

Company "A" History

Battery "G", Anti-Tank Battery, 188th FA, North Dakota National Guard, was organized 11 February 1941 with a total complement of three officers and 56 enlisted men. Company "D", 164th Infantry, furnished a cadre of 20 men, the balance of the men enlisted to complete their one year's service required under the conscription bill. During the period of February 11 to April 1, drills were held once a week, and the rest of this time spent soliciting bar-rooms and pool halls, getting men to join up. In some cases it took considerable coaxing.

On April 1, 1941, the unit was inducted into Federal Service, with a Battery strength of 76 enlisted men. Immediately after induction all men drew their uniforms, received their immunization "shots", and physical examinations. About half a dozen lucky guys were rejected. Men who didn't live in Minot stayed at the Armory there, and we messed in the First Lutheran Church basement. On April 10 we were given a farewell party with Governor Moses as guest speaker. Afterwards he and General Edwards shook hands with all the men of the Battery, which was considered an honor. After two weeks of processing the men were beginning to look like soldiers. The tags were scarce on the uniforms and part of the men could stay in step at the same time. We were scheduled to leave April 14, the day before Easter. Our departure was postponed to allow us to spend Easter with our families and friends. The streets were jammed with people on April

16 as we marched to the train, accompanied by the Minot high school band. Mr. Brady, proprietor of Brady's Bar in Minot, supplied beer and whiskey for our trip to Fort Warren, Wyoming. We never did see these beverages, for Hq. Battery, 188th FA, another unit leaving Minot, hogged it all.

After a monotonous train ride lasting two and a half days we arrived at Fort Warren, Cheyenne, Wyoming. Our army life had begun in earnest: Policing the camp area, scrubbing the barracks floors, washing windows, regimental detail, battalion detail, guard duty, inspections, parades, and K. P., K. P., K. P. In addition to this, the Battery was issued two 75 mm guns on which, between details, we did "cannoneers' hop" and care and cleaning of materiel.

In the middle of June we received our first batch of replacements from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, whom we heartily welcomed. Pvt. Karg had the honor of being the first man to be thrown into the guardhouse. He derived so much K. P. from his operations he signed up for steady cook. It's too bad that Kjelstrup wasn't Mess Sgt.

Upon the completion of our basic training 15% of the men were given seven-day furloughs. Our group chartered a Greyhound bus to Minot. Sgt. Kjelberg tried to keep order on the way home. On our return to the Battery he reported the consumption of beer and whiskey en route, along with 'Yoo-

hoing' the girls and throwing firecrackers out the windows. July 1 Pvts. Brown, Keck, O'Leary, and Olson were promoted to Cpl.

On July 15 we were informed that an Anti-Tank Battalion was being activated of which we were to be a part, designated as Battery "C", Anti-Tank Battalion, 76th FA Brigade. The Battalion being under the command of Lt. Colonel Meek. A few days later we were ordered to take part in maneuvers which were being held at Fort Lewis, Washington. At this time Captain P. Owen took over the command of the Battery. Needing additional N. C. O.'s for the coming operations, the following promotions were made: Cpls. Brown, O'Leary, Keck, Kolbo, Lunde, Newman, and Newton to Sergeants; Pvts. Runemark, Fjelstad, Gullickson, Crowe, and Clark to Corporals. At the same time, being short of specialists, Treichel and Sailor transferred in from Service Battery, 188th FA; Doug Brown, Berger, Hoeffler, and Hoffman from Battery "A", 188th FA. The above named men learned to drive a truck en route to Fort Lewis. The 188th FA band saw us off at 6:00 A. M. for Fort Lewis, Washington, on August 4. Desiring to impress his old buddies, Doug Brown clashed gears and stalled his truck in front of his old barracks. On the first night we stopped at Rock Springs, Wyoming, where a few drinks were purchased over a bar on which Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane once rested their elbows. In Pocatello, Idaho, a Ladies' Civic Club served us ice cream and doughnuts with our supper. In the evening a dance in the Armory and a street dance were held for our benefit. After six days of jolting ride we reached our destination.

