



New 90 mm Tank Destroyers arrive Nov. 1944

5 September 1944 arriving at the new bivouac area near Mezieres-Charleville at 1430 hours the same day. On 6 September 1944 Company "A" was attached to 10th Tank Battalion, Company "B" to 47th Infantry Battalion, Company "C" to CCR trains while Battalion Headquarters, Reconnaissance Company Headquarters and Medical Detachment were attached to CCR Headquarters. Left bivouac at 0845 hours on September 6, 1944, and moved through Mezieres-Charleville, Le Theux and arrived in a new bivouac area near Sedan, France, at 1630 hours the same day. Then proceeded to a new area near Florenville, Belgium, 8 September 1944, with the mission of liberating Luxembourg.

#### LIBERATION OF LUXEMBOURG

The Battalion's diary continues: Left Florenville, Belgium, at 0800 hours on 9 Sept. 1944 arriving at new assembly position southeast of Useldange, Luxembourg, at 2100 hours same day. Column was fired upon by enemy anti-tank guns and machine guns in the vicinity of Metxert, Belgium, but no casualties were sustained.



Airport Near Camp Elsenborn, Germany

Left Useldange, Luxembourg, at 0835 hours on 10 Sept. 1944, had temporary halt northeast of Mersch at 1000 hours when the leading elements ran into enemy resistance. Advance continued at 1800 hours to the new area at Schrondeweiler, Luxembourg, arriving there at 2045 hours on 10 Sept. 1944. Left Schrondeweiler, Luxembourg, at 1915 hours on 11 Sept. 1944 for new area northwest of Ermsdorf, Luxembourg, (Brucherhof Farm)



Kallerherberg, Germany, Nov. 1944

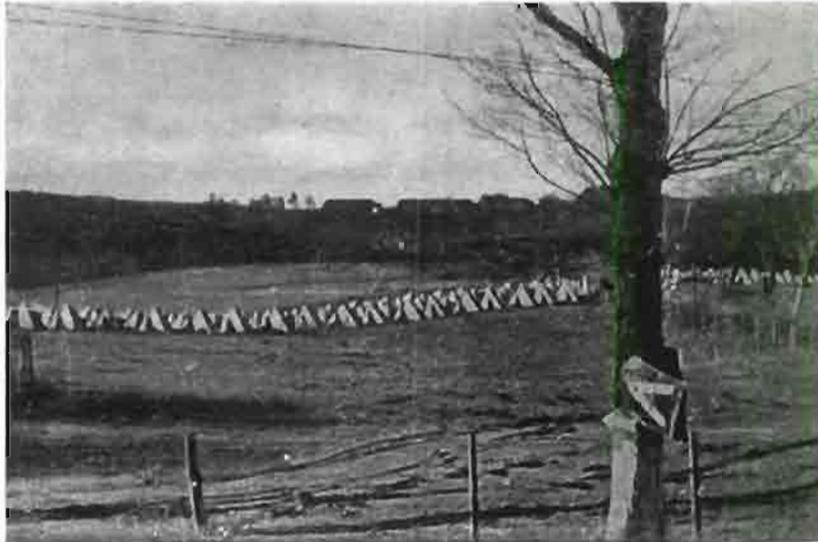
arriving at 2100 hours same day. Plans for the breaching of the Siegfried Line at Wallendorf, Germany, on the Luxembourg border were started.

#### FIRST PENETRATION OF THE SIEGFRIED LINE

On 13 Sept. 1944, CCR announced the mission of breaching the Siegfried Line installations at Wallendorf, Germany, and advancing east in an effort to capture Bitburg. CCB was to assist and cover the advance of CCR with artillery support. Company "A" was attached to CCB for this purpose, the rest of the Battalion was attached to CCR. Prior to the launching of the attack, artillery fired both direct and indirect missions on targets in Germany. On 12 Sept. 1944 3rd Platoon Reconnaissance Company, established an OP in Luxembourg overlooking the Siegfried Line installations  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile west of Ameldingen, Germany. Enemy patrols crossed the Our River and passed within 100 yards of the OP, however, the OP did not open fire as it would have revealed the position. On 13 Sept. 1944, 2nd Platoon, Company "B" in position on hill near Bigelbach, Luxembourg, used direct fire methods at 2000 yard range on German pill boxes and other enemy targets in the vicinity of Wallendorf and Biesdorf. On the same day, 2nd Platoon, Company "C", moved across the Moselle River and fired on enemy pill boxes northeast of Hoesdorf, Germany. Direct fire methods were used and six pill boxes were knocked out, after which the Platoon returned to the bivouac area.



View From Railroad Station Kallerherberg,  
Germany



Dragons Teeth, Siegfried Line near Rotgen, Germany, Dec. 1944



House Moving, Lammersdorf, Germany

On 13 September 1944, Company "B" with Reconnaissance Platoon attached, moved with the 47th Armored Inf. Bn., into firing positions on high ground east and northeast of Reisdorf, Luxembourg, on direct fire support, for 47th Armored Infantry Bn., attacked fortifications of the Siegfried Line northeast of Wallendorf. Company "C" with Reconnaissance Platoon, still attached to the 10th Tank Battalion moved

to an assembly area 5 miles east of Gilsdorf at 1315 hours. 1st Platoon, Company "C" then moved to Wallendorf, Germany, crossing the Our River, and set up road blocks to protect the main body of CCR. 2nd Platoon, Company "C", assisted 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division also attached to CCR., in the seizing of Reisdorf, Luxembourg, and the establishing of road blocks there. 3rd Platoon Company "C" moved to a position one mile north of Wallendorf, Germany, to guard the right flank of CCR. Pioneer Platoon, Reconnaissance Company, was attached to Company "C", 22nd Armored Engineer Battalion for a bridge building mission. Company "C" was in Germany and to Major Burgess, then Captain, go the honors of being the first man in the Battalion to set foot on German soil. The remainder of the Battalion, except Company "A" working with CCB, crossed into Germany on 15 September 1944 and at 1700 hours the Battalion CP was established on Hill 408, one mile east of Frelingen, approximately six miles into Germany, and which later proved about the deepest penetration CCR was able to make on this mission.



Mine Rollers, Hurtgen Forest, Germany, Dec. 1944

About 1030 hours on 16 Sept, 1944, the CCR area in which Battalion Hq., Reconnaissance Company Hq., and the Medical Detachment were also located, came under enemy artillery fire so these units withdrew to a new bivouac area west of Frelingen, Germany. Company "A" with CCB moved into Germany this day, and went into direct and indirect artillery positions protecting CCR lines of communication and flanks. 1st and 3rd Platoons, Company "B", in position southeast of Hill 408, 2nd Platoon, Company "B" in position supporting 1st Bn., 112th Infantry Regt., 28th Infantry Division on Hill 298 near Stockem, Germany. 1st and 2nd Platoons, Company "C" in anti-tank defense of 10th Tank Bn. positions southeast of Stockem and northeast of Halsdorf, respectively, while 3rd Platoon, Company "C" had anti-tank defense of CCR trains near Hommerdingen, Germany.



Hurtgen Forest, Germany, Dec. 1944

On 17 Sept. 1944, enemy small arms, mortar and artillery fire increased in intensity in all areas occupied by American troops. 2nd Platoon, Company "B" repulsed three enemy attacks against their position east of Wettingen, Germany, inflicting an estimated 150 casualties. 1st Bn., 112th Infantry Regt., 28th Division and 2nd Platoon also suffered heavy casualties from enemy mortar and artillery fire, all personnel and vehicles were evacuated to safety. Lt. Rennebaum, Platoon Leader, was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross as a result of this action, the highest award received by any member of this Battalion during its entire period of combat.



View from Haute Bodeux, Belgium, Jan. 1945

For their outstanding work in this sector of action, T/4 Claycomb, Medical Detachment, was awarded the first Silver Star in the Medical Detachment and T/5 Coschignano the first Bronze Star Medal. The work of the men in the Medical Detachment throughout the entire period of combat was exemplified by courage, daring and skill. The names of Barnes, Baker, Burden, Beam, Dewey, Davidson, Edlin, Estanish, Gura, Fittery, Kauffman, McCall, McCann, Mackey,

Rhodes and Youngs will long be remembered by the men of the firing companies. The fact that in this group of men a total of five Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars, and nine Purple Heart Medals were awarded is ample demonstration of the superior record achieved by the Battalion Medical Detachment.

