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HEADQUARTERS
IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND

2
E-HUM-6

APO 133*, US Army
23 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Troop Carrier Combat Control Teams.

TO: 1ST Lt Norman C. Wilmeth, O-400455

1. You men gathered here today have been hand-picked from twenty-five hundred (2,500) glider pilots of this command to do your part in a special project for the Commanding General of the IX Troop Carrier Command
2. This project is the formation and training of eight (8) Troop Carrier Combat Control Teams.
3. The following nine (9) officers who have a minimum of 500 hours of power time and two (2) combat missions will take a course in flying control procedures. This will complete your qualifications for assignment as operations officers in command of the team. Your project officer is Captain Maurice M Orovitz, Command Flying Control Officer.
 - 1st Lt. Norman C. Wilmeth O-400455
 - 1st Lt. Richard K. Fort, Jr. O-559714
 - 2nd Lt. Milton Linn O-525168
 - 2nd Lt. Charles L. Mann O-1998292
 - 2nd Lt. Frank E. Luckenback O-1996314
 - 2nd Lt. Burdette E. Townsend O-1996169
 - 2nd Lt. L. J. Cordier O-1999632
 - 2nd Lt. T. M. Brown O-5422779
 - 2nd Lt. C. A. Jensen O-543857

*Editor's Note: From information found in the USAF Historical Research Center, (Maxwell AFB, Alabama) "*Guide to Stations where USAAF personnel served in the United Kingdom during World War II*" compiled by Captain Barry Anderson, dated 31 January 1985. The station listed as APO-133 was also identified as AAF # 472 and was located at Ascot (Cunninghill Park), Berkshire. The report listed principal units as Headquarters, 9th Air Force and Headquarters, IX Air Force Service Command.

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4. The following twenty-six (26) glider pilots will be trained in code, ciphers, maintenance, operation of 299, 183 and 522 sets, cryptographic and air coordination procedures. Your project officer will be Capt G. W. Powell of the Communications Section.

- 1st Lt. Raby W. Padgett O-533029
- 2nd Lt. Donald R. Nelson O-1999569
- 2nd Lt. William D. Fasking O-1996130
- 2nd Lt. Thomas J. Kilker, Jr. O-1996149
- F/O Chester E. Brooks T-121411
- F/O R. W. Corin T-121045
- F/O Basil S. Stafford T-857
- F/O James L. Sindeldecker T-121098
- F/O Paris L. Guy T-122345
- F/O Lawrence E. Moyer T-131776
- F/O L. V. Rounds T- 120460
- F/O G. T. Knight T-123412
- F/O Robert L. McGee T-128177
- F/O Eugene J. Kay T-125120
- F/O C. J. Kiel T-125120
- F/O Arthur J. Naughtin T-128182
- F/O R. R. Feuerstein T-121144
- F/O H. P. Ullrich T-128195
- F/O Donald G. Secor T-128190
- F/O R. E. Williams T-132190
- F/O Charles V. Miller T-122953
- F/O J. M. Haley T-128166
- F/O J. B. Harry Jr. T-128167
- F/O I. E. Rhoads T-121094
- F/O J. K. Gangloff T-122343
- F/O B. T. Hayes T-128168

5. The ranking officers of each group will be in command and responsible for the control of all personnel in his training class.
6. It cannot be overemphasized at this time that all members of Combat Control Teams must devote their efforts 100% to learning all they can while they are here. It will be too late to try to learn on the battle field. Absenteeism will not be tolerated.
7. All personnel will report to Billeting Officer in Building B-26 for assignment to quarters at this station.
8. The Troop Carrier Command Officers Club is available for your use and bus transportation is provided each night between 1800 and 2300 hours.

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9. Mess facilities are provided on this base at the Officers' Mess.
10. Combat control team schematically shown aboard the GC-4A glider, appears as follows:



LEGEND
COMBAT CONTROL TEAM CG-4A GLIDER SCHEMATIC

Graphically shown are the cockpit and cargo areas of the two CG-4A Waco Gliders used by each Combat Control Team.

