup>46</sup> But even Truscott disbanded the “Provisional Mounted Squadron” celebrated in a later *Cavalry Journal* article once the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division became bogged down in defensive operations after the failed breakout from the Anzio beachhead.<sup>47</sup>

Between Patton, the Seventh Army commander, and Truscott, the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division commander resided II Corps under the command of Lieutenant General Omar Bradley. His military intelligence staff, G2, in an effort to capture lessons learned and prepare for then next campaign in Italy prepared a report for use in their “II Corps Intelligence School,” which they conducted between 5-7 September.<sup>48</sup> Not addressing Truscott’s use of light aircraft directly, the corps level report expressed discontent with the reliance on air observation to render any type of reporting on the activity in the enemy rear areas. Noting that airplanes flying high missed the details and planes flying low only capture “fleeting” glances of the terrain below, the report lamented the inability of existing ground reconnaissance agencies to do more.<sup>49</sup> Their solution was the same as Truscott’s improvisation.

The II Corps training material suggested that one solution “cast aside by those opposed to the use of mounted troops” who believed “horses [could] no longer play valuable rolls (sic) in

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 255. Observer Report #81, Major A. J. Crist, December 1943-March 1944, 81 folder, box 53, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI.

<sup>47</sup> Captain A. T. Netterblad, “Tactical Employment of a Provisional Mounted Squadron,” *The Cavalry Journal* (March-April 1945), pp. 68-69. In a different *The Cavalry Journal* article, “Are Horses Essential,” the editorial staff made sure its readers knew that Generals Patton, Eddy, and Truscott all cited the need for horse cavalry. Truscott wrote, “I am firmly convinced that if one squadron of horse cavalry and one pack troop of 200 mules had been available to me at San Stefano on August 1, they would have enabled me to cut off and capture the entire German force opposing me along the north coast road, and would have permitted my entry into Messina at least 48 hours earlier.” Cited in Major P. D. Eldred’s “Are Horses Essential,” *The Cavalry Journal* (May-June 1944), p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> “II Corps Intelligence School, September 5-7 1943,” box Clippings and Magazine Articles, Papers of Benjamin Dickson, USMA.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. They reached all the way back to Sened Station, Tunisia for their example that recounted the truck mounted infantry battalion that drove miles into enemy territory before suffering heavy losses.

modern warfare” was the mounted patrol. With mobility “comparable to that of foot troops over varied terrain” and capable of marching “much faster” horses were thought to provide the means of penetrating the enemy rear area at ranges that exceeded the “range of foot troops” and to places “inaccessible to jeeps.”<sup>50</sup> The II Corps Reconnaissance School material also touched on the mechanized reconnaissance units found in the corps’ order of battle.

The brief campaign in Sicily coupled with what that which had already been observed in North Africa led Colonel [no first name listed in the report] Curtis to conclude that the 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Troop and the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron had done “a fine job in this campaign in spite of many difficulties due to lack of equipment and in many cases poor equipment.”<sup>51</sup> Common to all the mechanized reconnaissance units, Curtis viewed the open scout car as the “bane” to these units “rather than a boon.”<sup>52</sup> He hoped that fielding the M8 Armored Car with its turret mounted 37 mm cannon and six-wheel drive might “solve some of [their] rcn problems.”<sup>53</sup> Curtis’ comments were not limited to equipment; he also touched on organization. Like the last of Chief of Cavalry, he viewed the single cavalry troop assigned to infantry divisions as too small for their assigned tasks. Commenting on the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron’s advantage over the divisional reconnaissance troops with its light tank company, he still lamented the squadron’s lack of other essential assets. These included organic forward observers to communicate directly with supporting field artillery units, assault guns (which were part of the armored reconnaissance battalion organization) that the forward observers might have called for immediate support, and most significantly, the “other facilities for observation such as the cub plane.”<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, there was little time for the Army to act on all of Curtis’ observations, if they had been so inclined, for with the fall of Sicily the next objective awaited.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

The Allies invaded the Italian peninsula in September 1943, but became bogged down in the rugged mountains along the *Gustav Line* by October 1943 when confronted with the key terrain at Mount Cassino that dominated Highway No. 6, the most direct avenue to Rome. Planners and commanders conceived the Anzio landings, which took place on 22 January 1944, as an ambitious means of restoring mobility to the battlefield by enveloping the German positions and appearing in their rear only thirty miles south of Rome. The Allies hoped that by landing in the German rear they would force the Germans to divert strength from the formidable defense line, already held at Mount Cassino, by threatening the German lines of communication extending south from Rome to the *Gustav Line*. Planners and commander alike hoped the combination of the seaborne envelopment at Anzio and a new push against the *Gustave Line* would lead to a breakthrough.<sup>55</sup>

Other than the last month of the war, April 1945, the operations surrounding Anzio and the delayed, but subsequent breakout to Rome, offered the only opportunities for the larger mechanized reconnaissance organizations like the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, still attached to II Corps, and the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion organic to 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division to do anything closely resembling their intended doctrinal role. For the most part, the scouts served as infantrymen in the mountains while the light tankers assisted with their logistical needs by leading pack trains. Assault gun crews continued to provide fire support as well.<sup>56</sup> The M8 Armored cars the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion fielded during their last days in North Africa before moving to Italy were of little use initially with the

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<sup>55</sup> *Anzio Beachhead, 22 January—25 May 1944* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1990), pp. 1-3.

