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NARRATIVE REPORT OF CAPT. G. M. SLAUGHTER
ACTING DEPUTY GROUP GLIDER OFFICER

The operation of "Varsity" mission is as follows: Take-off of Serial A-10, lead by Col. Williams, took off at 0754, 24 March 1945 with a seventy-two glider lift, composed of Group Headquarters, 81st Squadron, and 82nd Squadron glider pilots. Serial A-11 was lead by Lt. Col. Bridgers, composed of glider pilots from 79th S Squadron and 80th Squadron.

Formation enroute as observed from number one glider flown by Major W. A. Brown, Pilot, and Capt. G. M. Slaughter, Co-Pilot - Formation was all at same altitude and in two ship echelon to the right. Flying condition in flight was ideal. It was a bit rough for the first hour and forty-five minutes, but smoothed out near end of the flight.

Serial A-10 reached LZ "S" at approximately 1050, ten minutes ahead of schedule.

Visibility from Rhine River to LZ "S" was very poor as smoke laid down by the British for protection on river crossing had drifted over LZ "S". Smoke from shell fire and burning aircraft also covered LZ "S" - altitude at LZ "S" as observed by lead glider was approximately 1200 feet indicated.

We encountered small arms and machine gun fire at the south border of LZ "W" - lead glider was hit at this point with machine gun fire - medium flak also observed in this area and some 20 MM fire. Glider in No. 2 position was shot off at turn position at edge of LZ "S", also flak had damaged wing to extent that pilot had to release. This was a simultaneous action.

Lead glider released at pre-arranged spot. Major Brown took control of lead glider at release spot; visibility was approximately 1000 feet.

About one mile from LZ "S", Capt. McAllister, 194th Glider Infantry, Liaison Officer with the 438th T. C. Group was injured in right leg with flak. From release point and on downwind approach, machine gun and rifle fire was very heavy - Major Brown, pilot, was killed by 20 MM fire on base leg - at this point the undersigned took control and completed a 180° turn into a field visible from right side. This landing was approximately 300 yards north of designated spot for landing.

Upon landing all airborne and glider pilots were under fire; rifle and machine gun from wooded areas and houses.

Pattern for gliders were carried out as well as could be under such visibility condition. All gliders were released too high.

Organization of Squadron grouping of all pilots in assembly areas was carried out as planned. Little difficulty was found in assembling pilots. All Squadrons of this Group were in Squadron assembly points within one hour after landing. Assembly and moving into defense areas as designated was carried out as planned. Group "C" was set up at approximately 1600 hours - contact was established with Squadrons, Wing, and Regimental CP's. Reports on personnel and glider loads were

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seventy-five per cent accounted for at 1800 hours. One Squadron (80th) was assembled and had proceeded to designated area when stopped by airborne and warned not to proceed any further until next morning. Report from his Squadron was not made until 1000, 25th March 1945. Wing Headquarters notified the Group the 80th Squadron was in there area. Defense positions were made and held by all organizations - communications were maintained by runners - at 2300 hours, 24 March 1945, enemy resistance was met. Two tanks with estimated hundred infantrymen tried to make a road approach through our area. This Group made no attempt to join this attack. The 435th T. C. Group to our immediate left front and flank held off the attack. This information was dispatched to 680th F.A. to our rear - on this same attack, Regt. C.P. was shelled.

At 1700 hours, the 25th of March this Group received march orders for evacuation - at 1815 hours this Group had formed and proceeded on march to evacuation point. Orders were given to proceed to 18th Corps Headquarters where further orders were received by runner to proceed to Rhine River crossing - at 2350 hours we had completed our crossing via Stone River crossing (British).

Some difficulty was found at Stone River crossing as to the place we were supposed to report. The proper crossing was to be made by "Dukw" crossing. This information was not given the undersigned. This Unit camped for the night near the town of Xanten, Germany - on the morning of the 27th, this unit reported to Dukw crossing for evacuation to Glider Pilot Rest Area and from there to B-86 Airdrome.

Summary - Glider Pilots were well aware of the condition about them. Control was maintained through out - weapons were adequate - chain of command was carried out. The unit functioned without the aid of airborne liaison officer, after Capt. McAllister was injured. All wounded glider pilots and airborne were cared for on the spot and at temporary aid station until they could be turned over to Medical Units. One German doctor was employed for this use.

Recommendations - Glider Pilots should be briefed a day or two earlier and be given time to study overlays, photo and terrain maps. More oblique photos be furnished. Release altitude should be approximately 400 feet above terrain. Organization for control of glider pilots was excellent; the best that has been observed in any operation. Paratroopers should precede gliders by at least twelve hours.

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