

General George S. Patton, Jr. and The U.S. 2nd Cavalry (Patton's Ghosts of the Third Army)

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Also, I would like to thank another one of my dad's friends who served in the same outfit, Mr. Bernard Sandowski. These men had my father's utmost respect, and now, they also have mine. I would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Vito Spadifino, who was a Sergeant from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, Troop A, 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized who provided me an excellent story on a face-to-face encounter that he had with General Patton somewhere in France. Thank you again, and also thank you for your service to our country.

## Executive Summary

This paper addresses two of my heroes, the Greatest Combat Commander of the Third Army in World War II, General George Smith Patton, Jr., and Private First Class Albert Frank De Amicis, my father, who served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, Troop A, Recon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized, and was attached to the Third Army. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry was labeled by the Nazis as Patton's Ghosts of the Third Army. These men wore this "crown" with pride and the distinction of fighting behind enemy lines, taking prisoners, disrupting communication and the enemy's infrastructure, and killing as many Germans as they could. That was their mission.

The paper examines how General Patton was almost sidelined after the Battle of Sicily due to atrocities that were tied to his passionate speeches that he delivered to his troops. These speeches, according to Patton, were misconstrued and taken out of context where some of his units believed they had the green light to shoot prisoners without cause. Slapping incidents occurred on two soldiers that were in the same evacuation hospital as the General toured and spoke to the wounded. These incidents had an adverse affect when this bad press hit the States. General Eisenhower almost court-martialed Patton which ultimately would have sent this honorable man back to the United States in disgrace prior to giving him the Third Army for the European Campaign. If, that in fact would have occurred, this act of misjudgment would have definitely altered the outcome of the war. The paper follows one of the greatest campaigns through the European Theater of Operations from Operations Overlord, Fortitude, and Cobra, and the march toward Berlin. The events are followed through the hedge rows of France, through one of the fiercest battles during WW II, the Battle of the Bulge, and through the end of the war in Europe, when the Germans surrendered on May 7, 1945 and a Constabulary District Government was established during our occupation of Germany.

## I. Introduction

This paper will address two of my heroes as a young boy growing up in middle-class America. General George Smith. Patton, Jr., Combat Commander of the Third U.S. Army and Combat Infantry Soldier, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Cavalry, Troop A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized, attached to General Patton's Third Army, Private First Class, Albert Frank De Amicis, my father.

While growing up in a middle-class environment with two wonderful parents and a great kid sister, I felt very fortunate that my father was a great provider. He and his partner owned a construction company. Coming from Brentwood, Pennsylvania, a tight little community located just a few miles from downtown Pittsburgh, seemed like a very normal situation.

My father was a little guy who grew up tough on the streets of the Northside of Pittsburgh. He lived in Clifton Park, Pennsylvania. At the time, I didn't realize just how tough he was.

From a book that we had in our library at home I found out that dad had served under General Patton in the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Cavalry. In our household, there were two worn, torn scrapbooks with pictures of my dad in the war. I would press him to tell me what these pictures meant, and he would hardly ever verbalize on these scrapbooks. He'd utter a few syllables about the war and that would be the end of the conversation.

Many years later, the reason my father never spoke about the war would be clarified to this writer. After reading, *Tom Brockaw's Book, the Greatest Generation*, this became very clear to me when Brockaw quoted Mauldin (1998) who wrote these words more than half a century ago:

Even before the men headed home from the front lines, and it is as true today as it was then. They didn't want pity and they did want to forget. Of course, they could not forget, especially those who'd seen combat. When they couldn't erase the war from memory they simply confined it there, refusing to talk about it unless questioned, and then only reluctantly. That is why I think it's so important for us to hear these stories now, to know what an exceptional time that was for so many and how much they sacrificed to give us the world we have today (p-382)<sup>1</sup>.

As a curious young man, these pictures fascinated me, as well as some war memorabilia that dad brought back from Germany. One item was a full size Swastika Flag that had been draped over a Balcony on a building in downtown Berlin which he removed and brought back to the States. The other two items that he also recovered were two swords from two captured SS officers. These

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<sup>1</sup> Brockaw, T. (1998). *The greatest generation*, Random House, New York, New York, (pp-382).

swords had their names etched on their blades. The weapons had a black steel sheath with a real hard corrugated spiral handle with a Swastika engraved in each of the handles.

Dad started to open up to me about the war around the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of D-Day. The both of us were watching some of the activities that were being televised from Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. Then all of a sudden, he made reference to Omaha Beach, and told me he had landed there in July of 1944, with General Patton and his Third Army (Please refer to Appendix-A, pp-28).

From that day on, he discussed the war openly with me. He stated that back in those days, when the war broke out, everyone wanted to serve. He was employed by the Defense Department and he had a service deferment because of his job. This job measured fluctuations in body temperature for submariners who were under the water for lengthy periods of time and who were exposed to extreme temperatures. He was subjected to extreme cold and heat temperatures where they'd document how his body would react to these changes. When traveling by streetcar to and from his place of employment, my dad mentioned to me how he felt being the only civilian riding the streetcar. He told me that he felt like a Jodi who was a person who had stayed home, had a normal life, job, and family, while everyone was overseas fighting for their country. All the men who were riding the streetcar were in uniform because of the war. If there was one civilian riding the streetcar, the people leered at that individual, and would view him with contempt.

My father joined the Army on March 18, 1943. He served under one of the greatest combat generals ever to don a military uniform, General George Smith. Patton, Jr. My dad's regiment was the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Cavalry.

In the European Theater of Operations, the Third Army was broken into corps and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry was under the XII Corps most of the war, and commanded by General Manton Sprague Eddy.

When making reference to General Patton, my dad had nothing but the utmost respect for him. When the troops would see Patton in the field, they would say, "There goes Old Blood and Guts, our blood and his guts". But these men would go to hell and back for the "Old Man".

Dad had the privilege of seeing the General in the field on three different occasions. This General was a leader who believed in being on the front lines with his men. He was spit and polish, and epitomized how you should wear a uniform. His helmet was so shiny that you could actually shave in its reflection, and in regard to his sidearms, he carried two pretty pearl handled revolvers.

The third and final time he saw General Patton was nearing the end of the war when they reached the Rhine River in Germany. The General assembled the Third Army on the banks of the Rhine, where he told his men, "I am going to show you men what I think of those Nazi bastards". He then proceeded to urinate in the Rhine River. This was a great man, who his troops loved and respected due to his leadership and warrior spirit. He truly walked the walk and talked the talk, and will go down in the annals of history as one of the greatest combat generals to live.

This paper is dedicated to those veterans, who like my father, fought and those who died in the Greatest War to end all wars, World War II. Also, the writer would like to thank those veterans who fought in other wars and conflicts, and who also made that supreme sacrifice to our country.

