

Chapter IV

Germany – The Cold War

Beginnings

The 285th Military Police Company began service in Germany in 1953 as a headquarters unit of the newly created United States Army-Europe (USAREUR) command. The history of the unit's performance during the Cold War was representative of both dedicated and distinguished service that encompassed the better part of four (4) decades. Decades characterized by not only what can be considered as the constant application of Army reorganizations but also by a continuous series of world events that helped shape the ever-changing environment in which all soldiers in Europe, including the MP's, were required to function. Although those events are understandably outside the parameters of this narrative, they will be referred to and referenced here in order to provide the reader with both a basis for understanding the military setting in which the 285th MP Company was conducting its mission as well as a source for further study.

During its lengthy stay in Germany, the 285th MP Company went through numerous re-assignments, re-numberings and mission alterations. Still, the unit personnel served diligently and faithfully where and when needed. The rationale for the unit's reactivation in Europe began as a result of- and during the waning years of- the Korean War.

The outbreak of the Korean War had wide-ranging ramifications for the US military.¹³³ Seen as a ploy to shackle resources on the peninsula, the war also resulted in a build-up of armed forces in Europe.¹³⁴ President Truman, along with his senior advisors, rationalized that with the military committed to war in Korea, Europe stood precariously close to invasion by the Soviet bloc.¹³⁵ The President not only sent troops to Korea but he also authorized additional personnel and units for assignment to Europe.¹³⁶ For the US Army, the face of Germany changed from one of occupation to that of defense.¹³⁷

¹³³ Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr. U.S. Army (Ret.) "The Korean War- A Fresh Perspective" *Military History* (April 1996) p.2-3.

¹³⁴ James F. Schnable, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1972) p.104.
See also: Joint Strategic Planning Committee, 853/15, 13 July 1950, G-3, DA file- 091- Korea, I-C, Case 16. and Joint Chief of Staff Report 1800/104.

¹³⁵ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The U.S. and NATO* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 1984) p. 129.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ For a detailed description of the history of the occupation see: Fredericksen, *The American Military Occupation of Germany*.

Accordingly, manpower allocations were raised, tours of duty were extended, Reserve and National Guard units were activated and NATO units were supplemented.¹³⁸ By 1957, atomic weapons were being deployed all over Europe.¹³⁹ Then, in 1961, the Berlin Wall crisis led to what the Army designated as the “61 Augmentation” and troop levels in Europe were raised another 37,000.¹⁴⁰ The Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 served to further reinforce the theory of communist “expansionism” and the military commitment to NATO continued to escalate.¹⁴¹

The increasing numbers of soldiers committed to the European continent required a corresponding increase in police personnel to control them.¹⁴² Concurrent expansion of military facilities, stations and depots also required the services of guard personnel. As a result, Military Police assets were assigned to these tasks. As troop levels escalated, more and more MP units were either reactivated, reassigned or deployed throughout NATO member countries. A statistical examination of Army records covering the early years of the Cold War revealed that the quantity of MP units in Europe increased steadily over the period. For example, in 1949, a total of twenty-four (24) MP units were in service throughout Europe. By 1961, that number had expanded to fifty-two (52).¹⁴³

That expansion included the 285th Military Police Company. A veteran unit of both World Wars, the 285th was one unit out of many that was reactivated for NATO service. It took only a short period of time for the personnel of the unit to regain their “Cinderella” nickname. It took a bit longer for unit personnel to realize that the company was still plagued with its “Gypsy” heraldry.

¹³⁸ From May to November of 1951, the 2nd and 14th Armored and the 4th Infantry, elements of V Corps, as well as the 28th and 43rd Infantry Divisions, elements of VII Corps, all united under Seventh Army Command in Germany, and along with the 1st Infantry Division that had been in the theater since the end of the war, began the defensive deployment.

¹³⁹ Headquarters USAREUR, *Annual History U.S. Army Europe*, 1959. p. 15-17
This document, declassified in 1979, provides an excellent description of the circumstances surrounding the nuclear weapons dispersal program involving NATO member countries.

¹⁴⁰ Walter G. Hermes, “Global Pressures and the Flexible Response” in *American Military History* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 2001) p. 593-596.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² In early 1950, troop strength in Europe (Germany, France Austria and Trieste) totaled 94,230. By the end of the “61 Augmentation” troop strength had risen to over 387,000.

