

Brief History of the 16th CONSTABULARY SQUADRON (SEPARATE)

In March 1947, the foreign ministers of the U. S., Britain, France and Russia met in Moscow in an effort to work out a peace treaty for their recent great enemy - the 65,910,999 inventive people, the 182,104 square miles of rich natural resources and the traditionally proud, fierce national spirit which are Germany. It has been written that the Big Four may take months or years to agree. France wanted an impotent, agrarian Germany. Britain, torn between a socialist government and a conservative military, did not know quite what it wanted. Russia definitely wanted a subject Germany, either as an unwilling source of reparations or an enthusiastic disciple of Communism. The U. S. settled down to wanting a neutralized Germany which would be given an opportunity to rebuild peacetime trade under a democratic self-government.

Meanwhile the occupation went on under an impossible four-zone arrangement which was secretly foisted on the world at the Yalta Conference. In 43,195 square miles of southern Germany, U.S. troops patrolled. In western Germany the British were the constabulary; in the industrial Ruhr the French had troops; in the 85,501 square miles of eastern Germany the Russians had full charge. At the time, Germany used four official currencies, the dollar, pound, its own reichmark and occupation marks printed by the Allies. It also used one unofficial currency - the American cigarette - which was possibly better than all the rest. Its economy was divided much as if no food imports were permitted to New York and no iron-ore traffic between the Mesabi Range and Pittsburgh.

While Germany proper was divided into four zones, Berlin, the capitol was divided into four sectors. This became a problem as the Russians had control of the power stations that controlled the lights of the city. To make things worse, they were to take over the control of rail and road traffic into and out of Berlin. This, eventually led to a shutdown of rail traffic hauling food to the people of the city. As a result, the Berlin Airlift was formed and allowed the much needed food, clothing and medicine to reach the city by air and the aircraft were permitted to land at Tempelhof airfield without major disruptions from the Russians.

In Berlin, there were two major American military units that protected the city. These were the First Infantry Division, also known as the Big Red One, and the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate). These two units were responsible for the patrolling of the cobblestone streets of the city and the safeguarding of various government buildings and the 16th Constabulary was responsible for an 18-day tour of duty on the border between the U. S. and Russian sectors. The patrols carried out by the Constabulary were either by foot, horseback or motorized. The motorized patrols consisted of Jeeps and M8 Armored Cars.

All troopers assigned to the elite units of the United States Constabulary proudly wore on the left shoulder sleeve of their uniform the new Constabulary insignia of deep blue, golden yellow and red -- the time honored colors of the three basic combat arms, blue for the Infantry, yellow for the

dominant design of the letter "C" for "CONSTABULARY," also in Infantry blue, is pierced by a bolt of lightning in Artillery red. This lightning bolt is symbolic of the speed and armored power inherent in the Constabulary and was especially appropriate for the 16th Constabulary Squadron whose origin can be traced to the 78th Infantry Division, "The Lightning Division." The separate shoulder flash was authorized only for the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate) while serving in Berlin. The word "CONSTABULARY" served to designate and to distinguish the wearer. The flash was a reward for good conduct and acceptance of the Squadron standard of performance of duty. Troopers of the 16th Constabulary Squadron were entitled to wear the flash after completing thirty (30) days service with the Squadron and for as long as they incurred no disciplinary action against their record. The privilege of wearing the flash was removed when any undisciplined conduct was verified. The privilege was restored by order of any Troop Commander not sooner than thirty (30) days following the completion of punishment for any offense. The "CONSTABULARY" flash, like the patch, was designed on an arc of basic Cavalry yellow, lettering of Infantry blue, and bordered by Artillery red. The flash was worn one-half inch below the left shoulder seam. The shoulder patch was placed one-half inch below the bottom edge of the flash.

The 16th Constabulary Squadron was part of the 4th Cavalry Regiment, whose military history extended far back into American military history during the American Civil War. The 4th Cavalry Regiment was fully mechanized at the beginning of the Second World War and fought brilliantly from the assault landings on the beaches of Normandy to the Elbe River. The 4th Cavalry Group was reorganized as the 4th Constabulary Regiment in early 1946 with initial occupation duties in Austria.