19 Sept. 1944 was the high point in the Battalion's combat history insofar as knocking out enemy tanks during any single twenty-four hour period is concerned. Starting at 0930 hours of this eventful day, CCR's CP area as well as the Battalion CP area came under intense artillery fire from the north, east and south, forcing the CP installations to be moved from one protective terrain feature to another until it was finally decided to withdraw all units back into Luxembourg, a movement which was successfully completed by 0500 hours on 20 Sept. 1944. Prior to the withdrawal however, both Companies "B" and "C" had an artilleryman's field day. 1st Platoon, Company "B" with Lt. Jones commanding, while in position north of Frelingen, Germany, protecting the left flank of CCR knocked out six Mark VI tanks



German Mark VI Tiger Royal, Goronne, Belgium, Jan. 1945

attempting to approach their position from the vicinity of Huttingen, Germany, by direct fire at ranges from 1500 to 3600 yards. Cpl. Rice, Tank Destroyer gunner, knocked out three enemy tanks in quick succession at 1800 yards, Cpl. Milliman also destroyed one at 1800 yards while Cpl. Tomaszewski and Cpl. Kiwior knocked out tanks at 3600 and 3200 yards respectively. Two unidentified enemy tanks were also knocked out by the 2nd Platoon. In addition, this



Bn. C. P. Haute Badeux,  
Belgium, Jan. 1945

Platoon assisted the tanks attached to the 47th Armored Infantry Bn. in knocking out an additional five enemy tanks of undetermined designation, while Cpl. Giacomino knocked out two other enemy tanks but was unable to identify the tanks due to enemy fire. The 3rd Platoon, Company "C", with Lt. Feldman commanding, established OP and firing positions on the reverse slope of a hill 1500 yards north of Hommerdingen, Germany. Considerable enemy movement was observed in the vicinity of Huttingen and brought under fire at ranges from 1000 to 2000 yards which resulted in one enemy Mark V tank definitely knocked out and observed hits scored on six Mark VI's and one other Mark V, which the enemy either recovered or else completed the destruction. Thus, in one twenty-four hour period, the Battalion received credit for six Mark VI's, one Mark V, and four unidentified tanks destroyed; six Mark VI's, and one Mark V probably destroyed, and assisted in the destruction of five unidentified tanks.



Prisoners Of War, Aberfontain, Belgium. January 1945



Rear Echelon, Hq. Co., Harzee, Belgium, Jan. 1945

Thus did the Battalion acquit itself on this historic initial penetration of the Siegfried Line into Germany. The fact that a withdrawal became necessary after the German Army moved a greatly superior force from other fronts to offset this threat, only further proved the success of the operation.

#### BATTLE OF THE HURTGEN FOREST. GERMANY

After withdrawing from Germany back into Luxembourg on 19 Sept. 1944, the Battalion was committed to various road block and indirect artillery missions during October and November, 1944. The entire Battalion moved from Luxembourg to the vicinity of Faymonville, Belgium, on 5 October 1944.

Company "A" was attached to CCR on 11 October 1944 and moved to the area north of Elsenborn, Belgium, on anti-tank defense and indirect field artillery missions and on 13 October 1944, moved to an indirect fire position near Kalterherberg, Germany. Company "B" was attached to CCA on 13 Oct. 1944 and moved to the vicinity of Herleen, Holland. Company "C" was attached to CCB on 15 October 1944, and moved to the vicinity of Ober Forseba, Germany. CCA and Company "B" were in reserve with XIX Corps while CCB and Company "C" were in reserve with VII Corps in the attack on Aachen, Germany, but were not committed prior to



Battalion C. P. At Francorchamps, Belgium, January 1945



Tank Trailer, Voerendaal, Holland, February 1945

the fall of that city. Thus it was that during this period the Battalion had elements in Belgium, Holland, and Germany at the same time.

On 23 October 1944, the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Kalterherberg, Germany where for the first time since entering combat civilian homes were utilized for billets, a policy which was continued from that date until the end of hostilities. On 1 November 1944 the new M-36 Tank Destroyers equipped with the 90 mm guns arrived to replace the M-10's with the three inch guns in the three firing companies.

By 18 November 1944, all companies were located in the vicinity of Rotgen, Germany, the gun companies having either road block or indirect artillery missions. On 25 November 1944, Co. "C" moved with CCR to vicinity of Hurtgen, Germany with mission of providing A. T. defense for CCR attached to 8th Inf. Div., V Corps, First U. S. Army, in the impending battle of Hurtgen Forest. On 29 November 1944, 5th Armored Division with 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, less CCR and Company "C" respectively, were relieved of attachment to V Corps and attached to VII Corps, First U. S. Army.

On 3 December CCA with Co. "A" attached was further attached to 4th Infantry Div. in their attack on Strauss, Germany, while Co. "B" was attached to CCB on indirect fire missions. The Battle of the Hurtgen Forest in Germany was by far the most intense period of combat experienced by any unit in this Battalion and full credit can be paid to CCR and Co. "C" for their outstanding combat record in this engagement. This was



View Near Voerendaal, Holland, February 1945



Krefeld, Germany, March, 1945

the area that the enemy had been able to strongly fortify and were determined to protect, as it controlled the approaches to the vitally important network of dams which fed into the Roer River area. To the north British and American units were approaching the west bank of the Roer but could not cross until the network of dams in the hills above their position were held by our forces. It was known that the German plan of defense was based on their ability to hold these dams to the last possible minute, and then release this vast supply of water to flood the entire Roer River area. It was for this reason that the American Army had to have those dams and it took the 28th Inf. Division, 8th Inf. Division and 78th Inf. Division supported by CCR and Co. "C" weeks of stubborn fighting thru mine fields and innumerable counter-attacks. The way was cleared thru Hurtgen, Kleinhau, Groshau, Brandenburg, Bergstein Strass and Gey so that our forces were in a position where they could successfully launch an attack to capture these dams.

The enemy made extensive use of his air elements during this period, strafing and bombing both forward and rear elements of this organization. On 3 December 1944, near Rotgen, Germany, Co. "B" was attacked and strafed by ME-109's while in indirect fire positions and received credit for the first of four enemy planes destroyed by this Battalion. On the same day one mile East of Rotgen, Company "C"'s bivouac area was strafed by enemy planes and the second plane to the credit of this Battalion was destroyed.



Co "C" Firing Into Ruhr, Lank Latum, Germany, March 1945

Enemy artillery employment in the Hurtgen-Bergstein area was the heaviest encountered. The artillery fire was such as to confine tank crews to their tanks for hours at a time and air bursts and shrapnel caused many casualties to the men in the open M-36 turrets. One Co. "C" M-36 hit a mine in the vicinity of Bergstein, on 6 Dec. 1944 and the crew climbed into another M-36 for protection. Shortly afterwards, however this other M-36 with both crews aboard received



Glider Landing Field, East Of Wessel

a direct hit in the open turret with a white phosphorous shell. As the result of this experience, plans were immediately started to build an armored turret top for all T. D. vehicles. This modification for all M36 Tank Destroyer vehicles was finally completed in January, 1945, and proved invaluable in combat on a number of subsequent occasions.

At one time Company "C" had only one M-36 out of twelve operational, either due to being destroyed, knocked out by mines, or lacking crews. However, largely because of the untiring and aggressive efforts of the men in the Company, and the efforts of the Company and Battalion Motor Maintenance crew, recovery and repairs were completed so that seven M-36's were operational the next day.

While this was a difficult and hazardous period for our men, they in turn had been making the enemy pay heavily at all times. Innumerable casualties were inflicted on enemy troops as counter attack after counter attack was repulsed by our forces. Elements of the 272nd and the 246th



Pontoon Bridge Across Rhine River, Wessel, Germany, March 31, 1945



Wesser-Elbe Canal, Fallersleben, Germany, April, 1945

Volks Grenadier Division, three Paratroop Divisions, the 116th Panzer Division and other units of the 5th Panzer Army were employed but once the American units took an objective they held it. On 6 December 1944, in Bergstein, Germany, Company "C" destroyed five enemy tanks when Sgt. Woods knocked out one Mark VI and one Mark V tank at a 1000 yard range, Sgt. Balough knocked out one Mark V and one Mark IV at a 1200 yard range, and Sgt. Leo destroyed one Mark IV at a 175 yard range. On 8 December 1944, CCR and Company "C" were relieved and pulled back to the vicinity of Rabotrath, Belgium, for a much needed rest. The Battle of Hurtgen Forest was not over, but the foothold on the commanding terrain controlling the approaches to the Roer River dams was secured with the capture of the towns of Kleinhau, Brandenburg, Bergstein, Strauss and Gey, Germany, Credit for the capture of these towns can be claimed by CCR and CCA, with Company "C" and Company "A" of this Battalion attached.



Volkswagen Factory Near Fallersleben, Germany  
April, 1945

#### BATTLE OF THE ARDENNES

Early in December 1944, intelligence reports showed that there was a considerable increase in enemy troop movements, and that the German 5th and 6th Panzer Armies were in reserve between the Roer and Rhine Rivers. Further, by looking at the friendly situation map, it could be seen that the American troops between Rotgen, Kalterherberg and Eisenborn, Belgium, were spread fairly thin. The entire sector from



Salzwedel, Germany, April, 1945

St. Vith, Belgium, south to Wiltz and Diekirch, Luxembourg, had been quiet since September, and it was generally felt by those who were located at these points that the area was fairly safe. It was thought the enemy could not afford to make the sacrifice in troops and material which a large counter attack would entail. The German Army could not afford such an expenditure as was later proven by the ease with which the Allied armies in the West crossed the Roer, Rhine, Wesser and on to the banks of the Elbe River in March and April, 1945. Afford it or not, however, on 16 December 1944, the German Army did launch an offensive on a grand scale which was not stopped until spearhead elements of the German Army had nearly cut Belgium in two from the German to the French border, and until most of the U. S. First and Third Armies, together with elements of the British Second Army had been shifted to meet this threat.

Around 8 December 1944, all companies in the Battalion with exception of Company "B" and Company "C" moved north to the Hahn -- Zweifall area located approximately six miles south of Aachen. Preparations were being made for the crossing of the Roer River as soon as the Roer River dams could be secured.

On 17 December 1944, first news of the German counter offensive in Belgium was received, enemy air activity increased and we learned that harassing enemy paratroopers had landed in the area between Hahn, Germany, and Eupen, Belgium.



