

During the period 4 - 6 June 1982, Company B, 702 Tank Destroyer Battalion, 2d Armored Division will hold a reunion in Columbia, South Carolina. This will be the fourth such meeting of the company which has been brought together mainly through the efforts of former 1st Sergeant James E. Ridenhour of Cooleenee, North Carolina. Approximately 35 former members, and wives, from many areas of the United States, will attend. The company was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1942 with cadre from the 2d Armored Division. It took part in the Louisiana maneuvers, completed its training in Camp Gruber, Oklahoma and joined the 2d Armored in England in early 1944. On June 9 of that year the company landed in France where it immediately entered combat among the hedgerows of Normandy.

During five major European campaigns (Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe) in which it participated, as part of the 2d Armored Division, the company fought with bravery and distinction while compiling an impressive combat record. It was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, Fourragere of the Belgium Croix de' Guerre and numerous individual honors. Company B participated in the St. Lo breakthrough in July 1944, crossed the Seine River in August, fought through Belgium and Holland, and on 3 October, was in the attack on the Siegfried Line in the vicinity of Ubach, Germany. After what was described as the largest tank battle on the Western Front, the Roer River was reached in late November. At this time, casualties had reduced the combat effectiveness of the company to only 5 tanks and the unit was relieved for a much needed rest and re-organization. In December, when the German winter counter-offensive threatened to reach the Meuse River, the 2d Armored moved southward to Belgium, traveling more than 100 miles in 24 hours to meet the 2d Panzer Division, which had made the deepest penetration by German forces. The 2d Panzer was destroyed after 5 days of bitter fighting. On 3 January 1945, the company, as part of Combat Command B, began counter operations against German forces and on 16 January, the back of the Ardennes offensive was broken when a link-up with 3d U.S. Army troops was made at Houffalize, Belgium. In helping to blunt the German offensive, Company B, which had recently been equipped with the new I-10 Tank Destroyer with 90 MM gun, was cited in battle reports for its actions. After moving back into Germany, the Roer River was

crossed at Julich on 27 February, the Rhine, in vicinity of Wesel, on 29 March, and the company moved across Germany to its final operation of the war when Magdeburg on the Elbe River was captured.

At war's end, the 2d Armored Division was designated as the Honor Division to represent the United States at the Postdam Conference in Berlin. Company B was selected as the Honor Guard Company of its parent battalion and took part in ceremonies for President Truman, Winston Churchill, and other dignitaries attending the conference. The company was inactivated at Camp Miles Standish, Mass. in September 1945, with most of its personnel returning to civilian life.

Among those in attendance at the 1982 reunion will be 1st Sergeant Ridenhour; Col (Ret) Louis K. Nawrocky, Arlington, Virginia, who organized the company and commanded it through most of the fighting in Europe; Colonel (Ret) Cecil F. Hunnicutt, a native South Carolinian and resident of Columbia, who served with Company B as a platoon leader, executive officer, and company commander; and a former battalion commander, Harry Hart of Mooresville, North Carolina. During its reunion in Columbia, the Quality Inn, N.E. will be Company B's operational base. Various activities have been planned to include attendance at a command retreat review at Fort Jackson, a Bar-B-Q, and a memorial breakfast on 6 June.