

UNIT HISTORY
SECOND TANK DESTROYER GROUP
Period 1 February 1945 - 28 February 1945

- NARRATIVE -

At the beginning of this period, the Second Tank Destroyer Group continued being located at Kornelimunster, Germany, and remained attached to the XIX Corps. This period was an eventful one for Group, and added to its many tasks and responsibilities, ~~was~~ the task of planning and supervising Operation "Grenade" as it applied to Anti-Tank Defense. On this Operation, the outstanding accomplishment of bridging the Roer River in force by XIX Corps troops and armor was effected most successfully, with Group and its attached units playing an important part in this Operation.

A change in the Table of Organization took place in accordance with Table of Organization and Equipment 18-10-1 dated 31 October 1944, to become effective on 15 February 1945 per General Order 41, Headquarters, Ninth United States Army, dated 11 February 1945. The necessary reorganization of Group was completed on 15 February 1945.

Changes in Staff personnel took place, with several new Staff Officers being assigned and several Officers previously assigned being transferred to other Organizations. Changes in assignments, transfers, and promotions of Officers and Enlisted Men during this period are as follows:

Major Fred A. Smith assigned to Temporary Duty of approximately eight days duration to Paris, France, as Information and Education Officer. At completion of Temporary Duty, will return to proper station, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 28, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 31 January 1945.

Captain Victor J. Smith placed on Temporary Duty with Headquarters, XIX Corps, per Paragraph VCOG XIX Corps dated 29 January 1945.

Major Fred A. Smith relieved of assignment to Second Tank Destroyer Group and assigned to Headquarters XIX Corps, effective 10 February 1945 per Special Order 37, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 10 February 1945.



Lieutenant Colonel Alfred G. Seitz placed on Temporary Duty to A-87 for purpose of carrying out instructions of The Commanding General, XIX Corps, and upon completion of Temporary Duty will return to proper station and Organization, per Paragraph 1, Letter file Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 14 February 1945, Subject Orders.

Lieutenant Colonel Alfred G. Seitz returned from Temporary Duty with A-87 to duty on 23 February 1945.

Captain John J. Freitag relieved of duty as Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company, Second Tank Destroyer Group, and assigned as Adjutant and S-1 as primary duties, per Paragraph 1a, Special Order 10, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Captain Victor D. Waloga relieved of duty as Assistant S-2 and is assigned Headquarters Company; Commanding Officer and Communications Officer as primary duties, per Paragraph 1b, Special Order 10, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Captain Otis H. Bealmear relieved of duty as Special Services Officer, Assistant S-4, Assistant S-1, and Munitions Officer, and is assigned Assistant S-2 and Liaison Officer as primary duty, per Paragraph 1c, Special Order 10, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

First Lieutenant William T. McGuinness, relieved of duty as Headquarters Company Executive Officer and assigned as Athletic, Recreation Officer and Assistant S-1 as primary duties, per Paragraph 1d, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Technical Sergeant Fosque D. Mears promoted from Sergeant to Technical Sergeant, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Technician Fourth Grade Leo C. Hittel promoted from Technician Fifth Grade to Technician Fourth Grade, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.



Master Sergeant Voen E. Fowler promoted from Technician Fourth Grade to Master Sergeant, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Corporal Thomas C. Akmon promoted from Private to Corporal per Paragraph 2, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Technician Fifth Grade Alton R. Partin promoted to Technician Fifth Grade from Private First Class, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 10, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 15 February 1945.

Major Russell L. Smith promoted from Captain to Major, effective 16 February 1945, per Paragraph 1, Special Order 47, Headquarters, Ninth United States Army, dated 16 February 1945.

Captain David M. Sunderland relieved of assignment to Second Tank Destroyer Group and assigned to 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, per Paragraph 2, Special Order 44, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 17 February 1945.

First Lieutenant William T. McGuinness relieved of assignment to Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, and assigned to 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion, per Paragraph 4, Special Order 45, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 18 February 1945.