<sup>56</sup> A review of the unit histories for the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion reveals frequent stints in the line serving as infantry. Example: “14 October 1944...Squadron was attached to CC “A” and relieved the 91<sup>st</sup> Rcn Sqdn in their sector...15 October: A, B, and C troops were in position along the front, F troop in reserve and E troop in position to support line troops with artillery fire...16 October:...moved in the sector to the immediate East and relieved the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry in that sector.” Headquarters, 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, History October 1944, Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA.

reconnaissance companies largely limited to dismounted patrolling.<sup>57</sup> Beyond the impassible mountains lay the objective of the bold amphibious envelopment intended to restore mobility to the stalled Italian campaign.

Operation SHINGLE, commanded by Major General John P. Lucas and conducted with his VI Corps, achieved stunning initial success by achieving complete surprise. Success rapidly gave way to what became a 125-day siege.<sup>58</sup> Mechanized reconnaissance units played a role in the initial success, subsequent siege, and ultimate breakout to Rome. The initial wave of troops that landed at Anzio on 22 January 1944 included the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division, British 1<sup>st</sup> Division, British 46<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment, the 751<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion, 509<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalion, 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, British Commandos, American Rangers, and other supporting troops. The second wave to include the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, less Combat Command B, and the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.<sup>59</sup> In preparation for the landings, Lieutenant General Mark Clark's Fifth Army attempted to isolate the proposed landing sites with air power and fix German forces on the *Gustav Line* to the south with a supporting attack. The supporting attack culminated by 20 January 1944 after only eight days of fighting and only two days before the landings.<sup>60</sup> Even so, the Allies achieved complete tactical surprise at Anzio. There was no resistance on the beach and the single company tasked with defending the area where the landings took place had not been warned of the impending invasion.<sup>61</sup> The 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division rapidly moved off the beaches to secure its initial objectives and began preparations for the expected counter attack. The 3<sup>d</sup> Reconnaissance Troop and the Provisional Reconnaissance Troop raced to secure the bridges over the Mussolini Canal that formed the right

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<sup>57</sup> "History of the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion," Headquarters, 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 10 November 1943, WWII Operations Reports, 1940-1948, 601-CAV-0.3, 1-31-43 to 12-31-44 folder, box 14820, entry 427, RG 407, NAI.

<sup>58</sup> Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision, Anzio and the Battle for Rome* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 4-5.

<sup>59</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, p.5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, pp. 4-5 and *Anzio Beachhead*, p. 13.

flank of the division's beachhead. They encountered German resistance only at the southernmost bridge, but were able to dispatch the three armored vehicles that defended the crossing site. Major Robert Crandall's "mobile cavalry detachments" seized all the crossings over the Mussolini Canal with the speed and mobility that allowed them to surge ahead and gain the key terrain to buy the time for slower moving follow on forces.<sup>62</sup> In this respect they had performed just as expected. What occurred later that day exposed the inherent weakness in the troop sized element.

During the first day, the Allies managed to gain control of the port and its facilities, which allowed them to land 36,000 troops and 3,200 vehicles. These soldiers and vehicles were critical if the Allies hoped to repulse the expected counterattack. Also critical was holding the perimeter of the limited beachhead. By the end of D Day the 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Troop received the assistance of infantrymen to help them hold vital bridges over the Mussolini Canal, the division's right boundary and flank in the beachhead. The *Herman Goering Panzer Division* counterattacked to retake the bridges and only the addition of tanks, tank destroyers and additional infantry units allowed the Americans to secure their right flank.<sup>63</sup> The cavalry troop possessed the speed to grab the key terrain, but lacked sufficient firepower to resist the German counterattack without substantial reinforcements. Only days later, the troop fared even worse.

When the 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division attacked from the right side of the Anzio beachhead on 30 January 1944, the 3<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Troop supported the drive oriented on Cisterna. The terrain surrounding the beachhead afforded little cover, so the American Rangers leading the attack moved under cover of darkness guiding along the Cisterna-Conca road. Veteran German troops compromised the Rangers' advance and by mid-day were using tanks to move back and forth through the exposed Ranger positions. Of the 767 Rangers, only six made it back to friendly lines, but theirs was not the only devastating loss encountered that day. A platoon of the 3<sup>d</sup> Reconnaissance Troop followed the advance of the Rangers with their jeeps on the Cisterna-

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<sup>62</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, pp. 14-16 and Truscott, *Command Missions*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>63</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, pp. 18-19. The Germans captured Major Robert Crandall that same evening while he was checking on the security of the bridge west of Sessano. Unbeknownst to him, the Germans had retaken the bridge and he drove his "into the midst of a German battalion and was captured." Truscott, *Command Missions*, p. 311.