- O – Glider Pilot/Operations Officer
- X – Glider Pilot/Radio Operator
- L – Enlisted Radio Operator / Maintainer
- Jeep – ¼ Ton Truck
- Radio Trailer – Specially designed and configured radio trailer.

Glynnne M. Jones

GLYNNE M. JONES
Colonel, GCS
Asst C/S, A-3

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Included Document
Undated but March 1945

OPERATION VARSITY

SECTION 1

General WILLIAMS was informed that enough A-5 containers modified for C-46 use had been obtained for the initial lift. A total of 425 already had been delivered to the 313th Group and another 500 were on the way.

Following the conference, Colonel JONES (A-3) requested all parties concerned to remain for a discussion on training. It was decided that first priority would go to combining training of Troop Carrier and airborne troops.

Glider Infantry Trained as Unit

A limitation of 16 gliders was placed on each lift owing to the condition of airfields and the necessity for transferring large numbers of motor-less craft from England to France. A lift total of 16 were agreed upon since it enabled an entire glider infantry company to train as a unit.

In addition, an extensive air program was set up for Troop Carrier units with a view to solving the individual problems of each airfield in the limited time remaining before the operational deadline. Units were urged to utilize all flyable weather to the greatest extent possible when not committed to combined training.

For training in loading and lashing, 80 glider fuselages from the Eindhoven area were made available to the 17th and 13th Airborne Divisions.

Full Dress Rehearsal Inadvisable

A 100 per cent dress rehearsal of VARSITY was considered inadvisable in the few remaining weeks of training since airborne units would be unable to replace possible losses incurred. It was decided to set up a mock operation on a reduced scale approximately 10 days before D-Day to test communications, operational suitability of airfields, timing, navigational aids and related problems.

Upon completion of the rehearsal, all training would cease to permit proper staging of troops and necessary maintenance of aircraft. 20 March was established as a tentative date for terminate of training.

It was further decided that a pair of Troop Carrier Glider Combat Control Teams would accompany each Airborne Division. A glider pilot control would follow procedure to be laid down in the new Memorandum 50-21A, Headquarters, IX Troop Carrier Command, subject: "SOP for the Tactical Employment of Glider Pilots", dated 11 March 1945.

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General WILLIAMS strongly emphasized the need for continued training of airborne personnel in C-46 aircraft. He stressed, that two Regiments, one from each American Division, be selected for C-46 lifts and be moved immediately to the area adjacent to Achiet* (B-54) to facilitate training and to have these troops in position for actual staging.

Conferees were informed that VARSITY control would center at the Brussels headquarters of Lieutenant General LEWIS H. BRERETON and Air Chief Marshal CONINGHAM to FAAA** (Main) to IX Troop Carrier Command (FWD) and 38 Group. Overall plans would be drawn to at FAAA (Main) by representatives of IX Troop Carrier Command and the Airborne Divisions***.

* AAF Station in France

**First Allied Airborne Army

***American 13th, 17th for Operation Varsity; American 82nd, 101st for Operation Arena.

SECTION 2

On 8 March General WILLIAMS reported to General BRERETON that eight Glider Combat Control Teams had been specially equipped and trained to perform the duties carried out by air coordination parties during the Normandy and Holland operations. Operationally, each team could function as a completely self-sustaining unit.

General WILLIAMS stated that two such teams would be assigned to each Airborne Division to insure reliable communications. He pointed out that in Normandy two out of four air coordinated parties were lost due to enemy action, while the Holland battle saw six out of eight parties suffered casualties and damage with three units completely knocked out.

A further reason for employing a spare team was the fact that all control personnel could not be carried in a single glide; this factor caused a dispersal of team members. Under such conditions, an extra control team would permit reshuffling of personnel on the spot and accomplish necessary communication in a minimum of time.

In addition to combat drill, the control teams had been thoroughly trained in the use of codes and ciphers and the maintenance of their radio equipment.