First Lieutenant William F. Dudley relieved of assignment to 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion and assigned to Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, per Paragraph 3, Special Order 45, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 18 February 1945.

Major Ashley I. Lohse relieved of assignment with 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and assigned to Second Tank Destroyer Group, per Paragraph 1, Special Order 23, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 21 February 1945.

Master Sergeant Charles Cameron Broderson was honorably discharged on 22 February 1945, per Message from file 210.1, Headquarters, Ninth United States Army, dated 22 February 1945.

Master Sergeant Charles Cameron Broderson was appointed



Second Lieutenant, Army of the United States, 23 February 1945, and assigned Platoon Commander of Headquarters Company, per Special Order 13, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 24 February 1945.

Major Eugene J. Mohen, relieved of assignment to Seventh Armored Group and assigned to Second Tank Destroyer Group, with directions to remain with XIX Corps Headquarters, per Paragraph 1, Special Order 48, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated 21 February 1945.

Captain Rodney B. Phillippay relieved of duty as assistant S-3, Information and Education Officer, and assigned duty as Assistant S-3, per Paragraph 4, Special Order 12, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 22 February 1945.

First Lieutenant William F. Dudley assigned Assistant S-3, Information and Education Officer, per Paragraph 5, Special Order 12, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 22 February 1945.

Corporal James R. Williams reduced to Private, per Paragraph 1, Special Order 12, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 22 February 1945.

Technician Fifth Grade James R. Williams promoted from Private to Technician Fifth Grade per Paragraph 2, Special Order 12, Headquarters, Second Tank Destroyer Group, dated 22 February 1945.

Private Thomas Whalen is relieved from AU Detachment 45, Ground Forces Reinforcement Center, 354th Reinforcement Company, and is transferred in grade to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Second Tank Destroyer Group, per Special Order 57, Paragraph 78, Headquarters, 18th Reinforcement Depot, dated 26 February 1945. The activity of Group during this period was greatly increased and the added duties, of necessity imposed upon Officers and Enlisted Men, were proficiently carried out. Moreover, changes in the Table of Organization which followed found several new Staff Officers assigned to Group and reassignment of duties to other Staff Officers. All of the above, notwithstanding, the Group carried out its duties and assignments in an exemplary manner, with a combat efficiency rating of Excellent for the entire period.



Group continued in its work of coordinating Anti-Tank defense in all of Corps Sector, continued in command of Corps Reserve, and completed plans for commitment of Corps Reserve if occasion arose necessitating such action.

Group submitted plans for Operation "Grenade" as it pertained to Anti-Tank Defense. Operated Fire Direction Center to control indirect fires of all Tank Destroyer Battalions in Corps. Facilitated reinforcement of combat losses for all Tank Destroyer Battalions in Corps and facilitated conversion of 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion to a self-propelled unit.

An estimated enemy armored force of 110 tanks of SP guns operated against XIX Corps during the period. Our tanks destroyed at least twenty-five (25) and the Tank Destroyers accounted for eleven (11). Infantry and bazookas claim five (5) while fighter bombers strafed, bombed and rocketted at least twenty-five (25) with excellent results reported. These results total some sixty-six (66) tanks or SP guns knocked out. In addition two (2) tanks were captured intact.

German armor was employed in close support of infantry in small groups from well concealed or dug-in positions. Depleted ranks, shortages of materiel or gas, and constant threat of air attack necessitated piecemeal use, and at no time during our rapid advance was a coordinated Pz force committed against us.

Elements of the Ninth Pz, 130th Pz Lehr, Eleventh Pz Divisions; 301st General Headquarters Tank Battalion, 341st Assault Gun Brigade, were identified on our front. Prisoners of War from Panzer units elaborated on the shortage of tanks since the ARDENNES offensive, and verified statements made concerning cannibalization of tanks from various units to enable at least one company to enter combat at full tank strength.