Conca road. When the Germans counterattacked the American penetration they established a road block to deny any route of egress for the mounted soldiers. Of the forty-three men that had started the mission, only one cavalryman crossed back to friendly lines.<sup>64</sup> Operating as a single platoon beyond the supporting distance of heavy weapons, the platoon of mechanized cavalrymen suffered a horrible fate.

During the remainder of their stay inside the Anzio beachhead the 3<sup>d</sup> Reconnaissance Troop continued to support the division's patrolling activities, mainly at night, and exclusively dismounted since "in that sector there [was] no such thing as 'mounted scouting and patrolling.'"<sup>65</sup> Confronted with the static conditions reminiscent of World War I, the ability of the mechanized cavalry troop to fulfill its intended mission on a fluid battlefield was limited, but the horse had not provided a viable solution under the same conditions either. Inside the same beachhead, operating under the same conditions, the more robust armored reconnaissance battalion fared no better.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division came ashore, less Combat Command B, on the heels of the assaulting infantry forces.<sup>66</sup> By 29 January 1944, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division was prepared to advance the VI Corps beachhead by attacking toward the Buonriposo Ridge on the left side of the perimeter. General Ernest Harmon ordered Colonel Kent C. Lambert to lead the attack with his Combat Command A, which was composed of two tank companies, an armored infantry battalion and an armored field artillery battalion. Company B, 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion supported the combat command's first breakout attempt. The entire attack stalled when confronted with terrain that was impassible to traverse, enemy minefields, and enemy fire forced

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<sup>64</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>65</sup> Observer Report #93, Observer assigned for temporary duty to HQ, 3d INF DIV for entire period—was used jointly in G2 and G3, [1944], 93 folder, box 83, entry 15A, RG 377, NA II. The same was true for the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division who, an observer commented, had received their M8 Armored Cars in January 1944, but had been unable to use because of the conditions inside the beachhead. Observer Report #93, Major H. F. Suffield on the Italian Campaign, 91 folder, box 83, entry 15A, RG 337, NAII.

<sup>66</sup> Howe, *The History of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division*, pp. 281-282.

light tanks from the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Regiment to attempt to push forward the reconnaissance effort.<sup>67</sup>

The next day, 31 January 1944, Major William R. Tuck ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Regiment to reconnoiter to the west side of the Albano road in support of the British main effort that was attacking directly up the road to Campoleone. The British attack met stiff resistance from the 29<sup>th</sup> *Panzer Grenadier Regiment*. While the overall attack culminated short of the objective that day, the conduct of the reconnaissance mission was quite interesting. Using light tanks, the Americans cleared the ridge on the western flank inflicting an estimated 175 casualties. They also overran a number of mortar positions, destroyed an antitank gun and put two *Mark IV panzers* out of action with the 37 mm equipped light tanks. Although the Germans halted the American attack with intense antitank fire and heavy weapons, the attack had continued through intense artillery fire. Safe inside their buttoned-up tanks and without fear of getting a flat tire, the light tanks made considerable progress on their assigned reconnaissance mission.<sup>68</sup> In doing so, they achieved what had been impossible for jeeps and armored cars the day before. Even so, the nature of the terrain, especially the mud, limited the trafficability of all the mechanized forces operating inside the Anzio beachhead. Unable to capitalize on element of surprise and after these initial failed attempts to breakout, General Lucas pulled the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division out of the line to serve in the corps reserve.<sup>69</sup>

The 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion fully assembled inside the Anzio beachhead in early February with the arrival of Company A, which had been attached to Combat Command B, still to the south below the *Gustav Line*. With “cross country movement impossible” the battalion settled into a familiar routine for the next four months that had nothing to do with mounted reconnaissance.<sup>70</sup> The men dug their own defensive positions, camouflaged their vehicles and even dug alternate defensive positions for other units. The battalion’s companies

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>68</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, p.39.

<sup>69</sup> *Anzio Beachhead*, p. 39-40.

<sup>70</sup> Battalion History of the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Reports from February-April 1944, Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA.

saw service with various units inside the beachhead as liaisons and manning observation and listening posts. They were probably selected for this duty because their large number of radio equipped vehicles allowed them to send reports on the division's "Reconnaissance Net" to provide early warning of penetrations of the perimeter.<sup>71</sup> The battalion even saw its assault guns removed from the reconnaissance platoons and assembled into firing detachments assigned to the 91<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery battalions. The men even prepared to counterattack "any paratroop attack in the center of the beach-head."<sup>72</sup> The battalion also found time to conduct small unit training and on a few occasions supported combat patrols and small raids. Not until May did they begin to fully resume their mounted mission.

The 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion supported the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division's contribution to the late-May 1944 breakout from the Anzio beachhead. The division attached Company A to the Combat Command B, which had joined the division in the beachhead for the breakout attempt. The division later attached Company A to Task Force Howze during the drive up Highway 6 to Rome. The remainder of the battalion served intact.<sup>73</sup> As the division battered its way through the encircling minefields and German defensive positions, the reconnaissance elements of the division mainly performed liaison duty or operated to the flanks, often fighting as infantrymen.<sup>74</sup> Harmon led the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division with the full weight of his armored regiments and the support of all arms but made minimal progress with heavy losses. There was no expectation that the more lightly equipped mechanized reconnaissance forces could have led the way and achieved better results. Fifth Army Commander Mark Clark's extremely

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> "Company "A" 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Operations 22-31 May 1944," Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA and Lieutenant Colonel Michael Popowski, Jr., "The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron Fights Way to Rome," *The Cavalry Journal* (January-February 1945), p. 35.

