

The fighting Company "C" really lived up to the name adopted by the men of the outfit a long time ago. It has the distinction of being the first unit of the Battalion to land in France, and it has the further distinction of being the first Tank Destroyer Company to have set foot on German soil; this includes the entire United States Army.

During the time the Company was ably commanded by Capt. (now Major) Hal A. Burgess, Jr. The 1st Platoon by Lt. Frank E. Hurt, Jr.; 2nd Platoon Herbert A. Pratte; 3rd Platoon by Lt. Seymour Feldman. During its brief but eventful stay in Germany the first time the Company took a costly amount of enemy equipment and personnel. It later proved to be only a small portion of the damage inflicted on the enemy by the Company during its adventurous encounters in future missions and assignments.

The Hurtgen Forest, the Ardennes "Bulge", the Roer to the Rhine River Campaign, Rhine to Wesser River, and then to the Elbe River, were further missions the Company took part in. With the exception of the Ardennes "Bulge", the Company was closely supporting the spearheading CCR, of the 5th Armored Division. During the above campaigns the company was commanded by Captain Robert C. Jones.

The following is an official account of enemy equipment and personnel knocked out by this Company:

16 Tanks	15 General Purpose Vehicles
4 88s	20 Pill Boxes
3 Field Pieces	1 Bazooka Nest
3 Armored Cars	2 ME 109s
12 Trucks (1/2 tons)	1 Stuka Dive Bomber
Inflicted on Enemy:	2 Flak Gun Positions
1 Officer Killed	

392 Enlisted Men (plus an uncounted number of others that were killed)

Today we feel deeply sorrowful because of the absence in our ranks of many old faces. They were friends, tried and true and we cannot help but recall them to our memory. For, without their aid we would not have been so successful in fulfilling our missions. Their determination to win, to fight through to victory, inspired us all with an incentive and an ambition that could not be stilled. These men killed or wounded in action have commanded our deepest respects. Some of the wounded are scattered throughout this theatre, others have been discharged.

The men wounded and no longer with us are:

Sgt. Samuel Angelo

Sgt. Louis J. Wintz

Sgt. William J. Kane

Sgt. Thomas E. Walker

T/4 Stephen Medack

Cpl. Curtis W. Griffith

T/5 Anthony Riccobono

T/5 James A. Feltman

Pfc. Johnny L. Copeland

Pfc. Romeo Mariano

Pfc. Jay Terry

Pfc. Frank G. Wochim

Pfc. William C. Miller

The men killed in action to whom the credit and tribute they deserve can never equal their sacrifice:

1st Lt. Benjamin Smith

Sgt. Charles Leo

Sgt. James W. Luvender

Sgt. John A. Hydu

Sgt. Woodrow W. Woods

Cpl. Ashley C. Long

Cpl. Herman Barth

Cpl. Henry Goffart

Cpl. Casimir Wydrezenski

T/5 Thomas VanderVeen

T/5 Louis DiOrio

T/5 Peter Kowalchik

Pfc. Earl V. Ward

Pfc. Earl Higley

Pfc. Frank Mozina

Pfc. Willie B. Greene

Pfc. Joseph G. Yakaitis, Jr.

Pvt. John J. Lawler











Reconnaissance Company



Capt. David Doerr
Company Commander
Wounded and Evacuated



1st Lt. Charles H. Geissel
Company Commander



2nd Lt. Martin Penberthy
Executive Officer



1st Sgt. Arthur P. Puffer
First Sergeant

The word "Reconnaissance" defined in most dictionaries is usually a short brief statement about it being a "Military Survey". Maps and charts can give the position of objects and terrain as it was when drawn. Information is needed as to the immediate situation when in war, and it is the Reconnaissance elements that supply the details. On good Reconnaissance has depended the lives of personnel and the success of battles.

The Reconnaissance Company was born of men from Headquarters Battery, of the 109th Field Artillery, 28th Division. It originally bore the name of "Pioneer Company", and came into existence in Camp Livingston, Louisiana, in the month of January, 1942. In March of the same year, the first recruits joined its ranks.



S/Sgt. John Jacobs
Supply Sgt.



S/Sgt. Edward Cooper
Communications Sgt.

It was with amazement that the handful of summer-clothed G. I.'s looked upon the new men as they unloaded from the train. Each man carried an overcoat and wore OD's, long discarded by the camp personnel. They in turn were cursing the heat and the weight of two barracks bags.

Lt. Bocock, welcomed the men as the Company Commander, and under his guidance began the training with wooden guns and simulated Tanks. The greatest discomfort to many man's sorrow, was the scratching of a "Chigger" or "Red Bug" bite. Stiff muscles from hardening exercises caused some unrestful nights, but on the whole did a lot to increase the stamina of the individual. It was embarrassing, however, to double time down the road in shorts, past the grinning civilians. They undoubtedly were curious of the display of manliness.

A morale trip to the city of Monroe, Louisiana, was scheduled for the end of May, and the Battalion took over the town with the full support of the warm-hearted citizens. The „Pioneer Company“, made the most of the situation and an unforgettable time was had by all.

On Organization Day, July 10th, the Company displayed its athletic might by winning the prize cup. The winning points were scored by Joe Vitelli, in the pie eating contest, today a baseball star for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Ex-Marine Vic



T/5 MacNeil, S/Sgt. Cooper, Cpl. Rast, T/4 Lipa, 1st Sgt. Puffer, T/5 Ashby, Pfc. Hooven,
Lt. Geissel, T/5 Weselinski, T/5 Ayotte



Pfc. Reading, T/5 Bell, T/5 Ford, T/5 Rubino
S/Sgt. Klosewicz, T/4 Wilson

faylor, the multi-decorated Mess Sergeant, prepared a sumptuous Victory dinner and all indulged in drinking "Chug-a-Lug" out of the prize.

Prior to moving to Camp Hood, Texas, in late August, Lt. Starzynski assumed command of the renamed "Reconnaissance Company". Here more men were received to bring the outfit up to full strength. The most remembered event at Camp Hood, besides actual Tank Destroyer training, was five days of combat experience. It was most enjoyable to listen to a lecture without changing clothes after swimming a stream, wiggling through barb wire, smoke, and exploding dynamite the final effort being a run up the steep "Puke Hill." It did put most in the right frame of mind to learn how to effectively dispose of an enemy.



S/Sgt. Al Klosewicz
Mess Sgt.

Crawling through the infiltration course and listening to machine gun bullets crack a few inches above your head or ear was very thrilling. But returning to an evening of the restful Pup Tents was an oft. blessed event. In the final days at Camp Hood, Capt. Roeloffs, took over the Company, and further lessons were learned from him.

The next move found the Reconnaissance Company with another new C.O., and the scenery of Camp Bowie. Captain Scott was now in command, and the long expected Army Ground Forces test was taken and passed. Furloughs over Christmas and the New Year of 1943 were granted.