¹⁴³ US Army, *Directory and Station List of the U.S. Army* (Washington, D.C.: Adjutant General Office, 1949/1961)

Activation

The 285th Military Police Company was reactivated in November of 1953 at Baumholder Germany.¹⁴⁴ The activation had been in the planning stages since 1952, the last year of active service for the US Constabulary squadrons.¹⁴⁵ The retiring units would have created gaps in police coverage so some Military Police units were activated to fill that void. Some, such as the 285th, were activated to meet expansion needs.

The 285th MP Company, along with its sister unit, the 287th MP Company, were both activated at the same time and under the same authorization order. The 287th was assigned to Berlin to replace the then disbanding 759th MP Battalion that had been on duty in the city since the end of the war.¹⁴⁶ The 285th MP Co., on the other hand, appears to have been the first MP unit assigned to the Baumholder area. Research of declassified records revealed that Army units began moving into the somewhat small Baumholder post in 1951 as French forces were moving out.¹⁴⁷ At that point, the Army began a massive four (4) year expansion of the facility that resulted in one of the largest US military facilities outside the continental US.¹⁴⁸ Scores of units, hundreds of soldiers, their dependants and vehicles moved in. The build-up of forces at Baumholder no doubt created a need for an MP unit and the task was assigned to the 285th MP Company.

Upon activation, the 285th was designated as a “SEP” unit.¹⁴⁹ That designation established the company as a “separate” unit under the direct control of the theatre commander. Therefore, when the 285th was put in service at Baumholder, Headquarters staff of the U.S. Army-Europe (USAREUR) controlled both company mission and assignment.¹⁵⁰ In actuality, however, the day-to-day supervision of these “SEP” units was delegated to the Area Provost Marshal.

¹⁴⁴ Headquarters, USAREUR, General Order No. 37, 1 Dec. 1953.

¹⁴⁵ US Army, Adjutant General, *Personnel Report 1952*.

The Constabulary had been the post-war State Police force responsible for both military and civil law enforcement in the American Zone of Germany. With reconstruction well underway by 1952, the US Army was both encouraging and preparing contractual agreements for German authorities to take over civil and criminal law enforcement functions. Most of the retiring Constabulary units were absorbed into the recently activated Seventh Army. (Footnote No.4)

¹⁴⁶ The 759th was constituted on 19 August 1942 and activated the following month at Ft. Ontario, New York. The Battalion served during WWII in Italy, France and Central Europe. The unit was inactivated in Germany on Nov. 2nd, 1953. The Battalion was reactivated at Ft. Dix in 1968 and in 1987 the unit was assigned to Ft. Carson, Colorado. The 759th participated in Operation Promote Liberty in Panama and in Desert Shield/Storm.

¹⁴⁷ In 1951, the new German Federal Republic was created and the Zones of Occupation were re-aligned, the change resulted in French forces turning over the Rhineland - Pfalz area to the US Army.

¹⁴⁸ The Kaiserslautern facilities were the largest and the expansion there began in 1952.

¹⁴⁹ Headquarters, USAREUR, General Order No. 37, 1 Dec. 1953.

¹⁵⁰ USAREUR, initiated on November 15, 1947, remained basically a paper organization subordinate to EUCOM until August 1, 1952 when it took over command and control of operational forces in Europe.

When placed in service, the 285th was authorized three (3) officers and ninety-seven (97) enlisted personnel.¹⁵¹ Although consistently under-staffed, the three (3) line platoons generally contained approximately twenty (20) soldiers. Unit strength during the 1950's fluctuated between 70 and 80 individuals.¹⁵²

Initially, all platoons were stationed at Baumholder. Following activation, the officers and NCO's spent the first few months gathering both personnel and equipment and securing necessary facilities. Billets were secured at Smith Barracks, company offices were organized on-post and an assortment of vehicles were obtained. Eventually, an MP Station was established in the town of Baumholder.