<sup>74</sup> Popowski, "The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron," p. 35 and Ernest F. Fisher, *Cassino to the Alps, U. S. Army in World War II, Mediterranean Theater of Operations* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2002), pp. 142-159.



Figure 24

81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion M8 Armored Car with German POWs as it advances beyond the Anzio beachhead. Signal Corps photo, Harmon Papers, Special Collections, Norwich University.



Figure 25

M8 Armored Car from the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion advancing on Rome, 4 June 1944. Signal Corps photograph, Harmon Papers, Special Collections, Norwich University.

controversial decision to reorient the Allied drive directly to Rome and not the Valmontone Gap led to greater losses in the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division as it battled its way through the Albano Hills. Not until 4 June on the outskirts of Rome, with the German army in full retreat, did the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion make a significant contribution.

With Company A assigned to Task Force Howze, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division assigned the battalion the mission of protecting the division's left flank as it made its final march on Rome. The battalion had been holding a defensive portion of the line between the British 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and the American 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division while the remainder of the division refitted after the heavy fighting that had marked the previous days. Using a route parallel to Combat Command B, Company B led the battalion as it moved out in early morning darkness only hours after having been relieved of defensive duties. The combination of limited visibility, the "quietness of the armored cars and the rapidity of the advance" allowed Company B to bypass a number of "well-concealed anti-tank guns and machine gun positions."<sup>75</sup> The resultant firefight was costly to the advancing Americans.

Only the rapid arrival of Company C and the light tanks of Company D helped to extract Company B from the precarious position it found itself in after bypassing the German positions. With freedom to maneuver, companies C and D conducted a double envelopment of the German strongpoint. The combined fires of the assault guns organic to the reconnaissance platoons, 37 mm cannons on the M8 armored cars and light tanks, as well as the .50 calibre machine gun fire allowed the battalion to overcome the three anti-tank guns and seventy German soldiers.<sup>76</sup> This first contact cost B Company four armored cars and one jeep, and before the day was over Company B lost an additional three armored cars, leaving them with seven of the fourteen that started that morning.<sup>77</sup>

Company B's first encounter established a pattern used throughout the remainder of 4 June. Once in contact, the battalion's other elements maneuvered to envelop delaying German

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<sup>75</sup> "Battalion History, June 1944, 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion," Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Popowski, "The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron," p. 37.

positions. By the end of the day, attached to Combat Command B and ordered forward to capture an intact bridge on the advice of a light observation aircraft, Company B was supremely confident in its claim to have “definitely [been] the first troops to enter the city from that direction.”<sup>78</sup> The battalion had proved its ability to fight its way forward when allowed to operate as a single unit, but against decidedly minimal resistance. Although the bridge that Company B raced forward to secure was never in real danger of being destroyed, the action stemmed from the use of light observation aircraft.<sup>79</sup> The title of the battalion commander’s recounting of the 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion’s participation in the liberation of Rome publicly signalled the death of the notion that mechanized reconnaissance units were advised to use stealth. His article, “The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron Fights Way to Rome,” also provided an early indication of how those left in cavalry branch were recasting themselves. The horses may have been gone, but there was still plenty of fight, when required, left in the cavalry.

Following the liberation of Rome, there ensued a brief period of relative mobility as Allied forces pursued the Germans to the next defensible terrain feature which they transformed into the Gothic line. By September 1944, as the main Allied effort shifted to other theaters, the 81<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron once again found itself limited to dismounted patrolling and serving in the line as infantry.<sup>80</sup> Ironically, they too found themselves reliant on forty mules,

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<sup>78</sup> “Battalion History, June 1944, 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion,” Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA. The 88<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop entered the city in the early morning of 4 June but had to withdraw until reinforcements arrived. Company A attached to Task Force Howze, reached Rome at 0700, 4 June, followed closely by medium tanks and tank destroyers. Popowski, “The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron,” p. 37.

<sup>79</sup> Popowski, “The 81<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron,” p. 37 and Fisher, *Cassino to the Alps*, p. 203. Hitler denied Field Marshal Kesselring’s request to destroy the bridges over the Tiber River based on their “historical and artistic merit.”

<sup>80</sup> Sears, “Supply Operations in Combat” and “Squadron History, September 1944,” 81<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Squadron Headquarters, Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel 2189, USMA. The 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion operated to the division’s flank as it advanced north. In July 1944, the division finally underwent reorganization, the subject of the next chapter. Part of the reorganization affected the armored reconnaissance battalion’s conversion to a cavalry reconnaissance squadron in name and in organization.

procured from a South African division, to sustain them logistically as reconnaissance troops took their turns in the line.<sup>81</sup> Other mechanized reconnaissance units experienced the same conditions for much of the remainder of the campaign in Italy.