Next day we drew five 75 mm guns and one wooden gun, completing our eight-gun

Battery. After three weeks of battling our mythical foe the maneuvers were completed. We skillfully checked our enemy's advance and drove him back into the Pacific Ocean—so the Generals said. After the maneuvers Sgts. Christenson, Newman, and Pederson, and Cpls. White and Price were reduced to Privates, the reasons ranging from lack of interest in the wooden gun to being sleepy and taking French leave. A tank battalion attempted to show us the tactics of tanks in action. Confusion was rampant in the affair. We actually saw real live tanks in this operation. Sgt. Newton and his crew shot a blank 75 mm shell at a ten-yard range at a tank in which Lt. Shirley was riding. The following explosion and black powder darkened him considerably.

After a short rest and a three-day pass over Labor Day we started back to Fort Warren. When we arrived in Idaho Falls, Idaho, the American Legion decided to sponsor a dance for us. On account of the short notice a successful announcement was made on the radio, asking for 500 young ladies for the jitterbug G. I.s in town for the evening.

Upon our return to Fort Warren we were given furloughs. Again our morale was at a high point. Around this time several of us were discharged from the Army for being 28 years of age or over and for dependency.

The next few months were spent on occasional trips—you guessed it, to "Pole Mt.". Many of us have a tendency to shiver at hearing those two words. It's a good thing Uncle Sam gave us good shoes and overshoes, or we could refer to the place as "Valley Forge." It was so cold up there the vapor from your breath would freeze in mid-air,

drop to the ground, and one would get a very sore foot if it happened to be in the way.— Believe it or not! Here—"Pole Mt."—is where we got some real shooting experience with the 75 mm gun. Targets representing enemy tanks were improvised of a wooden frame with a sheet of white cloth stretched over. Most of our firing was direct. After two months of firing, we had a Battery policing job to do. We combed the firing range marking duds, which later on the ordnance picked up.

We were just getting nicely settled down, planning various sports tournaments, had an indoor rifle range near completion, when those dirty, yellow Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. Things started popping very fast then. On December 11 we started for Tokyo via Fort Lewis, Washington, with two towed 75 mm guns. In Rawlins, Wyoming, we were notified it was to be a forced march, stopping only to eat and gas up. On our arrival in Fort Lewis we were stationed in Camp "Swamp" Murray. This was the wettest and muddiest spot in the country.



Company "A" 776 T. D. Bn.

Here the Battalion was activated into the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and we were at last Company "A". At this time we received a number of men transferred from old Battery "A", Anti-Tank Battalion, 76th FA Brigade, which was broken up under the new TD Table of Organization. Some of the men who transferred to us at this time were Sgts. Tobiassen and S. Smith, Cpl. Barker, and Pvts. D. Smith, Kinkki, Bybee, Spyksma, Horseman, Gold, and Bingham. Also at this time we received 11 men from the 144th FA, namely S/Sgt. Riordan, Sgt. Goodwin, Sgt. Haywood, Sgt. MacCall, Cpls. Rennie, Minah, Lacassie, and Pvts. Britz, Cota, and Shalhoob.

We moved into barracks at Fort Lewis on December 23, 1941, and on Christmas Eve had a swell party. No one was able to go on pass to town, for the entire Fort was alerted.

The Company pulled Regimental guard, Battalion guard, and Anti-aircraft guard which kept us all plenty busy. The following men were transferred on the 7 of January to an M. P. detachment at Fort Lewis: Cpls. Heere and Fjelstad, and Pvts. Horn, Ottmar, Murray, Berg, Horseman, Gold, Newman and White.

On January 22 at 8:00 P. M. the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Copales and Pacific Beach, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. We were billeted in tourist cabins, with the Company CP set up in the middle of town. January 26 the Battalion moved to Carlisle, Washington, a ghost town. This time we billeted in an old building built for troops during World War I. Here time was spent on problems, digging in gun positions, etc. At the one general merchandise store in town we picked up the expression "A nickel and

a token." On February 13 we moved out at 3:00 A. M. on war games lasting till late afternoon.

We then moved back to Fort Lewis, and were then given six-hour passes into towns outside the Fort. Most of the six hours was spent in traveling to and from the towns, leaving us but little time in town. At this time the Battalion got orders to form a training cadre to train new recruits and thus bring our Battalion up to T/O strength. The men from this Company who were selected were Lt. Fulton, S/Sgts. MacCall and Goodwin, Sgt. O'Leary, and Cpls. Bonness and Lacassie. It was about this time that Lts. Wadle and Sternfeld were assigned to our Company. Our training schedule consisted of close-order drill, manual of arms, care and cleaning of materiel, and frequent marches to the firing range. In March, 1942 Major Barney became Battalion Commander.