Duties

Gradually, as the unit built to strength, troopers were dispatched on patrol duty. Patrol vehicles, in the early 1950's, were limited almost exclusively to Jeeps. However, most MP units in Europe during that time had access to one or two sedan automobiles as patrol cars. The troopers worked in "Class A" uniforms accented with "bloused" trouser legs over paratrooper boots. They also wore the distinctive "white-hat" headgear.¹⁵³ The uniform was complimented with a Sam Browne belt to which a .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol was attached. The shoulder patch displayed on both personnel uniforms and the MP brassard was that of the USAREUR insignia, a blue shield with a flaming sword in the center. Together with a white lanyard and a brass whistle, the MP's of NATO law enforcement units presented a striking appearance.

By 1953, several Infantry, Armor and support regiments had moved into Baumholder. As troop levels at the post continued to escalate, the MP's assigned to the 285th had ample work to occupy their time. They patrolled both the Army post and the town, enforced military regulations and responded to calls for assistance from GI's, their dependents and German citizens.

A large portion of the MP's time was consumed in responding to "bar fights" and "domestic disturbances" involving soldiers. Due to the inherent danger involved, MP patrols were staffed using two (2) troopers. Squad configurations and assignments were generally made to provide for this service and when coupled with under-staffing, it led to a work schedule of long hours and extended weeks. (Nine days on- three days off) Added to the extended schedules was the requirement of providing service on an around- the-clock basis, including weekends and holidays. These working conditions contributed to chronic low morale within the unit.

Included in the list of primary tasks assigned to the MP unit was that of locating, apprehending and returning soldiers reported as AWOL. Although most absent GI's were returned to their units, this duty frequently required that the MP's transport prisoners either to or from places of incarceration. Some of the less mentally stable MP's relished this duty and used the arrest opportunity to physically abuse their prisoners. Many instances of this type of conduct occurred but few were reported by co-workers for fear of being ostracized. However, when the command staff learned of these questionable practices, the individual MP responsible was generally "weeded-out" of the unit.

¹⁵¹ Table of Organization and Equipment (TO/E) 19-35, AG 322.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Neither the exact date of initiation nor who authorized the use of the MP "white-hat" could be ascertained from available material. Prior to 1955 most MP personnel wore a painted helmet liner, sometimes "white", with a color band indicating unit designation. By 1956-57, the readily recognizable "white" cloth hat was in wide use.

Another series of tasks assigned to road troopers were functions associated with traffic control. MP's were required to patrol their area and take corrective action with traffic violators. In addition, the MP's had to handle any motor vehicle accidents involving US personnel. Also, when divisions went on field maneuvers, the MP's were assigned routing and convoy escort duty. Associated with this particular task were reports of damage claims that MP's had to make on destroyed property that resulted from movement of troops and equipment throughout their territory. On many occasions, the M-60 tank did not quite fit through the narrow streets of the small German towns and it left damaged walls and structures in its wake. Many MP's can remember the astonished look on Frau Gruber's face as she surveyed the damage to her home while giving information for the claim form.

When the troopers were not responding to calls for assistance they also had to check all military structures in their bailiwick. This task, designed to prevent break-ins, required that MP's check the post, the dependant housing area, the schools, hospitals and airfields to make sure they were secure. The MP's were required to make certain that doors were locked and windows were secure. Then the trooper signed a check sheet posted in the "woodbox" attached to the structure attesting to the actual time of the security visit.

Finally, one duty that the MP's had to perform that they were neither prepared for nor adequately trained for in the 1950's and '60's was that of "riot control." Beginning in the early days of the occupation, large groups of black soldiers throughout Europe caused disturbances, disruptions, committed gang crimes and in some cases even rioted.¹⁵⁴ The causes of the disturbances were multi-faceted and the situation lasted well into the 1970's. During this time, the road MP's were the first responders to come in contact with many of the unruly mobs. Over the years, the 285th had several troopers injured handling the incidents. On several occasions while stationed at Baumholder, the MP's of the 285th had to request assistance from either Infantry, Armor or Calvary units to help restore order.

Highway Patrol

One of the first duties delegated to the 285th MP Company following its assignment to Baumholder was the responsibility for performing the functions of a Highway Patrol unit. As more and more GI's and their dependants entered Germany a corresponding increase in automobiles took to the roads of Europe. As the accident and resultant death rate began to spiral upward, most MP units were given some form of highway patrol duty to help reduce the accident/death rate.