This paper will follow General Patton from the great battles from North Africa, Sicily, and the landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France on July 19, 1944. We will also follow his great campaigns through France and Germany, along with his U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, which was called by the Nazis, "The Ghosts of Patton's Third Army" until the unconditional surrender of all German forces to the Allies on May 7, 1945. Then on January 1, 1946, the 2nd Cavalry was charged with the task as the District Constabulary, Eastern Military District of the occupied zones as a military government (Third Army) (Lambert and Layton, ND, pp-333).<sup>2</sup>

## **II. Tribulations of General Patton**

The path of George S. Patton, Jr. was written in the annals of his destiny. The General's exploits and accomplishments are many. In World War II his successes in the North African Campaign took him from the conquering of Casablanca, to the Battle of Sicily, where his Seventh Army took Palermo and Messina. In the Battle of Sicily, we, along with our Allies, conquered the Island in 38 days. Finally, Patton's Third Army culminated itself through some of the greatest battle campaigns waged in the European Theater of Operations. Along his path to greatness, there were certain dangers and roadblocks he encountered. These documented incidents almost changed the course of World War II, where one of the greatest combat commanders was almost sidelined for the duration of the European Theater. Patton, through his successful campaign in the Battle of Sicily, was now recognized by the American Press Corps as being the new generation of contemporary

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<sup>2</sup> Layton, G.B, Capt and Lambert, A.L CAV (ND). Ghosts of Patton's Third Army: A History of The Second U.S. Cavalry, Published by Historical Section Second Cavalry Association, Printed by Munchner, Graphiche, Kunstanstalten, GMBH. (Bisher F. Bruckmann), Munich, Germany (pp-333)

mobile commanders, and was being built up and touted as the man of the future (Hogg, I.V. 1982, pp-74-75).<sup>3</sup>

### III. Atrocities

During the Battle of Sicily, some serious allegations began to surface on atrocities that were being committed by our troops. These murders of the prisoners that were in our custody were being blamed on General Patton's speeches that he had delivered to his troops. On June 27, 1943, General Patton gave two passionate speeches to the new arrivals of the 45<sup>th</sup> officers. In this speech:

Captain Howard said, that Patton stated (1943):

“Made it very plain over there that we were to kill the enemy wherever we found him,” Patton continued to say” He said to kill and to continue to kill and that the more we killed then the less we'd have to kill later and the better off the Division would be in the long run (374).<sup>4</sup>

According to Hirshson (2002):

“While some witnesses even testified that Patton talked about killing those prisoners who surrendered within two hundred yards: “It didn't make any difference. He just said ‘Kill him’... He did say that the more prisoners we took the more men we'd have to feed and not fool around with prisoners. He said that there was only one good German and that was a dead one” (374).<sup>5</sup>

During the invasion between the days when the Americans had secured the airfields from the enemy at Biscari, Comiso, and Ponte Olivio, Sicily, Patton had some bitter words for his diary when the report of this atrocity first surfaced on July 15<sup>th</sup>, when:

Bradley-a most loyal man-arrived in great excitement about 0900 to report that a Captain in the 180 RCT, 45<sup>th</sup> Division, had taken my injunction to kill men who kept on shooting until we got within 200 yards, seriously, and had shot some 50 prisoners in cold blood and also in ranks, which was an even greater error. I told him that it was probably an exaggeration, but in any case to tell the officer to certify that the dead men were snipers or had attempted to

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<sup>3</sup> Hogg, I.V. (1982), The biography of General George S. Patton, Division of W.H. Smith Publishers, Inc. New York City, (pp-74-75)

<sup>4</sup> Hirshson, S.P. (2002). General Patton: A soldier's life, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, New York, (pp-374)

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, (pp-374)

escape or something, as it would make a stink in the press and also would make the civilians mad (374).<sup>6</sup>

In this entry, a reference was made by Patton on two other shootings at Biscari. There was some fierce fighting on the nights of July 13-14. A captain from the 180<sup>th</sup> claimed that he heard yelling coming from the top of the hill saying that we are the master race, come up and get us. They had just walked into fierce machine gun fire that had come from the crest of that ridge from the direction where the hollering came from. The surrender of 40 snipers came ten minutes later. These snipers were dressed in Italian uniforms and some were in civilian dress. The commander of Company C of the 180<sup>th</sup> ordered two dozen men to form a firing squad and shoot the prisoners. After hearing of the massacre, Lieutenant Colonel William E. King, the chaplain of the 45<sup>th</sup> Division, and Colonel Martin went to Biscari. When arriving, these two Colonels saw three mounds of dead bodies which had been stacked up like cordwood. Martin told Middleton that there was no doubt in his mind that these prisoners had been slaughtered. Also at Biscari, Sergeant Horace T. West of Company A was tried for the shooting of 36 prisoners; thirty four of them were Italian, and two were Germans. Also, there had been another incident reported coming from Canicatti, Sicily, where there had also been a shooting of unarmed civilians (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-374,375, 378-379).<sup>7</sup>

According to Hirshson (2002) “At West’s trial Captain Robert C. Dean, the commander of Company D of the 180<sup>th</sup>, described the effects of these talks”:

My impression goes back to the speech General Patton made to us while in Africa, in which he said he did not want any prisoners taken. I told my company that there was a fine line there and I wanted nobody killed after they had been taken, After Lt. Col. Schaefer’s speech. I had no time to talk to the company. A lot of men had the impression within my unit that nobody was to be taken. Lt. Col. Schaefer had the same thing to say that General Patton did. One day I picked up a couple of pieces of shrapnel and went back to the rear to get fixed up. On the way back some aid men stopped me. They had two wounded Italians there. The aid men requested that I send men over to shoot them. I went over and looked after them. They were pretty bad shot and I told them to fix them up. That actually happened on my way back to the front (p-375-376).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hirshson, S.P. (2002). General Patton: A soldier's life, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, New York, (pp-374)

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, (pp-374, 375, 378-379)

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, (pp-375-376)

## IV. Slappings

On August 3, 1943, Patton decided to visit the wounded in an Army hospital. Patton recorded (1943) the following passage in his diary:

On the way, I stopped at an evacuation hospital and talked to 350 newly wounded. One poor fellow who had lost his right arm cried; another had lost a leg. All were brave and cheerful. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant of "C: Company, 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry, was in for his second wound. He laughed and said that after he got his third wound he was going to ask to go home. I had told General Marshall some months ago that an enlisted man hit 3 times should be sent home. In the hospital was one louse. He was unhurt but told me that he was unable to take it-just a coward. I gave him hell and slapped his face with my gloves. Companies should deal with such men and if they shirk, try them for cowardice (389).<sup>9</sup>

This following excerpt was taken from a letter dated August 16, 1943 from Lt. Col. Perrin H. Long, Medical Corps, on the subject of "Mistreatment of Patients in Receiving Tents"(Exhibit 2, p-2).

The second slapping incident happened on August 10, 1943 in an evacuation hospital, with Private Paul G. Bennet, C Battery, 17<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. Bennet was a patient who had served four years as regular Army. He had served in II Corps, and had never experienced any problems until the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. After his friend was wounded, Private Paul G. Bennet was having trouble sleeping. He was then ordered to the evacuation hospital by the medical officer. The young man had pleaded with his medical officer not to send him because he wanted to be with his unit. Lt. General Patton, Jr, again was touring the hospital to see all of the wounded, where he made a point to talk to each and every one. The next one who he spoke to was a patient who was sitting on the end of his bed shivering. Patton asked the young man what was his problem? The young man replied, "It is my nerves," and began to cry. Patton hollered at the man, "What did you say?" The man repeated the same, and also said "he can't stand the shelling anymore". At this juncture, the General hollered again. "Your nerves, you are just a Goddamed coward, you yellow son of a bitch." Patton slapped him, and said "shut up your Goddamed crying. I won't have these brave men here who have been shot at seeing a yellow bastard sitting here crying." The General then struck the man once again; this strike resulted in knocking his helmet liner off his head. The General went into a tirade and told the

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<sup>9</sup> Hirshson, S.P. (2002). General Patton: A soldiers life, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, New York (pp-389)

officer in charge of admitting patients to the hospital, “Don’t admit this yellow bastard; there’s nothing the matter with him. I won’t have the hospitals cluttered up with these sons of bitches who haven’t got the guts to fight.” He then told the man again, “You’re going back to the front lines and you may get shot and killed, but you’re going to fight. If you don’t, I’ll stand you up against the wall and have a firing squad kill you on purpose.” He said, reaching for his pistol, “In fact, I ought to shoot you myself, you Goddamned whimpering coward”. The medical staff got him out of the hospital where the General continued hollering at him until he was out of view (Long, P. H., 1943, pp-1-2).<sup>10</sup>

Later, after Patton entered Messina, he condensed the mishaps that had happened recently. He didn’t even mention the 5-massacres, the three end-runs, and lastly, the two slappings. He kept his wife, Bea, in the dark about those incidents. Patton reflected that if he had to do it all over again, he would not change one iota. But for the next 12-months, after such a successful campaign, he would become bedeviled by them (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-398).<sup>11</sup>