In keeping with the usual moving that was always expected, and not to disappoint any one, the next stop was Camp Carrabelle, in January. As it was in Camp Hood, the camp was officially opened and the name changed to Camp Gordon Johnston. From the Floridians, it was claimed that this was not actually a part of their wonderful State. They described it as being like



Pfc. Lamoreaux, Pfc. Eason, 2nd Lt. Majors, T/5 Luke, T/5 Wiseman, Pfc. Brown, Pfc. Quiroga, T/5 Boone, Pfc. Micun, T/4 White, Pfc. Guinn, Sgt. Desiderio, Pvt. Litzau, Pvt. Swindell, Sgt. Shovlin, Pfc. Sheffer, Pfc. K. Bishop, Pfc. Clayton, Pfc. Busby



2nd Lt. Majors
1st Platoon Leader



S/Sgt. Wm. C. Davis
1st Platoon Sgt.

the little telephone booth structures seen behind so many residences. No one who didn't have to, lived there.

Amphibious training was our purpose, and towards the closing phases, the majority were inclined to believe we were porpoise. There were forced marches through the sand that always found itself into everything. The nights, and such were romantic indeed, but soon shattered when lying between sand sprinkled sheets. The thirsty members of the Company found their heaven at the Beach Comber. No one disagreed with the statement made the first day, "Here we will separate the men from the boys". All were men.

From Florida, to dry out and prepare for maneuvers the "Gypsies" landed in Camp Rucker Alabama. This was only a brief stay and along with a new Commanding Officer took off for Tennessee maneuvers. Capt. Burgess had charge, and a popular new "Top-Kick", "Ibber" Lowe. The outstanding casualty, was when the First Sergeant lost his pistol, wrist watch and reported mind. Having had experience with eating sand it was no trouble to get accustomed to the rich super fine dust. This conversion was helpful later while touring France.

Maneuvers wound up, and in Camp Rucker again to rest and recover from the strenuous ordeal. While resting, a new person made his debut, "Major Midnight". It was his policy to in-

sist on an eighteen hour day including Sundays, for maintenance and inspection. Everyone mourned his departure after his brief stay.

A change of scene was in order again, so Camp Pickett it was. Here the first enemy engagement was fought and won. The battle was touch and go for a while, but with the employment of large sprays, the bed bugs were annihilated. Preparations were started for advance Amphibious Training to take place under the Navy at Camp Bradford.

In Bradford, it was difficult to get used to seeing so much blue around. We had lessons in who to salute, but here the Navy didn't seem to observe the custom. The K. P. was a pleasure, with only one job to do and plenty of goodies in the pastry shop. The meals were as delicious as any that could have been prepared by a gastronomical expert. Each meal was like an army Sunday dinner.

The climax of eating pleasure was the complete chicken dinner with lemon meringue pie served on the beach. This brought forth many queries as to transfers to the wet branch of service.

Too soon it was over and back to Camp Pickett, where this time weekend passes were granted. They were most welcomed and thoroughly appreciated by the men.

Here we go again, on the move as usual and a real change this time. For some reason it was



1st Lt. Floyd Springer
2nd Platoon Leader



S/Sgt. Wilbur Lowe
2nd Platoon Sgt.



Pvt. Graves, Pfc. Shafer, Pfc. Dignan, Pfc. Campbell, Pfc. Rawsky, Pfc. Greh, Pvt. Hahn, Pfc. Miller, Pfc. Flake, Pfc. O'Conner, Pfc. Murphy, 1st Lt. Springer, T/5 Sacus, Sgt. Levandoski, Sgt. Satchell, Pvt. Garrison, Pfc. Goodyke, S/Sgt. Lowe



Pfc. Adams, Pvt. Abel, Pfc. Volpitta, T/5 Garmback, Pfc. Jackson, T/4 Watkins, T/5 Knight, Sgt. Carter, Pvt. Kent, Pfc. Thomas, S/Sgt. Asti, Pvt. Garbish, 2nd Lt. Crawford, Pfc. Martin, T/5 Wright, Pfc. Wierda, Pfc. Borowski, Sgt. Boyer



2nd Lt. Kenneth Crawford
3rd Platoon Leader



S/Sgt. John Asti
3rd Platoon Sgt.

the mountains of West Virginia, in the vicinity of the town of Davis. Not being able to move the vehicles through the goo and mud to our area, most of the equipment was humped the quarter mile. The deluxe quarters were of the winterized "Pup Tent" style ideal for October weather. A few boards for a floor and sides with a shelterhalf nailed on for a roof. It was nice to look over the valley and wish to be some other place. In two days time the clouds gave forth with an eight inch snowfall, this helped to plug the holes in the "homes", but in no other way added to comfort. About this time, the rear echelon wives, and civilian cars began to arrive. The folks in the near by towns did find places for sleeping, at least for the majority of the pioneer mountain dwellers. Then arose the question as to where reveille should be held, in town or at area.

In reflecting one shouldn't forget the "Hernandez Corduroy Road", built over the quagmire called a firing range. Most of the time was spent in digging out stuck vehicles, and needing a proverbial mine detector looking for those which sank. Returning in the evening to a good plate of delicious "C" Ration stew renewed the spent energy.

It wasn't the cook's fault if it froze in the mess kit before you could eat it. It wasn't rough either, when Wolfe could get his favorite home-town beer, and a twenty-five cent whisky ration card could be had. It was perhaps the most enjoyable

place the gang ever stayed. The folks in town really made up for all the inconveniences of the "Hill".

Recalling an incident of that location, the then Pvt. Ashby was detailed to sterilize the latrine. It was occupied at the time by an officer. Requesting that the person tarry not, but apply a bit more pressure, he said jokingly, "Better hurry up, sir, cause I'm gonna burn this place down." Ashby then went about the business of dumping a few gallons of gas into the hole. A little while later an embarrassed Pvt. reported to the same officer, "You all know that latrine screen we had sir?" "What do you mean had?" "Well sir", the man began "the wind blew, it caught on fire and burned up". No statement of charge was filed.

The next stepping stone on the way to combat, was Fort Dix in the wilds of New Jersey, in December. The Fort itself was a nice place, the usual barracks of white painted exterior. But that was not for us. Our place was some five miles past the civilized portion, in some abandoned CCC buildings. It was here we received the Company Commander who was to lead us through many months of combat. Lt. Doerr, was the man, and he just returned from Cavalry Reconnaissance School. Having been reared in a saddle, it perhaps was with some dejection he returned to a mechanized unit.

A new First Sergeant was chosen and he was Penberthy. Our Motor Sergeant met with a slight accident and he was replaced by the present Cumer. During our stay a new Mess Sergeant arrived to take the place of "Fritz" Schwertfeger. He was Ex "Ranger", Al Klosewicz, and soon organized his mess deluxe. Here also the mystery arose over the disappearance of some beef from the Kitchen. On the same line was the snacks of melted cheese sandwiches and beer in most platoons in the evening.

Furloughs were granted for the last time, and during the men's absence over the Christmas Holidays, the east coast was alerted. Those who were around, will remember the setting up of machine guns and such. And on the stroke of twelve, New Years Eve, 1944 the expected confinement went into effect.



At A Firing Position Near Pufferdorf, Germany, February, 1945



2nd Platoon Near Paris, France, August 1944

This time with some traces of "Gang Plank Fever", the destination shrouded in secrecy, we boarded a train and wound up in Camp Shanks, New York. For twelve memorable days the last preparations were made. Shots, a brush up on the use of cargo nets, marching with all that was ever issued and brief passes to the city of New York.