When the 285th was given this assignment in April of 1954, it was also required to begin dispersion of line platoons throughout the Rhineland-Pfalz area of Germany.¹⁵⁵ By August of 1954, the 285th had the 2nd Platoon assigned to Pirmasens and the 3rd Platoon assigned to Kaiserslautern.¹⁵⁶ The mission of all the platoons was the same: patrol the highways and reduce the accident rate.

During March and April of 1954, John Marshal was assigned to the 285th at Baumholder. He reported that most of the unit's working duties involved "Highway Patrol".¹⁵⁷ In fact, the 285th MP Company

¹⁵⁴ *The Second Year of the Occupation: Occupation Forces in Europe Series, 1946-1947, Vol. III* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Office of Chief Historian-European Command, 1947) p. 122-23.

The situation deteriorated to a point where, by the time this report was issued, LTC Hyman Y. Chase of the Provost Marshals Office was visiting field locations giving a lecture entitled "Behavior and Conduct of Negro Troops in European Command." The problem of riots would get much worse.

¹⁵⁵ USAREUR Headquarters, Provost Marshal General, Letter of Instruction, April 1, 1954.

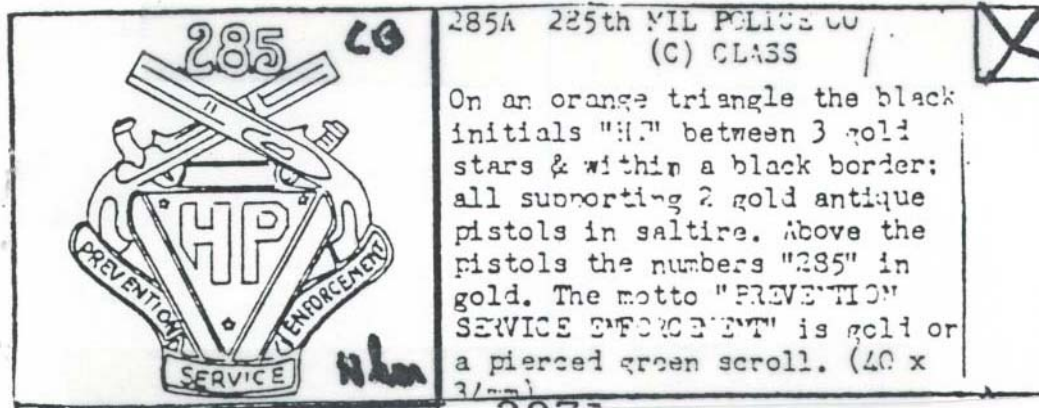
¹⁵⁶ The first MP unit assigned to Kaiserslautern was the 533rd MP Co. The unit was assigned there in early 1952 from duty in Kafertal, Germany.

¹⁵⁷ Narrative, John W. Marshall, August 11th 2001.

vehicles displayed the familiar logo of the Highway Patrol made famous throughout Germany and Austria by the 62nd Military Police Company.¹⁵⁸

Both the unit mission and assignment locations remained relatively static until 1957. Mr. Roe Jackson was assigned to the 285th from April 1955 to September 1957 and gave the following description of company assignment and personnel.

We were stationed at Baumholder with a platoon at Pirmasens and a squad at Zweibrucken... We also supplied men to the Highway Patrol... Seems we had approx. 100 men when up to strength. Capt. Joseph F. Mecelli was the CO in 1955 followed by Andersen and Hannigan...¹⁵⁹



Unit crest used on 285th MP vehicles and equipment during the 1950's in Germany.

Photograph courtesy of (Sergeant) Edward Smith

The year 1957 saw many changes for not only the 285th MP Company specifically, but for all USAREUR MP units in general. First, it was the year that dispersion and custody of nuclear weapons was given to NATO member countries.¹⁶⁰ Second, the Army adoption of the "Pentomic" concept resulted in an expansion of both facilities and personnel at places such as Karlsruhe, Germany.¹⁶¹ As a result, many theater MP units were required to transfer some of their personnel into the newly reactivated or reconstituted MP "security companies." Third, the Provost Marshal's Office completed planning for the

¹⁵⁸ 62nd Highway Patrol Association, 2001. The 62nd HP Unit began "highway patrol" in Europe on Sept. 20, 1951. The unit was headquartered at Heidelberg and had Detachments and sub-stations throughout Germany and Austria. The unit of "White Mice", the colloquialism given to them, became one of the most respected law enforcement units in Europe. The 62nd was deactivated on September 20, 1958 in Germany. The unit was again reactivated on March 25th 1964 at Ryukyus Island as the 62nd MP Service Co. It was deactivated at Okinawa on June 30th 1974.