Eisenhower contemplated for several days how and what discipline he would have to hand out to his old friend. When citing history, Eisenhower (1943) told Butcher, “Great generals, in their zeal to win battles, often went crazy on the battlefield” (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-399).<sup>12</sup>

Eisenhower faced a lot of dilemmas about Patton’s discipline action. As far as Eisenhower was concerned, Patton was in all likelihood the most accomplished commander that he had. The offense of assaulting a soldier was a very serious charge. If Eisenhower selected to court-martial Patton, his penalty would be a reduction in his permanent rank; there were not enough high ranking officers in the North African Campaign to convene a board anyway. Ike wished to avoid humiliating a general with his ability. If he would be tried and convicted, he would be sent back to the States in disgrace. Eisenhower wanted to avoid that option all together (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-399).<sup>13</sup>

Eisenhower arrived at his decision. Patton was ordered to make a public apology to all those individuals and units who were involved in the slappings (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, p-399).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Long, P.H (1943). The Unknown Patton Chapter 8, (The Slapping Incidents), Exhibit 2,(pp-1-2) <http://www.pattonhq.com/unknown/chap08.html>

<sup>11</sup> Hirshson, S.P. (2002). General Patton: A soldiers life, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, New York, (pp-398)

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, (pp-399)

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, (pp-399)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, (pp-399)

Patton was a good soldier; even if he didn't like Eisenhower's order to apologize he would carry it out to the best of his ability. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, he met with Private First Class Kuhl, and shook hands. This was the first soldier who he had slapped. Between August 24<sup>th</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup>, General Patton met with his divisions, and all of his officers and noncommissioned officers, and assembled as many enlisted men as he could muster, and then delivered a speech. He prefaced the speech by speaking of all of their successes in the Sicily Campaign. He credited the aggressive approach of pressing the attack, day and night. These attacks were unrelenting and incessant. Patton stated that, "We held the enemy by the nose and kicked him in the pants. We never, except in the landing, attacked head on" (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-402).<sup>15</sup>

Toward the end of this apology Patton referred obtusely to some unspecified misdeed (1943):

He had, he conceded, been "guilty" of criticizing too much and of talking too loudly. "For every man I have criticized in this Army, I have probably stopped, talked to, and complimented a thousand, but people are more prone to remember ill usage than to recall compliments; therefore, I want you officers and men who are here to explain to the other soldiers, who think perhaps that I am too hard, my motives and to express to them my sincere regrets" (p-402).<sup>16</sup>

The two slapping incidents created fervor in the States because it had been reported by Drew Pearson on his weekly radio broadcast. Pearson had also worked as a columnist in Washington. Even Bedell Smith told Patton that the Pearson report had been escalated out of proportion about those slapping incidents (Hirshson, S.P. 2002, pp-423).<sup>17</sup>

Patton feared that these reports were more of the same and these errors of his past judgment would keep him out of the rest of the war. Little did he know, in spite of these indiscretions, Ike would tell him that he would command the Third Army in the largest invasion that the world has ever seen. This invasion would take place in the European Theater of Operations.

## **V. General Patton Gets His Third Army**

On January 26, 1944, Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. landed in England. He was there to visit the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, who during the meeting told his old friend that he was giving him command of the Third Army which was in route to England. Patton

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<sup>15</sup> Hirshson, S.P. (2002). General Patton: A soldiers life, Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, New York, (pp-402)

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, (pp-402)

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, (pp-423)

was overjoyed! However, Patton had learned that his subordinate, General Omar Bradley, the Commander of the First Army, would be his new boss because of the slappings incidents, and atrocity accusations that had been leveled against General Patton. Eisenhower opted for General Bradley's style of leadership, and his clam demeanor to be in charge of "Operation Overlord" which would take place on June 6, 1944. (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-8).<sup>18</sup>

Eisenhower originally had Patton's part in his plans for Operation Overload, which was scheduled to land 10 days hence on Bradley's First Army's arrival on Normandy's beachhead. The plan had to be altered due to the late arrival of Patton's staff which had arrived later than expected. At this time, it had not been an established policy that armies would be shipped all at one time. Patton's Third Army finally was developing, after finally reaching England; Patton's numbers had grown to over 250,000 men. Patton had four corps attached to the Third Army: XV, VIII, XX, and the XII. Also, he had seven infantry divisions and they had six armored divisions (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-9).<sup>19</sup>

The morale of Patton's units began to increase after his vulgar pep talks that the men seemed to really enjoy.

One of these inspirational quotes:

Patton (1943):

"I want you men to remember that no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making sure the other dumb bastard died for his country" (p-9).<sup>20</sup>

Eisenhower did not want to bring any attention through any kind of verbal blunders which could attract any attention from the public, Congress, or the press. He made this very clear to General Patton. However, Patton placed his foot in his mouth once again. On April 25, 1944 Patton was speaking at a British woman's club while in England. The comments that he made in the speech, were allegedly off the record. They leaked back to the United States and overseas. Patton, because of this speech, almost lost his command. Eisenhower and General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff for the Army, (who was also the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee) were ready to discharge him from his command there. Eisenhower changed his mind due to Patton's most

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<sup>18</sup> Green, G.,& Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp-8)

<sup>19</sup> ibid, (pp-9)

<sup>20</sup> ibid, (pp-9)

aggressive leadership as a General, and rescinded his idea (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-11, 13).<sup>21</sup>

Operation Fortitude was a plan to deceive the Germans in having them believe that the invasion of France would be happening in the Pas de Calais, instead of the main invasion site, which was set to take place in Normandy, Operation Overlord. The Germans had so much respect for General Patton they were under the assumption that Patton's First Army Group invasion would be Pas de Calais. The Supreme Command had all types of shams going on to reassure the Germans that this, in fact, was the place. One example was the conducting of maneuvers taking place in the English Channel in the vicinity of the Pas de Calais. Deception was the key component for this plan (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-17).<sup>22</sup>

## **VI. Operation Overlord**

On June 6, 1944, Operation Overlord went into effect. D-Day had arrived. This invasion force with a total number of troops totaling 130,000 was being transferred by 5,000 ships off the Normandy coast of France. This strategic plan by Eisenhower was to establish a beachhead between Le Harve and the Cotentin Peninsula. Here there would be a mass of land amphibious and airborne forces to drive to adequate ports located in the heart of the Loire and Seine Rivers. These areas were in the heart of France and the Allies were concentrating on the Germans' strength so they would be able to free France (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-18).<sup>23</sup>

Our British Allies' sea assault was being conducted by the commander of the 21<sup>st</sup> Army, British General Bernard Montgomery. In this invasion, the Allies' two armies were the British Second Army, under Lieutenant General Sir Miles C. Dempsey, and our own, Lt. General Omar Bradley, who commanded the First Army and would be on Dempsey's right. Operation Overlord was on a broad front which consisted of French coastline totaling a 50 mile course of action. The invasion commenced at 6:30 a.m. The Americans had encountered heavy fighting where, on Omaha beach alone, we lost 2,500 men. The two American airborne divisions, had lost an additional 2,500 men (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-18).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, (pp-11-13)

<sup>22</sup> Green, G.,& Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp- 17)

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, (pp-18)

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, (pp-18)

## VII. Operation Cobra and Its Buildup

Dating back as early as 1942, the planning was already in the works by top allied military officials who were conceptualizing a grand scheme of a plan. Operation Cobra was moving southwardly into Brittany, then heading in an eastwardly direction on to Paris, and for this to be successful, the Allies would need to have a triumphant landing in Normandy. Operation Cobra's purpose was developed to create a gap in the German defenses which were located to the west of Saint-Lo. If this was successful, the Allies would have a profound insertion point that was deep into the enemy's lines. Then, after this penetration, there would be a major push by armored division(s) attacking the rear echelon of the Germans, then onto Coutances. If Coutances is liberated, it would be placed in the First Army's hands. Operation would then be completed and another operation would have to be planned for the southern base of the Contentin Peninsula, then the opening to Brittany (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-37, 39 and 41).<sup>25</sup>