After leaving the rail coaches and crossing the Hudson River to pier fifty-nine we had the first glimpse of our new home for a time. It was H. M. S. "Acquitania", our "Banana Boat". While waiting in the drizzling rain and chill of that January night the pretty Red Cross Girls did a fine job with coffee and doughnuts. On the inside of the former "Luxury" liner, we wondered where the "Luxury" ever was. This was not all for as we showed our meal tickets for our first meal, we were asked to "que-up", and after receiving the odorous kidney stew for breakfast and knowing that only two meals were served, were sure that we'd be dead from starvation before the voyage ended. The life saver was, no doubt, the ships canteen, bless it! For seven days, craps, poker and pinochle games raged through-out the ship. Everybody proved fairly good sailors and later debarked in Greenock, Scotland.

The waiting for the trains was the only time actually spent on Scottish soil. Quite some differences were noticed, as the trains were more like toys compared to our behemoths. The Red Cross was on the job again with coffee (?) chocolate, doughnuts, and smokes dispensed by real American gals. Scotch Whisky, was the same in cost as back home, according to prices quoted.

In Packington Park, the tempo of our movements slowed. Many a good time was had in the blackout. It really required the services of a native to guide one around the darkened cities. A raincoat became a necessity to combat the dampness, and Radio Sgt., Cooper, acquired the name of "Radar". Beer and customs became the topics of the hour, arguments at times lasting far into the night.

Having drawn new equipment, still untested, it was necessary to prove it. In Wales, in the hills, a short distance from Aberdare, Camp was established for this purpose. Nightly passes to town and the warm welcome given by the civilians will never be forgotten. The town was completely in American hands, and the beer seemed of a better quality. A new Welsh song was becoming popular called "Roll Me Over"; and was sung with gusto by the visiting Yanks.

On our return to Packington Park, we enjoyed the comfort of our barracks until Easter Sunday. The pup tents, still wet with Welsh dew, were again unfurled beside our former quarters. Two days later we were in the Marshalling Area of Dorchester. Our work here was in the form of service and supply, many troops scheduled to make "D Day", landings were briefed and outfitted in the camp. Each man had his own job, and in operation was even a barber shop run by John Asti, with an excellent trade. Most exciting were the air raids, and many can relate strange happenings during one. It always seemed a debatable subject, to take advantage of the shelters or stay in bed. Road patrols for security reasons, offered an opportunity to see the scenic wonders of the Island for the men so assigned.

Up to this point we were waiting for our turn to be alerted for movement. It came soon enough, we were set up in D 2 shortly after "D Day". This was in the vicinity of Bournemouth. The Battalion's third Anniversary dinner was celebrated here with a slight word of caution from the Mayor. All he requested was that we didn't tear the town up too much and please forget souvenirs. It was a big success, and Bournemouth suffered no damage.

Camp D 3 was to see us for a short time and from here we were soon loading aboard ship. Some went via LST, others by LCT's. The Navy chow was, as usual, superb. Most thankfully on our part, several cases were left within easy borrowing reach. These included such delicacies as canned chicken, spam and salmon. The ships soon pushed their noses onto Utah



3rd Platoon In The Field At Camp Eisenborn, Belgium



Reconnaissance Section In France, August 1944

Beach. Normandy, France. By July 30th we unloaded and went into our first bivouac.

Here we became attached to the 5th Armored Division and joined the "Blood and Guts" drive through France. The company was split, a Reconnaissance Platoon each joining a firing company. The 1st Platoon was attached to "B" Company, until VE Day. The 2nd to "C" Company, until August 25th when they changed with the 3rd Platoon to "A" Company.

One of the first missions in August, was to provide flank reconnaissance for the main column of task force "W". The first platoon destroyed an enemy troop carrier which supposedly had been booby trapped. Sgt. Al Moletz, Tom Carpellotti and Tom Moses were responsible for its destruction.

With orders to return to their Company, they started back to join the main column. Like most of the "Liberators", Bob Eason and Ken Bishop were preparing to enjoy a few sips from gift bottles. Setting them on the hood of the jeep, they were without warning, suddenly forced to take cover. Bullets began to whistle all around, just passing over the ditch in which they had dove. Something was definitely wrong, as the tracers were with red tails, which were friendly. The main column had spotted their movement and had opened up, thinking they were Germans. Eventually, the identification was made and the fire ceased, but not before two bottles of "Vin Rouge", were in the same state as the fallen "Humpty Dumpty."

Another incident which happened, was when the second section of the third platoon was to secure and hold the bridges over the Eure River near Dreux. A platoon of destroyers was also on the same mission and when almost to their destination, they received some heavy enemy fire. The section consisted of an M-8 and two jeeps, the crews being St. John, Thomas, Adams, Murphy and Paul. No casualties were suffered and one man distinguished himself for bravery. When asked how he won the Bronze Star he begins, "As fer as ah kin ricollect the incident goes sum thin along these har lines."

It's sixfoot "Hound Dog", A Southern Gentleman, who's on Army records as Vernon R. Adams.

"We wuz arolling down the road, mah jeep in the lead, St. John's Jeep in the rear of mine. and Sgt. Puffer with his M-8 and crew. Well, all of a sudden like we came to an open field with a woods on the futher side and we started ta cross it. Jes as we started ta cross it, things started apopping. Ah means they popped! Some Jerra in the middle of the field musta got plumb scairt cause he ups and started to run.

"Goddamm Meeee! He didn't git very fur. Ole Sgt. Puffer opens up with his tirty caliber and lets him have it. Picks 'im clean off'n the ground and hurls him high in the air and when he came down he jes laid thar.

"But that wuz only the beginning." Says Hound Dog. "All of a sudden from out'n the woods the damn Jerras opened up with machine guns. Give us everything they had. Everyboda ran, even the tanks scrambled, and thar ah was aleaning up agin a tree mah carbean apumping lead.

"Then ah noticed a jeep someboda left out thar in the middle of the field, so duckin low ah races fo the jeep andgits inside level with the flo-bods. Ah werks the gas pedal with mah hands and looks oute'n the side t' see where ah was goin. Well, ah got to where ah was agoin with bullets jest apopping alla round me, but ah got me and that thar jeep safe.

"Goddamn meeeee! Ah'l niver fergit it!"

Everytime a dash was made on burning wheels to liberate a small French village, it became reminescent of a miniature "Times Square". The happy inhabitants thronged the sidewalks and choked the streets. They filled the lanes



S/Sgt. Alfred Cumer
Motor Sgt.