The final month of the campaigning in Italy was not indicative of the overall experience for the Americans who fought there, especially the men in the 81<sup>st</sup> and 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons. Once across the Po River and onto the plains of northern Italy the fighting became more fluid in the “long awaited offensive.”<sup>82</sup> Retreating German columns lost a number of engagements with mobile American columns, often led by reconnaissance troops. Appearing behind them and often mistaken for other retreating Germans, the Americans “always fired first” resulting in the Germans being blown to “hell.”<sup>83</sup> During the advance, the 81<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was once again assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, thus ending its employment in the line similar to the manner in which the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron had been used so often during the drive up the peninsula.

For the men of the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron the war ended near the Swiss border while elements of the 81<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron found themselves in an interesting situation near the French Alps. Caught between a regiment of French Chasseurs Alpins, assigned to the American Seventh Army and well outside their prescribed boundaries, and the local Italian Partisani near the town of Comiori. The French refused to vacate the slice of Italy they had come to occupy. Colonel Howze dispatched a battalion of tanks to reinforce the men of the 81<sup>st</sup> until the issue could be resolved diplomatically.<sup>84</sup> To the end, the reconnaissance

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> 81<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Squadron History, April 1945, Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel 2190, USMA.

<sup>83</sup> Summary of Interviews, section 3, p. 54 box 1, Howze Papers, MHI and Royer Interview, p. 54, Florida State. Trooper Royer recalls that in one case his troop destroyed a convoy carrying a large amount of money. Unlike “Kelly’s Heros,” where the money in question took the form of gold bars, all the troopers recovered were Italian lire that they gambled with amongst themselves for days.

<sup>84</sup> Summary of Interviews, section 3, pp. 55-57, box 1, Howze Papers, MHI.

men had been out in front finding the trouble and to the end they had often required the assistance of follow on forces to complete the mission.

Just as the fighting in North Africa and Sicily provided the horse advocates what they believed was rich material for their personal campaigns to reestablish the rightful place of the horse on the battlefield in reconnaissance and combat roles, Italy provided the same inspiration. John K. Herr's son-in-law, Colonel Willard A. Holbrook, Jr., himself the son of the first Chief of Cavalry, wrote him the following observation even as he trained with the 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Division in California.

I am tickled to death with the turn combat is taking to show up some of our chiefs in their opinion of cavalry. I would not be surprised if some well trained horsemen were allowed to get into the coming spring fuss.<sup>85</sup>

One can only speculate from where he thought these well trained horsemen would come with 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division already deployed to the Pacific and the 2<sup>d</sup> Cavalry Division on the verge of being disbanded.

Herr also heard from another former cavalryman inclined to address his former chief's interest in all things horse cavalry related. After expressing his gratitude for the role Herr had played in getting him promoted, General C. H. Gerhardt observed that...

Both Truscott and General Lucas felt that at least a regiment of our U. S. Cavalry would have made a tremendous difference in that campaign [Italy]. All the divisions had pack trains of captured mules and equipment, and Truscott has a Provisional Mounted Troop for scouting and patrolling.<sup>86</sup>

Ironically, at the time the letter was written in January 1944, Lucas and Truscott were just coming to grips with the Anzio beachhead where Truscott ultimately disbanded his mounted provisional troop. One of the most interesting letters about the action in Italy came from yet

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<sup>85</sup> Colonel Willard A. Holbrook, Jr., to Czar [John K. Herr], 9 December 1943, Los Angeles, California, box 6, Herr Papers, USMA.

<sup>86</sup> Major General C. H. Gerhardt to Major General John K. Herr (Retired), January 1944, V Mail return address New York, box 6, Herr Papers, USMA.

another old cavalry family and was directed to John K. Herr's most vocal proponent of the horse at *The Cavalry Journal*, Hamilton Hawkins.

Hamilton H. Howze, like Willard A. Holbrook, Jr., was from an old cavalry family and had also married the daughter of a former Chief of Cavalry. His uncle happened to be Hamilton Hawkins. In a hand written letter drafted in February 1945, Howze offered his "opinions on the possibilities of cavalry in the pursuit phase" that had followed the breakout from Anzio.<sup>87</sup>

It is my opinion that a corps of two cavalry divisions would have utterly destroyed the German *14<sup>th</sup> Army*, in toto; we could have marched a [unintelligible text], practically, to the Brenner Pass. Lesser cavalry forces should have doubled the 5<sup>th</sup> Army's take of prisoners, which in actuality was about 40,000. That is provided the high command should have been able to hold that cavalry as cavalry, should have resisted the temptation to send the cavalry, dismounted, into the mountains during the winter to relieve the very weary doughboys.<sup>88</sup>

Years later in an interview conducted at the Army War College, General Howze was careful to qualify his comment on the utility of horses in Italy. He emphasized the important qualification that two divisions of horse cavalry only would have been useful had "it been kept in a training status" and "out of the line, until the propitious moment" arrived. Howze reiterated that only a "bonus of two well trained horse cavalry divisions would have been a tremendous benefit." What he also offered the interviewer that he probably did not offer the die-hard horse advocates, was his impression of what had happened in Italy when his tanks encountered Turkomen cavalry in the service of the Germans. He noted that the outcome of these encounters was "not a great endorsement of horse cavalry."<sup>89</sup>