Autobahn Near Peine, Germany, April, 1945

which was the main supply route, anti-paratroop patrols were organized by the Battalion. On 19 December 1944, the Battalion was relieved of the attachment to VII Corps and 5th Armored Division, and attached to XIX Corps, 78th Infantry Division and the Battalion CP returned to Rotgen, Germany, to be in closer touch with Hq. 78th Infantry Division. On 23 December 1944, however, all companies reverted to Battalion control. The Battalion was relieved of the attachment to XIX Corps, 78th Infantry Division, and attached to VII Corps, 3rd Armored Division and alerted for immediate movement to the vicinity of Barveau, Belgium. The Battle of the Belgium Bulge was on.

Upon the arrival of all units in the new area around 1400 hours on 24 December 1944, Company "A" took up a defensive position in Soy, Belgium. Company "B" was attached to the 83rd Reconnaissance Bn., 3rd Armored Division and took up defensive positions in the vicinity of Grandmenil, Belgium. Company "C", Reconnaissance Company and the Battalion Forward CP were established in Erezee, Belgium, and Headquarters Company and the Battalion rear echelon elements moved into Bomal, Belgium. No one knew just how near the enemy had approached, but it did not take long to find out. Company "A's" position in Soy, Belgium, came under artillery fire shortly after their arrival and the enemy launched a small infantry counter attack which approached to within 200 yards of Company "A's" position before withdrawing. At 0130 hours, 25 December 1944, 2nd Platoon, Company "B" had a road block established in Grandmenil, Belgium, when an enemy armored column was heard approaching the concealed position. Sgt. Moser, Tank Destroyer Gun Commander, permitted the leading enemy vehicles to come up to 25 yards of his position before opening fire and then in quick succession knocked out the first two tanks at almost point blank range, both of which were later identified as Mark Vs. This action caused the other vehicles in the enemy column to withdraw, and no further attempt was made by the enemy to utilize this Grandmenil-Erezee-Soy road net work which they needed to properly protect their northern flank. Later in the same day, members of Company "B" found two Mark V tanks abandoned by the German crews because they were out of gas, and these two enemy tanks were also destroyed. Thus did the Battalion celebrate Christmas Day in the Year 1944.

The Battalion remained on road blocks and protective anti-tank missions in this area until the 3rd Armored Division was relieved, and by 31 December 1944 all companies were in reserve with the 3rd Armored Division, Battalion Hq. in Seny, Belgium, Headquarters and Reconnaissance Companies in Bomal, Company "A" in Les Avine, and companies "B" and "C" in Abee, Belgium.

On the first day of the year of final victory in Europe, the Battalion was relieved of the attachment to VII Corps, 3rd Armored Division, and attached to XVIII Airborne Corps, 82nd Airborne Division. These were truly fighting men, a squad of the 82nd Airborne Division will take on a Company of the German Army, an 82nd Airborne Division Company will take on a German Battalion, and to assign any unit of the 82nd Airborne Division an objective is to know that the objective will be taken and held.

The mission of the 82nd Airborne during the time this Battalion was attached to it, was to clean up all enemy resistance in the Division area west of the Salm River. The mission was successfully completed in eleven days, but those eleven days were filled with excitement and pathos. During this period, Company "A" had two M-36 Tank Destroyers destroyed by anti-tank fire, and one M-36 Tank Destroyer and one M-8 Armored Car knocked out by enemy mines, while Company "C" had one M-36 Destroyer knocked out by enemy mines. The vehicles hit by anti-tank fire burned and were total losses, however, those vehicles damaged by mines were recovered and repaired.

In addition to the vehicle losses, fourteen enlisted men in the Battalion were killed in this action, nine from Company "B", and five from Company "A" and eighteen were wounded. That the enemy paid dearly for these losses is without question. On 4 January 1945, the 1st Section, 2nd Platoon, Company "B" destroyed one Mark V tank in the vicinity of Abrefontaine, Belgium, and on the same day east of Odrimont, Belgium, Sgt. Moser and Sgt. Marrapese, both of Company "B", teamed up to knock out a Mark IV tank at 600 yard range. On 7 January 1945, southeast of Goronne, Belgium, Cpl. Kiwior, Company "B", knocked out another Mark VI Royal Tiger tank at 350 yard range, and on the same day, also southeast of Goronne, Cpl. Olsabeck and Sgt. Koczan, Company "A" teamed up to knock out another Royal Tiger tank at 700 yards, the only two Royal Tigers to the credit of the Battalion. On 8 January 1945, Cpl. O'Brien and Cpl. Salamone, Company "A", teamed up to knock out two Mark IV tanks at 800 yards to make a total of six enemy tanks on this mission. In addition to these tanks, the Battalion also received credit for destroying one 88 mm towed gun two armored vehicles, one half-track, one machine gun nest, one bazooka and one OP in a stonehouse; inflicted approximately 75 casualties of which 54 were known dead, and captured 41 prisoners of war. Upon the conclusion of the operation, Company "B" received a citation from the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division for the aggressive spirit displayed by the members of that company during this period.

On 11 January 1945, the Battalion was relieved of the attachment with the 82nd Airborne Division, and attached to the 75th Infantry Division. However, no actual contact with the enemy was made after this date while the Battalion was with the 75th Infantry Division.

On 16 January 1945, the Battalion was relieved of the attachment to the 75th Infantry Division and moved to the vicinity of Francorchamps, Belgium, in the status of Corps Reserve. On 27 January 1945, the Battalion was relieved of the attachment to XVIII Corps (Airborne), First U.S. Army, and attached once again to what all members of the Battalion have come to regard as the parent unit, the 5th Armored Division, which had recently been transferred from First U. S. Army to Ninth U. S. Army control. The Battalion less Company "A" moved to Herbesthal, Belgium, for a rest period, and needed maintenance. Company "A" was attached to CCA, 5th Armored Division, and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Rott, Belgium, with the mission of assisting CCA in their attack on Eicher-scheid, Germany. The mission was successfully completed with the loss of

only one man, and Company "A" returned to Battalion control at Herbesthal, Belgium, on 1 February 1945. The Battalion moved to Voerendaal, Holland on 5 February 1945, and there enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Holland until the plans for the crossing of the Roer River on 25 February 1945, with the XIII Corps, Ninth U.S. Army, could be completed.

## THE ROER TO THE RHINE RIVER

Since early October 1944, the Roer River and the defensive positions of the German Army to its east, had been a formidable barrier. By the middle of February 1945, the U. S. First and Third Armies had not only regained all ground occupied by the German Army in the battle of the Belgium Bulge, but had succeeded in pushing deep into German territory and seizing the Roer River dams. The Germans withdrew the remnants of their tattered 5th and 6th Panzer Armies east of the Roer River and around 15 February 1945, opened the gates of the dams and flooded the Roer River Valley in order to gain time to construct their defensive positions between the Roer and Rhine rivers.

The build-up of Allied troops waiting for the Roer River crossing was now complete, and so all that was necessary was to wait for the flood waters to subside. This took about seven days, and on the 23 February 1945, the XVI Corps launched its attack to cross. Company "A" under Division Artillery control was in indirect artillery position in the vicinity of Puffendorf, Germany, to support this attack. From 5 February 1945, Company "A" fired three registrations, 21 interdiction concentrations and 103 harrasing concentrations, totaling 2122 rounds of which 1600 rounds were fired in the initial artillery barrage which lasted ten hours prior to the jumping off of the Infantry attack on 23 February 1945. This represents the greatest number of rounds fired by any company in this battalion in any similar period of time.

Company "B" attached to CCB was the first unit of the Battalion to cross the Roer at Linnich, Germany on 25 February 1945, and the remainder of the Battalion followed the next day with Company "A" attached to CCA, Company "C" to CCR, and Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Reconnaissance Company Headquarters the Pioneer Platoon and Medical Detachment moving with Division Artillery Hq. The initial assembly area east of the Roer River was in the vicinity of Koffern-Hottorf, Germany. All elements of the 5th Armored Division then swung to the north capturing Rath, Erkelenz, Hardt, Rheindalen, Rheydt, by-passing Munchen-Gladbach and continuing through Vierson, Anrath, Huls, Tonisberg, Vluyneheide where the Battalion CP was established on 4 March 1945. Company "A" in the meantime had proceeded with CCA in the attack against Krefeld, while Company "C" continued with CCR in the attack on Repelen and Orsoy, on March 7, 1945. With the exception of a pocket of resistance around Wessel, the operation from the Roer River to the west bank of the Rhine River was completed by 10 March 1945. No losses in either vehicles or personnel were suffered by this Battalion in this operation although on 3 March 1945 a friendly plane dropped a bomb in Company "A's" area which killed two men, and injured several others.

The enemy troops opposing our troops in early March, constituted an inefficient group lacking sufficient personnel or equipment to even delay our advance. The principal obstacles confronting the Battalion's movement consisted of drainage ditches, supplemented by numerous anti-tank ditches and occasional mine fields. Enemy anti-tank guns were, for the most part, 88 mm guns dug in with excellent fields of fire covering anti-tank ditches, road blocks, mine fields, approaches and highways. Enemy air elements were scarce but reconnaissance planes were heard throughout the area with occasional strafing, but no damage was done to our units. In March 1945, during a movie program in the Battalion CP in the post office at Vluynheide, a lone enemy plane dove on the CP and dropped what was estimated to be a 500 pound bomb, but missed the building by 200 yards. Several men were cut however when the concussion of the bomb blew in all the windows of the building. The movie was continued after the black-out shades had been repaired. Enemy armor was limited and no enemy tanks were engaged by the Battalion.