T/4 Fales, S/Sgt. Jacobs, Pfc. Faulhaber, S/Sgt. Cumer, T/5 Duke
T/4 Landskroener, T/5 Pacharme, T/5 Wolfe



Lt. Vinson, S/Sgt. Freeman, Sgt. Bidwell, Sgt. Fiad, Cpl. Gullickson, Cpl. Snyder, T/5 Mastori, Pfc. Andros, Pfc. Dolgas, Pfc. Johnson, Pfc. Dunn, Pfc. Kalinski, Pfc. Schultz, Pfc. Toniolo, Pvt. Aichele, Pvt. Branham, Pvt. Farino, Pvt. Hamed, Pvt. Hedger, Pvt. Nunley, Pvt. Rossi, Pvt. Weistein



2nd Lt. Craig L. Vinson
Pioneer Platoon Leader

and hung from the open windows. Passage was made impossible by the colorful throng, and the speed of vehicles slowed to a halt. Once stopped it was "Duck Soup" for the gay French. They clambered over into the Jeeps, Trucks and Armored Cars, the Tanks even received their share. With tears of joy they heaped them with flowers, bottles of wine, cider and cognac. The women especially were very emotional, throwing their arms around the none too resistant Yanks and implanting there on, a token kiss.

No matter where we went the proverbial French Anthem seemed to be "Chocolate?" and "Cigarettes Pour Popa?" This was echoed throughout the entire nation wherever the Americans

were, and many such rations were distributed. After a while when things began to quiet, the phrase changed to another color, this being from the men, "Madamoiselle cushay"

Soon Paris was entered and a big time was expected by everyone. The warm August sun however, was replaced by a drizzling rain, which made the ride less enjoyable. The Parisians were out in full strength, lining the boulevards three and four deep. Cigarettes, chocolate and "K" rations were erupting from every vehicle. In return apples, tomatoes, flowers and liquids took their place. The French were none the less happy to receive the small gifts and which were without doubt appreciated after four years under Nazi rule, without. Never did people seem so joyous, and never will their faces be forgotten.

Road markings were fairly dangerous in the days of France. The American forces at this time were operating behind the German lines, so anything could happen, and usually did. One marker would stand by a crossroad, and after



Kitchen Crew In The Field, April 1944

directing the major portion of the column through, it would be necessary to wait for the stragglers. These last few vehicles had always been held up by one thing or another and were usually racing to catch up with the main body. This happened at a lonely spot near Valenciennes in the cool dusk of evening, when it was impossible to trust one's eyes.

Two men from the Pioneer Platoon were left to mark a road junction. They stood and waited for the remnants of the column to appear, keeping at the same time, a look out for snipers. In the distance they heard the rumble of tanks, as the noise grew in volume, the men stepped out and pointed the right direction. Too late, they discovered the tanks were enemy. With no chance to escape, they were fired upon, and miraculously managed to dodge out of the way of most of the bullets. After the tanks had passed the wounded men were discovered and quickly evacuated to a hospital.

In short order our tanks soon took up positions and engaged the column, destroying a large percentage.

Colorful September found us deep in the heart of the beautiful Luxembourg hills over-looking Ammeldingen, Germany. A Platoon of Reconnaissance was cautiously going up the side of a steep hill. On the way to their objective, an observation post, they could not help but notice the tall towering pines on either side of the winding path called a road. They couldn't help but gaze in abstract wonder at the shadow pattern cast upon the ground by the filtering sun. To add to this lovely picture and to enhance its splendor, a deer came bounding from the wood and watched the passing vehicles.

Completing the laborious climb to the objective, they related what they saw, "We gazed from a vantage point in breathtaking wonder at what stretched



S/Sgt. Charles C. Freeman
Pioneer Platoon Sgt.

below us. A beautiful rolling valley carpeted with green grass. But was it so beautiful? A closer look the very first time with a trained eye, would have not brought a gasp at the beauty, for there stretched across that mantle of green and in every strategic position lay a part of the long sought "Siegfried Line". Pillboxes galore. Each protected by the "Fangs of the Dragon". This was the kind of stuff we had to crack in order to get to the heart of the "Reich".

"Rough going" we knew it would be. There lay Germany before us and we were between the border line of Luxembourg and Germany. We stayed there observing for about three days gathering important data and information. About the second day a patrol of seven Krauts came to within one hundred yards of the post and the ugly snouts of our waiting machine guns. For reasons of keeping the position secret no attempt was made to either shoot or capture the "Cabbage Heads," but had they seen the position, who knows but what they might have been knocking on St. Peters or more than likely on the other fellers' door.

On the third day the Tank Destroyers lumbered into view, they pulled into position and pointed their guns at the formidable pillboxes. Wump! Wump! Wump!, they banged away. All to no avail. Even the terrific power of our T.D's. had no effect on the thick walled pillboxes. The armor piercing shells, sad to relate, bounced off the ten foot thick walls like rubber balls. They did no more than chip large hunks of concrete from the outside.

From then on it was a job for the Infantry and Engineers to demolish the concrete forts. The air force can be credited with the destruction of many with their pulverizing bombs. Heavy artillery did its bit and before long the line was breached.

We had done our job as a Reconnaissance Platoon and this was when we took wing. Mission accomplished.

Having blazed the way through the obstacles commonly thought as the "Siegfried Line", it was found that the "Siegfried Line" was behind the actual fortifications.

We bit roughly about ten miles into Germany. The facts were kept on the hush hush side, and it was all for the better, it being good psychology on the part of the brass.

Yes, it was good psychology not to inform the little man about the little things which were incidental to the bigger thing. The little thing being, namely, we acting as bait, and the bigger thing being the fish who not only swallowed the bait, but almost succeeded in digesting it.

The first ten miles into "Kraut Land" seemed almost a pushover, except to stop and scatter a few pillboxes to the elements and level Wallendorf to the ground.

But as we were sailing along like a ship into the blue, peaceful like, things began to whistle. It took a few seconds to realize that it wasn't the birds, so unabashed, the courageous comedians hit the ground.

Pal, they were eighty-eights, and they were being shot at us like rifles, direct. They rooted us out of each spot we thought was safe. Could they

observe? Yes, they could see every little move we made. At that time although we didn't know it, one of our cubs was flying around in our rear. It was and it wasn't ours. Right then it wasn't, it was in enemy hands and he was the cause of the chaos. He was soon reported and shot out of the skies by a P-47.

The artillery barrage continued so we scattered to the valleys and to spots of refuge where we could consolidate our front and hurl back some of that "Rough Stuff". After consolidating, we began to fire back some of the mail, and although we were fairly strong, they were a stronger force, far outnumbering what we had, then we found out that the enemy had powerful mobile reserves, which had been our mission.

The enemy thinking this a major thrust concentrated a good bit of his reserves against this special sector. For the first time since the coast of France, we really felt the sting of concentrated artillery. The Germans were in Germany, they no longer ran, and so the fighting became a vicious artillery duel.

The krauts brought up their reserves day by day, until nearing the seventh and eighth day they had amassed an estimated twelve battalions of artillery of all kinds.

They gave us hell! Laying there in a slit trench and listening to those damned devil guns go off, one hundred and forty-four of them. "What a peculiar sound." The Germans had placed their guns in a horse shoe formation on the high ground overlooking our position, then they saturated the valley and the hilltops in brackets, trying to annihilate everything. On the last day before our strategic withdrawal from sure destruction, we took five long steady hours of a continuous barrage.

The escape route was made possible by the brilliant action of several Reconnaissance men who reconnoitered the route. Sgt. Barth and his crew were highly praised for this piece of work, when orders to withdraw were received. Sgt. Freeman and crew were also commended on their bit of reconnaissance.

