

N-10201

Report of Airborne Pathfinder
Operation "NUTS"

UNCLASSIFIED

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HEADQUARTERS
IX TCC PATHFINDER GROUP (PROV)
Office of the Corps Pathfinder Officer

APO 133 U.S. Army
7 January 1945

SUBJECT: Report of Airborne Pathfinder Operation "Nuts".

TO : Commanding General, XVIII Corps (Airborne).

Report on Pathfinder Drop and Resupply to 101st A/B Division, Bastogne Area, 22-27 December 1944.

1. Airborne Pathfinder Detachment was alerted for a two-stick Pathfinder Mission at 1130 hours, 22 December 44 via orders from Lt. Col. James T. Blair, Executive Officer, IX TCC Pathfinder Group. (Attention is invited to the fact that Airborne Pathfinders participating in this operation are not permanently assigned to IX TCC Pathfinder Group but were on temporary duty while attending school for a period of two weeks. It was merely a coincidence that sufficient Airborne Pathfinders to accomplish the mission were available at this base at the time the mission was received).

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a. First decision was to commit one stick (one officer and nine enlisted men) to mark the DZ. Due to the fact that the DZ was known to be surrounded by the enemy and considering the effect of small arms fire on C-47 type aircraft at jump altitude (400-600 feet) the Ex-Officer, IX TCC Pathfinder Gp and XVIII Corps (Airborne) Pathfinder Officer felt that two identical teams should be committed. A telephone (scrambler) request to commit two teams was approved by IX Troop Carrier Command.

b. Coordinates of DZ with as much intelligence data as was available was telephoned (scrambler) to IX TCC Pathfinder Gp at 1330 hours with instructions to have personnel airborne at 1400 hours to facilitate checking of teams and equipment on the ground during daylight hours.

c. Airborne Pathfinder Teams were equipped with weapons and combat equipment by the Group S-4. Smoke and panels had been predrawn and were available in the XVIII Corps supply room. Radar equipment was set up and checked. Due to limited time all enlisted men belonging to the Airborne Pathfinder teams were dispatched to the Dispersal Areas to load at 1330. Officer jumpmasters reported to Group Operations for Pilot-Jumpmaster Briefing at this time.

d. Intelligence reports relative to enemy and friendly situations on the ground indicated that the situation in the area was fluid and a close map reconnaissance of the DZ was impossible due to lack of large scale (1:25000) maps of the area. Airborne Pathfinders were furnished 1:100000 maps of the area. The time limit from receipt of necessary information to take off (thirty minutes) did not allow time for proper briefing, plotting of course and preparation for an emergency operation under the circumstances. Combined Air Corps and Airborne teams took off at 1452 hours.

e. Commanding Officer, IX TCC Pathfinder Group returned to this headquarters at 1455 hours and checked prior preparations made in his absence. After checking weather and sunset time he radioed the Flight Leader to return to the Base. Message was confirmed and flight returned to base.

f. During the night of 22 December 44 all available information in reference to the operation was obtained. Maps (1:50000) were furnished to Airborne Pathfinder Briefing was accomplished and flight took off as scheduled at 0645 hours.

g. Inasmuch as up to the minute intelligence reports were unobtainable it was decided to drop one stick and wait for a predetermined signal (orange smoke grenade) prior to dropping second stick in order to definitely establish the fact that the Airborne Pathfinders were in friendly territory.

h. First plane load of troops were dropped by Lt. Col. Joel L. Crouch from A/C 993. Troops landed on exact spot agreed upon by pilot and jumpmaster. Orange smoke and signal from Eureka indicated that troops were safe. Second stick and bundles were dropped at same location by 1st Lt. (now Capt.) Lionel E. Wood flying A/C 681.

(1)

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PO Reg # 1686258
acc # PAR-191