Although his letter to his Uncle Ham never specifically addressed the mechanized reconnaissance units in the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, there was little doubt about Howze's frustration with his inability to clear the routes to his front in a timely manner. Frustrated with

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<sup>87</sup> Hamilton H. Howze to Hamilton Hawkins, 10 February [1945], somewhere in Italy, Family Papers, Combat Command A, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, to Major General Hamilton S. Hawkins folder, box 7, Papers of Hamilton H. Howze, MHI.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Summary of Interviews, Section 2, p. 32-33, box 1, Howze Papers MHI.

the rate of reconnaissance afforded him with dismounted infantry operating to either side of any given road, Howze ordered his tanks to “barrel down the road” until “bang and I’d have a flamer.”<sup>90</sup> Recognizing that the “lead tanker” knew he was the “next one to die” and did not appreciate this, Howze conceded that it was “difficult...to make speed.”<sup>91</sup> Nothing found in Howze’s divisional or regimental reconnaissance agencies had the equivalent firepower and protection as the tanks he was using to lead the way. Howze did offer a solution.

To overcome and bypass the endless defended roadblocks, Howze called for the use of a squadron of horse cavalry. Riding to the flanks, where he insisted they “would have encountered NOTHING,” armed with tank killing bazookas, the horse cavalrymen could have enveloped and reduced the successive roadblocks and rapidly increased the armored division’s rate of advance. In closing his letter, Howze begged the questions on John K. Herr’s mind.

I wonder if we’ll be smart enough to send mounted cavalry to the Pacific for operations in China, and whether we’ll reform divisions after the war. I doubt it, and it will cost us.<sup>92</sup>

Howze was not alone in his sentiments of what had plagued mechanized forces in Italy. The Army, as it had in North Africa and Sicily dispatched observers to Italy. The Army also recalled Major General Ernest N. Harmon in July 1944, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, a man unequalled in the tactical employment of armored forces. Harmon, the external observers, and those assigned to the mechanized reconnaissance units all recorded their views. Equipment and organization continued to dominate their remarks.

If one could consider the horse a piece of equipment, the observers were no different than the horse advocates in that they continued to record the desires of some units for the return to horse cavalry given the difficulty of the terrain in Italy. In the horse they too saw the ability to

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<sup>90</sup> Hamilton H. Howze to Hamilton Hawkins, 10 February [1945], somewhere in Italy, Family Papers, Combat Command A, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, to Major General Hamilton S. Hawkins folder, box 7, Papers of Hamilton H. Howze, MHI.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

get off the roads to pursue and cut off retreating enemy forces, or to exploit breakthroughs.<sup>93</sup> The horse's replacements, the jeep and the M8 Armored Car, garnered far more attention. Troopers and observers liked the M8, but like its predecessor the scout car, the M8 came with a number of serious limitations. As long as the weather was dry, it proved capable of limited cross country mobility in "moderate terrain." Equipped with enough sandbags on the floor, it provided limited protection from the ubiquitous land mines found in Italy, but at the expense of space in the crew compartment.<sup>94</sup> General Harmon classified the 37 mm cannon it carried as "another weapon that has been built in large quantities and which has no practical use except in small quantities in the infantry to operate against machine gun nests."<sup>95</sup> Harmon's comment was not directed at the M8 Armored Car, but not even the light tanks in the armored reconnaissance battalions and squadrons carried anything bigger. The high hopes held out for the arrival of the M8 since the days of campaigning in North Africa and Sicily were dashed in Italy. The jeep received scant attention.

Mechanized reconnaissance units took matters into their own hands to solve the many mobility problems that confronted them in Italy and sought solutions that blended equipment needs with ad hoc organization. The 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron identified the impact that the constricted terrain in Sicily had on their operations. Before they arrived in Italy they collected a number of pieces of engineering equipment and the fifteen- percent over-strength in personnel to man their provisional "reconnaissance engineer platoon."<sup>96</sup> The squadron commander believed it was particularly important for the 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron to have its own engineers since as a corps asset it often moved to different sectors of the front and could not depend on the support of higher headquarters. The Army rewarded the

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<sup>93</sup> Observer Report #110, Major Harold E. Miller, 9 March to 6 April 1944, 110 folder, box 54, entry 15A, RG 337.

<sup>94</sup> Observer Report #110, Major Harold E. Miller, 9 March to 6 April 1944, folder 110, box 54, entry 15A, RG 337.

<sup>95</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, "Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns," curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 20.

<sup>96</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Ellis, "Demolition Obstacles to Reconnaissance," *The Cavalry Journal* (May-June 1945), p. 29.

squadron's initiative in April 1944 by stripping it of its personnel and equipment above their authorized Table of Organization and Equipment.<sup>97</sup> General Harmon cited the need for more armored bulldozers in his report as well.<sup>98</sup> Cavalrymen in the field, as they had through the formative years of mechanized reconnaissance, continued to apply creative solutions to overcome their problems, but their creativity was dashed by the Army's over-arching manpower and equipment shortages.