After the miraculous escape from the hair-raising escapades of treacherous Wallendorf and its "Devil Guns" we found ourselves retreating in an orderly fashion through an alternate route which led across a ford and up a hill made slippery by a misty rain. Trucks and tanks alike were straining their motors to the very limit. Vehicles were stuck right and left, wheels were whirring and spinning, mud was flying and brows were sweating, muscles were strained to the very limit of human endurance, to keep the column moving.

Some of the vehicles had already reached the top of the torturous grind and were wending their way through woodlands while the remainder was still sweating it out in the valley below. Watching from the direction we had just come, we noticed many miles away a series of flashes on the horizon, being veterans of "Wallendorf" and knowing what those flashes were, even though they were miles away we hit the ground. For a few brief heartrending seconds it seemed like the hammers of hell broke loose.

That familiar scream of the "Nebelwerfer", combined with the whistle of the artillery and then the exploding shells, just for a few seconds and then silence. No one was hurt in this last barrage. The miserable "Huns" thought they would throw in a last triumphant effort to try and keep us out of their sacred land.

Well, chums, this wasn't the last effort because we came back and the next time we came, we came to stay.

Perhaps one of the heaviest concentrations, artillery and mortar fire of the war, came on a day in December, 1944. This day found "Ye Ole Pioneers" braving this heavy concentration to assist in retrieving two M-36's out of a heavily mined field. The job was only started but not completed and they returned to the company. The job being only half-finished, they returned on the following day, and neutralizing the mine field, recovered the vehicles.

Later in December the dropping of paratroopers in the vicinity of Hahn, caused quite a furor, to such an extent that road patrols were set up and operated twenty four hours a day. Such constant and strenuous patrolling found the men in the morning hackeyed and worn to a frazzle. The Paratroopers were dropped behind our lines to create a disturbance and disrupt the supply lines to help Von Rundstedt's push. A few were caught in our sector, the others probably landed in full civilian regalia, no wonder we couldn't find them. At any rate our Pioneer Platoon, cooks and what have you, patrolled far into the small hours of each night. The road vigil ceased on the 24th of December and we were whisked away to still another job.

We were in a short time on the way back to Belgium. There had been reports about a German break-through, and several times we had been strafed, but paid little attention to it. Our road patrol was in operation and everything was fairly under control in that sector. However we were on the way to Belgium with no definite plan or information and had sensed something had happened. The night air was bitter cold, and seemed to be getting colder. Gone was our vision of Christmas turkey and trimmings. Near Rahrment, contact was made with the German advance and Christmas found many with nothing to eat at all, not even a "C" or "K" ration. The weather still was overcast hampering our main support, the Air Force. The situation was so fluid that the front lines changed by the minute. Germans were using American Tanks and Americans using German. The fight was severe and casualties were heavy on both sides. It was later evident that the Bulge was beginning to shrink under the efforts of the Allies and during this period the Platoons had been acting as security and liaison for the firing companies. They had several small skirmishes and narrow escapes. This fighting was perhaps the bitterest and most savage ever encountered. After it was apparent that the situation was under control, the companies and platoons were billeted around Boumal with the relieved civilians. Many made lasting friends of these people and usually a good time was had in the evenings. Seven days after Christmas on a clear brisk day, Christmas dinner was served with all the trimmings and it was a happy occasion.

After doing our bit in the "Bulge", the outfit made a motor trip to Voorden-dall, Holland. Here we awaited the crossing of the Roer River. One of the

firing Companies and a Recon Platoon attached. joined in an indirect fire mission. The night of the crossing saw hundreds of bombers in flight and the resultant flashes of the bombs exploding on their target some miles away. After they had laid their eggs, the cannon commenced to fire and the sky was vibrant with the flashes. While in Holland Henry Katula, the Company clerk urged all to take out Soldiers Savings for passes that were promised. At the same place a dance was made up and was attended by Holland girls and chaperons. It was regrettable that not all could enjoy this bit of relaxation, but had to sweat it out up on the front.

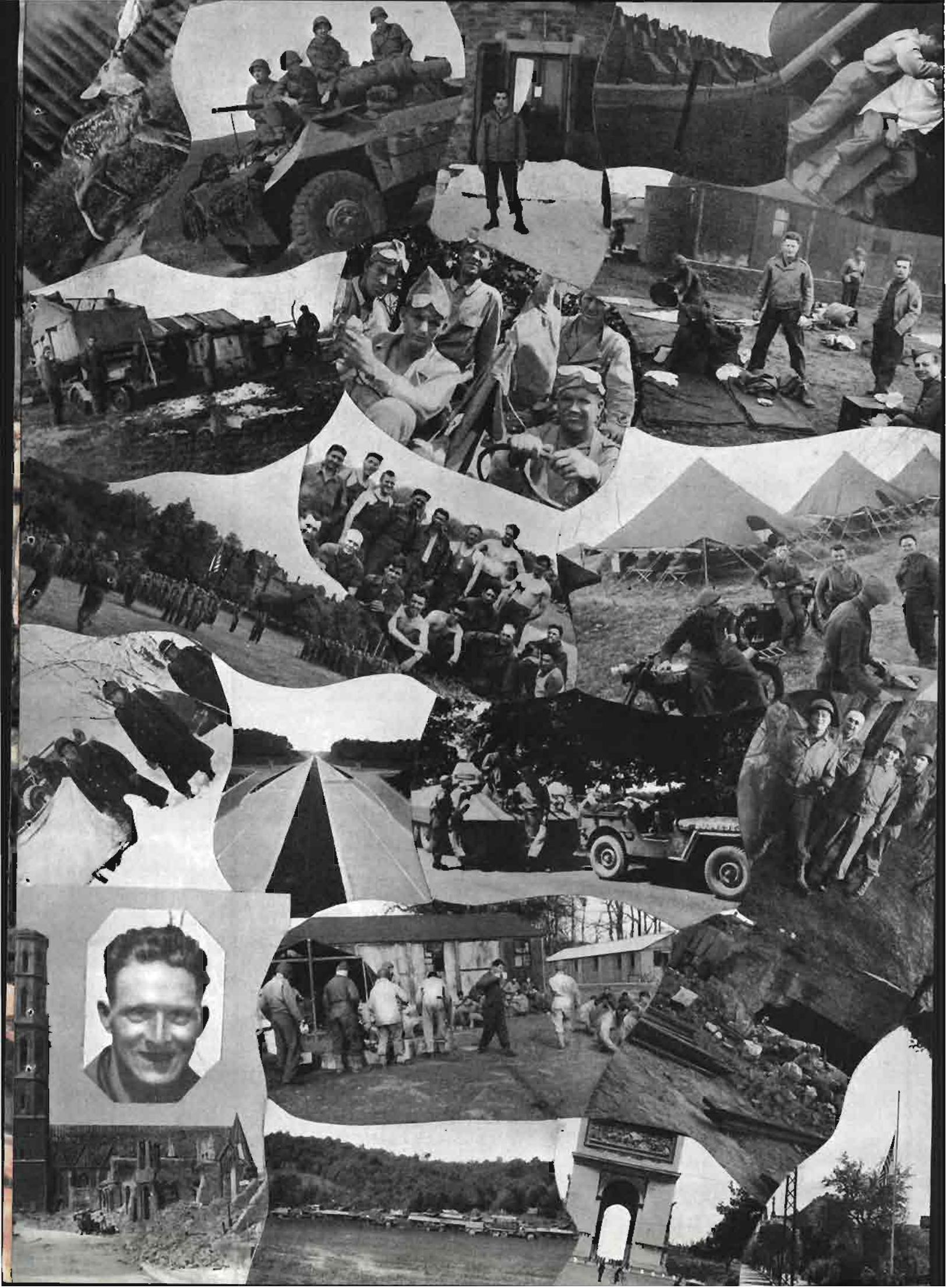
From Holland a move across the Roer at night was made, and the push to the Rhine was on. The Roer was shrouded in smoke from the generators operated for the purpose of hiding the bridges from enemy eyes. Many towns on the way were seen leveled to the ground, and in some we made temporary quarters. The outfit was assembled for the first time near Krefeld, but in a few hours one of the platoons was recalled to its firing company. At Krefeld, we were very near the Rhine, being only about four miles away, and the firing companies were supporting an indirect fire mission on the city of Duisburg. They also covered several patrol crossings of the river, even though bridgeheads were established many miles further to the north and south. The platoons were comparatively inactive during this period.