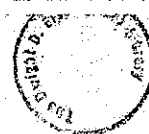
Except for a 14.5 inch mortar mounted on Mark VI chassis, knocked out by Tank Destroyers in the 30th Division sector, no new or unusual pieces of materiel were encountered. Mark IV's and V's made up the majority of tanks employed. An estimated fifteen (15) Tiger Tanks were reported. Most of the armor encountered took the form of 75mm



or 88mm high velocity SP guns on standard tank chassis.

February 1945 opened with Group at Kornelimunster (K904378), attached to XIX Corps. Unit was in charge of Corps Reserve and had attached to it the Second Ranger Battalion Infantry and the 744th Tank Battalion (Light). Units were continually contacted, their training and maintenance inspected while defensive plans were made, and revised frequently to meet changes in the situation. Intensive work was done on plans for future operations. February 3rd the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion came under Group supervision when it moved into an assembly position in Aachen. By VCOG, 4th February 1945, the Second Ranger Infantry Battalion was released from attachment while on 5th February 1945, after Group had displaced with XIX Corps to Bardenberg (K856506), by Letter of Instructions No. 107, XIX Corps dated 041130, the 744th Tank Battalion (Light) was released from attachment at 1200A hours. After a long period of research and planning the first antitank Annex to Field Order No. 30 covering the attack on the Roer River was submitted. At 1400, 7 February 1945 Group moved to Rahe, Germany (K825456), where it completed the final plans for the defense of the Corps sector which were submitted to XIX Corps 14 February 1945. Tank Destroyer Battalions maintenance, training and conversion were supervised and inspected. Intensive work was done on plans for the crossing of the Roer River and after drafting and redrafting, and re-arranging, final antitank Annexes to FO No. 30, XIX Corps, were submitted February 22. By that time all units were in position, with ammunition stacked beside the guns, waiting D-day, H-hour.

With the 801st TD Bn (3" towed) and one Company of the 702nd TD Bn (90mm SP) in indirect fire positions in the vicinity of Aldenhoven, preparation fires were fired as follows: The 702nd delivered long range infilade interdiction fire upon three (3) main highways, firing at the rate of 100 rounds per hour from H-45 to H-210 for the purpose of preventing enemy traffic from reaching the scene of the assault crossing while one (1) company of the 801st TD Bn in the sector of the 30th Inf Div neutralized the Straatsforst, firing 300 rounds per hour from H-45 to H-210 and the other two (2) Companies put neutralization fires on a trench system on the high ridge in the



29th Inf Div sector at the rate of 300 rounds per company from H-45 to H-15 when the fire lifted to three (3) key towns 3000-4000 yards further E where the same rate of fire continued until H-210. This fire thickened and deepened the fires of the Division and Corps Arty units and the fires of the 821st TD Bn and the 823rd TD Bn which, firing within the sectors of the 28th, 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions, expended 3174 and 6485 rounds HE N/C respectively from H-150 and H-15 to H.

Through a Group Fire Control Center which was established at the Corps Artillery Fire Direction Center upon the completion of the scheduled fire, both the 90mm and 3" guns were prepared to fire call missions from Corps Artillery FDC. Although an ammunition shortage stopped 3" fire after "D" Day, 90mm fire missions were handled for four (4) days. These guns were mainly used for long range targets beyond the range of other types of artillery, and the high rate of fire, low weight shell and high muzzle velocity proved of great value on harassing and interdiction missions.

Two (2) companies of the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion occupied direct fire positions in the 29th and 30th Infantry Division sectors, where through the medium of direct-indirect methods controlled by Reconnaissance Officers of the 702nd and 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalions, who crossed with the assault infantry and acted as forward observers carrying 536 radios and linked to the guns by 609 relay stations, targets of opportunity were taken under fire or combat areas isolated by fire. One SP 88 was destroyed by this method. Although excess smoke at bridge site, great range and unfamiliarity on the part of the Infantry with this type of support fire interfered or cut down the maximum use of those guns, it is believed that their fires were a success and that serious consideration should be given to this type of employment in the future.

