



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
16TH CONSTABULARY SQUADRON (SEPARATE)
BERLIN, GERMANY

In accordance with the Yalta Agreement when Germany had been defeated by the Allies, the former Deutsches Reich was to be divided into four zones of occupation: USSR, USA, Great Britain and France. The great capital city of Berlin was to be an enclave within the Soviet Zone, divided into three sectors and occupied by the USSR, UK, and USA. The Soviet Army fought a bitter battle to take Berlin from the still loyal, fanatical Nazi defenders. The Soviets occupied the city from early May, 1945 until July 4, 1945. On that date the US, UK and French forces were authorized to move into their assigned sectors of Berlin. (France was added to the occupation forces by agreement. A portion of the British Sector was assigned to them). The first major US unit assigned to occupy Berlin was the 2nd Armored Division, then followed by the 82nd Airborne Division, followed by the 78th Infantry Division, each for a period of approximately 90 days.

The first American troops in Berlin found the city in virtual total ruin; looted by the Soviets of all moveable machinery, supplies, transportation, and some key people. There was no electricity, heat, water, food and marginally adequate shelter. There were no tools for the inhabitants to dig themselves out and bury thousands of Berliners entombed by bricks and cement from the fallen buildings. The collapse of Berlin (before the war the fourth largest city in the world) was total. Berlin was transformed from the showcase of European Culture to a hell on earth. The suffering was further intensified by the fact that they were not allowed to leave and that no German from the outside could enter the city. There was no money since most of the banks were destroyed and there was no government to back a currency.

The U. S. Military found Berlin in dire need of medical services. Several U.S. medical units immediately set up first aid stations in the Grunewald. They later moved to Berlin's Pathological Institute on Unter den Eichen in a 19th Century German complex of medical clinics. These clinics were later consolidated to become the 279th Station Hospital. U.S. Quartermaster units brought with them tons of "U" rations and set up impromptu kitchens. These facilities were later taken over by U.S. occupation units supplied with rations arriving daily via trucks and trains. Of special help was the U.S. 36th Combat Engineer Battalion who brought to Berlin badly needed tools and motorized equipment to move rubble, begin reconstructing and repairing first their own and other units' billets and headquarters, then taking care of buildings soon to be occupied by various agencies of the new administration of the City of Berlin.

Accompanying the U.S. 2nd Armored Division at the time of the initial quadripartite occupation was the 16th Cavalry Group composed of the 6th and 28th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons. This light, armored, mobile force initiated patrols of the devastated U.S. Sector and sustained contact with the British, French and Soviet forces. The 16th Cavalry Group remained in Berlin during the rapid rotation of the 82nd Airborne Division and 78th Infantry Division. However its effectiveness was diminished by the rapid departure of combat weary officers and men under the point system of U.S. demobilization. By late 1945 the 78th Division created a

temporary and provisional light armored, mobile force designated the 78th Infantry Division Provisional Squadron to patrol the devastated streets of Berlin in the American Sector to replace the 16th Cavalry Group.

After the unconditional surrender of all enemies of the U.S. after V-J Day the vast U.S. Army, Army Air Corps and Navy stationed in Western Europe underwent a precipitous deactivation and demobilization. Combat units that had defeated the Axis virtually dissolved as fast as air and sealift could move men (and some equipment) to the United States. It was clearly apparent that there would be an inadequate combat force remaining to execute the occupation of the large American zone of Germany. To fill this void a decision was made in Washington to create a unique provisional organization to be called the U.S. Zone Constabulary. This 35,000 man force would assume the mission of overwatching the long border between the US and USSR zones of occupation, demonstrate the military presence of the US, and where necessary preserve law and order. Under the command of a dynamic, combat experienced Armor/Cavalry officer, MG Ernest N. Harmon, the U.S. Zone Constabulary was created in the U.S. occupation zone in early 1946.

Organization and equipment for the Constabulary Force was based on the Armored-Cavalry Squadrons and Groups that had played such an important role in the defeat of the German Wehrmacht. Concurrently the US Berlin Command requested and gained approval that one such Constabulary Squadron be activated in Berlin as a component of the US Occupation Force there. A skeleton planning staff was formed in early 1946. On May 1, 1946 the 16th CONSTABULARY SQUADRON (SEPARATE) was activated from the remaining units of the 78th Infantry Division Provisional Squadron and fleshed out from draftees called to duty in late 1945 to early 1946. Units designated were:

16th Cavalry Group Hq.....Hq, Hq & Sv Troop
78th Div. Cav. Recon. Trp....."A" Troop
Anti-Tank Co. 310th Inf. Regt....."B" Troop
Anti-Tank Co. 309th Inf. Regt..... "C" Troop
Cannon Co. 310th Inf. Regt....."D" Troop
Co. "A". 771 Tank Bn....."E" Troop

The 16th Constabulary Squadron was not under the command of the US Zone Constabulary. It was one of the two combat units assigned to the Berlin Command. Tables of organization and equipment (TO&E) and most operational and administrative procedures were those quickly developed for the Zone Constabulary.