It soon came the time for us to cross the Rhine, and this was done at Wessel, and the mad pursuit of the German Army began. Events happened too fast to be recorded, but many strong points were by-passed and later had to be cleaned out as a threat to the supply lines. The Reconnaissance platoons were used for this purpose, and one mission, a platoon was to guard a highly important radio station. Its importance was so great that the Germans made several attempts to recapture it. However with some support, the platoon held on to its prize and beat the attackers off. At the same time the enemy made an attempt to cut the supply route, and was partially successful, but these were reopened in a few hours and things returned to normal.

The Elbe was reached and the division took up holding positions. The platoons were regrouped and accomplished the mission of gathering small bands of enemy personnel left in the rear areas.

After withdrawing to the rear, it was the Battalion's job to set up Military Governments in various towns. This consisted of checking on civilian passes and the processing of all the towns inhabitants. This was being done at the announcement of VE Day and contrary to all expectations no great celebration was held, but it was greeted with great calm and peacefulness.

Credit should be given to all the various sections in the company, the Cooks who did a fine job with the chow, and the Motor maintenance gang who kept the wheels rolling through many miles of territory of all kinds, and to the excellent spirit of cooperation on each individual's part in the company, who undoubtedly helped in winning victory.





Medical Detachment History



S/Sgt. Herman A. Fittery
Detachment 1st Sgt.



Capt. Francis T. England
Battalion Surgeon



T/3 Otis Estadish
Surgeon Technician

UNITED STATES

When the Medical Detachment was formed at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania in July, 1941, it consisted of nineteen men and two officers, Capt. Donaldson, the Medical Detachment Commander, and Lt. Hodgson. Estadish, Fittery, Kauffman and Youngs were among the "old timers" in the Medical Detachment. On August 4th of that year the Detachment left for six weeks of maneuvers at AP Hill, Virginia, then returned to the Gap for a brief stay and then went on to the Carolina maneuvers. It was during the Carolina maneuvers that Lt. Perelman joined the organization. The return to the Gap followed after which came Camp Livingston, Louisiana. While at Livingston, Lt. Perelman left the organization. During January, 1942, Captain Hodgson became the Medical Detachment Commander. Lt. England joined the Detachment in August, 1942, while the unit was still at Camp Livingston, La. In September, 1942, came the movement to Camp Hood, Texas, and it was here that the strength of the Detachment was brought up to 33 men and two officers. Camp Bowie, Texas, Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla., and Camp Rucker, Ala. followed in that order. While at Rucker in May, 1943, Capt. Hodgson left the Detachment to join an Engineer's Group and Capt. England became the Battalion Surgeon. The ten week Tennessee maneuvers followed in July, 1943, and it was during these maneuvers that Lt. Arendt joined the organization. The mountains of West Virginia, the

staging area at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and final processing at Camp Shanks, New York, preceded the unit's leaving for overseas. Throughout their stay in the States, the men of the Medical Detachment were trained in all branches of first aid, in all phases of treatment and care of the wounded, in map reading and in the firing of small arms.

ENGLAND

During their stay in England, the unit stayed at Packington Park some eight miles from Birmingham and from there moved on to Wales for a pleasant two week stay. While here the medics underwent additional training. The unit then returned to Packington Park for two weeks prior to moving to Dorchester in April, 1944, where the Battalion was in charge of Marshalling Area "D", servicing those troops that had been selected to take part in the invasion across the Channel. In June, 1944, Lt. Arendt transferred to 6th TD Group. While the unit was at Dorchester, Capt. England was Medical Officer and Sanitary Engineer for all the camps in Area "D", Sub Area "X". Barnes and Baker stationed with a Quartermaster Unit outside Dorchester had a First Aid Station. Burden, Edlin and McCall acted in the capacity of Sanitary Engineers at D-7 Poundbury. Elmore, Dewey, Gura and McCann were at D-4 Camehouse in a similiar capacity. The remainder of the Medical Detachment was located at D-7 Marabout. During the last days of the stay in England, the Medical Detachment attended the third anniversary Battalion banquet held in Bournemouth on July 10, 1944.

COMBAT

Prior to embarking across the Channel for France on July 28, 1944, the personnel of the Medical Detachment were detached from the Battalion and assigned to the companies as follows: Burden, Beam and McCall were assigned to Company "A"; Claycomb, Coschignano and Edlin were assigned to Company "B"; Davidson, Dewey and Gura were assigned to Company "C"; Barnes, Mc-



S/Sgt. Fittery, T/5 W. Baker, T/4 Davidson, T/3 Defibaugh, T/5 J. Baker, T/4 Claycomb, Cpl. Kauffman, Pfc. Youngs, T/5 Dewey, T/5 Barnes, Pfc. McCall, T/5 McCann

Cann and Elmore were assigned to the Reconnaissance Company; Youngs was assigned to Headquarters Company. The Battalion Aid Station was manned by Captain England, S/Sgt. Fittery, T/3 Estanish, Dittmeier, Kauffman and Baker.

On August 14, 1944, the first casualty within the Medical Detachment was Captain England who was injured when the Commanding Officer's vehicle struck a mine. The wound was slight and Captain England remained on duty.

Throughout their travels in the States and later in England the men of the Medical Detachment were on the receiving end of many gags, jokes and puns directed at them because they were "medics". "Nothing to be afraid of", the men in the firing companies often remarked with a broad grin, "the medics will be there... behind us"! Or on other occasions, "They don't do detail duty... they're medics!" But when combat came, when the chips were down and the stakes were high, the men of the Medical Detachment showed the stuff of which they were really made, and none sang the praises of the "medics" more loudly than did the men of the firing companies. Nothing speaks more eloquently of the gallant and noble work performed by the "medics" throughout France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and Germany than the fact that from among the relatively small number of men within the Medical Detachment, Burden, Beam and Claycomb were awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action; Captain England, Barnes, Edlin, Fittery and Youngs were awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service; Coshignano, Davidson and Dewey were awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroic service; Captain England, Barnes, Beams, Claycomb, Coschignano, Davidson, Dewey, Edlin, Kauffman, McCann and Youngs received Purple Hearts for wounds received in action.