On 12 March 1945, all companies reverted to Battalion Control and moved in the vicinity of Osterath, Germany. The Battalion CP was set up at Schweinheim, with three gun companies in indirect firing positions to the east. From 13 March 1945 to 29 March 1945, under Division Artillery control. Company "A" fired three registrations of 20 rounds, two TOT's totaling 36 rounds, and 19 harrassing concentrations totaling 340 rounds. Company "B" fired three registrations of 50 rounds, four TOT's totaling 77 rounds and 246 harrassing concentrations totaling 1507 rounds during this same period. Company "C" fired one registration of five rounds, four TOT's totaling 77 rounds and 247 harrassing concentrations totaling 1528 rounds. All targets were located in the important industrial Ruhr district, east of the Rhine.

On 15 March 1945, 1st Platoon, Company "A" was subjected to very accurate counter-battery fire as the result of which two EM were killed and eight EM wounded. It was believed that some civilians in the area furnished information as to the exact position of the Platoon. The concentration of enemy artillery is also believed to have damaged some of the ammunition in the company dump, because later in the afternoon while loading a 90 mm APC shell on a 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ton truck a shell exploded in the hands of Cpl. Jacquinto, Company "A" and set off the entire load of ammunition in the truck, which was destroyed. The premature explosion of the shell in his hands knocked Cpl. Jacquinto off the rear of the truck, he was revived by the company medical aid man, and after treatment for slight burns of his hands, remained on a duty status, unshaken, but richer by the award of an Oak Leaf Cluster to a previously earned Purple Heart Award.

On 30 March 1945, Co. "A", Co. "B" and Co. "C" were attached to CCA, CCB and CCR respectively in preparation of tactical commitment east of the Rhine River, and on 31 March 1945 the entire Battalion crossed the River over the Engineer pontoon bridge at Wessel, Germany. The final phase in the war in Europe had started.

## THE RHINE TO THE ELBE RIVER

After being penned for so many months by terrain and prepared defensive positions which was only suitable for Infantry, the terrain east from the Rhine River was a tank man's dream. Flat country and with a good network of highways. Once the Infantry had seized a bridgehead on the east bank of the Rhine and the Engineers had installed their pontoon bridges, the only limits on the armored forces was one of resupply of rations and gas. Reminiscent of the hard driving, fast moving, armored slashes following the breakthrough at Avaraches, France, last August, once again the 5th Armored Division and the Tank Destroyers were on the loose, deep in enemy territory.

In general, the operation was broken into three phases: Phase No 1 1 April to 8 April, the attack from the Rhine River east to the Wesser River, Phase No 2 8 April to 16 April, Wesser River to Elbe River and phase No 3 16 April to 25 April, the mopping of the rear areas and the Von Clausewitz Panzer Division.

After Crossing the Rhine, the three gun companies during phase No 1 moved usually along three separate routes of march with Co. "C" on the right, Co. "A" in the center and Co. "B" on the left or northern flank, with Battalion Hq., Reconnaissance Co. and Medical Detachment moving with Division Artillery Headquarters, usually along a center route.

Munster, Germany, was by-passed to the south on 2 April and subsequently was captured by the 17th Airborne Division. The Dortmund Ems Canal was crossed by some elements on 1 April and remainder on 2 April. Bielfeld was by-passed to the north on 3 April and the entire Division went into an assembly area in vicinity of Hereford on that date and remained there until 8 April 1945.

On 3 April, east of Bonn Hof Lohne, the CCB column ran into some enemy resistance Lt. Duchscherer and the 2nd Platoon, Company "B" went into action and after knocking out one unidentified tank, one German Scout car, six 76 mm artillery pieces, two mortar positions and capturing eight prisoners and inflicting an unknown number of casualties the CCB column continued its march. Nine rounds of AP and twenty-four rounds of 90 mm HE were used by Lt. Duchscherer's Platoon in this action. On the same date in vicinity of Exeter, Germany, Cpl. Crawford, Company "C" knocked out one enemy artillery field piece at 1500 yards.

In phase No 2 all elements of the Battalion crossed the Wesser River at Hamelin, Germany, the Pied Piper town, on 8 April 1945, proceeded generally NE, by-passing south of Hannover. On 9 April in vicinity of Rosenthal, Cpl. Winget and Cpl. Appling, Company "C" each destroyed an 88 mm A-T gun at 1900 and 2200 yards respectively. On 10 April in Pattensen, Germany, enemy artillery fired a 200 round artillery concentration which fell in the 400 yard space between Division Artillery Headquarters and Battalion Headquarters without incurring any personnel loss, although two Div. Artillery vehicles were hit. Reconnaissance Co. C. P. building was hit and roof damaged but no casualties sustained. Reconnaissance Company screened the town which CCR had by-passed and picked up 114 prisoners of war

in the vicinity. CCR swung north and CCA continued the attack east thru CCR's old axis of march thru Peine and east to capture Tangermunde and Stendal, Germany. Battalion Headquarters continued with Division Artillery Headquarters thru Dideise, Neuendorf and arrived in Denker, west of Tangermunde, on 11 April 1945. Enroute to Denker, Reconnaissance Company while acting as rear guard to the Battalion, encountered an enemy patrol west of Deetz and engaged in fighting off and successfully routing the patrol after killing ten of their members.

At this point, CCA in Tangermunde was the closest U.S. Army unit to Berlin, however, this record was later lost in favor of the 2nd Armored Division who actually crossed to the east bank of the Elbe River the next day against stiffening enemy opposition.

On 14 April 1945, the Battalion CP Headquarters, and Reconnaissance Company moved with Division Artillery Headquarters to Osterburg where these units remained until 16 April 1945.

The only loss on this movement from the Rhine to the Elbe Rivers was suffered by Co. "A" at Tangermunde, when SS troopers knocked out one M-36 vehicle of the 3rd Platoon with a bazooka. All crew members escaped from the vehicle, however, the gun sergeant was killed by small arms fire and the other four crew members, were captured by SS troopers in Tangermunde. These four men with approximately 200 American Paratroop prisoners of war, were subsequently released the same day prior to the surrender of the town to CCA. Company "A" succeeded in destroying one locomotive and eight freight cars by direct fire and after taking Tangermunde, assisted CCA in the clearing of Stendal, capturing 59 prisoners on this mission.

CCB with Company "B" initially had the mission of following between CCR and CCA in a reserve status and to protect the bridge across the Wesser River at Hamelin. The Company subsequently moved east thru Osterburg to the Elbe River.

CCR with Company "C" had the mission of cutting the autobahn in the vicinity of Peine and then proceeding north and east toward the Elbe River and try to secure the bridges over the river in the vicinity of Sandau, but the enemy destroyed the bridges and ferry before they could be secured.

After reaching the western banks of the Elbe River on 11 April 1945, and consolidating the position there in anticipation of making a crossing and marching directly on to Berlin, word came in that the Von Clausewitz Division had moved south to escape the British and were making an effort to cut our rear supply line and to eventually tie up with other German units holding out in the Hartz Mountains in the south. Phase No 3, therefore, found the Battalion moving with the various combat commands to meet this threat. For the first time since the drive started with the crossing of the Roer River, the Battalion was moving west instead of east, even though still on the offensive.

Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company and Reconnaissance Company moved from Osterburg to Klotz on 16 April 1945, then on to Rohrberg on 18 April, then to Wopel and arrived at Salzwedel on 22 April 1945.

Battalion Motor Maintenance Platoon under Capt. Bayer had been left in the vicinity of Klotz, when Battalion Hq. and Headquarters Company left for Rohrberg. On 20 April 1945, however, Capt. Bayer and his entire Platoon reported in unexpectedly at the Battalion CP at Wopel, that evening. It had been found that an estimated 400 enemy troops had infiltrated into the woods one mile from Capt. Bayer's area near Klotz. These enemy troops were subsequently captured and the estimate was found to be correct.

On 16 April 1945, Division Trains that utilized Battalion personnel trucks and drivers to haul supplies in a large convoy had only proceeded about 15 miles west of Klotz when it was ambushed, and after the two leading vehicles had been destroyed, the remaining vehicles were abandoned and captured by the enemy. On 17 April, however, the truck belonging to this Battalion and one other truck was recaptured and returned to the division Rear Echelon. On the Battalion Personnel truck at the time of its capture by the enemy was the Battalion Standard and the silk parade flag, both of which were returned with the truck intact.