The organization that received the most attention from the observers in Italy was the infantry division's reconnaissance troop. The terrain in Italy forced the reconnaissance troops to operate dismounted most of the time, yet they still patrolled, manned observation posts and maintained contact between friendly adjacent units. Troops were also subject to have their platoons dispatched on separate missions that placed platoons beyond mutually supporting distances.<sup>99</sup> Calls for the an increase from the troop sized units serving the infantry divisions for squadron sized elements were common, but the reasoning for the increase in size was not always consistent with why the mechanized reconnaissance troops had been formed in the first place. Citing the inability of the existing organization "to deal with the German reconnaissance battalion" was a very reasonable call for the expansion of the troop to squadron sized strength given the implied assets that came with the squadron organization.<sup>100</sup> Calls from the field for

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, "Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns," curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 20.

<sup>99</sup> Observer Report #81, Major A. J. Crist, Report on the Italian Campaign, December 1943 to March 1944, folder 81, box 53, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI. Christ specifically observed the 34<sup>th</sup> and the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions. Observer Report #110, Major Harold E. Miller, 9 March to 6 April 1944, 110 folder, box 54, entry 15A, RG 337. Observer Report #85, Major Elias C. Townsend, nd, folder 85, box 53, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI. "Collection and Dissemination of Information and the Employment of Reconnaissance Units," 23 May 1944, Headquarters Army Ground Forces, folder 142, box 56, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI. Observer Report #90, , Lieutenant Colonel M. S. Cralle, Observer to Fifth Army, 24 December 1943 to 8 March 1944, folder 90, box 53, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI.

<sup>100</sup> Observer Report #93, Major H. F. Suffield on the Italian Campaign, 23 December 1943 to 5 March 1944, 91 folder, box 83, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI.

larger reconnaissance organizations for each of the infantry divisions lent substance, even if in retrospect, to John K. Herr's rabid defense of a more sizeable cavalry force as the nation entered World War II.

Neither a function of equipment, nor a function of any existing organization, air-ground cooperation in the field of reconnaissance continued to attract the attention of the observers. Not all of them viewed the inclusion of light reconnaissance aircraft as necessarily the solution to the ongoing ground reconnaissance problems found in Sicily and Italy, but everyone seemed to agree that there had to be better and more direct communication between the air and ground reconnaissance assets.<sup>101</sup> Commanders valued the planes for their ability to direct accurate indirect fire and in some cases their mere presence was enough to silence German artillery units fearful of receiving counter battery fire.<sup>102</sup> Even as units continued to discover new uses for the light observation aircraft, or in many cases rediscover uses long established at Fort Knox during the interwar years, the planes continued to remain beyond the reach of the mechanized reconnaissance units intended from the earliest days of mechanization to work directly with them. General Harmon, a real fan of light airplanes for reconnaissance work, commented that "contrary to expectation [the light observation aircraft] has been able to survive on the battlefield in spite of hostile air."<sup>103</sup> The issue of air-ground cooperation remained solved only on an ad hoc basis. Long identified as a critical component of successful mechanized ground reconnaissance, the air-ground link remained broken.

Not surprisingly, as Howze's division commander, Harmon's account of how the division conducted ground reconnaissance in the pursuit north of Rome after the Anzio breakout echoed the techniques Howze had adopted. Infantrymen riding on tanks dismounted to reconnoiter since

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<sup>101</sup> Observer Report #93, Major H. F. Suffield on the Italian Campaign, 23 December 1943 to 5 March 1944, 91 folder, box 53, entry 15A, RG 337, NAI. Suffield commented specifically on the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division citing no need for the inclusion of aircraft in the reconnaissance troop, but that there must be better training so that the pilots and ground troops could work better together.

<sup>102</sup> Observer Report #110, Major Harold E. Miller, 9 March to 6 April 1944, 110 folder, box 54, entry 15A, RG 337.

<sup>103</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, "Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns," curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 20.

for the most part Harmon's armored reconnaissance battalion operated to the division's flank, maintaining contact with adjacent units.<sup>104</sup> He adopted this technique because...

During a pursuit the use of reconnaissance elements, as the leading elements in a force, merely because contact has been lost locally, is not justified in most circumstances. Where the nature of the expected resistance [sic] can be in any way deduced—and it usually can—appropriate composition of the column should be made ahead of time to overcome it; usually time is saved in the long run if medium tanks lead.<sup>105</sup>

Harmon recognized the inability of his armored reconnaissance battalion to overcome anything but the lightest resistance and thus used them on his flanks. By putting the reconnaissance battalion on the flanks, albeit for good reasons, Harmon placed himself on the horns of dilemma he acknowledged earlier in his report. It was observation that would have made John K. Herr proud.

Writing about speed on the battlefield, Harmon concluded that “all movement...is relatively slow and deliberate” and that interwar maneuvers had lent a “false picture of speed” because of the failure to accurately portray casualties and logistics.<sup>106</sup> Harmon remarked that his division had lost “many tanks...in the early days under the false training idea” that rewarded “boiling down the road.” Speed could only be achieved by “going rapidly from one reconnoitered place to another” and “by thinking ahead and being prepared with the solution for [an] emergency when it arises.” He cautioned that division commanders should be “thinking in terms of what is going to happen from six to twelve hours ahead of the present.”<sup>107</sup> Only good

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<sup>104</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, “Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns,” curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 18 and “Report of Operations, 81<sup>st</sup> Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, June 1944,” Historical Documents, World War II, microfilm reel box 2189, USMA.

