

John A. Beall - 702nd TD Battalion

by ROB HALDEMAN

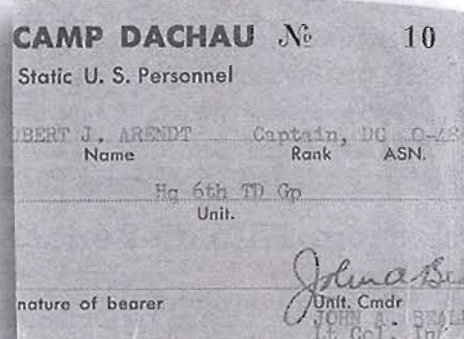


Greetings to all the members, families and friends of the 2nd Armored Division. My name is Rob Haldeman and I have been on a quest for the last 15 years to find out more about my father's time in the service during WWII. My father, Robert L. Haldeman, actually served in the HO

Company, 6th Tank Destroyer Group, which I'm sure most of you have never heard of but the history of the 2nd Armored and my father's unit have some similarities. One in particular is the fact that the 6th TD Group was attached to the 9th Army for many months in 1945 as they moved through Germany up to and beyond VE day. The 6th TD Grp. had even more in common with the 702nd Tank Destroyer battalion, which served with the 2nd Armored....they shared a commanding officer. Up until a few months ago I was only aware of two commanders for my father's unit, one that saw them through training and onto the Brittany Peninsula in France and one that saw them from France to the end of the war. I recently acquired some Morning Reports from the archives in St. Louis and discovered that his unit had a different commander at its inception and that at the very end of the war, another officer, a Lt. Colonel John A. Beall transferred into the unit in June 1945 and served as their commander while they were stationed at a place called Bad Aibling, Germany. It was during this time that the unit had responsibilities to guard the Dachau Concentration camp. During my research, the family of the dentist in my father's unit, Robert Arendt, sent me a photo of an identification card for the Dachau camp. On this card it lists John A. Beall as the commanding officer. This confirmed what I had learned from the reports. After Dachau's liberation, there were many weeks until all

of the sick and dying could be buried or moved to proper medical facilities. It was during this period that the camp was converted to house many of the captured German Troops. These captives included SS troops that may have originally been stationed there. Most people do not know that the Dachau facility was much larger than the area used for political prisoners and the atrocities that we see and hear about. There was also a large SS Garrison there. I guess it is somewhat ironic that these troops would now be held in this same camp. The prisoners would be held there and later tried there for the crimes they had committed.

All this aside, it is the information about John A. Beall that brought me to the 2nd Armored and caused me to inquire with some of its Association leadership. Unfortunately very little information could be found and it was hoped that one of the readers of this newsletter might remember Lt. Col. Beall and possibly be able to provide some information about him or put me in contact with his family. I would ultimately love to find a photo of him to include on my website.



Not only would I like to have information on Beall but also any and all information relating to the 702nd. My website was originally designed to showcase just my father's unit, but I am now expanded it to include information on all tank destroyer units. I would be honored to include any submissions relating to the 702nd that any of you would be willing to share. It is unfortunate that many of the sites, started by WWII veterans are being lost. It is my hope that my work and the work of many others that don't want to lose this information will keep the work going and preserve the memory of those that served.

I can be contacted through my website at www.tankdestroyer.net or contacted directly by phone at (717) 336-5516. You can write to me also. My address is 316 S. Reamstown Road, Ephrata, PA 17522. I would welcome any information that you could provide. Thank you for your help!

-Rob Haldeman