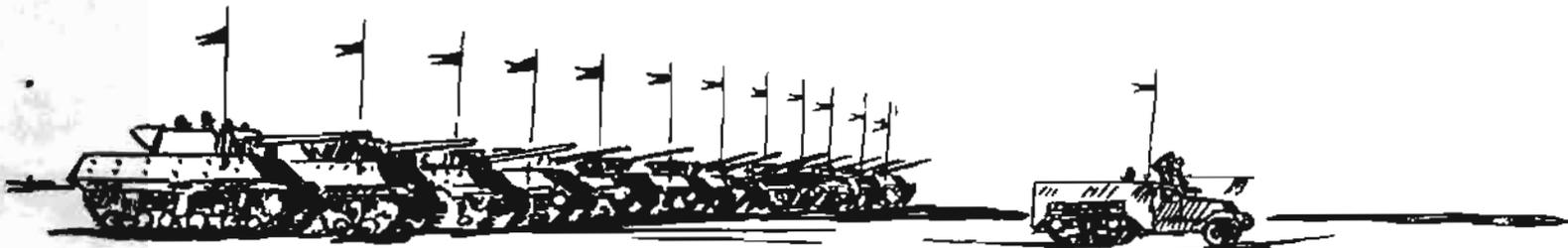
On 17 April 1945, CCA was relieved of the area in the vicinity of the Elbe River, and with Company "A" still attached moved west and then north on 18 April thru Knesbeck, Stiemke and Wittingen. On 21 April, Company "A" supported CCA on an attack north from Wittingen thru Kelnze and Hitzack. Opposition in general was light but Cpl. Rutkowski destroyed a 1/2 ton truck at 400 yard range in the vicinity of Harlingen on 22 April. In the vicinity of Kiefen, on 23 April, Cpl. Rutkowski, 2nd Platoon, Co. "A" had the honor of knocking out the last of the total of 56 tanks credited this Battalion when he destroyed a Mark V tank at 600 yard range. Cleaning up operations for Co. "A" continued until 26 April when the Company reverted to Battalion Control.

Company "B" moved with CCB on 16 April to vicinity of Jubar, where it assisted in cleaning up a task force of the Von Clausewitz Panzer Division which had been harrasing the supply lines in that area. On 18 April, 1st Platoon, Co. "B" set up a defensive position against enemy armor reported moving from the direction of Ludelsen. The enemy was encountered in the woods north of Ludelsen and the 1st Platoon, Co. "B", destroyed one half-track, two general purpose vehicles, one Jager Panther Tank and killed an unknown number of the enemy. Third Platoon, Co. "B" also destroyed one enemy half track and two general purpose vehicles the same day. On 25 April, Co. "B" reverted to Battalion Control.

On 16 April, Co. "C" with CCR moved in the vicinity of Salzwedel with a mission of cleaning up small pockets of resistance, then attacking north thru Luchow to the Elbe River. The entire company was attached to 10th Tank Bn. (Task Force Hamberg) on this mission, which moved thru Salzwedel, north to Luchow to Dannenburg. Cpl. Herman, 2nd Platoon, Co. "C" destroyed one 88-mm self-propelled gun at 1500 yards on 22 April in the vicinity of Nebenstedt and the Platoon captured 44 prisoners on 24 April in the vicinity of Quicklen. Pvt. Helton took 6 prisoners in the vicinity of Dannenburg on 22 April. Co. "C" reverted to Battalion Control on 25 April, thus ended the tactical commitment of all companies of this Battalion against the German Army in the European Theater after 266 days of combat.

## VICTORY IN EUROPE

On 26 April, the entire Battalion moved from the vicinity of Salzwedel south and west to take up military government duties controlling an area of approximately 230 sq. miles located south of the autobahn from Peine east to Wendezelle. Battalion CP, Headquarters Co. and Medical Detachment were located in Wendezelle, Reconnaissance Co. in Wendelburg, Company "A" in Wolterf, Company "B" in Zweidorf and Company "C" in Schmedenstadt, Germany. On 8 May 1945, when V-E Day was announced as effective 0001 hours, 9 May 1945, the combat history of the 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion in the European Theater of Operations came to a close.



SUMMARY OF ENEMY LOSSES CREDITED TO THE  
628th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, 2 AUGUST 1944 to 8 MAY 1945

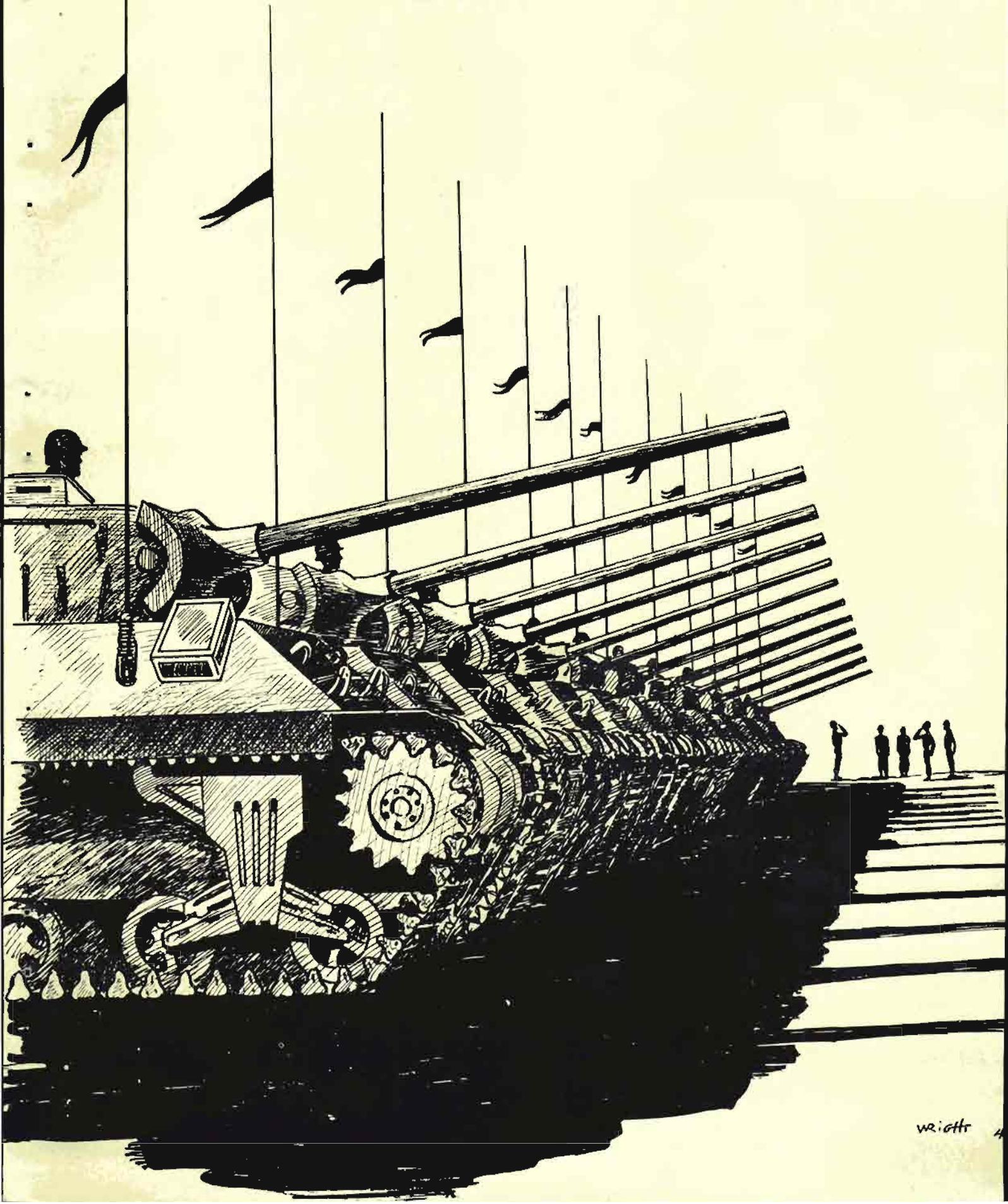
TANKS:

	Number	Total		Number	Total
Tiger Royals	2		MACHINE GUNS:	24	24
Mark VI	14		PILL BOXES:	58	58
Mark V	14		OP'S:	16	16
Mark IV	13		MISCELLANEOUS:		
Unidentified	<u>13</u>		Buildings	52	
	56	56	Bazooka Nests	<u>2</u>	
S. P. GUNS:	4	4		54	54
TOWED GUNS:			AIRPLANES:	4	4
88MM	8		TRAINS:		
75MM or 76MM	10		Locomotive	1	1
47MM	1		Freight Cars	8	8
40MM	2		PW'S CAPTURED:		
75MM How.	1		EM	1487	
Others	<u>2</u>		Officers	<u>29</u>	
	24	24		1516	1516
MORTARS:	7	7	ESTIMATED ENEMY		
HALF-TRACKS:	22	22	CASUALTIES	1231	1231
GENERAL PURPOSE					
VEHICLES	68	68			



Heiligenstadt, Germany, May, 1945

# LINE and STAFF



wright

## Battalion Staff



Major Joseph A. Patalive  
Executive Officer



Lt. Col. William J. Gallagher  
Commander



Major Hal A. Burgess, Jr.  
Operations Officer



Capt. Elmer V. Sparks  
Adjutant



Capt. John S. Wright  
Intelligence Officer



Capt. Arthur L. Travis  
Supply Officer

## Battalion Special Staff



1st Lt. Edward V. Jahoda  
Commo. Off.



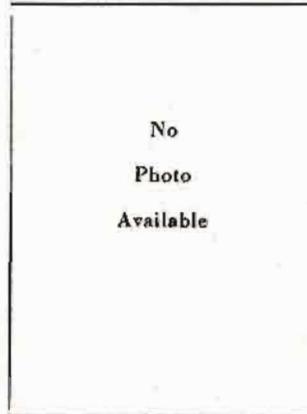
Capt. Joseph Bayer  
Motor Off.



1st Lt. James A. Wing  
Ln. Off. Asst. S-3



2nd Lt. Wade Abee  
Trans. Off



Capt. Thomas Cook  
Ln. Off. Asst. S-3  
Transferred 6 T. D. Gp.



