

From the book Spearhead in the West, the 3rd Armored Division's 260 page WWII History, Published in 1946.

703rd TANK DESTROYER BN.

Call sign: "Amber"

The 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, upon its activation at Camp Polk, Louisiana, on December 15, 1941, may have been considered by some as an "8-ball" outfit. One year later, at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, while troops of the 3rd Armored Division gazed wide eyed, the "8-ball" tank busters proceeded to steal the show at a demonstration of fire power and big gun accuracy. Under the expert, harsh discipline of Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans, later commanding officer of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the 703rd had whipped itself into shape as a smoothly functioning, well trained organization.

Formed at Camp Polk, from 3rd Armored Division cadres, the 703rd was yet an attached unit owing allegiance not to Armored Force, but to Tank Destroyer Command, a new branch of service. Excepting for a short TD and commando training course at Camp Hood, Texas, however, and a period during the Ardennes fighting of 1944-45, the battalion always remained under "Spearhead" control. With the 3rd, it trained on California's Mojave Desert and at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Although originally wearing the black and orange tiger patch of TD service, the fiercely independent 703rd finally adopted the "Spearhead" patch and was as much a part of the division as any of its own tank battalions.

Crossing the Atlantic on the *Shawnee*, the battalion was stationed at Mere, Wiltshire, England. Here, Lt. Colonel Wilbur E. Showalter, a West Point graduate, assumed command.

Used as roadblocks, flank protection, and as a base of fire, the M-10, 3-inch gun carriages used by the battalion added security and heavy fire power to the division's drive through Normandy, France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line. Here, the 703rd was the first TD unit to receive the new M-36, 90 mm gun carriage, which was used for both direct and indirect fire.

Throughout constant operations in five western campaigns, the tank destroyer soldiers chalked up a record of efficiency that was cited by the ordnance offices at Aberdeen, Maryland. For every tank destroyer lost to the battalion through enemy action, men of the 703rd destroyed ten German tanks or assault guns!

The battalion's most notable actions were: first, at Ranès-Fromentel, France, where seven tanks and assault guns fell to the TD's, among them two Panthers destroyed at a range of 25 yards, by Cpl. Joseph Juno, who was himself killed as he attempted to aid the wounded enemy tankers;

at Mons, Belgium, when column after column of fleeing Jerries ran into the point blank fire of the TD's; and in the Ardennes fighting, when the 703rd was temporarily attached to the 1st Infantry Division and to the 82nd Airborne Division. The battalion returned to the 3rd in time to take part in the all out counter attack which deflated the "bulge."

Throughout the five European campaigns, the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion destroyed 90 German tanks and SP guns, scores of other transport and enemy line troops. In the final analysis, accuracy and big gun performance paid off.