Under the plan outlined by General WILLIAMS, two Combat Control Teams were scheduled for assignment to XVIII Corps (Airborne) during Operation Varsity.

Normally two gliders would be adequate to lift the necessary personnel and equipment of each team, but in this case an additional two gliders would be required to haul special pickup apparatus of both teams, bringing the total number of gliders to six. Every effort was being made to insure the operational success of the control teams, General WILLIAMS stressed.

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Responsibility Delegated to Teams

A broad range of responsibility was delegated to the teams which were to establish themselves with XVIII Corps headquarters for the purpose of coordinating all outgoing messages through the Corps or Division commander. Further coordination was to be established with Corps G-3 to arrange glider pickups from combat landing zones if emergencies dictated such measures. In preparation for such a contingency, necessary pickup ropes and stations would be sent in with the control teams. Both IX Troop Carrier Command and XVIII Corps had agreed upon the desirability of such action if permitted by the tactical situation.

In line with this procedure, 16 gliders committed for the movement of a medical Battalion also were equipped with litter straps in the event it was considered practicable to evacuate patients by glider. Decision to make such a pickup was reserved by General WILLIAMS. In case the method was to be employed, the glider pickup location would be designated by the grid coordinate system.

Three Hour Weather Reports

The control teams were further directed to effect radio contact with the headquarters of both IX Troop Carrier Command and FAAA in order to facilitate the transmittal of three hour weather reports to D-Day serials and later to resupply formations. UCO code was stipulated as the medium of communication.

Information was to be relayed by the teams to IX Troop Carrier Command concerning known strength of resistance points that could be circumvented enroute to and surrounding DZ's and LZ's. Hazards in glider LZ's and methods of eliminating were to be pointed out, if possible. Necessary changes were to be recommended in locations of LZ's and resupply DZ's.

Teams were to maintain contact with Troop Carrier serial leaders and to supply necessary pertinent information over VHF. They were responsible for setting up pickup stations, if called upon to do so, and transmitting coordinates together with timing and any other information applicable to such a task.

In addition, control teams would transmit all messages directed by the Commanding General, XVIII Corps relative to concentration of enemy troops, enemy air activity and any other necessary information.

Familiarization with Units

Preliminary to VARSITY, Troop Carrier Combat Control Teams No. 1 and 2 would be placed on five days detached service beginning 12 March with XVIII Corps for the purpose of familiarizing themselves with the units with which they would serve. Then they would proceed to marshalling areas.

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SECRETCombat ControlTeam Number 1

Shown left to right are: Tech-4 Neil R. Long, F/O Lawrence E. Moyer, 1st Lt. Norman C. Wilmeth (Commander), 2nd Lt. William D. Fasking, F/O Leon V. Rounds. The glider shown in the photo is the one damaged during equipment loading. It never saw combat. It was replaced by the RED WACO. Note the loading A-Frame attached at rear of the Waco glider. (Photo from Norman C. Wilmeth files)

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The Glider Combat Control Teams of IX Troop Carrier Command were molded in the crucible of combat on the fields of Normandy and Holland. Their development was in answer to the acute need for on-the-spot reconnaissance from DZ's and LZ's during an operation and speedy communication to oncoming serials and operations leaders at headquarters.

Faulty relay of information under extreme pressure of fluid battle lines during previous operations resulted in continuous improvements that culminated in the formation of eight combat control teams to participate in VARSITY.

Two Teams per Division

Colonel JONES (A-3) pointed out that eight teams were formed in order to provide two for each of the American Airborne Divisions in the European Theater – the 82nd, 101st, 17th, and 13th.

A wide range of versatility was demanded for the four glider pilots and single enlisted man who comprised each team. One GP, with a minimum of 500 hours as a power pilot in addition to at least two combat missions, served as flying control operator, while each of the remaining three glider pilots doubled as radio operators. The enlisted man functioned as radio operator and mechanic. All personnel were qualified to drive a jeep and trailer.