16th Constabulary Deactivated

Friday, November 10, 1950, will long be remembered by the men of the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate), who have served in the Berlin Command as part of this unit. This was the last full dress parade of a unit that has been part of the Berlin occupation since May 1, 1946, and served throughout the many historical events which have taken place within the four-quartered city of Berlin. On hand to give the final farewell to the unit was Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, U. S. Commander of Berlin, also Col. M. W. Daniel, Post Commander and Col. L. P. Leone, Deputy Post Commander. Gen. Taylor commented on the outstanding services performed by the Squadron since its activation. He mentioned the fact that he would not say goodby, but he would see them again as men of the famous 6th Infantry Regiment.

Though the Squadron was activated in 1946, its history in Berlin began in 1945. On November 25 1945, the 16th Cavalry Group (Mecz) a unit which had entered Berlin with the 2nd Armored Division in July 1945 was designated as the District Constabulary for the American Sector. A new provisional unit was formed around Hq & Hq Troop, 16th Cavalry Group, consisting of the 78th Division Cavalry Recon Troop, Anti-Tank Co of the 310th Inf. Regt, and Anti-Tank Cg (sic), 309th Infantry Regiment.

These three units, after a very brief period of familiarization training with M-8 Armored Cars and 1/4 ton trucks assumed full responsibility for continuous security patrols through the bleak, cold streets of Berlin in the winter of 1945--1946. On Jan. 1, 1946 the District Constabulary was organized and reassigned the 78th Inf. Div. A provisional Squadron and three other units were assigned to this Squadron.

Received the Standard

The 16th Constabulary Squadron (Provisional) was next designated in the history of the Squadron. Lt. Col. Samuel M. Goodwin assumed command on May 1, 1946 at which time the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Sep.) was activated. Maj. Gen. Frank A. Keating, Commanding General, Berlin District, presented the Squadron with the National Standard on 6th May 1946 at Patton Barracks, Lankwitz, Berlin, Germany.

At this time Gen. Keating charged the Squadron with the basic mission of tactical security of the American Sector of Berlin. On April 25, 1947, Lt. Col. Goodwin relinquished command to Lt. Col. (George C.) Benjamin.

During 1947 the Squadron operated the Autobahn Patrols on the International Autobahn which lead the Russian Zone of occupation. The Nahmitz outposts on the Autobahn was also operated by the Squadron as well as a tour of guard at Spandau Prison.

Considering the terrible hardship of winter in a city desperately short of all life essentials; food, clothing, housing and fuel, and considering the depletion of American forces they still performed their duties efficiently and exceedingly well as security troops. On August 15, 1947, Lt. Col. George C. Benjamin relinquished command of the Squadron to Lt. Col. Robert C. Works. Lt. Col. Benjamin departed to an assignment in the zone of interior.

On February 10, 1948, the Squadron was reorganized and redesignated as follows: Headquarters and Headquarters Service Troop and Troops A, B, C, D, were formed. As a result of reorganization E Troop was lost from the Squadron.

On January 12, 1948, the Squadron Colors were presented at a Squadron parade by Col. Robert A. Willard, Commanding Officer of Berlin Command.

During the Blockade

When the Iron Curtain reached out and closed Berlin to the outside world by blocking the city on June 16, 1948 leaving it with the threat of communism, the Berlin Airlift was formed and progressed to become one of the most successful events in America's strive for freedom throughout the world. The Squadron assumed a special commitment in the airlift for blockaded Berlin. This commitment required three hundred and twelve enlisted men and twelve officers every forty-eight hours.

This duty was rotated every month with the 3rd Bn 16th Inf. By December the officers commitment was decreased to six (6) due to the efficiency and supervisory capacity demonstrated by the non-commissioned officers of the Squadron.

The fact of the airlift commitments, travel restrictions, and the "Cold War" the Squadron was unable to training grounds in the American Zone of Germany, as had been done in the years before. On March 29, two troops moved into the Grunwald area in the American Sector of Berlin for field training and on April 2 the entire Squadron marched to the area in preparation for an Army Day review and display of equipment open to the general public. Troops were rotated for training throughout the year, all troops spending at least one month in the training area. By the end of this training period, all officers and personnel had been qualified in familiarization firing with crew served weapons, and the Squadron was at a high peak of combat efficiency.

Assigned to Berlin

On February 1, 1949 the 16th Constabulary (sic) Squadron was relieved from assignment to the 4th Constabulary Regt. and assigned to Berlin Military Post.