2. Following Airborne personnel participated in operation from organizations as indicated:

1st Lt. Williams, Shrablo D.	0-445033	Regtl. Hq.	506
Sgt. McNieco, James E.	18131236	Regtl. Hq.	"
Sgt. Roseman, John	13099061	A Co.	"
Sgt. Merz, Cleo	6276163	C Co.	"
Sgt. Shulenberg, Leroy E.	16099729	B Co.	"
Cpl. Dewey, John W.	20624451	Regtl. Hq.	"
T/5 Blain, George H.	11087169	Hq. 1st Sq.	"
Pfc. Agnew, John	13115157	Regtl. Hq.	"
Pvt. Coad, William E.	36674366	Regtl. Hq.	"
Pfc. Slater, Geo. H.	32155876	B Co.	"
1st Lt. Rothwell, Gordon O.	0-394257	Hq. 3rd	
Cpl. Wright, Richard	39531637	E Co	
Cpl. Roeso, Lavon P.	15107830	E Co	
Pfc. Fenstermaker, Carl L.	13099212	E Co	
Pvt. Tillman, Lachlan	34685543	D Co	
Pvt. Partlow, Charles H.	13066226	D Co	
Pfc. Majewski, Martin	39254355	Regtl. Hq.	
Pfc. Forster, Mathon M.	32065239	Hq 1st	
Pvt. Thomas, Floyd	39695442	A Co.	
Pvt. Shumaker, Irvin L.	37550963	H Co.	

3. Report on drop and resupply missions.

December 23rd.

Time	No. of Planes	Where Dropped
1150	16	DZ
1210	3	DZ
1304	3	Turned back No drop
1309	3	DZ
1320	3	3 to 4 miles off DZ
1327	3	same
1400	3	DZ
1402	3	DZ
1406	4	DZ
1407	3	1 1/2 miles off DZ Recovered
1530	40	DZ
1535	46	DZ
1538	36	DZ
1540	14	DZ
1545	18	DZ
1548	18	DZ
1551	17	DZ
1554	10	DZ
1606	1	DZ

December 24th

0855	1	DZ
0908	3	DZ
1340	77	DZ
1343	44	DZ
1352	35	DZ

December 25th

1420	1 (P-38)	G-2 maps on DZ
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December 26th

1515	66	DZ
1518	35	DZ
1521	56	DZ
1524	71	DZ
1535	41	50% on DZ possible 50% not recovered

	December 27th	
1425	39	DZ
1430	48	DZ
1445	42	DZ
TOTAL PLANES	<u>819</u>	

DATE	TIME	NO OF GLIDERS	WHERE LANDED
26th	1700	1	LZ (MEDICS)
26th	1715	10	LZ
27th	1233	<u>33</u>	LZ
TOTAL GLIDERS		44	

Of the total of 819 planes approximately (32) thirty-two planes dropped their loads over enemy territory, unrecoverable.

Of the (50) fifty gliders reported to have left England on 27th of Dec. thirty-three (33) landed safely on the LZ. Kickoff Able company reported seeing three gliders downed in enemy territory. The report stated that the gliders were destroyed after landing.

The above information regarding success of resupply was obtained from 1st Lt. Gordon O. Rothwell 0394257 upon return to this headquarters 6 January 45.

4. Following Pathfinder Equipment was dropped with troops:

- 6 Eureka's ----- 2 extra batteries
- 3 CRN-4's
- 14 Halophane Lights
- 14 AP 50's (red fluorescent)
- 20 AP 30's (white)
- 6 cases of smoke grenades.

5. Information as to dispersion of resupply is shown on attached sketch (Annex 1). This information covers only that equipment recovered by the troops on the ground and must be accepted as general information. Circumstances did not allow Airborne Pathfinders on the ground to specifically plot dispersal of individual groups of aircraft at time of drop.

6. Suggestions for future commitments of Air Corps- Airborne Pathfinder Teams.

a. Each Division or higher headquarters operating in combat should have on hand at all times sufficient Pathfinder Aids to mark a DZ for resupply by air. This would require a very small amount of equipment and personnel. Provisions should be made in S.O.I. of such units to definitely establish Eureka (AN/PPN-1) frequencies, Radio Compass (AN-CRN-4) frequencies, color of smoke, panels etc. This information would be furnished by IX Troop Carrier Command and coordinated with unit (AC) Radar Officers.

b. An emergency radio frequency common to ground and air units should be established that will allow direct communication between units on the ground and elements of aircraft dropping supplies. Communications between aircraft and base exist and are efficient.