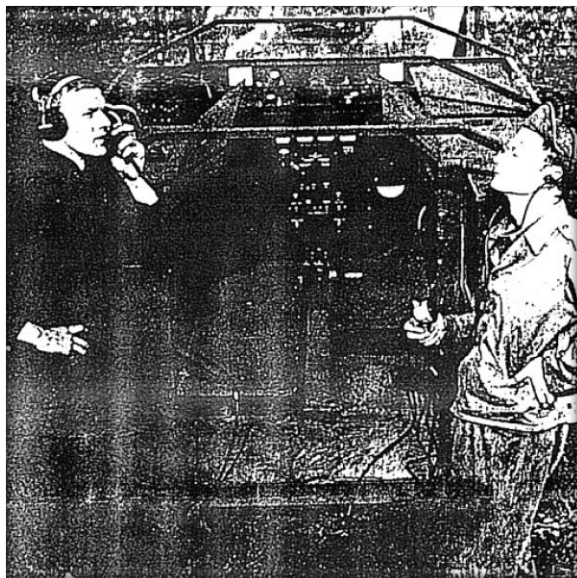
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Relaying information from the field
Shown here two Combat Controllers operate
from the rear of the radio equipment trailer.
(Photo from Norman C. Wilmeth files)

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In addition to possessing special skills in the use of radio and cryptographic equipment, each man was given infantry training with the airborne unit in which he was intended to serve.

Since control teams were to operate from airborne landing areas, often inside enemy lines under the most fluid battle conditions, their ability to survive was the only guarantee of a workable communications system. The paramount importance of combat training was obvious.

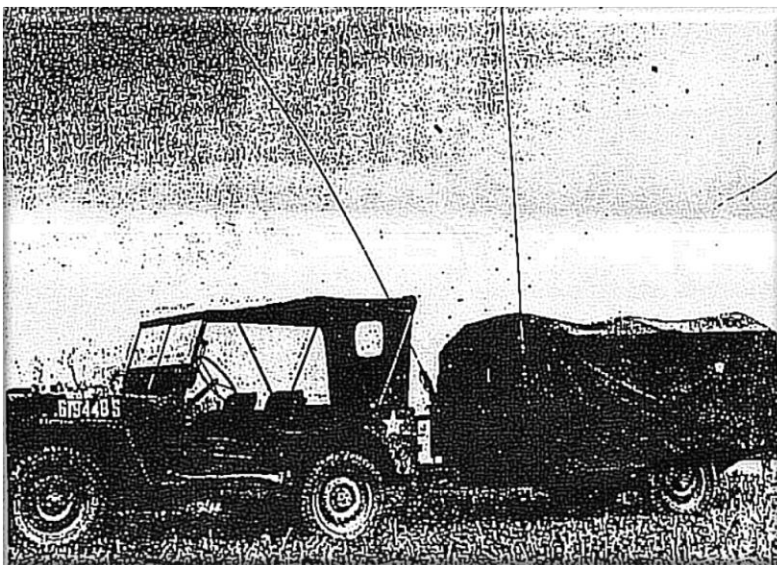
Jeep and Trailer

A single team's equipment included a jeep and a one-quarter ton two-wheeled trailer with special rebuilt body to provide adequate space for radio apparatus and an operator. Standard jeep trailer could not accommodate an SCR-339 or SCR-499 radio and still permit an operator to work efficiently.

Equipment of the Combat Control Team
Jeep and SCR-499 Radio Set on Special
Trailer. (Photo from Norman C. Wilmeth
files)

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Either an SCR-399 or SCR-499 radio could be employed along with a PE-75 power unit substituted for the PE-95.