¹⁵⁹ Roe Jackson, written narrative, January 15, 2003.

¹⁶⁰ John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Separate Brigades* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1998) p.276.

¹⁶¹ The Karlsruhe Nuclear research facility opened in 1958.

replacement of the 62nd Highway Patrol Detachments using the larger company sized organizations. The 62nd had been staffed almost exclusively with NCO's and these experienced veterans were needed for supervision and training of troopers entering the rapidly expanding number of MP units assigned to the theater.¹⁶²

These, as well as other factors, resulted in the USAREUR Provost Marshal assigning the 285th MP Company to Karlsruhe Germany in November of 1957.¹⁶³ The 285th MP's began moving to Karlsruhe that month and by early 1958 the re-location had been completed.



Military Police equipment, Europe, circa 1950.

This photograph shows typical MP patrol vehicles in Germany during the late 40's and early 50's. German police (standing by hydrant) frequently accompanied MP patrols. The purpose of the loudspeaker on the sedan has never been ascertained. The jeep remained the standard MP vehicle well into the 1970's.

Photograph contribution courtesy of (Sgt.) Edward Smith

The troopers of the 285th Military Police Co. had "Cinderella" duty at Karlsruhe. Still assigned to USAREUR command as a SEP unit, the company retained its "white-hat" status. The personnel were billeted at the old German SS Barracks and they employed German Nationals to provide uniform maintenance, barracks cleaning and KP duty. Generally, the MP's worked an 8-10 hour rotating shift schedule with an extended workweek. During off-days, the troopers made use of leave "passes" and they had ready access to planes, trains and automobiles. Many spent leave time in the cities of Paris, Frankfurt, Garmish and Amsterdam.

¹⁶² Many documents of USAREUR report on the lack of qualified or experienced MP's for work in Europe. See: USAREUR *Annual History Reports* for 1950, 1953, 1956 and 1959.

¹⁶³ When the 285th moved into Karlsruhe, the 382nd MP Battalion moved out of the city and into Baumholder, Pirmasens and Kaiserslautern. Company "B" of the 382nd moved into Bad Kreuznach. For all intents and purposes, the two units switched locations. (See footnote No.178 for the 382nd Battalion lineage and assignments.)

Working hours consisted of both highway patrol and law enforcement duty. Most patrol work evolved around both the base and the neighboring community. However, the 285th did assign a portion of the unit's troopers to staff the Highway Patrol (HP) office located next to the autobahn.

The “Cinderella’s” of the 285th were, for all intents and purposes, content with their assignment, mission and status. Chronic understaffing led to low morale but the troopers had good housing, good meals and conscientious leaders. The US dollar exchanged into approximately four (4) Deutsche Marks and most soldiers lived reasonably well on their earnings. Overall, it was a good time to be in Germany.

However, the MP's were, first and foremost soldiers, and that stark reality was delivered to the unit during the summer of 1958. At that time, the Lebanese Crisis burst onto the world scene and the 285th was one of the few MP Companies that was required to deploy to the insurrection.



Karlsruhe, Germany – US Army barracks, circa 1959.

Army facilities expanded here throughout the 1950's and 1960's. The Army left Karlsruhe in 1995, returning the facilities to the German Government. The buildings have been converted to housing projects.

Photograph courtesy of the City of Karlsruhe

Lebanon - 1958

In January of 1957, President Eisenhower obtained a Joint Resolution from Congress adopting his Middle East “Eisenhower Doctrine”; a foreign affairs policy that was in large part a response to the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956.¹⁶⁴ The policy was designed to estop communist aggression in the area by employing, if necessary, the use of armed forces.