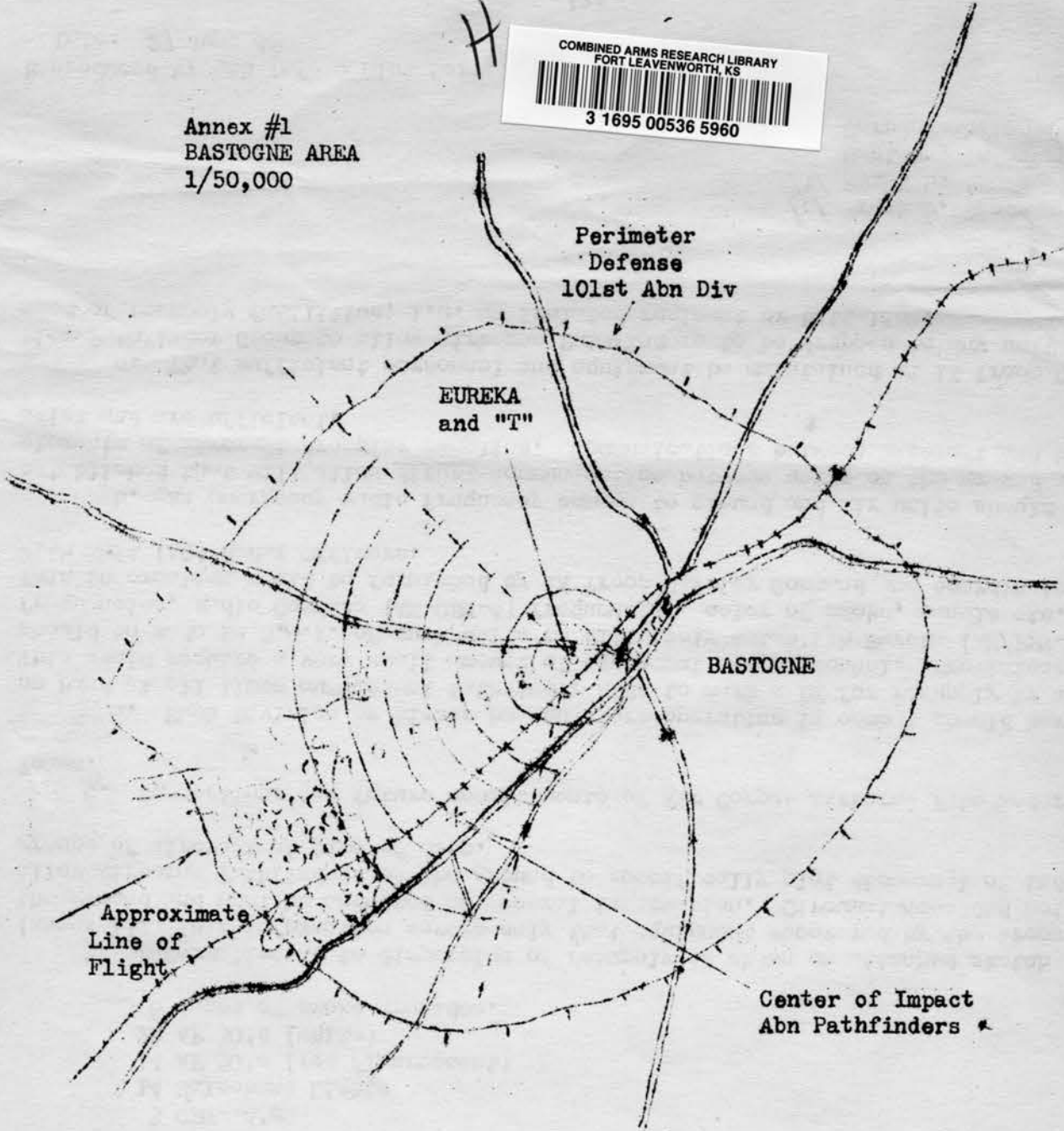
c. That sufficient personnel and equipment be maintained at IX Troop Carrier Pathfinder Group to allow Airborne Pathfinders to be dropped to any unit in need of resupply facilities, i.e. an isolated regiment or battalion.

/s/ Frank L. Brown
 /t/ FRANK L. BROWN
 Captain, Infantry (Pro)
 Corps Pathfinder Office

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Annex #1
 BASTOGNE AREA
 1/50,000



LEGEND

EUREKA and "Y"

X Center of impact A/B Pathfinders

Zones indicated by areas cover dispersal area for bundles recovered

----- Dotted lines indicate right and left dispersal limits

Bundles landing in each zone were as follows:

Zone 1	35%
2	30%
3	20%
4	10%
5	5%
6	5%
7	5%

Percentage is figured for
 787 A/C loads as counted by
 A/B Pathfinders.

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