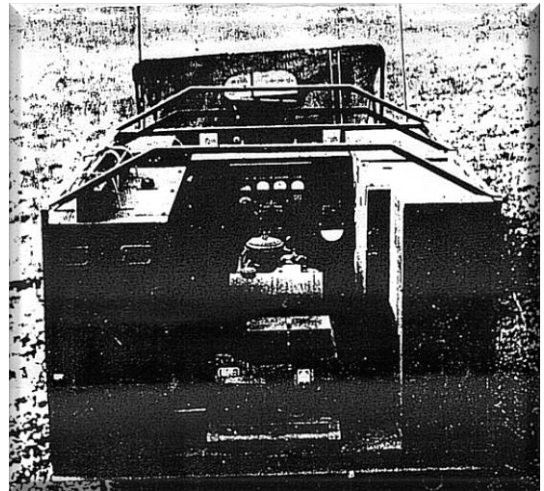
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Combat Control Team Radios

Close-up of trailer (aft), looking forward you can see back of Jeep. The trailer contained SCR-499 Radio Set. (Ed: Radio Set can be identified by the 3 half-moon white dials. At center of the trailer bed is the power generator, PE-75 or PE-95.) (Photo from Norman C. Wilmeth files)

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Also included in the trailer was the SCR-622 VHF radio to provide an auxiliary channel of communication to aircraft in flight. This set could be mounted in the jeep, but such an installation would require additional power equipment which was listed as a critical item and difficult to procure.

No Space Inconvenience

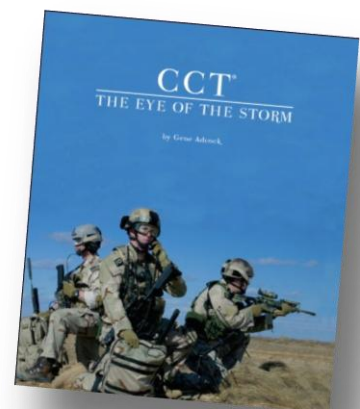
Although the team could function without the SCR-VHF, the set added less than 100 pounds to the total load without imposing any space inconvenience and therefore was considered a highly valuable aid.

Each team carried a set of documents to include three M-209 converters with special settings to provide approximately 32-hour security for any message; special code similar to air support request code but with vocabulary to fit the type of messages to be handled and assuring a longer period of security than the M-209; and air-ground authentication.