Bradley told Eisenhower, during the early stages of Cobra, that he would prefer to keep Patton's Third Army out of the forthcoming operation. Patton was then included by Bradley, who then gave him permission to be able to have his Third Army participate in Operation Cobra on July 28<sup>th</sup>. The Third Army was formally activated on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Patton then began to formulate his six divisions of the First Army's VIII Corps, and then broke it down into two separate corps. The last remaining corps of the First Army would stay in place under the command of General Courtney H. Hodges, who was the assistant commander of the First Army (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-43-44).<sup>26</sup>

Bradley was not that excited about his former boss being in charge of the Third Army. In comparing both Generals, Patton was more absolute and flamboyant in his style of leadership; on the other hand, Bradley was more low-key and reserved. Their two leadership styles were very conflicting in nature, despite this, Bradley would protect and defend Patton from Eisenhower's ire. Bradley would also give precedence to General Patton and his Third Army over other armies (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-46).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Green, G.,& Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp-37, 39 and 41)

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, (pp-43-44)

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, (pp-46)

On July 24, 1944, General Bradley's Cobra was hesitant to order the launch of Operation Cobra, but did at 11:00 a.m. As the original plan called for, all of the plans' objectives were met. Originally, vision of the planners, was for a limited breakthrough in the Saint-Lo area. The First Army did capture Coutances. The Second Armor was accomplishing some of the other goals that were set-up in the plan (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-51, 59-60).<sup>28</sup>

### **VIII. Patton's Third Army on the Offensive**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, Bradley issued orders to Patton and his soon-to-be activated Third Army to drive in a southwardly direction and capture Rennes and Forgeres, and then head toward Breton ports, secure them, then onto Brittany. Bradley, on August 2, amended those orders with a new one stating that Brittany and its ports would be taken with minimum force. Patton's VIII Corps, captured Saint Malo, and then moved in to capture Brest on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Patton's VIII Corps overran Brittany with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Armored Divisions, accompanied by Patton's other remaining corps who joined in on the battle. Patton's headquarters were established in Beauchamps, on August 2, located north of Avranches, and approximately 11 miles away. On August 6, a nighttime bombing by the Luftwaffe on Patton's headquarters was executed, but to no avail. Fortunately, there were no casualties. Eisenhower in the meantime, finally lifted the blackout on General Patton's landing in Normandy. According to our intelligence, the Germans were aware that Patton had arrived on French soil, and Patton was the combat Commander of the Third Army. This had actually been a relief to Hitler and his German High Command. The fear of a second allied invasion of the Pas de Calais was no longer a concern (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-63, 65, 74, 76, 77 and 78).<sup>29</sup>

This writer communicated with Sergeant Vito J. Spadafino, who was in the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, Troop A, 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, during WW II. The following incident happened somewhere in France as his unit was moving up to go into action for the very first time. The following email communication is from Mr. Spadafino, to this writer on July 2, 2008:

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<sup>28</sup> Green, G.,& Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp-51, 59-60)

<sup>29</sup> ibid, (pp-63, 65,74,76, 77 and 78)

Spadifino (2008):

I must tell you of my brief face to face encounter with General Patton. This happened on the first day the Unit was finally going into action in early August 44. We were rolling along this road somewhere in France when the column came to halt for some time. I decided to get up in the turret to keep an eye out for enemy planes while the other guys gathered in groups gabbing. I know it was not a paved road because all vehicles pulled off to the side. While up in the turret I noticed up the road a jeep barreling down at a fast clip. As it got closer I could see the stars on the bumper and the driver pulled up alongside of my armored car and stopped. Lo and behold General Patton stands up and I salute him and he does me. He asked me if I had any knowledge why we had come to a halt and how long we had been there. I replied I had no idea and said we were there at least half an hour. He then said carry on and told his driver to get a move on. That man was so impressive with his shiny helmet and pearl handled pistols. Some time passed and the column started to move ahead and there was General Patton waving us on like traffic cop. I said it and keep saying that if they had given him free reign the war would have ended right after The Battle of The Bulge.<sup>30</sup>

Patton's rapid pace through France headed him toward the Seine River. Patton ordered his XV Corps to head north towards Paris, and then sent his 5<sup>th</sup> Armored and his 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions in an eastwardly direction, along the Seine, north of Paris. By this strategic move, this would extend a trap that would encircle eastwardly so that any German troops which had been estimated at 75,000 and 250 tanks would be unable to escape out of the Falaise Pocket. When the citizens of Paris heard that Patton was heading toward the Seine, they rose up against their German despots. At this time, there were 20,000 German soldiers guarding Paris. They were positioned in the outskirts of town. In Paris proper, there were approximately 5,000 Germans led by General Dietrich von Choltiz, with a variety of tanks, armored cars and artillery pieces. The liberation of Paris was at hand. The Free French 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division was given the green light by Ike to enter their city (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-95).<sup>31</sup>

The Allies had advanced so rapidly across France that their momentum was slowing down because of the stretching of their supply lines. Eisenhower decided to apply the brakes to the American Armies so we could place our entire support system logistically to allowing Montgomery's 21<sup>st</sup> Army to advance northward. Patton and Bradley became incensed with Ike's order allowing Monty to advance instead of the original plan which would have allowed Bradley's

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<sup>30</sup> V.J. Spadifino (Personal communication, July 2, 2008)

<sup>31</sup> Green, G., & Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp-95)

12<sup>th</sup> Army Group to advance. Patton actually attempted to convince Bradley to quit his position as an act of protest. Patton had reached the conclusion since the invasion of North Africa that Eisenhower had always favored the British. One quote by Patton goes as follows: “Monty does what he pleases, and Ike says, ‘Yes Sir (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-107)!’”<sup>32</sup>

Lastly, Operation Cobra which was initiated in the latter part of July was now at its end. The Third Army by the end of August had captured Verdun and had now crossed the Meuse River. Patton was now in an excellent strategic position because of where his Army was located. He could now drive to the Moselle River and then capture the following French cities: Metz and Nancy. After those conquests, Patton could assail the Rhine River in Germany (Green, G., & Green, M.1998, pp-105,110).<sup>33</sup>

Patton’s Third Army pushed 4000 kilometers from September 25<sup>th</sup> to November 7<sup>th</sup>, where they had been thrusting toward the east and south and north of the city of Metz which fell to the Third Army on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The strength of the Third Army was in force to cross at any point of the Moselle River. The Saar Campaign was initiated on November 8, 1944. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, after a total of one month of fighting, the Third Army liberated 873 towns and covered 1600 square miles of ground. We had captured a total of 30,000 prisoners, and registered 88,000 killed or wounded. There were 137 tanks and 440 guns which had been accounted for. Our casualties accounted for battle losses totaling during the same month, 23,000 killed, and missing, and our non-battle was 18,000, totaling 41,000 (Harkins, P.D.1947, pp-164, 184).<sup>34</sup>

## **IX. The Second U.S. Cavalry: Patton’s Ghosts of the Third Army**

The Second Cavalry was one of General Patton’s crackerjack regiments who landed with him on Omaha Beach. A storm had delayed the disembarkation of Troops A and B, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 42 Squadrons. Their landing officially took place on July 22, 1944. My dad was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry; Troop A, Recon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized. They participated in every campaign in the European Theater of Operations attached to the Third Army. General Patton’s command of the Third Army consisted of four corps, XV, VIII, XX, and the XII. General S. Eddy commanded the XII Corps. The United States Second Cavalry Regiment was attached mostly to the XII Corps during the entire

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<sup>32</sup> Green, G.,& Green, M.(1998). Patton Operation cobra and beyond, Osceola, WI, MBI Publishing Company, (pp-107)

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*,(pp-105, 110)

<sup>34</sup> Harkins, P.D. (1947). War as I knew it, Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, Cambridge, Massachusetts, (pp-164,184)

European Campaign. The Regimental Commander for the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S Cavalry was Colonel Charles S. Reed. Troop A, Recon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon under the leadership of Troop Commander Captain Robert Cunningham (Lambert and Layton, ND, pp-71, 350).<sup>35</sup>

Some of Patton's Ghosts, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Troop A, Recon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, (Please refer to Appendix-B, pp-29).