At the time of the activation informal arrangements were made to associate the 16th Constabulary with the 4th Cavalry Group, then part of the occupation force in Austria. There was no command relationship. However the 16th Squadron was authorized to wear the distinctive insignia (DI) of the distinguished 4th Cavalry Regiment (see insignias below).

The primary missions initially assigned to the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate) were:

1. To patrol at random all main streets of the American Sector thereby representing the presence and strength of the US occupation force in Berlin.
2. To patrol daily the autobahn from Berlin to Helmstedt (the place where the autobahn left the Soviet zone and entered the British occupation zone of Germany).
3. To support when needed the newly activated Berlin police force.
4. To support as needed special missions requiring US combat forces e.g., refugee control, CIC searches, and

humanitarian relief.

5. To organize and equip a para-military German Civilian Guard Detachment assigned static security of selected US installations in Berlin.

6. To maintain on continuous 15 minute alert a force of one mechanized platoon to respond to any emergency in Berlin.

These missions were subsequently modified to accommodate the withdrawal of the USSR from the Berlin Allied Kommandatura (the Inter-Allied Authority in Berlin), the restoration of the Berlin Police Force, the massive Berlin Airlift named "Operation Vittles", and numerous international crises impacting on Berlin. When the seven convicted NURNBERG trial prisoners were brought to Spandau Prison in Berlin the 16th Constabulary Squadron furnished the first prison guard detachment. Every fourth month thereafter this duty was repeated in rotation among the four occupying nations. On occasion the entire squadron or parts thereof was deployed within Berlin to control actual or threatened civil disturbances. Such actions were normally in close collaboration with British and French occupation forces. Relations with the USSR rapidly deteriorated as opposing concepts for the occupation and restoration of Berlin emerged. An elite platoon of 30 horse mounted troopers performed innumerable ceremonial duties for all levels of US occupation forces in Berlin. On occasion the Horse Platoon made random mounted patrols of heavily wooded segments of the US-USSR sector boundary.

The 16th CONSTABULARY SQUADRON (SEPARATE) on May 1, 1946 wore the insignia of the parent Regiment, (Fig. 1) the 4th Cavalry Group. On February 10, 1948 the Squadron was reorganized and wore the Berlin Bears (Fig's 2). On February 1, 1949 the squadron was identified as heir to "Strike Hard", the 16th Cavalry Group insignia (Fig. 3).



Fig. 1



Fig's. 2



Fig. 3

All troopers assigned to the Constabulary proudly wore on the left shoulder sleeve of their uniform the new Constabulary insignia (shoulder patch). The organization of the Constabulary is symbolized in the basic disk of Cavalry yellow, bordered by a ring of Infantry blue. The dominant letter "C" for CONSTABULARY, also in Infantry blue, is pierced by a bolt of lightning in Artillery red. The lightning bolt is symbolic of speed and armored power inherent in the Constabulary and was especially appropriate for the 16th Constabulary Squadron whose origin is traced to the 78th Infantry Division, "The Lightning Division". After successfully completing a brief, special training program and meeting certain disciplinary standards members of the 16th Squadron were awarded a "flash" or "tab" reading "CONSTABULARY" worn 1/2 inch above the "Circle C". It was perpetuated by the "BERLIN" tab added to the US Army Europe shoulder patch worn by the Berlin Brigade until it was inactivated in 1994.

On activation the 16th Squadron was assigned a German Luftwaffe Anti-Aircraft Kaserne and an adjacent smaller Vehicular Repair and Maintenance Kaserne called "Emerick". Both had been severely damaged

by repeated aerial bombardment and further abused by the first Soviet occupation force. No utilities functioned. Bomb craters pot-marked the entire area. Concurrent with the first occupational mission was a self-help reconstruction project. US Army engineers (mentioned earlier) plus civilian contractors subsequently took over the rehabilitation. These Kasernes were in the area of Berlin called Lankwitz, part of the bezirke (borough) of Tempelhof.

US Berlin Command selected the name "Patton Barracks" for the Squadron's Kaserne complex. Shortly thereafter headquarters US European Command named a major installation in the US Zone of Occupation after Gen. George S. Patton Jr. of WWII fame. The 16th Constabulary garrison was re-named "Oliver Barracks" in honor of LTC Francis McD. Oliver, a distinguished Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron commander killed in action in France in early August 1944. In 1948 the Squadron was moved to a larger, more modern US complex named "McNair Barracks", formerly a major headquarters and electronics manufacturing plant of Telefunken, one of Germany's larger firms.