<sup>105</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, “Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns,” curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 21.

<sup>106</sup> Major General Ernest N. Harmon, “Notes on Combat Experience During the Tunisian and African Campaigns,” curricular files, Armor School Library, Fort Knox, Kentucky, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

ground reconnaissance coupled with thinking ahead could save countless lives. John K. Herr had recognized the false sense of speed and American doctrine had long recognized the need to conduct reconnaissance well in advance of the main body of forces. What Harmon pointed out with the use of his reconnaissance battalion to the flank was the inability of the contemporary organizations, dedicated to the task of getting that information well in advance, to perform as desired. Designed with one expectation of what war would be like in the future and confronted with a different reality, the American Army was learning as it went and finding solutions. The horse advocates continued to point to what they viewed as a proven technology and organization.

The fighting in Sicily and Italy presented few opportunities for the employment of mechanized reconnaissance units in the ways envisioned during the interwar years. The campaigns in Sicily and Italy did present plenty of opportunities for mechanized reconnaissance units to make numerous contributions, more often dismounted than they might have expected. A major contributing factor to the manner in which the mechanized cavalry units saw service was the terrain. The mountainous and built up terrain limited the mobility of all units, but combined with an enemy skilled in the art of defense it became nearly impossible for the lightly equipped mechanized reconnaissance units to precede the larger organizations they served. Another factor that led to their employment in ways never intended simply boiled down to the need to rotate haggard infantrymen in and out to the line. The mechanized cavalymen may not have been organized, trained and equipped for extended dismounted service, but they served in this capacity often. Mechanized reconnaissance units in the service of corps remained absent from the battlefield still waiting to make their debut. Only on rare occasions were battalion and squadron sized elements able to operate mounted, although on these occasions they were still often found on the flanks and not necessarily in front leading the way. Citing the inability of a mechanized cavalry troop to cover an entire infantry division's frontage was inconsistent with the basis of its creation, the ability to reconnoiter a few specific routes for the division's advance.<sup>108</sup> Continued calls for increases in the divisional cavalry troops did reinforce the last Chief of Cavalry's belief that each infantry division required an entire squadron to carry out all

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<sup>108</sup> Committee 17, Officers Advanced Class, 1949-1950, "Operation of CAV RCN SQ Integral to the Armored Division," (Fort Knox, Kentucky: Armored School, 1950), p. 39.

of the division's reconnaissance and security chores. The last Chief of Cavalry also saw himself vindicated in other ways.

General Harmon, more experienced in the employment of armored divisions in combat than any other commander at the time, commented specifically on the unrealistic speed of movement that had characterized the pre-war maneuvers. It was this speed that had largely been the undoing of horsed units. It was the same quest for speed that had long characterized the development of the lightly armed mechanized reconnaissance units that were expected to range out to find the enemy. The fighting in Sicily and Italy only presented opportunities for fast paced operations when Axis forces were in full retreat as had been the case on the drive to Palermo and during the final push into Rome and beyond. Terrain combined with the enemy's determined defence limited the ability of mechanized units to operate as they were intended. General Herr felt even further vindicated by the initial reports coming from Sicily and Italy. The horse had returned to the battlefield.

Provisional and Allied horsed units did see limited service in Sicily and Italy. The majority of their service fell under the realm of logistics, with the requirement for donkeys and burros to carry supplies to mountain positions. Truscott's own mounted reconnaissance troop experiment was short lived once confronted with the artillery swept conditions of the Anzio beachhead. Most calls for the employment of horse cavalry divisions at the time did not factor in the cost of what other types of units could not have participated to pay the penalty in shipping space to bring over a horse cavalry division. None of the commentators suggested that they would have willingly given up an infantry or an armored division to have a horse cavalry division. Perhaps they did not realize it, but German success off the East Coast of the United States had a dramatic impact on the United States' ability to deploy forces to Europe while the fighting raged in North Africa and in Sicily and Italy. The United States did not deploy any divisions to Europe from October 1942 to March 1943 and only eleven divisions crossed the Atlantic between March and November 1943.<sup>109</sup> General Howze, with time to reflect, further captured the dilemma that forced mechanized cavalymen into the line as infantrymen. When he wrote his uncle, Hamilton Hawkins, Howze wondered aloud if the commanders could have

resisted the urge to use the horse cavalry divisions as infantrymen or if they would have been able to keep them in the rear where they could train and remain capable of exploiting a breakthrough. Given the limited shipping and growing emphasis placed on the build-up of forces for the cross-channel attack in 1944 it seems unlikely. Before this final test, the Army visited more changes on the organization and doctrine of the mechanized cavalry units expected to lead those units marshalling in England.

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<sup>109</sup> Robert R. Palmer, Bell I Wiley, and William R. Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops. United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Historical Division United States Army, 1948), pp. 489-493.