NOTES ON THE PRECEDING KEYSTONE DOCUMENTS AND EDITING

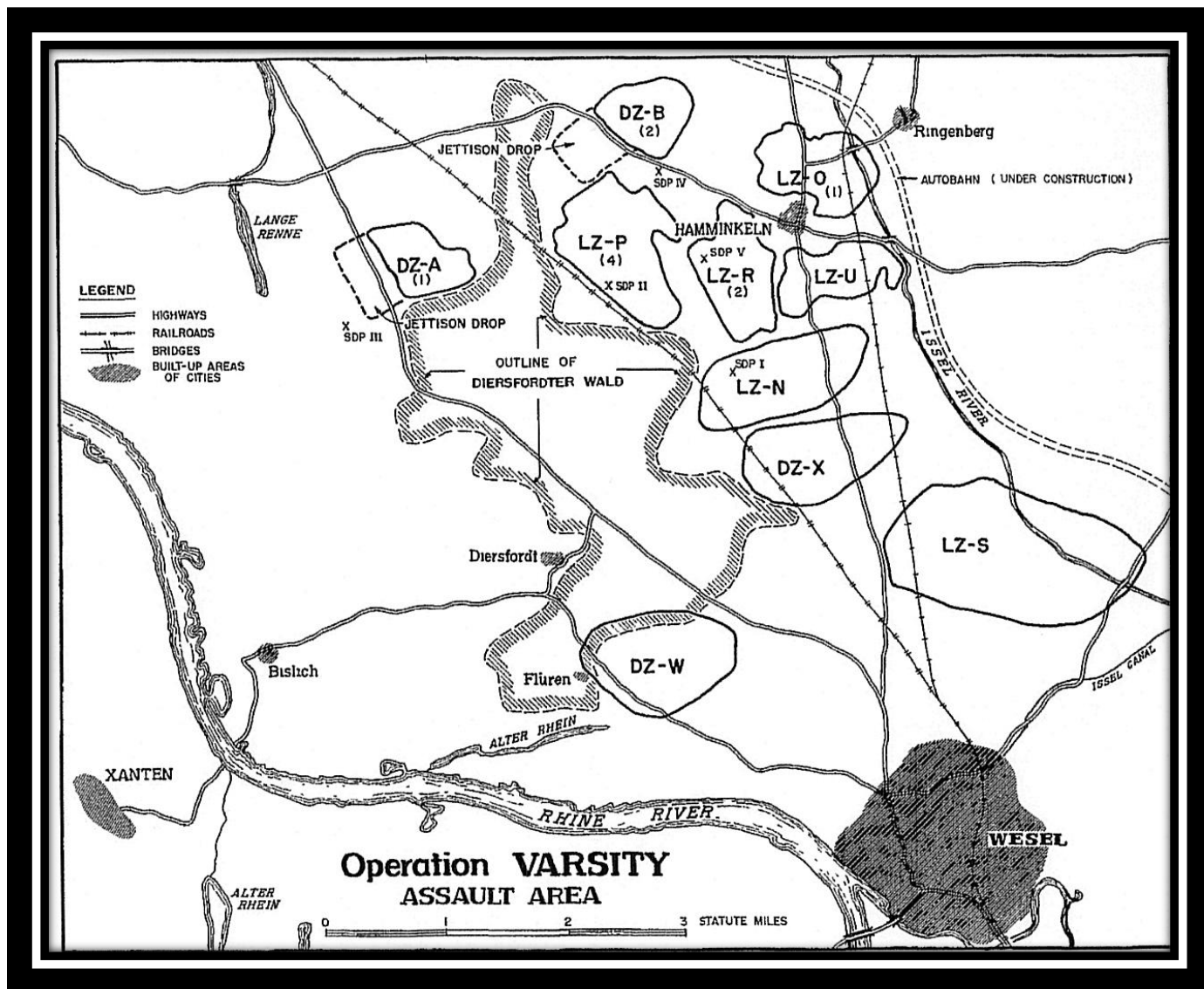
These keystone documents were transcribed from the two (2) "original documents" sent to the author by Mr. Norman C. Wilmeth, PO Box 577, Guyton, OK 73942 - on November 13, 2009. (See his story on Page 4, of CCT - The Eye of the Storm.) Included in the Wilmeth's second document are four photographs. Although only marginally suitable for printing, they are included for coordination purposes. The author is working with the Glider Pilots Association (Silent Wings Museum) to obtain better copies of the photographs. The author has taken some liberty in reformatting the documents for clarity. Beyond the reformatting and the addition of notes, the document remains unchanged. For educational purposes, I have added drawings of: 1. The Varsity Assault Zone area and 2. The GC-4A Waco glider, on the following pages.

*Finally, why was eight CCTs, plus one spare, commissioned by the USAAF in 1945? For the invasion of Germany, a total of four American Airborne Division drops were planned. A reinforcing Varsity drop was planned, along with two more - **Operation Arena** drops - 100+ miles deep into Germany. The three follow-on drops were cancelled by General Eisenhower, crediting the first Varsity drop as a resounding success. (Editor)*



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Varsity Assault Zones - "The Troop Carrier command had begun in January to organize combat control teams from its glider pilots and enlisted technicians on the basis of two teams for each American airborne division." "In the coming (Varsity) operation two teams, one a spare in case of accidents or casualties, were to be landed at opposite ends of **LZ N** to operate for XVIII Corps." "Two gliders loaded with wounded had been 'snatched' very successfully from the Remagen bridgehead, and the troop carriers were prepared to evacuate large numbers of patients by glider in Varsity under the direction of a combat control team if conditions warranted."