2nd Lt. Gregor J. Feibel  
Ln. Off. Asst. S-2



WOJG Frank E. Gerlach  
Pers. Off.



M/Sgt. Paul E. Kirkpatrick  
Sgt. Major



628

HQ

WRIGHT

## "Headquarters" Company History



Capt. Lyle L. Fought  
Executive Officer  
Transferred XXIX T. A. C.



Capt. Daniel L. Thomas  
Company Commander



1st Sgt. Claude L. Wielenga  
First Sergeant



1st Lt. Carl A. Forslund  
Executive Officer

### UNITED STATES

A short time after the Battalion was activated at Indiantown Gap in July, 1941, there came an influx of men from Camp Wheeler and Camp Bragg into Headquarters Company. When you speak of these men, the "old timers", the names Andros, Booth, Haupt, Kapitan, Karwoski, Kirschbaum, Mayer, Rosien, Rothman, Reed, Stein, Schulz, Schumacher, Wielenga, Wagner and Vervaeet come to mind. Major Patalive, then Lieutenant, was the Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company. From Indiantown Gap the unit moved to AP Hill, Va., where the Headquarters Company remained for a period of some seven weeks. The stay there was best remembered for the epidemic of the GI's that besieged the company. A return trip by the Company to the Gap followed. While here, one Pvt. Saviola went home on pass and neither hide nor hair has been seen of him since. Headquarters Company left the Gap in mid-September, 1941, and moved on to North Caro-



S/Sgt. Daniel Wagner, Jr.  
Supply Sgt.



S/Sgt. Francis E. Smith  
Motor Sgt.

lina for the ten weeks of maneuvers that ensued. On December 7, 1941, the unit packed up and moved back to the Gap. While enroute at South Boston, Va., the fateful news came through that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. The company arrived at the Gap on December 8th. It was during mid-December that the Battalion was officially designated as the 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion. After the brief furlough that followed, 2½ ton trucks were transferred from "D" and "E" Batteries to Headquarters Company. It was during this time that the names Campbell, Foyuth, Haggar, Regelski, Todorow were added to the company roster. The company next moved to Camp Livingston, La. and after a ten day trip arrived at Livingston on January 19, 1942. During the time that the company was at Livingston, Lieutenants Scott and Pat-alive each held the Company Commander's reins at different times. While here the company underwent routine training. The first batch of recruits received by the company were trained here. Bigi, Strahler, Weir, Volsko and Zanis were among these recruits. It was here too that the first men left the company to go to Officer's Candidate School. The names Blozitis, Downs, Fisher, Kamien, Mountz and Tobin now graced the company roster. The memories of standing reveille in shorts, the sweltering heat, the then in vogue twenty five mile hikes, and Col. Peterson's school for non-commissioned officers still bless and burn.



S/Sgt. Rosien, T/5 Karwowski, Pvt. Malphurs, Pfc. Merkel,  
S/Sgt. Wagner, 1st. Sgt. Weilenga, Pfc. Ruzick, T/4 Faulk, S/Sgt. F. E. Smith

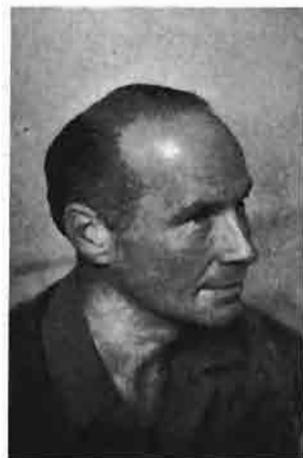


M/Sgt. Kirkpatrick, T/4 McClain, T/4 Ellis, T/5 Stover, T/Sgt. Haupt, T/Sgt. Kennedy, Pvt. Lepidus, T/5 Zanis, S/Sgt. Buchko, T/5 Rothman, T/5 Campbell, T/5 Cohen, T/5 Hayhow

In early September, the company arrived at Camp Hood, Texas, to undergo intensive training in Tank Destroyer tactics and commando training. While here the company lost several of its members to Officer's Candidate School, while others went out as a cadre. The "Class of '42" recruits were trained here. Coleman, Day, English, Faulk, Hamlin, Mathews, Malphurs, Richards, Schultz and Tisdler were among this group. Remember the football game against North Texas State Teacher's College, when our pride and joy, the football team received a bottle of beer through the courtesy of "Promoter" Ryan in payment for participating in the game? On November 20, 1942, the unit moved to Camp Bowie, Texas. Captain MacPherran, then Lieutenant, came in as Company Commander in early December. While at Camp Bowie, the unit successfully underwent the Army Ground Force test. Here too, another cadre was sent out. Barking dogs and blisters gave mute evidence of the fifteen mile hike accomplished in three hours and twelve minutes. The first week in January, 1943, found the company entraining for Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla. At Gordon Johnston the unit underwent amphibious and combined operations training. There were innumerable hikes through the sand, an invasion of Dog Island, and to top things off, a hurricane made its appearance to mar the final combined operations. The unit



Tec. Sgt. Roy Haupt  
Battalion Operations Sgt.



Tec. Sgt. Joseph M. Kennedy  
Battalion Intelligence Sgt.



T/5 Baylor, Cpl. Jago, Cpl. Kolc, T/4 McClain, T/4 Stein, Pvt. Zilaunes, T/5 Hayhow, Pvt. Morgan, T/Sgt. Meranda, S/Sgt. Buchko, T/5 Rothman, T/4 Keller, T/4 Ellis



Tec. Sgt. Willis D. Meranda  
Battalion Commo. Chief



S/Sgt. Nicholas Buchko  
Battalion Commo. Sgt.

moved to Camp Rucker, Alabama, in early May, 1943, and here underwent further training. The story goes that one morning the entire company reported for "Sick Call" and complained of seeing nightmares in the form of one "Major Midnight", the result of an 18 hour training grind conducted under the surveillance of this same person. During the latter portion of its stay in Rucker, the unit prepared its equipment for the coming Tennessee maneuvers. The maneuvers lasted eight weeks, from early July to late August. During this period, Captain Reeves, then Lieutenant, took over as Company Commander. A fifteen day furlough followed the maneuvers. The unit returned to Camp Rucker, Alabama, and for the next three weeks underwent a physical hardening program. Camp Pickett, Virginia, was next on the schedule and during the stay here, the company completed the firing scores necessary for overseas qualifications. October, 1943, saw the unit in Bradford, Virginia, to undergo a week of amphibious training. The next move was back to Pickett to prepare for winter maneuvers in West Virginia. The snow and cold in November, 1943, saw the unit taking mountain and winter training in Tank Destroyer tactics. Here too, the unit took further Army Ground Force tests. The town of Parsons, Thomas, Davis and Elkins recall pleasant memories to the men in the company. The hospitality and friendliness displayed by the people



Cpl. Katula, Cpl. Jones, T/5 Butya, T/4 Lowery, WOJG. Gerlach, T/Sgt. Wentworth,  
Cpl. Bell, T/5 Petrick, Cpl. Kronk, Cpl. Hilderbrand

of West Virginia made our stay here one of the most pleasant stops the company made on its journey. It was the staging area at Fort Dix New Jersey, in early December, 1943, where the unit picked up its T/O equipment. In response to their requests, Santa presented the men in the company with furloughs over the Christmas Holidays. However, those in camp on Christmas Day were surprised when they received word that the Battalion had been alerted for the defense of a nearby airport. Prior to shipping overseas, the unit moved to Camp Shanks, New York. Still remembered is the then seemingly never ending climb up the Palisades with the horseshoe pack strapped onto the back. There are rumors to the effect that the men received a physical while here,



Tec. Sgt. Harry P. Wentworth  
Personnel Sgt.

but these rumors have never been confirmed. On December 31, 1944. Lt. Jahoda, Butya and Kapitan left on the advance detail overseas. The company followed them into New York harbor and went up the gangplank of the "Aquitania" on January 28, 1943.

## ENGLAND

There were two memorable things about the journey overseas. First, there was the food which would never have won the seal of approval of the "Good Housekeeping Institute", secondly, there was Wentworth. The first thing Wentworth did upon getting aboard ship was to lean over the rail. The story has it that he did not leave the rail until the boat docked. The company was at sea seven days and landed at Greenock, Scotland, on February 6, 1944. In the midst of a drizzling rain, the company entrained for Packington



M/Sgt. Kirshbaum, T/4 Coleman, T/4 Cochrane, T/4 Regelski, T/4 Todorow, T/4 O'Leska, T/4 Keller, T/4 Westphal, T/Sgt. Vervat, T/5 Schumacher, T/5 Van Antwerp, T/5 McAlpin, T/5 Richards, T/5 Hamlin, T/5 Souders



M/Sgt. George A. Howell  
Battalion Motor Sgt.  
Returned to U. S. A.



T/Sgt. Frank Vervat  
Battalion Motor Sgt.