On April 5 we were detached from the Battalion and assigned to Coastal Defense, being attached to the 115th Cavalry. We had recently been equipped with M2 and M3 half-tracks. We still had our towed 75 mm. guns. Two days of travel landed us at Marshfield, Oregon. The Company was split into two platoons, one going to Charleston and the other to Bandon, some 30 miles away. Our 75 mm. guns were dug in positions on the beach where we worked together with the Coast Guard. Gun crews were on duty 24 hours and off 24. Cpl. Hagen was sent back to Fort Lewis and the training cadre to fill the vacancy created upon Sgt. O'Leary's departure for Officer Candidate School. He was our first candidate who had been selected to attend Officer School. Our stay in Oregon was regarded as a furlough, for we could spend a lot of time in town. The people were swell to us and

many of the soldiers struck up friendships that will last for years to come. Sgt. Delameter married one of the local girls.

On May 1 we were relieved by a battery of artillery of the 44th Division and returned to Fort Lewis. Everyone hated to leave because they knew they had to go back to the old monotonous training schedules. In May Sgt. Bonness went to O. C. S. Cpl. Sturla was sent to replace him at the training cadre. About this time most of the Company became air-minded. Someone started a rumor that glider pilots were desperately needed and 99% of the Company put in applications for the Air Corps.

Our new weapons were finally issued: four 75 mm. guns mounted on M3 half-tracks. Then came the hours of training on them. Dry runs. Dry firing. Then finally the firing of sub-calibre weapons mounted on the larger guns at towed targets. In the later part of May we received our replacements from the Replacement Training Battalion. Also at this time we furnished a cadre for the 817th TD Bn. that was being formed at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. The following men were sent: M/Sgt. MacCall, 1st/Sgt. Reardon, S/Sgts. Goodwin, Spyksma, and Johnson, Sgts. Stan Smith, Oberdiar, Bangs, Bybee, and Jensen, Cpls. Gullicksen, T/4s Clark, Selvog, and Schwede, Tec/5 Carlson, Captain Owens, our Company Commander, and Lt. Sternfeld. Lt. Potter was made captain and Commanding Officer shortly after entering the Company from Headquarters Company. Next came the task of forming sections and assigning the new men to them. Back to training again, Lt. Wadle was a firm believer in double time, often with a gas mask on. Area 46 really got a working over in the following weeks.

The weekend of July 4 we got our first weekend passes. Prior to that the Post was alerted on special days, such as holidays. Someone figured that would be the time of an attack if there was to be one by the Japs. Along toward the later part of July a rumor of Texas popped up from somewhere. More than likely the third hole. One day Colonel Barney had it for sure there would be no such trip. Someone crossed him up, for two days later we got orders and the gang started singing "Deep in the Heart of Texas." On July 27 Captain Potler was transferred to the 641st TD Bn. which was going overseas, and Captain Shirley, our Battalion S-2, was made Company Commander.

We packed up and left for Camp Hood, Texas, by train about July 29. The train trip was pleasant; berths were provided and the food was good. Most of us entrained with an adequate supply of spirits. Wendlandt and Nation provided the musical background for that old favorite song "Bless 'Em All." Lt. Wadle was in command of the Company on this trip. We arrived at Copperas Cove, Texas, about August 1, at 1:00 A. M. It was a desolate place. We had to unload all equipment immediately, and there was little transportation for men or equipment.

Finally arriving in our bivouac area, we bedded down in the first tent we found. Equipment was unloaded in every area but our own. The next two days were spent in locating our equipment and trying to adjust ourselves to our lousy camp. We were in a forgotten world—no showers, no bus service, dust was everywhere, and inspectors were popping up all the time. Captain Shirley was transferred and Lt. Wadle became Company Commander, and was the only officer with the Company until Lt. Cole's coming a few

days later. Lt. Cole was made Executive Officer. Sleepy-eyed Lt. Wherry came at this time and left shortly afterwards.

