

UNIT HISTORY
 SECOND TANK DESTROYER GROUP
 Period 1 January 1945 - 31 January 1945

1001
W.D.- NARRATIVE -

During the entire period 1 January to 31 January inclusive the 2nd TD Group remained at Kornelimunster, Germany, and continued being attached to the XIX Corps. A change of command in the 2nd TD Group took place during this period, with Colonel George G. Elms being relieved of assignment as Commanding Officer of Group and assigned to XIX Corps for duty as Deputy Chief of Staff. Lt. Colonel Paul B. Bell was relieved of assignment with XIX Corps Artillery and assigned to 2nd TD Group as Commanding Officer per par. 6 SO #19 Headquarters XIX Corps dated 22 January 1945.

Attached units with the 2nd TD Groups consisted of 2nd Ranger Infantry Bn, 744th Tank Bn (L), 692 Tank Destroyer Bn (T) (attached to 104 Infantry Division), 817 Tank Destroyer Bn (T) (attached to 8th Infantry Division), 893 Tank Destroyer Bn (T) (attached to 78th Infantry Division), Company "C" 628 Tank Destroyer Bn (SP) (attached to 5th Armored Division).

The strength status for Group during this period comprised of 16 Officers and 57 Enlisted Men. Activity for Group consisted of maintaining Anti Tank defense of Corps sector, assumed command of Corps Reserve and prepared plans for commitment of Reserve if occasion necessitated it. The Group supervised training and refitting of units in Corps Reserve, arranged replacement of equipment and materiel lost through combat for all Tank Destroyer units in Corps. Assisted 817 Tank Destroyer Bn in securing authorization for reorganization under new T/O & E. Secured range material for training of 2nd Ranger Infantry Bn and facilitated the supply of that unit.

Group obtained allocation of HVAP and Star Shell 3" and 90mm Ammunition for attached Bns, and arranged distribution of same. Total Ammunition expenditure by attached/covering the period from 1 January 1945 to 28 January 1945 inclusive were 9558 rounds of 3" shells.

The Group received quotas on rotation plan and orders directing travel on furloughs to US, UK, Paris, and Brussels. Quotas were allocated and delivered to Bns on an equal basis. Attached units were continuously contacted by Group Staff Officers, their training and maintenance inspected, and close supervision and coordination of all Anti Tank defense

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was strictly maintained at all times. The combat efficiency for Group during this entire period was excellent.

Special Services were provided for attached units by Group Special Service Officer and frequent visits of clubmobiles, moving picture teams, USO Shows and GI shows, were an important factor in maintaining a high morale amongst Officers and Enlisted Men. Frequent contacts were made by Group Special Service Officer to attached units and their needs discussed with their Special Service Officers and fulfilled where ever possible.

Effective Tuesday 23 January 1945, Officers of the Group were given a new schedule of duty which will give them more time to visit attached units.

During January all enemy armor was employed in the breakthrough in the Ardennes salient. The enemy facing the XIX Corps confined his activities to improving defensive positions along the EAST bank of the ROER RIVER. Frequently small numbers of tanks and SP guns supporting small infantry attacks were encountered.

After 15 January enemy armor began to pull out of the Ardennes salient and during this period heavy rail and motor movements were observed moving NORTH and SOUTH from the breakthrough area. Fighter bombers destroyed a considerable amount of rail equipment and armored vehicles. Artillery on numerous occasions during this period, fired on small groups of tanks and vehicular movements with good results.

In the latter part of the period Corps units in their attack did not meet any large force of enemy armor. At the close of the period enemy armored divisions had completely moved out of the Ardennes sector and as yet no Panzer units were identified on Corps front, although at least two (2) divisions, the 116th and 130th Panzer Divisions, ^{are} ~~are~~ believed to be along Corps front EAST of the RHINE for rest and refitting, the remainder of armor seemed destined for the Eastern front.

The 2nd TD Group was ordered to prepare plans for commitment of Corps Reserve to meet any hostile threat in Corps sector. The plan was drawn up, following extensive reconnaissance and terrain study, and coordinated with all Corps, Divisions, and Corps Rear Area Defense Headquarters (7th Armored Group). Arrangements with various FA units in

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Corps were made to provide artillery support in case of commitment to action. The plan also provided for employment of 1142 Combat Engineer Group (attached to Ninth US Army with one (1) to three (3) Bns) in case situation should necessitate it. The plan was presented to Corps and was approved. Pending commitment, the 2nd Ranger Infantry Bn reorganized, refitted, and carried out extensive training programs, with special attention to reinforcements. One (1) platoon of the 744 Tank Bn (L) was detached to provide security for Corps CP, platoons being rotated. At the same time, Group maintained close contact with Tank Destroyer units in Corps to insure a coordinated Anti Tank defense. The sector remained relatively quiet during most of the period and activities were limited to usual defense measures. Company "C" 784 Tank Bn (M) was relieved of attachment to 744 Tank Bn (L) per letter of instructions, Headquarters XIX Corps, dated 24 January 1945, and reverted to control of parent unit. On 26 January 1945, CC "A", 5th Armored Division, with Company "C" 628 Tank Destroyer Bn (SP) attached, was attached to the 78 Infantry Division, effective upon arrival in the area, per letter of instructions, Headquarters, XIX Corps, dated as above. On 30 January, 893 Tank Destroyer Bn supported the 78 Infantry Division with direct and indirect fires on Konzen - Imgenbroich, Huppenbroich, Kesternich, Germany, and Company "C", 628 Tank Destroyer Bn (SP) supported CC "A", 5th Armored Division in attack on Eicherschied, Germany. The attack is still progressing on the 31 January 1945. At the end of this period the Group is at K904378, Kornelimunster, Germany in XIX Corps Reserve, with the 2nd Ranger Infantry Bn, and 744 Tank Bn (L) attached. The combat efficiency of the 2nd Ranger Infantry Bn is very satisfactory, and that of the 744 Tank Bn (L) is excellent.

Under date of 13 January 1945 in a letter addressed to the Command-
ing General XIX Corps, the Group has recommended the following
Tank Destroyer Bns
for Unit Citations: 823 Tank Destroyer Bn (attached 30 Infantry Div),
702 Tank Destroyer Bn (attached to 2nd Armored Div), 803 Tank Destroyer
Bn (attached to VII Corps), 821 Tank Destroyer Bn (attached to 29th Inf-
antry Division), 654 Tank Destroyer Bn (attached to 35 Infantry Div),
703 Tank Destroyer Bn (attached to 3rd Armored Div), 813 Tank Destroyer
Bn (attached to 79 Infantry Division).

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Units which have to date received citations are as follows: Two (2) companies of the 823 Tank Destroyer Bn have received Presidential Citations for conspicuous bravery at Mortain. Company "B" of the 803 Tank Destroyer Bn was the among the first United States elements to enter St. Lo and its commander was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in this action. The Group further recommended the Divisions to whom the above units were attached should make a thorough investigation and recommend citations by the French Army to the units meriting the award.

On the 25 January a going away party was given in honor of Colonel George G. Elms at the company. Guest of honor was Major General Raymond S. McLain, his aide Major Kunkel was also present. Lt. Colonel Paul B. Bell was welcomed as the new Group Commander.

On 31 January Captain Victor J. Smith was relieved of assignment to Headquarters XIX Corps and assigned to 2nd Tank Destroyer Group per per 1 SO #26, Headquarters XIX Corps, dated 29 January 1945.

Group was informed by Major Dean of Armor Rear, of quota of one (1) Enlisted Man to act as attendant on hospital ship. The quota was turned over to the 744 Tank Bn (L).