While sweeping through France, General Patton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry registered 3,000 miles where their reconnaissance route was littered with dead Germans. This band of brothers should have been annihilated on so many occasions. Actually, the radio broadcasters from the Germany network had announced that the Ghosts have been eliminated; this was just wishful thinking on their part. This 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Group whose name was given by the Nazis, Patton's Ghosts or the Ghosts of Patton's Third Army, had a reputation of being daring and spending all its time behind enemy lines. Ever since those tough battles of Cherbourg and Brittany, these elite soldiers had been through some rugged days. This unit was independent. They would ride through the enemy's camps with two jeeps with a 50 Caliber machine gun mounted to each one. They would kill as many Germans as they could (Herron, 2007, pp-4-5).<sup>36</sup>

I interviewed my Dad's platoon leader, Robert Cunningham, on June 14, 2008. At the time of the war he held the rank of Captain, now Colonel Robert Cunningham (retired from the Army in 1973, after 30-years service). He gave me an illustration of this type of offensive that the Second U.S. Cavalry Troop-A, Mechanized Reconnaissance 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, participated in:

Cunningham (2008) stated: "as a rule, they usually took two jeeps with their 50 calibers mounted and ready to go into the enemy's camp with a five-man team. On one occasion, they caught the Nazis totally by surprise. One Nazi in particular was actually standing there shaving. He still had shaving cream on his face when one of the soldiers in the jeep snatched him, and took him back as a prisoner." Cunningham also would tell his troops: "Get in, get around, and get behind. That is what we do".<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Layton, G.B, Capt and Lambert, A.L CAV (ND). Ghosts of Patton's Third Army: A History of The Second U.S. Cavalry, Published by Historical Section Second Cavalry Association, Printed by Munchner, Graphiche, Kunstanstalten, GMBH. (Bisher F. Bruckmann), Munich, Germany (pp-71, 359)

<sup>36</sup> Herron, F (2007). The Ghosts of Patton's Third Army, <http://groups.msn.com/2ndUSCav/transfer3.mswnw>, retrieved on, June 22, 2008, (pp-4-5)

<sup>37</sup> (B. Cunningham, personal communication, June 14, 2008)

The following quote is from France Herron, a Warweek combat correspondent.

Herron (2007):

An infantry colonel called the men who do patrol work the tough guys of the war. He also referred to them as the loneliest men in the Army because they operate behind enemy lines, surrounded by enemy guns. Some do reconnaissance work on foot, some do it in vehicles but all of them draw rugged assignments. They become the eyes and ears of an outfit; on them depends the answer to the question of what has the enemy got in store for us (p-1).<sup>38</sup>

The captured SS Officer who spoke clear English stated, “You are the Ghosts, aren’t you? The Ghosts of Patton’s Army.” This SS officer, stood on this roadside far behind his own lines with him and his four other captured companions pointing their hands in the sky, while this young Lieutenant disarmed them. One of the Ghost’s M8’s armored vehicles, with a mounted 37 mm gun on the armored vehicle turret, stood in the readied position to blow the Germans into oblivion. These Yanks were hardened combat veterans, and these men stood with their carbines leveled on the German prisoners. The lieutenant told Herman proudly, “Yeah, we are the Ghosts”. The second Cavalry group, in all reality, is the Ghosts. The Ghosts traveled through France’s flat lands and hilly regions with a reckless abandon of a super hero myth of invincibility. These soldiers operated way out in front of their own Army by working independently as a group behind those German front lines, as they disrupted with deadly accuracy supply trains and enemy vehicles moving in columns (Herron, F. 2007, pp-1-2).<sup>39</sup>

Private First Class Albert F. De Amicis shared the following war experience with this writer:

De Amicis (1994):

On every third or fifth evening we would rotate on night patrol. We would cross the Moselle River with a squad of soldiers in a rubber raft. Our mission on this particular evening in question was to capture a prisoner, and bring him back for questioning. The Moselle River separated the Allies’ camps from the Nazi’s camps. We crossed the river at Midnight, with the moon shining bright and not providing us with much cover. We proceeded to the enemy’s encampment where we spotted a German sentry standing for guard duty. We then proceeded stealthily and approached the sentry from behind. My Dad told this writer, “I struck him in the back with the butt of my rifle and incapacitated him, and we then carried him back to the raft. We completed our mission by bringing back a prisoner for questioning.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Herron, F (2007). The Ghosts of Patton’s Third Army, <http://groups.msn.com/2ndUSCav/transfer3.msnw>, retrieved on, June 22, 2008, (pp-1-2)

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*,(pp-1-2)

<sup>40</sup> (A. De Amicis, personal interview (1994)

## **X. The Battle of the Bulge**

In 1944, the Third Reich was having a disastrous year. The Wehrmacht was being driven out of France by the Americans, British, and the Canadians, and being pushed back to the Siegfried Line. In the interim, eastwardly, a Soviet offensive was taking place in the summer. This summer offensive smashed the Army Group Center which defended the eastern regional section of Poland. At the same time, a vengeful Red Army was pouring in on the westward borders of Germany. If Adolf Hitler was going to have any chance, a radical battle plan would have to be initiated. He was planning a winter offensive that could dramatically change the war in favor of the Germans. The topography of the region, and the climate, would probably rebuff any victory, but could result in the eradication of 25 or so Russian Divisions and attempt to limit any type of regional gains. In hindsight, the Russian force structure was too large for such an accomplishment, but Hitler was determined to succeed (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-50).<sup>41</sup>

The following map, illustrates the final plan of the attack route for the Ardennes Offensive by Model's Heeresgruppe B, (Goldstein, D.M & Dillon, K.V. & Wenger, J.M, p-39), (please refer to Appendix-C, p-30).

In Europe, an invasion was on its way through the Ardennes which was a very heavily wooded area. This region could provide Hitler a needed decisive battle against the Allies. In the 1940's the mastery over the French began by General Heinz Guderian who punched a hole in their lines and crossed the Meuse River which just lay below Sedan. Guderian rapidly began thrusting toward the sea in just a mere 2 weeks' time. The Third Reich had a passionate attraction for the Ardennes. In the Ardennes, it seemed to the Germans, that all factors pointed there to take one last great offensive. Hitler began moving from the Eastern Front the critical units that were needed for the upcoming offensive. He had replacements to reinforce his worn down troops and bring them up to their strength levels. There was the hoarding of precious fuel and the armored vehicles which was accomplished all in the cloak of secrecy. This stealth of Hitler was in 1944 by assembling a strike force that hadn't been seen by the Germans in years. In Hitler's mind, this was a diversion that would convince the Allies that the Third Reich had no intention of launching an offensive. This gamble by Hitler was called, Operation Wacht am Rhein (Watch on the Rhine). This battle plan of Hitler was to call up two Panzer Armies which were expected to pound through three American

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<sup>41</sup> Schreckengost, G. (2001 January). Buying time at the battle of the bulge, World War II, 50)

infantry divisions, the 99<sup>th</sup>, 106<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>. These divisions were spread thin across the Ardennes, which bordered on Germany. This would be accomplished by the German forces which rested on the shoulders of seven armored, one parachute and eight Volksgrenadier Divisions. From the success of this plan, these two Panzer armies would thrust toward the Belgian Port of Antwerp, and the sea, by driving in a northwardly direction. The Allied line would be split in two, the Fifteenth and Seventh. The two other German armies would be there to protect the German advances by protecting their northern and southern flanks. Hitler hoped, by handing the Allies a severe blow of this nature, it would divide the unity of their alliance by crumbling the Western Allies advance (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-50-51).<sup>42</sup>