On August 20, 1944, one of Company "A's" Tank Destroyers received a direct hit from enemy artillery fire, with the result that three of the crew were seriously wounded. Despite the intense enemy artillery and machine



Pfc. Mackey, Cpl. Kauffman, T/4 Claycomb, Pfc. Youngs, S/Sgt. Fittery



Medic's truck near Salzwedel



T/3 Joseph J. Defibaugh

gun fire, Beam and Burden advanced along the ground so that they might administer first aid to the wounded men. While attempting to load the men on a $\frac{1}{4}$ ton ambulance a nearby artillery burst wounded Beam and rendered Burden unconscious. Unable to be of any further assistance, Beam worked his way back on foot to the Platoon Command Post where he was able to secure additional help. When the additional help arrived, Burden recovered consciousness and helped evacuate the wounded to safety. For this action, Beam and Burden were awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action.

Throughout the remainder of the French Campaign and the liberation of Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland that followed, the "medics" came through without a casualty. However, the initial penetration of the Siegfried Line in September, 1944, was a costly one for the Detachment. On September 16, while on a road block with the Reconnaissance Platoon, McCann was wounded during a mortar barrage. A few hours later Davidson was wounded during an enemy artillery barrage.

On that same day, Claycomb was serving as company aid man when Company "B" came under fire. Although the intense artillery fire resulted in many casualties and caused the unit to withdraw, Claycomb remained in the area under constant fire, treating the wounded and supervising their evacuation. On the following day, when the company was again subjected to intense enemy artillery, mortar and small arms fire, Claycomb, without regard for his personal safety moved from wounded man to wounded man giving each first aid treatment and then moving the wounded men to a safe

position. For this action, Claycomb was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

On September 19, Coschignano was wounded during an artillery barrage and on the following day was wounded again. The wounds were slight and he was able to continue as an aid man at the Battalion Aid Station. When the withdrawal became necessary the "medics" together with the unit pulled out, but there was no doubt that the work of the "medics" had been worthy of the highest traditions of the service.

The Medical Detachment received its first replacements on October 18, 1944, when Mackey and Muto were assigned to the Medical Detachment.

Early December, 1944, saw the intense fighting that was characteristic of the Hurtgen Forest battles, and here again the "medics" showed their mettle. Company "C" of this Battalion was attached to Combat Command "R", which had the mission of taking Bergstein, Germany. Dewey, Edlin, Mackey and Youngs were the "medics" assigned to Company "C". The Company moved in on the night of December 4th and set up road blocks in the area. The medics set up their Aid Station in the basement of a nearby building. One 30 cal. machine gun manned by three infantrymen was all that stood between the "medics" and the Germans some three hundred yards away. The next morning the Germans counter-attacked. Heavy enemy artillery and small arms fire came pouring into the area. Casualties resulting from shrapnel wounds and from exploding mines were many. Within a three day period the "medics" treated an estimated 500 casualties, including men from the 28th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Ranger Battalion, the 47th Infantry and the 10th Tank Battalion as well as men from this unit. The medics were able to leave the area on the 8th after two Sherman tanks crossed the outer defenses of the German lines which enabled the "medics" to make their getaway.

On December 11, 1944, T/3 Defibaugh became the third replacement to join the Detachment and he took over the job as Detachment Clerk. Rhoades, the fourth and last replacement, joined the Detachment on January 16, 1945.

In late February, 1945, the "medics" together with the companies to which they were assigned crossed the Roer River. Approximately one month later, came the long awaited crossing of the Rhine River.

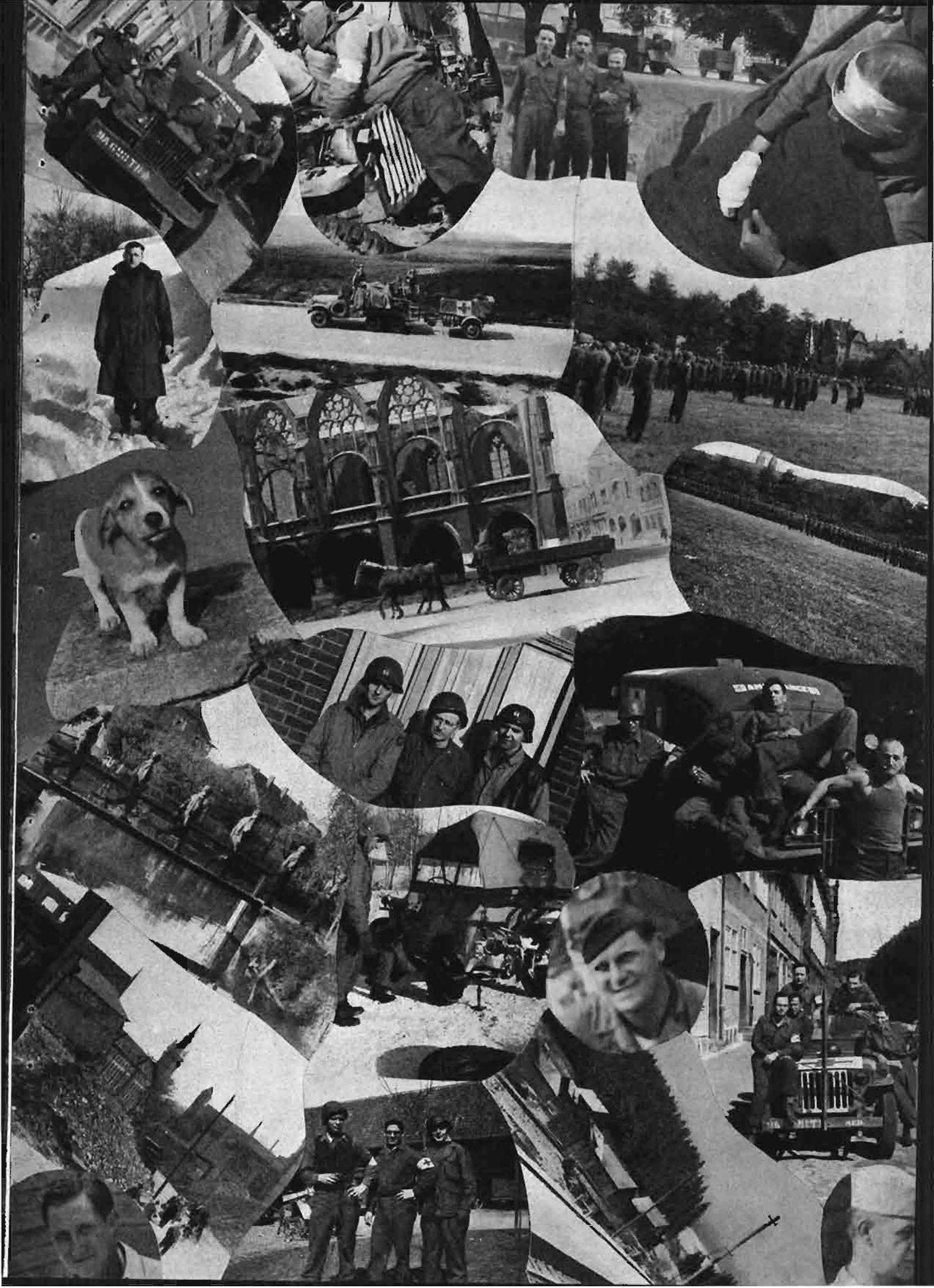
During the march from the Wesser to the Elbe, pocketed resistance was sometimes encountered. In mid-April, 1945, on one such occasion the 47th Infantry and the 10th Tank Battalion were among the units engaged in mopping up one such pocket. Word came down that one of the tanks of the 10th Tank Battalion had run into trouble with the result that the "medics" were badly needed. Barnes got behind the wheel of his jeep, and with Edlin riding on the hood they proceeded to the spot where they were needed. They saw the tank which had been hit and drove up behind it. Sniper fire could be clearly heard throughout the area and had already been responsible for some twelve casualties. There was an injured man atop the tank, and Edlin and Barnes set about the task of getting him down. Barnes got the stretcher while Edlin climbed atop the tank. No sooner had