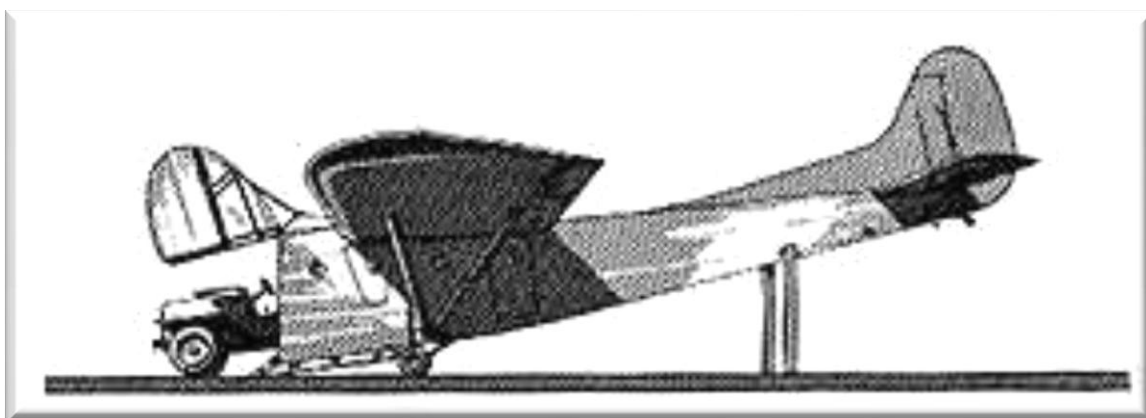
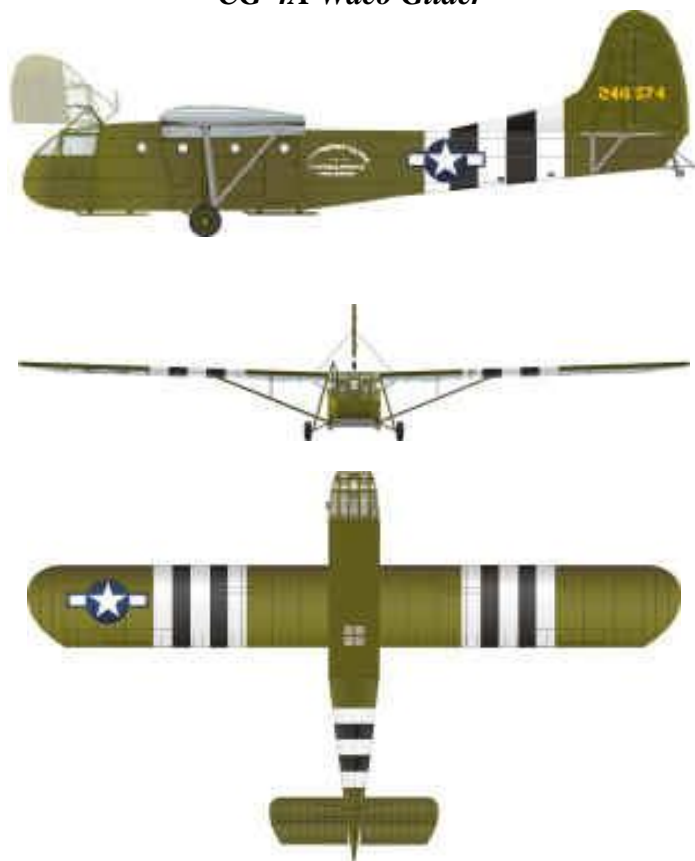
Source: Page 164, *Airborne Operations in World War II – European Theater* by Dr. John C. Warren, USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, Air University, September 1956

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CG-4A Waco Glider



Waco Glide shown on A-Frame for equipment loading.

*In **The Eye of the Storm** article **March 22, 1945 - The Red Waco**, Norman Wilmeth writes “while loading our CG-4A Waco glider for Operation Varsity, our CCT severely damaged it (when it slipped off the A-Frame), putting it out of commission. I scrounged around and finally found a recovered Normandy glider that had just been rebuilt, but not yet painted. The newly replaced canvas skin was still covered with red primer. It was not yet on line, but available, so we took it.”*

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