The leading role of the following Panzer Divisions in this operation was: General Heinrich von Luttwitz's XLVII Panzer Corps of General Hasso von Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Army. Their mission was to break through the Allies' lines of the small towns between Manach and Weiler, then take control of the two roads that run east and west then going through those towns. They would then go on the offensive by crossing the Clerf River on the very first day of the offensive. After breaking through the American Lines, Luttwitz would cross the city roads with his tanks of Bastogne, and then on the second day he would capture the bridges of the Meuse. These bridges lie south of Namur and Dinant. His territorial objective was his support of General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army. They would push towards Antwerp and the sea (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-51).<sup>43</sup>

Luttwitz had the U.S. Army 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 110<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (RCT) impeding his objective. The team commander was Colonel William Hurley Fuller. The 28<sup>th</sup> had been sent to Rott. This was located on the western border of the Hurtgen Forrest. The division was integrated with a bunch of green recruits. Their mission was to capture Schmidt and his forces surrounding that town. Luttwitz's Panzers had engaged the 9<sup>th</sup> Division a few weeks earlier and had annihilated them. This similar fate also happened to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division because of their lack of support from the First Army units. After this battle, the 28<sup>th</sup> was sent to the Ardennes, which at the time was considered by Eisenhower a quiet place where these new divisions could receive more training and battle-tired groups could receive some rest. The 28<sup>th</sup> was spread over a 25-mile sector which was certainly too long of an area to defend. The 110<sup>th</sup> was deployed in the center section of the line,

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<sup>42</sup> Schreckengost, G. (2001 January). Buying time at the battle of the bulge, World War II,50-51)

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*,(pp- 51)

which was a very vulnerable position to defend. The 110 (RCT) force was at 5,000 men. On the evening of December 15, 1945, on the other side of the Our River, Heinrich von Luttwitz's XLVII Panzer Corps, with a force of 27,000 men, had 216 tanks, assault guns and also tank destroyers.

Luttwitz's Panthers were going to ram through the 110<sup>th</sup> infantry in only one day and capture the Clerf River bridges, which had still been intact. If the capture of the bridges was successful, they would then proceed to take the Meuse in two or three day's time. On the evening of December 16, 1944, shortly after 1:00 a.m., parts of the 304<sup>th</sup> Panzergrenadier Regiment from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division, the 39<sup>th</sup> and the 77<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier which belonged to the 26<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier Division initiated their attack crossing the Our river in rubber boats. This was accomplished by 2:00 a.m. and at the same time they traversed a snow covered forest. The Germans were skillfully quiet as they surrounded the American defenses that were placed at Marnach, Hosingen, Holzthum, Weiler, Munshausen and Clervaux. The Germans had surrounded them with squads, platoons, companies, and at Hosingen they were surrounded by a whole battalion. The Germans began their assault in and around 7:00 a.m. They had infiltrated the American Lines. A freezing forward observer (FO) was totally surprised to see an entire company camouflaged white clad Germans from the 77<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadiers were pervading through the field so they could push toward the town. The FO was able to alert the GI's back in Hosingen. The Americans began to fire at the approaching Germans with their 30-caliber machine guns and their BAR (Browning Automatic Rifles) and their M-1 rifles. The Germans had no choice but to retreat after the few minute outburst of the American gun fire. Luttwitz was slowed down by the 110<sup>th</sup> and could not fulfill his objective on December 16<sup>th</sup> as he had hoped. There had been 12 companies of infantry of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Divisions which had been immobilized in Marnach by the 110<sup>th</sup>'s Company B. Twelve other companies from the 26<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier had been halted in its tracks at Hosingen by Company K of the 110<sup>th</sup>, and 103<sup>rd</sup> Engineers, Company B(Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-53-54).<sup>44</sup>

The 16 Sherman Tanks dispatched by General Cota from the 707<sup>th</sup> headed towards the front, in a staggered formation. After a mile, four tanks took a fork and headed to Holzthum to support Company L. Once they crossed the Clerf, they were under a barrage of gunfire from the 39<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier consisting of a half a dozen squads, from a line of trees with MG42's. In the confusion of the battle, the leader of the tanks misjudged an anti-tank gun from Company M as the

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<sup>44</sup> Schreckengost, G. (2001 January). Buying time at the battle of the bulge, World War II, 53-54)

enemy and fired on Company M killing the majority of Company M's crew. The remainder column of tanks took the left fork out of Wiltz, and then at Drauffelt, they crossed the Clerf. After another short distance, they took another fork. The tanks that took the right fork on the right side fought all the way into Hosingen. The balance of the other tanks who took the left fork, headed in a northern direction to Munshausen and Marnach. Half of these tanks stayed in Munshausen to support Company C and some of Company D's anti-tank guns also added to the support of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. The remaining other tanks were fighting through the remaining German infantry and then headed on to Marnach (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-55).<sup>45</sup>

Fuller, who was back at Clervaux at his headquarters, was under attack. Since his communications were cut, he managed to get word to General Cota that a push was being made by the Germans against his command and he was in dire need of reinforcements. Cota determined after 4 solid hours of fighting, that indeed a need was established. The Germans were after Fuller's encampment. He immediately sent those 16 Sherman Tanks from the 707<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion to support Marnach, Hosingen and Holzthum. The 110<sup>th</sup> (RCT) was only standing between the Germans and a major breach in their lines. The order was given by Cota to hold on at all costs. Fuller's Headquarters was in the Hotel Claravallis, which was located towards the northern border of the town. Fuller had 450 men, and three tanks, and a few anti-tank guns which would come up against Lauchert's 5,000 infantry, who also had 120 tanks. This battle was going to be an entangled bloody affair. The German plans were to encircle the town in hopes of Fuller surrendering. If this option by Fuller would not be taken, the Germans would just storm the town. Surrender by Fuller and his 110<sup>th</sup> was not an option on the table. The Germans didn't take too much time to begin shelling down a rein of terror on the town. Fuller's 110<sup>th</sup> held out the best they could with all the artillery coming down on them. Fuller did call the division to muster up as much artillery as they could. The fighting continued back and forth during the day and the 110<sup>th</sup> still held the town. Fuller sent his last message at 6:45 a.m. asking to allow him and his men to pull back. His request was denied and he was ordered by command to fight on. Fuller's 110<sup>th</sup> was now totally out of ammunition. The defenders of this town of Clervaux attempted to elude the advancing Germans through the wooded areas. The German total occupation had not been completed. There were still 50 soldiers from the 110<sup>th</sup> led by Captain Clark Mackey, who was the Commander of Headquarters Company. He was also accompanied by Captain John Aiken from the Signal Corps in the Chateau. The Americans kept fighting even while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division headed

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<sup>45</sup> Schreckengost, G. (2001 January). Buying time at the battle of the bulge, World War II, pp-55)

westward toward Bastogne. Finally, after the Chateau was in flames and out of ammunition, these brave men finally surrendered the Fort Clervaux. (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-55, 86).<sup>46</sup>

Finally, by the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division had been eliminated from the map of the XLVII Panzer Corps. This division destruction was not in vain. Luttwitz's Panthers were three days in the rears and this loss of time was on the Allies' side. Had it not been for the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, who had been over run, but put up such a fierce fight, the Germans would have been in Bastogne way before the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne had arrived. The 110<sup>th</sup> RCT at one time had 5,000 officers and men. On the morning of December 16<sup>th</sup>, after Hitler had been defeated with the last great offensive, the RCT had only 532 officers and men who were able to fight (Schreckengost, G., 2001 January, pp-88, 92).<sup>47</sup>

During my dad's later years he had lived in California where he sent me a letter along with this article by *Gary Schreckengost, Buying Time at the Battle of the Bulge*. He had described that battle, and another battle that he was in that was part of the Bulge. This second battle took place on Hill 309.