At 230700A, Co "B", 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion, was released from secondary missions and was attached to the 29th Infantry Division. They at once entered an assemble position where they remained pending completion of a bridge that would allow their 3" guns to



cross the river. As Division Tank Destroyer units crossed the Roer River, 24 February 1945, Battalion attached to Group conducted reconnaissance of support positions E of the Roer and made plans to cross when either Division flanks became exposed or the need for Tank Destroyer reinforcements became apparent.

24 February 1945, Group at 1100 displaced with XIX Corps to Alsdorf, Germany (K883543). By Letter of Instructions No. 116, XIX Corps, at 2100, 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the 113th Cavalry Group (Mechs) while by same Letter 2120, "B" Co, 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from attachment to 29th Infantry Division. At 241145, "B" Co, 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion crossed the Roer River, taking up indirect fire positions in the vicinity of Nierdezier. 251200A February 1945, "C" Co, 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to Co "B" of 2nd Armored Division, and at 1300, "A" Co crossed Roer River and entered an assembly position in Nierdezier preparatory to moving into indirect fire positions near Lich. By Letter of Instructions No. 116, XIX Corps at 270700A, 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion (-) was released from attachment to Second Tank Destroyer Group and attached to 2nd Armored Division so at the close of the Period no units were attached to this unit and the principal function of the Group was the close of supervision and inspection of the Corps Anti-Tank Defenses, study of terrain and routes for continuing the operations, and assisting in supply and replacements of both men and materiel.

Group obtained allocation of High-Velocity Armor-Piercing, Star Shell 3-inch and 90-millimeter Ammunition for attached Battalions and arranged distribution of same. Total ammunition expended by attached units, covering the period from 29 January 1945 to 4 March 1945 inclusive, were 28,650 rounds of 3-inch shells. Expenditure of 90-millimeter ammunition from 19 February to 4 March were 16,000 rounds. Arranged delivery of eleven M-36's to 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion on 3 February by transports, and twelve M-36's on 4 February 1945. On 8 February, secured twenty-four 2 1/2 ton Trucks for 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion for handling two U/F of 90-millimeter ammunition. On 21

February arranged for nine 2 1/2 ton Trucks for 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion and eleven 2 1/2 ton Trucks for 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion to haul ammunition. Obtained authorization for conversion of 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion to M-18's on 21 February 1945. Arranged delivery of twelve M-18's to 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion on 22 February 1945. Made arrangements for delivery of five M-10's to 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and eleven M-10's to 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion on 11 February 1945.

The Special Service Office, of Group, which is combined with the S-1 Section under the new Table of Organization, has been extremely active during this period. In addition to arranging GI shows, movies, clubmobiles, USO shows for attached units, it has issued athletic equipment, phonographs, radios and has made distribution of Army Publications of Stars and Stripes, Wind Mill, and Yank. Group Special Service also made distribution of council books, playing cards and magazines. It has arranged Quotas of Furloughs and passes and made allocation of same to attached units. Quotas were also issued to Battalions for ~~the~~ Rest Center. Consideration was always given in allocations to those units in a position to spare the Personnel on such occasions. Group Special Service Office has received whole-hearted cooperation from attached units' Special Service Officers in planning and arranging various events for the entertainment of their personnel.

The Group has been notified of awarded battle credit for its participation in the campaign "Germany" as established by Paragraph 3, Section VI, General Orders 80, War Department, 5 October 1944.

On the 28 February 1945 the Second Tank Destroyer Group has made the following awards of the Certificate of Merit, for meritorious service from 18 June 1944 to 27 February 1945:

Master Sergeant Voen E. Fowler, Master Sergeant Joseph M. Kneeland, Master Sergeant Kenneth E. Marsh, Technical Sergeant Fosque D. Mears, Sergeant Garland E. Hatcher, Technician Fifth Grade Stanley S. Kwiatkowski, Technician Fifth Grade Jerome J. Minnicks, Technician Fifth Grade Charles E. Wharton, Private First Class William N. Kaska.

The Status of Strength of the Second Tank Destroyer Group at

end of this period is sixteen Officers and fifty-seven Enlisted Men.

Reinforcements needed: one Officer and six Enlisted Men.