In Lebanon, indicators of a pending revolution persisted. Foreign factions continued interference in Lebanon's internal affairs and by the summer of 1958 the crisis had reached the flash point. On July 14th 1958, the King of Iraq was assassinated and a pro-communist leadership was established. The President of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, and the King of Jordan quickly requested assistance from the United Nations. The UN Security Counsel met in emergency session to address the escalating violence while the Lebanese government requested aid from the US to prevent further conflict.

¹⁶⁴ Margaret M. Bordon, “U.S. Intervention in Lebanon – 1958.” *Military Review* (February 1976) p.66-76. USAREUR, G-3 Div. *US Army Task Force in Lebanon*, 1959. pp.52-56.

On July 15th President Eisenhower announced US intervention as he dispatched NATO forces to Lebanon.¹⁶⁵ Known as “Operation BlueBat”, units from USAREUR were dispatched as peace- keepers with the general instructions to protect US interests and specific orders to secure both the seaport and international airport at Beirut.¹⁶⁶ A total of 14,300 soldiers, both Army and Marine personnel, were sent into Lebanon while the US Sixth Fleet took up station off the Lebanese coast.¹⁶⁷ Military Police units, both Army and Marine Corps, were assigned individual parts of the mission. The 285th Military Police Company was one of the many units ordered to respond to Lebanon.

The 285th MP Company was originally assigned to “Force Bravo” which was given a 120- hour departure requirement from Germany. As a result, members of the company were boarded onto aircraft at Rhine-Main but remained on the tarmac in full battle dress awaiting departure.¹⁶⁸ However, expected opposition to the Marine landing did not occur and the MP airlift was cancelled. At that point, the 285th was assigned to the sea-tail “Force Delta”, which departed Bremerhaven with the MP’s and unit equipment on July 26th. The 285th arrived in Beirut on the 3rd of August 1958.

Most, but not all, of the unit went to Lebanon. Available records and declassified material revealed that a portion of the headquarters staff as well as members drawn from each of the three (3) line platoons were assigned the mission. The total commitment of personnel was approximately sixty (60) individuals. Among this group were the Commanding Officer, most of the Platoon Lieutenants and the senior NCO's. The few members that remained behind at Karlsruhe, one officer and a few enlisted men, were responsible for maintaining company office operations. The 385th MP Battalion was tasked with operational fill-in for the 285th while the company was absent from Karlsruhe.

The initial mission of the 285th in Beirut was two-fold. First, the unit was to support non-combatant evacuation operations in the Northern Command Area, code named “Operation Plan Grandios.”¹⁶⁹ Second, the MP’s were assigned the overall security and protection of both NATO Forces and their facilities in Beirut. By the middle of August 1958, unit assignment had expanded to include additional duties of providing security to ensure unobstructed and open voting places and also to patrol the towns of the Northern Area to maintain order.

¹⁶⁵ President Eisenhower announced “ in response to an appeal from the Government of Lebanon, the United States has dispatched a contingent of U.S. forces to Lebanon to protect American lives and by their presence encourage the Lebanon government in defense of Lebanese sovereignty and integrity.”

¹⁶⁶ The Seventh Army Commander, Lt. Gen. C.D. Eddleman, complained bitterly of the depletion of his forces as “a critical loss - at a critical time”. He proposed, but was overruled, that troops sent to Lebanon be dispatched from the continental US. See: Cable SX5453, USAREUR to DA for DCSOPS for Pachler, 19 July 58. [Secret]

¹⁶⁷ The US Army forces committed to Lebanon were known as Army Task Force 201.

¹⁶⁸ National Archives and Records Admin. Record Group 111, Film footage No. LC-41840, dated- July 21, 1958

¹⁶⁹ USAREUR Report, No. GC 89-64, 201st Logistical Command (A) p.2.
This report was declassified on December 21, 1990.

Many secondary unit histories report that the 709th MP Battalion sent troopers to Lebanon during the intervention. These assertions could neither be confirmed nor disputed from either the written or visual record examined by the author. Some units that served there were simply unidentified in the record. However, during the course of research, one Signal Corps film was located at the National Archives that specifically identifies the 285th on patrol in Lebanon.¹⁷⁰ In the film footage, the 285th MP's can be seen directing soldiers and civilians and resolving street level confrontations between soldiers and street merchants. Each patrol of MP's is shown accompanied with both US Marine MP's and Lebanese police officers.