In addition to the 16th Constabulary Squadron there was a battalion (subsequently a regiment) of Infantry stationed in Berlin. The two combat units plus the entire Berlin complex were supported by the traditional U.S. Army combat support and service support units of varying size. These included battalions, companies, detachments of: Signal Corps, Corps of Engineers, Military Police, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Transportation, Medical, Army Security Agency, Counter Intelligence, Adjutant General, Judge Advocate General, Tempelhof Airfield was a U.S. operational air base under an independent Army Air Corps commander.

The Squadron maintained close operational contact with the infantry unit and was dependent on the day-to-day service support of these technical service units. A small aviation detachment of light (observation) aircraft was part of the 16th Constabulary Squadron. The total Army occupation force in Berlin was assigned to the U.S. Army Berlin Command headed by a major general. Also in Berlin superior to Berlin Command was the Office of Military Government for Germany (US), "OMGUS", under Gen. Lucius D. Clay. By early 1947 there was a growing community of several thousand American spouses and children of American servicemen living in Berlin. Security and support for these dependents was part of the mission shared by the 16th Constabulary Squadron.

Patrols of the U.S. sector streets of Berlin were usually accomplished by a team of one M-8 armored car and two 1/4 ton trucks ("Jeeps"), seven soldiers commanded by an NCO. On occasion an officer commanded; the strength of the patrol was increased; occasionally decreased to one or two "Jeeps". Routes and timing were continuously varied. The duration of a patrol averaged about four hours. Night patrols were less frequent than in daylight. A basic load of ammunition accompanied each patrol; each maintained continuous contact by radio with the squadron operations center. Fraternalization with native Berliners was prohibited; courtesy and emergency assistance were required. Some sample actions by a patrol were:

- a. Report, investigate a traffic accident.
- b. Transportation of an ill or injured German to a hospital.
- c. Pursuit of a fleeing criminal.
- d. Escort; assistance to a Berlin policeman or police patrol.
- e. Apprehension of intoxicated Allied personnel.
- f. Break up street fights.
- g. Dispersal of unauthorized crowds.



With occasional exceptions 16th Constabulary patrols were well recieved. Violent incidents decreased as Berlin began its tortuous recovery.

In addition to metropolitan street patrols the 16th Constabulary Squadron patrolled the 110-mile autobahn eastward to the British zone several times a week. Composition of the patrol varied: normally one armored car and two "Jeeps". British and French mechanized patrols alternated with the U.S. Army in this long, usually boring drive through the Soviet zone of occupation. Incidents of harassment by Soviet military forces varied in frequency and seriousness. In late 1948 the USSR attempted to isolate the American, British and French forces in Berlin by blocking all roads, rail and canal routes into the city. This resulted in the famous Berlin Airlift. The 16th Constabulary Squadron's major effort switched to supervising the rapid unloading of cargo from aircraft arriving at Tempelhof Airfield 24 hours every flyable day. Additionally the Squadron maintained static security over the stored fuel, food, medical supplies, clothing, etc. stocks at Tempelhof before they were distributed to local ration points. Prior to the task being assigned to a U.S. MP Battalion the 16th Constabulary Squadron provided security guards aboard the U.S. railroad train between Hamburg and Berlin/Berlin-Hamburg. This procedure was considered necessary to preclude interference by Soviet forces as the train passed through the Soviet zone of occupation. Harassment (usually creating delays) occurred sporadically.

As the western (Allied) sectors of Berlin recovered, rebuilt, and created traditional government functions the missions of the 16th Constabulary Squadron were reduced.

"E" Troop, the Squadron's light tank unit, was transferred out of Berlin in 1948.

The Squadron Horse Platoon survived as one of the last mounted units of the U.S. Army. After deactivation of the 16th Constabulary Squadron in late 1950 it was absorbed into the 579th Military Police Battalion, which was deactivated in 1953. The riders and mounts became part of the 287th Military Police Company.

On November 10, 1950 LTC Charlie Y. Talbott passed the colors while trooping the line as the Squadron held its last parade on Ringstrasse at McNair Barracks.

The 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate) was deactivated on November 27, 1950 at Grafenwohr, Germany. Most remaining missions were assumed by a re-enforced MP Battalion. The majority of the 16th Constabulary Squadron's officers and enlisted personnel returned to Berlin to become the 1st Battalion of the newly formed 6th Infantry Regiment. At the time of deactivation many official and unofficial commendations were written and spoken about the four and one-half years of exemplary performance of duties under the US Zone Constabulary credo of "Mobility, Vigilance and Justice". The forty-nine years of U.S. occupation of Berlin ended on September 8, 1994. The long, sometimes critical, always sensitive force that performed that mission was modeled on the standards of excellence of the first mobile, light armored

16th CONSTABULARY SQUADRON (SEPARATE)

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