Park, which was located between Coventry and Birmingham. The unit remained here six weeks. The men learned that everything they had heard about the English rain and fog was true. The retreat formations, the dark and dusky nights, the English type barracks are still clear to the mind's eye. Before moving to Wales, the



Sgt. Earnest L. Kirschbaum  
Battalion Motor Sgt.

unit underwent a series of Platoon and Company tests. The company arrived in Wales during early March, 1944 and spent a pleasant two week stay. While in Wales, the company trained with the Battalion on indirect fire missions. The company then returned to Packington Park for a week and from this point moved to Dorchester, England in mid-April, 1944. The Headquarters Company less Motor Maintenance, combined with Company "B". The work was marshalling troops in D-7, Marabout, and the servicing of these troops that had been selected to take part in the invasion across the Channel. Motor Maintenance assisted Company "A" at D-7. Poundbury, in the marshalling of troops. The



T/5 Lind, S/Sgt. Schulz, T/Sgt. Tobin, T/4 Vazakas,  
T/4 Stein, T/Sgt. Kapitan, Pfc. Robinson

No  
Photo  
Available

T/Sgt. Slavinski  
Bn Supply Sgt.  
Returned to U.S.A.

calm and quiet of the days, the air raids in the dark of night, and the picture presented by the gliders and the paratroops as they left to perform their part in the invasion armada made unforgettable scenes. During this time Captain Reeves left to join the paratroops and was succeeded by Captain Scott, who was in turn succeeded by Captain Wright. The company left Dorchester on July 4, 1944, and moved to D-2 Diddlehinton to be processed and staged prior to landing in France. During these last days in England, the members of the company attended the third anniversary Battalion banquet which was held in Bournemouth on July 10, 1944.

## COMBAT

During the entire period of combat, Headquarters Company had two important functions to perform. The first was the service function; the second was the task of providing local security. When the Battalion received its first mission



T/Sgt. Tobin  
Bn. Supply Sgt.



T/Sgt. Kapitan  
Bn. Supply Sgt.



Pfc. Salvatore, Pvt. Stotts, Pfc. Lania, T/5 Blozitis, Pfc. Weir, Pfc. Wallace, T/5 Tinn, T/5 Booth, Pfc. Prichard, Pvt. Hughes, Pfc. Strahler, Pvt. Howard, Pfc. Andros, T/5 Day, Pfc. Windle, Pvt. Kamien, Pvt. Walls, T/5 Saucier, T/5 Volsko, Sgt. Foyuth.



Sgt. Foyuth  
Bn. Trans. Sgt.

after the landing in France, the entire Headquarters Company moved to Quellennes France. From this point on, the various individual sections comprising the Headquarters Company became, to all intents and purposes, self-sustaining. Each section performed its respective task in and of itself, so to speak. The Staff Platoon which included the Administrative Section (S-1), the Intelligence Section (S-2), the Operations Section (S-3) and the Supply Section (S-4) was detached from the Headquarters Company with the result that there were often periods when considerable distance separated the two.

On August 14, 1944, the Commanding Officer's vehicle struck a mine. Driver Mike Flora was injured and had to be evacuated, the first Headquarters Company casualty. In late August, Captain Wright moved over to the S-2 section and Captain Thomas became Company Commander.

The company as a whole was together at Guerville, France, during late August, 1944; at Stegen, Luxembourg, during mid-September, 1944; Headquarters Company entered Germany on September 16, 1944, and when the withdrawal from Germany became necessary the Forward and Rear Echelons moved with the trains of CCR. The various sections rejoined the company at Stegen, Luxembourg. The entire company was next together at Faymonville, Belgium, in early October, 1944; at Kalterherberg, Germany, where the sections reverted back to company control, from mid-October to mid-November, 1944; at Rotgen, Germany, during November, 1944. On December 8th, the company moved to Hahn, Germany. One day during mid-December, 1944 a thundering noise was clearly heard throughout the com-

pany area. Buildings shook momentarily, doors became ajar, and windows in the vicinity were shattered. The morning report of the following morning served as an explanation. Motivated by reasons of security, Captain Thomas blew open a safe that had been found in one of the buildings in which the Headquarters Company was billeted. Unknown to Captain Thomas, the safe contained TNT so that no one, least of all Captain Thomas was prepared for what followed. While the company was at Hahn, there were reports that German paratroopers had been landed in the vicinity. Twenty-four hour security patrols were set up to guard against any threat that might arise. After the Battle of the Belgium Bulge broke out, Headquarters Company moved to Bomal, Belgium. While enroute a buzz bomb dropped some two hundred yards in front of the column. Fortunately, no one was injured. Road blocks were set up at Bomal. The entire company was together again at Spa, Belgium, the famous health center, during mid-January, 1945; at Herbesthal, Belgium, where the drone of buzz bombs overhead could be frequently heard, during late January, 1945; at Voerendaal, Holland, throughout most of February, 1945. While at Voerendaal, Lt. Fought transferred to the Air Corps and Lt. Forslund took his place as Company Executive Officer. The company crossed the Roer River on February 26, 1945. It was while the company was billeted for a brief period in Viersen, Germany, that many a GI's dream came true. An abandoned distillery was located in the town, with the result that a sense of equilibrium was sacrificed in the interests of wine, merriment and song. In early March the entire company moved into the town of Vluynheille a few hours after it had been taken by the American forces. During the time the company was here, it performed military government duties, sent out searching parties, and doubled the security in the town. One evening when most of the men of the company were attending a movie, a German plane dropped a bomb which landed a few hundred



Message Center, Osterburg, Germany



Mess Line, Heiligenstadt, Germany

yards away from the scene of the movie. On the 31st of March the company left Osterath, Germany, and crossed the Rhine at 1800 hours that day.

The company left Wittel, Germany, on April 8th and began the now famed march from the Weser to the Elbe. The next day while billeted in Pattensen, Germany, the company was subjected to enemy artillery fire before moving out. Three days later the Motor Maintenance section was cut off from the rest of the column by some pocketed resistance in the vicinity of Nuendorf, Germany, and it became necessary for a platoon from the Reconnaissance Company to lend a hand. The remainder of the march continued as planned.

## THE STAFF PLATOON

Shortly before the landing in France, the Staff Platoon was detached from the Headquarters Company. Generally speaking, there was said to be four Sections within the Staff Platoon. The Administrative Section (S-1); the Intelligence Section (S-2); the Operations Section (S-3); and the Supply Section (S-4). Captain Sparks and the Battalion Sergeant Major Kirkpatrick, deftly performed and executed the numerous administrative data and detail that came up during the entire course of combat. The Intelligence Section was headed by Captain Lloyd until 27 August when the present S-2, Captain Wright took over, with T/Sgt. Feibel and Van Horn completing the section. The Operations Section was headed by Major Patalive until September 27th, at which time the present incumbent, Major Burgess, took over with T/Sgt. Haupt and Morley Cohen rounding out the Operations team.

During most of the combat period, the Staff Platoon was attached to the 5th Armored Division Artillery. However, during the initial penetration into the Siegfried Line in September, 1944, the Battalion Headquarters section was attached to CCR. of the 5th Armored Division. In December.



T/4 Regelski, Sgt. Moore, T/5 McAlpine, T/5 Souders, T/4 Mailliard T/4 Webster, T/4 Coleman,  
 T/5 Schumacher, T/5 Ritchie, T/5 Hamlin, T/5 Schultz, T/4 Westphal, T/4 Oleska,  
 T/4 Todorow, M/Sgt. Howell, Capt. Bayer, M/Sgt. Kirschbaum, T/5 Van Antwerp, T/4 Cochrane

1944, when the Battle of the Belgium Bulge broke out, the Commanding Officer and his vehicle, plus the S-2 and S-3 sections left the Battalion Headquarters section behind at Hahn, Germany and established a Forward Command Post at Rotgen, Germany. They were later joined there by the S-1 section which moved down from Hahn. Later that month, a Forward Command Post was established at Erezee, Belgium, within hearing distance of enemy small arms fire and it was here that the Forward CP Group spent Christmas, 1944. Again in January, 1945, the Commanding Officer and his driver, Baer, together with the S-2 and S-3 sections left the Battalion Headquarters Section at Chevron, Belgium, and established a Forward Command Post at Gernechamps, Belgium.

The Battalion Personnel Section headed by WOJG Frank E. Gerlach, and the entire section consisting of T/Sgt. Wentworth, Lowery, the Company Clerks, DeSalle, Bell, Jones, Kutyla, Kronk and driver Bill Reed on August 2, 1944 proceeded to the Rear Echelon of the 5th Armored Division where they remained during the entire period of combat doing an excellent job in performing the manifold duties involved in handling the personnel records and the necessary reports required from time to time by the higher Headquarters. It was while using the Personnel Section truck to bring up the necessary gasoline and ammunition in the push from the Weser to the Elbe, that Bill Reed, in convoy with other Division trucks was fired upon by stray enemy elements with the result that eleven of the trucks in the convoy were destroyed. Reed's truck was captured and driven away by the enemy but was later recovered. In attempting to make his way back to the Allied lines, Reed was fired upon several times by German civilians but managed to get back to safety, unscathed.

The job of maintaining liaison between the Battalion and Higher Headquarters was efficiently handled by Lt. Cook (S-3) with drivers Kness and Biermeyer. In February, 1945, Lt. Cook left to join the 6th TD Group and Lt. Wing took over the job of Liaison Officer.



Pfc. Nanna, T/4 Frauenpreis, S/Sgt. Mountz, T/4 Torres,  
Pfc. J. Mayer, T/5 Patterson, T/4 Carlisle

## THE SUPPLY SECTION

Had you been able to view the Supply Section of the Battalion as it landed in France, the picture would have been something like this. Captain Travis, then Lieutenant, rode in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton command car and in the same vehicle was Slavinski, the section NCO leader, and Lind was at the wheel. Stein, the section radio operator, was in the rear of the vehicle. Kapitan, the assistant Battalion Supply Sergeant rode in the weapons carrier with Robinson at the wheel. In the rear, if you looked behind the AR's the War Department communiques and the mail bags you would have seen Vazakas, the Battalion Supply Clerk, and Petrick, the ever reliable mail clerk. Tobiu was placed in complete charge of ammunition, Taggart was placed in charge of gas and oil, and Otto Schulz, the oldest man in the section from the standpoint of service, bounced along with Tobin's ammunition section.