We now settled down to some hard work, and the platoon sergeants were the platoon leaders—S/Sgts. Farver, Olson, and Tobiasen. We went on every type of problem, both day and night. We fired all weapons, sometimes firing on three ranges simultaneously. To accomplish this it was necessary to borrow Lt. Cusick from Headquarters Company. New equipment was arriving; the Company's morale, despite our hard work, was extremely high. We soon became the outstanding Company in the battalion. While on the firing range we gave an exhibition that topped anything ever put on at Camp Hood. Colonel Barney had many visitors for our performance. He even dressed up Willingham, one of our gunners, as a cook. The Company had many expert gunners, including Hanenberg who fired the only perfect course ever fired on the range.

When our firing was completed we carried on many map problems, especially from air photos. We were soon able to find our way about accurately, both night and day. Our security sections had a great time on our battalion problems. They dispensed the various grenades made of flour sacks and paint in bottles with such accuracy that a memorandum came out from TDC forbidding their use in the future.

We were being filled up to T/O strength for the first time in the Company's history. About this time a number of replacements arrived from FARTC, Camp Roberts, California. All the old men were receiving promotions and our non-commissioned officers proved to be very efficient. We were having an occasional "beer-bust" and poker

seemed to be the leading recreation and many times kept some of the men up all night. The famous Buchanan Dam was a favorite spot for our men on weekend pass. Temple and Lampasas were other popular towns.

Before we went over the famous Commando Course at Camp Hood, Lt. Wadle, hearing how rigorous the course was, went over one Sunday morning to swim the river which was supposed to be 10 to 14 feet deep. To his amazement it was not over four feet deep. This information greatly relieved some of the smaller men and we took the Commando Course in stride and really had a lot of fun on it. Lieutenants Henningsen, Hutchens, and Merritt were assigned to the Company, thereby giving us a full quota of officers.

In September we were alerted for overseas shipment. We had a famous inspection by the Army Ground Forces. We worked for three days to get ready and the inspection lasted about 15 minutes.

At this time the Company completed its training at Camp Hood; we learned rapidly here and were soon transformed from a green TD Company into one of the best. We had many night problems, during one of which Sgt. Tobiassen was peppered with flour grenades (dummy grenades) in a night attack. His classic statement: "They're here. There's millions of them," earned for him the names of Rommel and Timoshenko which he held for a long time.

Most of us were enjoying the pleasure of furloughs at this time. Some men thought Granlie would never come back. After this we settled down to improving our Company area. Tent frames were built of salvage lumber. There was little work to do, as our training areas had been taken away;

gripping reached a new high; the Company Commander was confronted with an impatient group of men. They threatened to transfer and passed about the remarks: "This outfit never will go overseas. I want to get into a fighting outfit." or, "If we're here another month I'll put in for O. C. S." In these days lots of us were belligerent, and the Company Commander often wondered if Hitler knew of this ferocious band of men waiting for the chance to tear apart his army.

Cpl. Peterson was transferred to the Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet on October 3, 1942. On October 7 the following named men were assigned to the Company from Camp Gordon, Georgia: Pvts. Kraus, Denny, Lark, Washburn, O'Connor, Coviello, and Badgley, which brought our Company strength over the 200 mark. On the 11 of October 25 enlisted men were transferred to the 31st Division at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, bringing our strength down to 185. Cpl. Edgar Wolfe was transferred to the Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet. Martin Olson was promoted to Cpl. on October 15; Pfc. Gilbert and Hakenson were promoted to Cpl. on October 22.

The Battalion football team played many good games during this period. Representing Company "A" on this team were Burton, Huber, Nacho, Hardies, Reed, Large, and Kunkel. Lts. Wadle and Cusick refereed many of the games. Pvt. Klein was attached to the organization from the 36th Armored Regt., Fort Knox, Kentucky, as a Tank Driver Instructor. Pvt. Biermann was transferred to this organization from Hq. Company on October 30. Sgt. Walter Hagen was transferred to the Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet on the same date.

On the 30 of October the Battalion made

a tactical march to Austin, Texas, and bivouaced at Camp Mowbry. During our stay at Camp Mowbry we attended a football game between the University of Texas and Southern Methodist University of Texas. There were some sober men in the Company; liquor ran so high that the Battalion was unable to pull out as scheduled, and we departed from Austin 36 hours late. Sgt. Vernon Olson, while showing how to ride a horse, fell and sustained a broken arm. Cpl. Hilson was transferred to Hq. Company to take over the duties as Personnel Sergeant. Lt. Cusick was transferred to the Company from Hq. Company.