De Amicis (2000):

The 110<sup>th</sup> infantry division was almost wiped out when they called us, the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Cavalry, and the 28<sup>th</sup> division, to replace them. It was one of the toughest battles I was in. Between the very cold and the snowy weather, and what we were faced with, it was rough, but I survived it! Then another fierce battle was when we were called to relieve the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, to take Hill 309. When we got there, there were GIs' dead all over that hill. We were having torrential rain and were suffering from lack of sleep. I couldn't lay on the hill because the rain was rolling down the hill like Niagara Falls. That's when I took two dead Germans, put them face down and together and laid my raincoat down and slept on them until we got orders to attack It took us another day and a half to take the Hill. It was a bloody battle.<sup>48</sup>

## **XI. The Lipizzan Rescue**

As the war was coming to a decisive ending, the Lipizzan Stallion Rescue was carried out by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. This story could have had a tragic ending if it was not for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry.

The Lipizzan Stallion Rescue was ordered by General George S. Patton and was carried out by Colonel Charles H. Reed. In early 1945, Vienna was under attack by our allied bombers. The

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, (pp-55,86)

<sup>47</sup> Schreckengost, G. (2001 January). *Buying time at the battle of the bulge*, World War II, 88, 92)

<sup>48</sup> A.F. De Amicis (Personal communication, December 14, 2000)

Spanish Riding School in Vienna feared for the Lipizzans' safety. They arranged to have the Lipizzans transferred 200 miles away. Fodder was scarce and they feared that starving refugees would steal the horses for food. Alois Podhajsky, Director of the School, was an old friend of General Patton. The both of them used to compete in equestrian events in the Olympic Games. Podhajsky arranged a show for the Undersecretary of War, Robert Patterson, and General Patton who immediately made the Lippazaner wards of the U.S. until they could be safely returned back to the Spanish Riding School. The Lipizzans had been stored in St. Martins. The mares and the foals had been separated and were being held in Remount Depot in Hostau where there were American prisoners who cared for the horses. Colonel Reed asked permission to attack Hostau and Patton gave his permission to attack. Later on, the Germans, who were great admirers of the Lipizzans, agreed to cooperate with the Americans. They were able to rescue these beautiful animals prior to the Russians arriving. The Germans feared that the Russians would destroy the Lippazaners. On April 28, Troops A, C and F of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Squadron attacked and accepted the surrender of the Germans at Hostau. Colonel Reed actually described it as more of a fiesta, than a military operation. The Germans formed an honor guard and welcomed the Americans. Although, two days later, the SS moved eastwardly along the Czechoslovakian border, and organized a counter attack on the 42 Squadron, but were driven off, and a week later the war was over. The Americans found 150 Lippazans, including a few stallions, mares and colts of two and three years of age. Shortly, thereafter, the Lippazans were put back into the care of Colonel Podhajsky at Linz (The United States 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry).<sup>49</sup>

## **XII. Constabulary**

On April 30, 1945, Adolf Hitler, commits suicide in his bunker. Then on May 7, 1945, the unconditional surrender of all German forces, (Please refer to Appendix-D, pp-31).

The final casualty report was filed on May 8, 1945 and was as follows (Harkins, P.D., 1947, (p-331)).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The United States 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Rescued Rare and Noble Lipizzaner Stallions  
<http://groups.msn.com/2ndUSCav/lippizanrescue.msnw>, Retrieved on June 22, 2008

<sup>50</sup> Harkins, P.D. (1947). War as I knew it, Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, Cambridge, Massachusetts, (pp-331)

Third Army	Enemy
Killed.....21,000	Killed.....144,500
Wounded.....99,224	Wounded.....386,200
Missing..... <u>16,200</u>	Prisoner of war..... <u>956,000</u>
Total.....136,865	Total.....1,486,700
Non-battle/casualties <u>111,562</u>	
Grand Total...248,427	

The U.S. Second Cavalry Group, Mechanized covered the area between Pilsen and Nepomuk. This component of the Third Army was the most advanced and reached the line of demarcation on May 7<sup>th</sup> and was ordered to halt. There was a ten kilometer barrier which separated the U.S. and the Russian Armies, which were in Czechoslovakia. The Second Cavalry pushed the envelope with patrols to the line of demarcation to determine if, in fact, the Russians had arrived. On May 9<sup>th</sup> the 42 Squadron did make contact with the Russians in Nepomuk and had difficulty in persuading them to go no further (2<sup>nd</sup> Armor Cavalry Regiment Dragoons, (pp-2) (Please refer to Appendix-E, pp-32).<sup>51</sup>

One of the darkest days for the Third Army was the death of the greatest combat commander of the Third Army. General Patton was killed in a car accident on the Autobahn near Heidelberg on December 21, 1945 just a few months after the war in Germany had ended. They gave this great warrior the honor that he deserved. Losing their General was a personal time for every soldier that served under him and who led them through every campaign in the European Theater of Operations. General Patton was laid to rest in Hamm Luxemburg, Germany to lie alongside the men who fought and died alongside of him in his Third Army. This was by the express wishes of his wife (Lambert and Layton, p-327).

On January 1, 1946, the District Constabulary, Eastern Military District (Third Army area), the Second Cavalry was established. This Constabulary was considered an elite force. Its mission was security and to maintain a general military government in the zones that were occupied by the U.S. (Please refer to Appendix-F and G, pp-33-34). This Theater Plan was comprised of three Brigade Headquarters. This German Land or state level consisted of an Air Recon Squadron and a number of Cavalry Groups with numbers of varying quantities. The Constabulary Group Headquarters had forty-eight Squadrons that had 192 mechanized troops who were recon. There

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<sup>51</sup> 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Dragoons, Retrieved on, July 9, 2008, (pp-2)  
[http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR\\_2ndACR.htm#History](http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR_2ndACR.htm#History)

were a total of 48 tank companies along with 48 HQ and Service troops. The total was 38,000 troopers. The U.S. Constabulary was abolished in 1952 (2<sup>nd</sup> Armor Cavalry Regiment Dragoons, (pp-6).<sup>52</sup>

### **XIII. Conclusion**

In conclusion, General Patton's leadership during the war to end all wars shows how greatness can be fleeting. This man can only be accused of being passionate. In regard to his speeches, was he really saying kill all the prisoners? According to those who came forward, the General was verbally liable. It cannot be 100 % documented that he in fact did order those killings, which he unequivocally denied. Also, in looking at more of the General's tribulations, were the two slapping incidents. In other countries, they would just take this type of soldier out in front of a firing squad and eliminate him or her. These incidents almost changed the course of the war. It had been very close for General Eisenhower sidelining General Patton for the entire Europe Campaign. As a soldier that served under him, you either loved him or hated him. But both sides of the spectrum would follow him into hell because he was one of their own.

When interviewing Colonel Cunningham, he was proud of his troopers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, Troop A, Recon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, Mechanized. They were a tough lot, who were just kids, who grew up as hardened fighting men. They wore the distinction of being called "Patton's Ghosts of the Third Army" with pride.

Later in life, when I found out what my dad and his fellow soldiers went through, it was totally overwhelming. Dad hid his mental scars well due to his mental toughness. You would never know what he had gone through. Actually he had caught a piece of shrapnel in his hip. They had taken it out leaving a significant hole in his right hip. They had put him in for a Purple Heart, but he never received it. During the Bulge, he suffered a severe case of frostbite to his hands and feet. Subsequently, every winter this condition reappeared.

According to Goldstein (2008):

The brutally cold and inclement weather the soldiers endured in pressing back against the German Bulge in January 1945. The bitter cold and biting winds were recurrent themes in the letters sent home by Chaplain Arthur D. Wenger of the 76<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, just coming into line during this period south of Echternach (p-160).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Dragoons, Retrieved on, July 9, 2008, (pp-6)  
[http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR\\_2ndACR.htm#History](http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR_2ndACR.htm#History)

<sup>53</sup> Goldstein, D.M & Dillon, K.V. & Wenger, J.M (1994). The story and photographs: Nuts! the battle of the bulge, Prange Enterprises, Canada, (pp-160)

Lastly, back then it was a united front where Rosie the Riveter worked in the factories or women joined the Women Army Corps (WACS) or Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES). Also, everyone got behind the bond drives. People grew victory gardens and even Hollywood did their part with the canteens. You had individuals in the service like the Champion of the World, the Brown Bomber (Joe Louis), Jimmie Stewart, Glen Ford, and Clark Gable, all who left their successes behind to join the cause and fight for our country. Not like the Hollywood of today, where these actors threaten to leave the country if certain individuals become President of the United States. There were no Republicans, Democrats or Independents. Everyone was an American first and foremost, similar to the 911 attacks. “United We Stand and Divided We Fall”. That is why they call it the Greatest Generation.