S/Sgt. Merle Mountz  
Mess Sgt.

Upon arriving in Briquebec, the section began the numerous duties involved in supplying and resupplying the Battalion. After a brief two day stay there the section moved out. Those who saw it still recall the humorous sight that Petrick presented as the section started to move out, clutching stray rolls of maps and equipment as he tried to catch up with the vehicle. After the rapid dash through France, the section's greatest obstacle from the standpoint of resupplying the Battalion was distance. The trips for gas and oil, ammunition and rations often was a 50 to 100 miles drive one way. The section crossed over into Germany arriving at the never to be forgotten town of Wallendorf, Germany. After the withdrawal from Germany in September, 1944, the section returned to Luxembourg with the Battalion where

the section began anew to supply the needs and wants of the organization. In addition to the normal duties, work was begun on a new T/O and T/E for the 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The Battalion next swung north and re-entered Germany in the Rotgen sector. Trips for supply continued to involve time and distance. For the first time since landing on the continent the section, as well as other units of the Battalion, was billeted in homes. Then followed the task of reconverting the Battalion, the M-36 Tank Destroyer with the more potent 90 mm gun replacing the M-10 Tank Destroyer. Then came the eventful Ardennes Campaign and the next four weeks found the section in Belgium, and it was in the town of Bomal that the section spent Christmas and New Years. Late January and early February, 1945, found the section in Holland where the section enjoyed a pleasant stay. After the crossing of the Roer, the section continued further work on the 8th, 543rd, and 762nd changes of T/O and T/E. The section welcomed a new addition in the person of Frank Mayer in January, 1945. It was during this time too that Petrick was reassigned to the Personnel Section operating with the Division trains. After a brief stay in Osterath, the section together with the rest of the Battalion joined the march across the Rhine and then began the memorable smash across Germany up to the Elbe River. It was while on this journey that Mayer achieved everlasting fame as a fill-in for magicians. When V-E day came the S-4 section by way of celebrating, fired thousands of German flares into the air on V-E night illuminating the sky and turning night into day.

From August, 1944 to mid-November, 1944, the Supply Section handled and delivered 11,378 rounds of 3 inch ammunition. From mid-November, 1944, until the cessation of hostilities 17,992 rounds of 90 mm ammunition was handled by the section. From 1 August, 1944, to 30 April, 1945, the supply section procured and issued 108,000 rations. The turnover, in percentage, of individual clothing and equipment during the entire course of combat was 300%.

## MOTOR MAINTENANCE

The Battalion Motor Maintenance Section, throughout the entire period of combat, did much towards maintaining the vehicles of the Battalion at a high level of performance and operating efficiency. Oft-times working under difficult combat conditions, the Motor Maintenance Section under the leadership of Captain Bayer, took on jobs that should have been handled by higher echelons, but the technical knowledge and skill of the men in the Motor Maintenance Section enabled them to take on and complete these jobs. This was of fundamental importance because not only was the job done well but valuable time, that ordinarily would have been lost had the vehicles been sent to a higher echelon for repair, was saved.

A short time after the landing in France, welders, Souders and Richards were assigned to assist a 3rd Army Ordnance unit to install hedgerow cutters on the number one Destroyer in each platoon of the firing companies. This was the first major piece of work accomplished on the continent.

During the operations that entailed the closing of the Falaise Gap, much work was performed on the track vehicles. In one instance, a direct hit from

an enemy 88 mm shell had punctured the fuel tank of a Destroyer, the shell passing through without further damage to the Destroyer. It thus became necessary to obtain the fuel tanks from a Destroyer that had been put out of action because of a faulty turret traversing mechanism, and this was accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

Before moving on to Paris, an incident took place within the Motor Maintenance Section that is still recalled by all the crew. McAlpine dehorned a hand grenade one day, and not knowing that Hamlin and Van Antwerp were in the cab of the parts truck getting out some dehydrated V-mails, McAlpine pulled the pin and threw the grenade into that part of the vehicle occupied by the letter writing enthusiasts. Paper, pens and the other tools of the trade were scattered to the four winds as Hamlin and Van Antwerp dove for the cover of a nearby brush. Van Antwerp showed up at the supper meal that evening wearing the latest in nettle burns, while Hamlin sported a sheepish look on his beaming countenance. While moving through France, Webster's knowledge of the French tongue enhanced the bill of fare on several occasions providing choice additions to the "Ten in One" menu.

The Motor Maintenance crew was kept busy making motor changes and tune ups on the wheeled vehicles in Luxembourg prior to the initial offensive into Germany in September, 1944. While in Germany, the section worked under artillery fire to repair three Company "B" M-10 Tank Destroyers which had been hit by shrapnel causing serious radiator leaks. While working on these Destroyers a fourth pulled in needing clutch repairs. Todorow, Lenehan, Oleska, Vervact, Schultz and Moore worked on the radiators, Westphal and McAlpine began the necessary work on the clutches, Howell, Mellring and Mailliard were recovering an M-20, belonging to the Forward Command Post Group, out of a deep ditch. The work on all sides continued at high pitch. When the order came to prepare to move out, the three radiator jobs had been completed. It became necessary to tow the Destroyer with the clutch difficulty, Westphal and McAlpine continuing to work on the vehicle all the while.

During the fighting in the Hurtgen Forest sector, many casualties resulted from mortar fire and tree bursts and the open turret tops on the M-36 Tank Destroyers afforded the crews inside the Destroyers little protection. Captain Bayer, Kirschbaum, Webster, McAlpine and Souders began drawing up plans and designs for an armored turret top. A plan was designed which appeared to offer the maximum amount of protection and at the same time did not hamper the operations of the crew within the Destroyers in carrying out their primary function. The installing of the turret tops began at once. When the Battle of the Belgium Bulge broke out all Destroyers were needed on the line so that the work on the turret tops was at a standstill during this time, of necessity. When the unit moved to Spa the work on the turret tops was continued. As the unit moved from one area to another tops were installed and Schwenheim, Germany, saw the completion of this task just prior to the crossing of the Rhine River. The turret top proved itself and demonstrated that the work and toil which had made it a reality had not been in vain.

Throughout the entire course of combat, welding was always in demand. Major repair jobs such as the replacement of transfer cases, transmissions

and engine overhaul jobs were numerous. Tire and tube repair constituted another important item in the contribution of the section to the success of the Battalion. Up to the Roer River, parts of every type and description were easily obtained but from the Roer River on a scarcity of all parts existed. From the standpoint of statistics, the following engine changes were made during the course of combat: Six M-10 Diesel engines, ten M-36 Ford engines, fourteen Ford (jeep) engines, eight GMC engines, ten Dodge engines, eleven JXD M-8, M-20 engines, one Heavy Wrecker and one Radial (T-2) engine.

## TRANSPORTATION

Upon debarking in France, it did not take long for the Transportation Platoon to learn of the rigors of combat. Lt. Wing was then in command of the Transportation section. The Platoon received its first mission upon landing. 800 rounds of ammunition were sorely needed by the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The Transportation Platoon set out on this mission that first night. German planes were out in number strafing the American columns but before the evening was over the men in Transportation got the ammunition through to its destination and made the mental notation "mission accomplished." Upon returning to the Battalion area the next morning, they learned the Battalion was preparing to hop off. They loaded their trucks and began the historic movement across France. When they reached Mantes, France, it became necessary to change tracks on all tanks. The job of hauling the tracks the necessary 300 miles fell to the Transportation platoon. This accomplished, the men loaded up and began the movement towards the Belgian border. Upon reaching the border, the Platoon refueled the Battalion. The men in the section, seven GMC's plus a platoon from the Reconnaissance Company for security reasons, made a 200 mile journey for fuel. Upon learning that there was no fuel available the platoon returned to rejoin the Battalion. In the interim, the Battalion had moved to Luxembourg so the Transportation section moved on in order to catch up with the remainder of the Battalion. After rejoining the Battalion, the section again took off for fuel and travelled to Laon, Belgium, some 150 miles distant. The men waited here some four days before they were able to obtain the necessary fuel and when this had been accomplished they returned to refuel the Battalion. Then came the initial offensive into Germany. On the fourth day, after entering Germany, word reached the section that Company "B" was in dire need of ammunition. Despite a heavy artillery barrage, Tibbets and Salvatore started out to attempt to get the ammunition through to the company. In the midst of the journey, the fan belt on Tibbets' vehicle broke. The men dismounted and working under artillery fire proceeded to put their extra fan belt on the vehicle, enabling them to continue their journey and to accomplish their mission. At this same time, word came down that a platoon of Company "A" was trapped and needed ammunition. Williams and Otto Schulz set out to attempt to get the ammunition through to the trapped platoon. Despite the heavy enemy artillery barrage, they too were able to get through to the platoon and deliver the ammunition.

When the Battle of the Belgium Bulge broke out, S/Sgt. Abec, Campbell, Volsko, Blozitis, Walls and Langford took three GMC's with them and set