Stability quickly returned to Lebanon as the elections of 1958 established a pro-western government. Accordingly, NATO and USAREUR forces began departing the country. The 285th MP Company was one of the last units to leave Lebanon. The unit's final task was to assist and supervise the withdrawal of both non-essential personnel and combat units. The extraction began on Sept. 15th and it ended on Oct. 25th 1958. The next day, the 285th boarded a troop transport, returned to Karlsruhe and again took-up "white-hat" duty.

Town Patrol

The 285th MP Company remained at Karlsruhe for several years following completion of the Lebanon assignment. During this period the Berlin Wall Crisis ('61), Cuban Missile Crisis ('62) and the ROAD reorganization ('63) came and went with little effect on the MP's of the 285th.¹⁷¹ "White-Hat" duty and Highway Patrol continued to occupy the working hours of the troopers. The 62nd Highway Patrol had previously disbanded and most of the remaining law enforcement units, including the 285th, were assigned remnants of this occupation function. However, the Federal Republic of Germany had been granted sovereignty on May 5, 1955 and the fleeting HP duty was being gradually taken over by civilian police.

Robert Larson was with the 285th at Karlsruhe during some of that time period. Assigned to the company in 1959, he reported working assignments consisted of both town patrol and "HP" duty on the adjacent autobahn.¹⁷² He provided the following narrative:

I served with the 285th from 1959 to 1961 at Karlsruhe. We patrolled the town and staffed the Autobahn Highway Patrol that traveled the highways from halfway to Heidelberg to halfway to Stuttgart and south to the Swiss border... although we only went towards Baden-Baden on specific assignment. The HP Detachment monitored the Soviet Liaison to the French sector... meaning, the Russians checked in with us on their way to film various allied military bases... The drivers of the mission cars wore privates' uniforms and spoke good English. They seemed to know a lot about our equipment and culture. We had our guess to who were the KGB people.

¹⁷⁰ National Archives and Records Admin. Record Group 111, Film No. LC 42207 dated Sept. 5, 1958.

¹⁷¹ The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 resulted in all USAREUR units being placed on DEFCON 3 alert status until November 20th 1962. The previous "Pentana", "Pentomic" and "RDCAD" reorganizations resulted in the adoption of the Reorganization Objective Army Division (ROAD) structure, implemented in USAREUR on January 27, 1963.

¹⁷² Written Narrative, Robert Larson, Dec. 2nd 2001.

We often patrolled the town with the Landespolice (German State Police) and the Cripo (Criminal Police). The older Landespolice were often ex-SS... When other MP companies went on field exercises... detachments of the 285th took their place... I went to Heidelberg and a small town near the border where a lot of spook units were located listening to the Russians on the other side of the border.¹⁷³

It is difficult to imagine today how dreadfully understaffed and under funded the regular Army was in 1958. When they changed uniform from the Eisenhower jacket and brown boots to the Army Green and black boots the Army paid nothing-requiring the troops to pay for their own uniforms.¹⁷⁴

While stationed at Karlsruhe, the 285th MP Company operated consistently under-strength. By 1964, the unit fielded only two (2) platoons backed-up by a headquarters staff. The unit consisted of eighty (80) members assigned as follows:

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Operations</u>	
One (1) Captain	Twenty-six (26)	Headquarters EM
Two (2) Lieutenants	Forty-four (44)	MP's
One (1) First Sergeant		
Six (6) NCO's		

The year 1964 was the last full year that the entire company was stationed at Karlsruhe. That year, a series of changes began sweeping across USAREUR altering not only Corps and battalion organization and structure but both company mission and assignment as well. Some changes were historic in effect and resonate, even today, in the heritage of the Military Police Corps.

The reorganizations, the result of a five (5) year planning program begun in 1960 and culminating in 1966, were correlated with the Army's inception of the Combat Service to the Army (COSTAR) Concept. The effect upon the 285th MP Company was the unit's inclusion into the formation and activation of the first MP Brigade.

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Written Narrative, Robert Larson, Dec. 3rd 2002.

Portrait photographs of the 285th MP Company just prior to leaving Karlsruhe.
Courtesy of Cecil Roberts