On May 19, 1949 Lt. Col. Works returned to the zone of interior for reassignment and Lt. Col. (Carroll H.) Prunty assumed command of the Squadron. Staff assignments remained the same throughout this period except that Major Snow assumed command of the Squadron on November 23 for the remainder of the year, during the absence of Lt. Col. Prunty. Lt. Col. Prunty later returned to the zone of interior for treatment at Walter Reed Hospital.

Finest in Berlin

The next to assume command on Jan 14, 1950, was Lt. Col. (Charlie Y.) Talbot who is at present Commanding Officer. Under his inspiring leadership the Squadron has carried on through many of the historical events of 1950 in Berlin. It is still known as the finest security unit in Berlin.

Although the Squadron will be deactivated in the near future to become the 1st Bn of the newly formed 6th Inf. Regiment, it will be long remembered throughout the Berlin community; not only has it performed well where needed but it has become, together with other Berlin units, a symbol of American ideals of freedom well-behind the "iron Curtain."

16th Constabulary Celebrate Anniversary With Parade

The 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate), which was organized five years ago as a mechanized force to provide for the security of the U. S. Sector of Berlin, has been authorized to wear the crest of the 16th Cavalry Regiment from which it evolved through the 78th Infantry Division.

Lt. Col. Charlie Y. Talbott, squadron commander, accepted the crest on behalf of his troopers from Col. James Duke, commanding officer of Berlin Military Post, at a review celebrating the fifth anniversary of the squadron's activation last Saturday, May 6.

Designed for wear on the shoulder straps of the troopers' uniforms, the crest commemorates the Third, Sixth and Fourteenth Cavalry Regiments from which the 16th Cavalry Regiment was formed in 1917. An embattled partition line across the device symbolizes the first engagement of the 6th Cavalry in 1862 at the Battle of Williamsburg when it assaulted artillery in earthworks. The green upper portion represents the color of the facings worn by the Mounted Rifles which became the Third Cavalry Regiment.

The crest bears a shield of cavalry yellow with a blue chevron symbolic of the old blue uniform. Also depicted are 16 spur rowels indicating both the numerical designation and mounted service. A green border and a rattlesnake symbolize the origin of the 16th Cavalry Regiment and its subsequent service on the Mexican Border. Across the crest is the motto, "Strike Hard."

The squadron was activated on May 1, 1946 when Maj. Gen. Frank A. Keating, Commanding General of Berlin District, presented it with the national colors.

When Maj. Gen. Frank A. Keating, commanding general of Berlin District, presented the squadron with the colors on May 1, 1946, the squadron was composed of personnel from Headquarters and Service Troop, 16th Cavalry Group (Mechanized), the 309th and 771st Infantry Regiments and the 310th Regiment's Cannon Company.

Troopers were selected for their military efficiency, intelligence and exemplary conduct, and the squadron has maintained these standards in obtaining replacements for personnel who have departed the organization through discharge and reassignment.

First squadron commander was Lt. Col. Samuel M. Goodwin, who was succeeded late in 1946 by Lt. Col. G(eorge) C. Benjamin. Early in 1947, Lt. Col. Robert C. Works took over the command which he held until May 1949 when he turned it over to Lt. Col. Carroll H. Prunty. The present commander, Lt. Col. Charlie Y. Talbott, took over the squadron January 1950 when Lt. Col. Prunty returned to the United States for medical treatment.

The colorful Horse Platoon, believed to be the only mounted group now in the U. S. Army, has been a feature of numerous military ceremonies in Berlin since it was activated in October 1, 1945. Selected from the 78th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop of the 78th Infantry Division, it performed its first major assignment in January 1946 in the reception of then Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay, Deputy U.S. Military Governor. The Horse Platoon became a part of the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Separate) on May 1, 1946.

Final Parade for Berlin's 16th Constab

Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, U.S. Commander of Berlin; Col. Maurice W. Daniel, Commanding Officer, Berlin Military Post; and Lt. Col. Charlie Y. Talbott, Commanding Officer, 16th Constabulary Squadron (Sep.), pass the colors while trooping the line as the 16th Constabulary Squadron (Sep.) held its last parade at McNair Barracks, November 10. After reorganization, the 16th Constabulary Squadron will become the 1st Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment now being formed for service in Berlin.

This history was compiled by ANDREW F. KING, US Constabulary Veteran
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