Edlin done so when he was hit by sniper fire. It now became necessary for Barnes to get the injured man down from the tank so that he might be treated and then evacuated and at the same time treat Edlin. Barnes treated and personally evacuated both men. For this action, both Barnes and Edlin received the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service.

Shortly after V-E Day, on May 10, 1945, the "medics" were recalled from the respective companies to which they had been assigned and they reported back to the Battalion Aid Station. When the Battalion moved to Heiligenstadt, Germany, only the Reconnaissance Company was separated from the Battalion and Estadish and Baker were assigned to the company as aid men.

During the entire course of combat, the Medical Detachment treated an estimated 1000 casualties including wounded men from other units as well as our own. The Detachment used an estimated 2000 three inch bandages, an estimated 3000 yards of both three inch and one inch tape and 300 morphine syretts were used in treatment of the wounded.



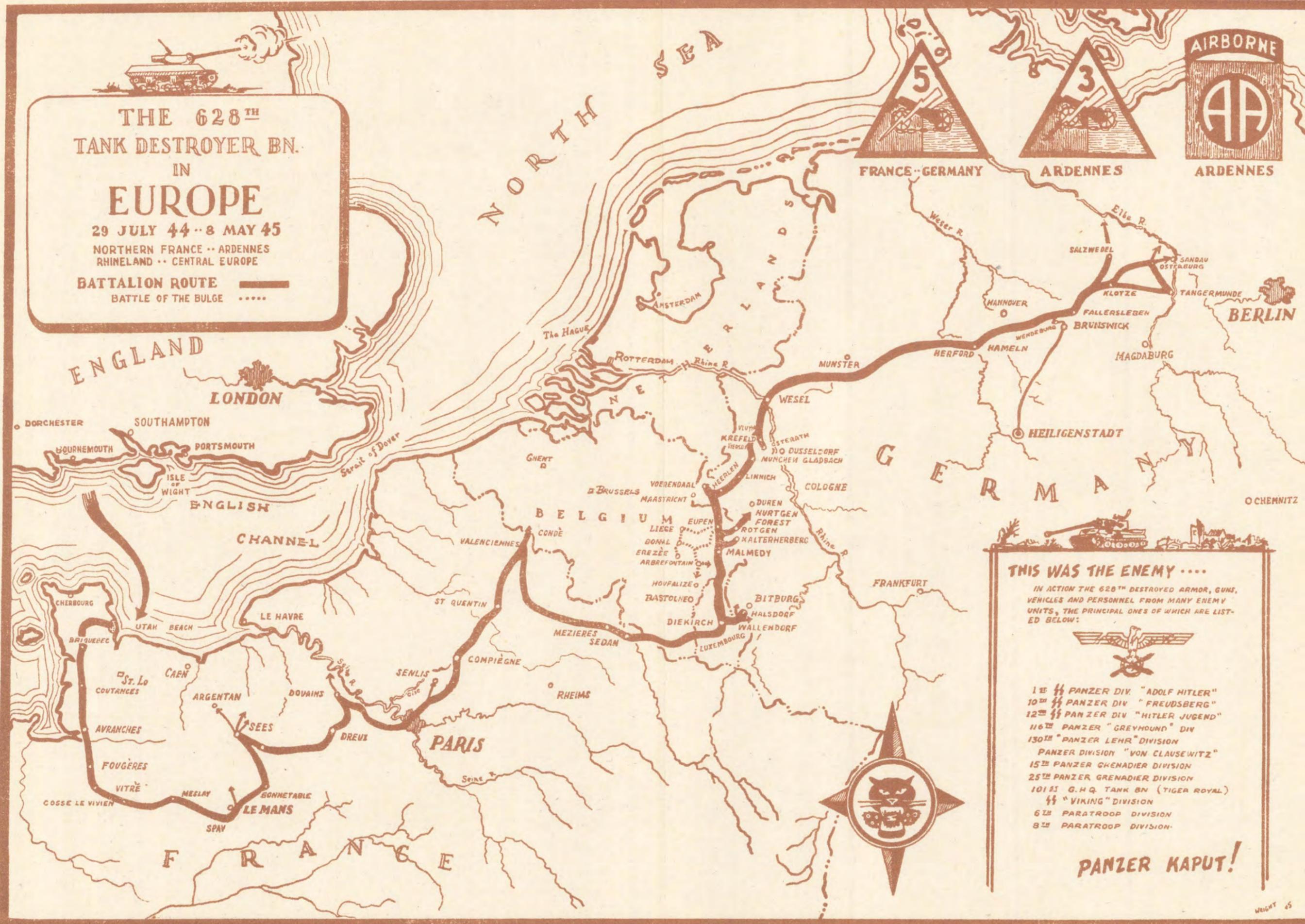


THE 628TH
TANK DESTROYER BN.
IN
EUROPE

29 JULY 44 - 8 MAY 45

NORTHERN FRANCE - ARDENNES
RHINELAND - CENTRAL EUROPE

BATTALION ROUTE ———
BATTLE OF THE BULGE
NORTH SEA



THIS WAS THE ENEMY

IN ACTION THE 628TH DESTROYED ARMOR, GUNS, VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL FROM MANY ENEMY UNITS, THE PRINCIPAL ONES OF WHICH ARE LISTED BELOW:

- 1ST SS PANZER DIV. "ADOLF HITLER"
- 10TH SS PANZER DIV. "FREUDSBERG"
- 12TH SS PANZER DIV. "HITLER JUGEND"
- 116TH PANZER "GREYHOUND" DIV
- 130TH "PANZER LEHR" DIVISION
- PANZER DIVISION "VON CLAUSEWITZ"
- 15TH PANZER GRENADIER DIVISION
- 25TH PANZER GRENADIER DIVISION
- 101ST G.H.Q. TANK BN (TIGER ROYAL)
- 4TH "VIKING" DIVISION
- 6TH PARATROOP DIVISION
- 8TH PARATROOP DIVISION

PANZER KAPUT!