In addition too, the Greatest Generation lost one of their own, Private First Class Albert Frank De Amicis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, Troop A, Recon, 2nd Squadron Mechanized, who passed away on May 24, 2007.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment Dragoons, Retrieved on, July 9, 2008, (pp-2)

[http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR\\_2ndACR.htm#History](http://www.usarmygermany.com/Units/ArmoredCav/USAREUR_2ndACR.htm#History)

## Appendix-A

General George Smith Patton, Jr  
Combat Commander of the Third Army



*General George S. Patton Jr.  
- Old blood and guts -*

(Layton, G.B, Capt and Lambert, A.L CAV (ND, p-55).

## Appendix-B

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, And Some of Patton's Ghost Of The Third Army



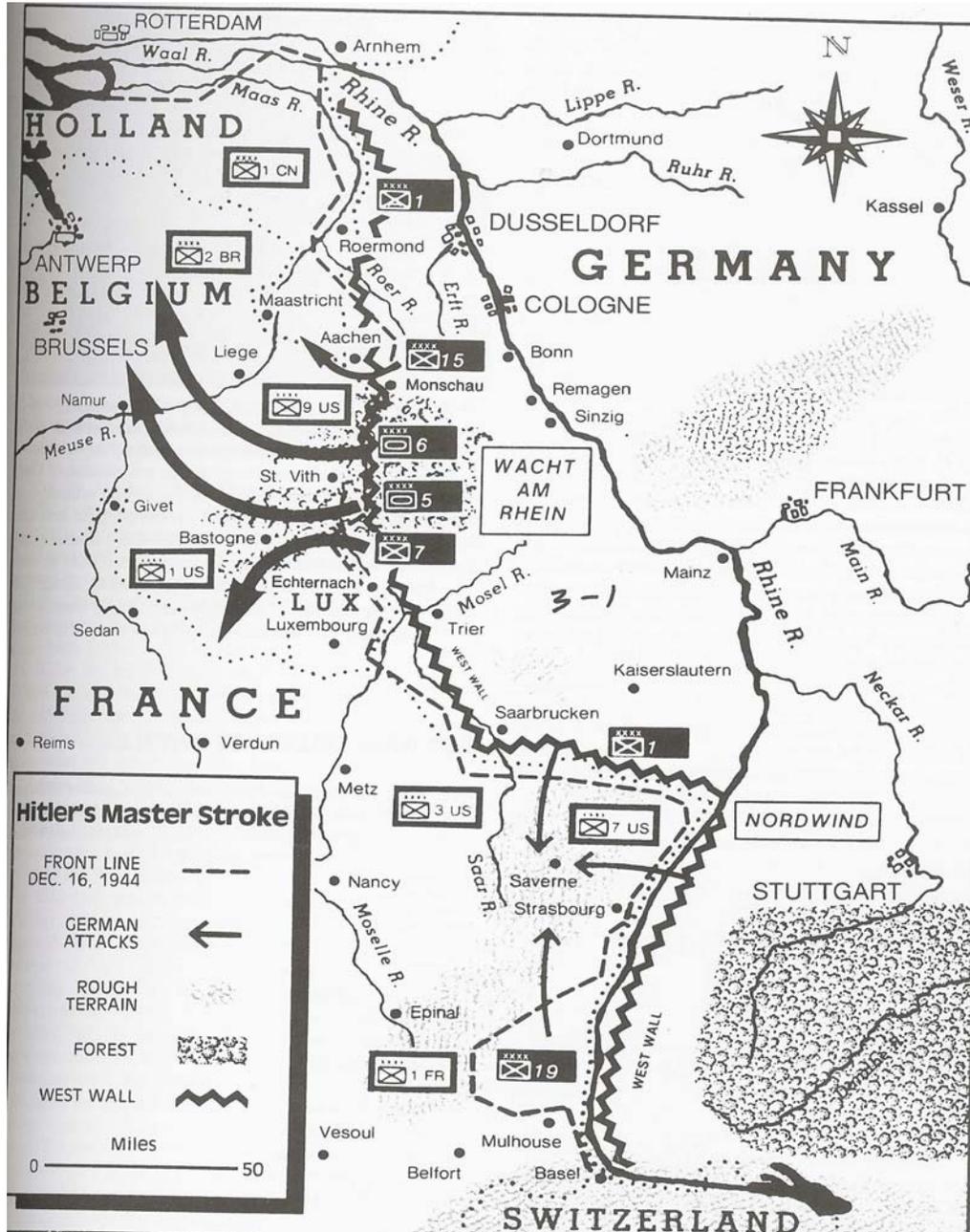
**Top Row: Warren Axelroth, Frank Mrowczynski, John Cederstrom, Al De Amicis, Fenton White**

**Bottom Row: Charles Reece "Red Dawn", Frank Florek, Hank Mantini, Byron Atkins**

**Picture Provided By John Cederstrom**

## Appendix C

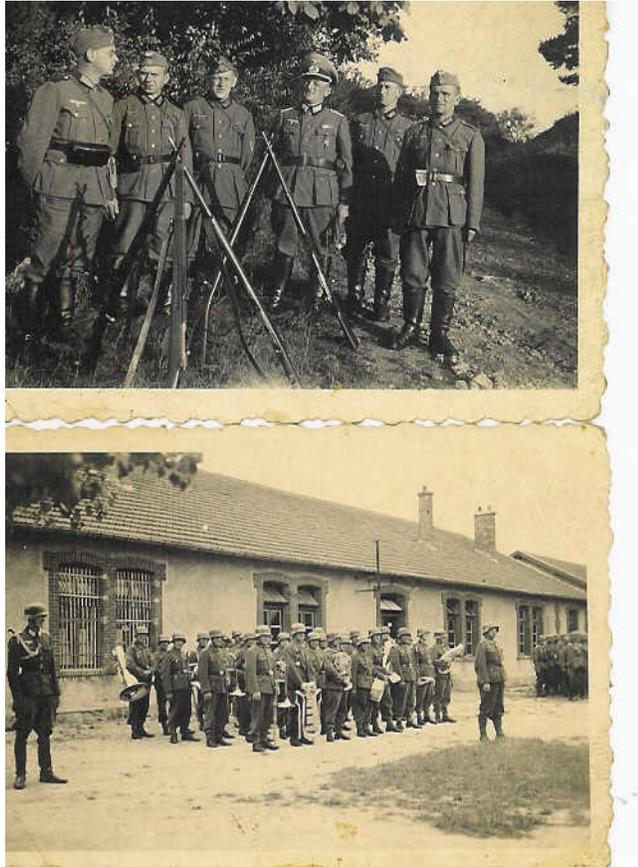
The following map, illustrates the final plan of the attack route for the Ardennes Offensive by Model's Heeresgruppe B



Goldstein, D.M & Dillon, K.V. & Wenger, J.M (1994), p-39.

## Appendix D

### Germans Surrender After The War To The 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Cavalry



## Appendix-E

### Private First Class, Al De Amicis On The Extreme Right, And His Unit Poses With The Russians



## Appendix F

**Private First Class, Al De Amicis On The Right As A Special Police And Another Unidentified Soldier Keeping Order After The War In Germany**



## Appendix-G

**Private First Class, Al De Amicis, After The War On The Border of  
Czechoslovakia And Germany**