We were selected by the TD Board to put on demonstrations for army "brass hats" who came to Camp Hood to learn how to use TDs. (Incidentally, they never did learn.) On these demonstrations the drivers really had a great time; it seemed we could never get into position fast enough. Even though Doc Large's destroyer never touched the ground over twice from the time he started until he got into position. On November 3 Cpl. Gunnarson was promoted to Sgt. and Pvt. Kramer was appointed Cpl. Tec/5 Ellibee was reduced to Pvt. for his reckless driving on a night maneuver.

We constructed a complete mess hall 80x100 feet out of salvage lumber from Camp Hood. We stole windows from the houses all over the camp. The tables were made of planks and were so heavy it took two men to move them. Much credit for this masterpiece of architecture goes to Tec/5 Alvin Anderson, Sgt. Rosslund, Sgt. Olson, and Cpl. Nation. After the Company Commander took the level and square away from these carpenters the building went up in a hurry. Our first night in the mess was devoted to a "beer bust." We left our

calling card in this mess hall with the following inscription: "You b_____ eating in this mess hall can thank God Company "A" 776 TD Bn. was here first."

Following a typical "A" Company "beer bust," Tom, Edaakie, and Nacho made a real reputation scouting out that queer little Texas animal, the armadillo. On these occasions Pfc. Cornell could invariably be depended upon to give his rendition of "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam."

On November 20 we moved from the tent camp into Camp Hood proper. This was after we had been able to eat in our Company constructed mess hall for approximately one week. Pfc. Landaker was promoted to Cpl. on November 24. The following day Pfc. Arnold Stompro was transferred to this organization from Hq. Company. November 26, Thanksgiving Day, the cooks really went to town in the kitchen and prepared a meal fit for a king. We had turkey, sirloin steaks, oyster stew and crackers, mashed potatoes, buttered peas, shrimp salad, dill pickles, pumpkin cobbler with whipped cream, ice cream with chocolate sauce, sugar cookies, candy, nuts, coffee, and cigars and cigarettes. A beautiful printed Menu was prepared for this occasion and sent to each man's home. Needless to say, the afternoon was spent just taking it easy. On the 30 of November the following named men were transferred to this organization from FARTC, Fort Sill, Oklahoma: Pvts. Hensley, Capps, Idol, L. Burton, Howe, Harrison, Izydorek, De Witt, Mills, Siler, and Corke. These men brought our Company strength up to 196.

About November 30 we held a Battalion problem to end all problems. After driving about the Post in blackout for several hours

we drove to a bivouac area in the woods in preparation for the maneuvers in the morning. The observers, including several Generals, didn't notice our many mistakes because of the darkness. Lt. Gusick who then had the first platoon reported that he was in the bivouac area—and he was, but the platoon was lost and wandering about the woods. Pvts. Tuthill and Marsing joined this organization on December 1, 1942, from FARTC, Camp Roberts, California. S/Sgt. Locken, our fine Mess Sgt., was transferred to Officers Candidate School at Camp Hood, Texas, on December 4, 1942. The same day Pvts. Schriefels, Bengston, and Wilde were transferred to the 148 Service Command at Camp Hood, Texas. One day we had a little war dance by the two Indians, Nacho and Tom, plus S/Sgt. H. T. Brown. For this generous exhibition from spirits while on duty the Company Commander generously rewarded them by taking them out to Pidcoke on a Sunday morning and letting them walk back, about nine miles.

Lt. Merritt was transferred to Company "B", this Battalion, and Lt. Burnell F. Peter, formerly our Battalion Personnel Officer, was assigned to this Company on December 7, 1942. Lt. Theodore L. Fawcett was transferred to our Company from the 811th TD Battalion on December 8, 1942. Cpl. Bero and Tec/5 Vernon McCallum were transferred to O. C. S. at Camp Hood, Texas, about this time.

We received our M-10s, the new Tank Destroyers with the three-inch guns, and were the envy of Camp Hood. We had the first ever issued to troops, received no instructions or tank manuals, and really had a problem learning about the guns. We had

these just long enough to learn a little about them before turning them in when we came overseas. On December 17 Pvt. Klein was officially assigned to the Company.

During this time we were really tearing our hair; nobody knew what the score was. Orders would contradict themselves as fast as they could be issued. We wore out our packing boxes stamping and restamping them. Lt. Wadle returned from Orientation School and we received the news that we were due for overseas duty. Those men who had been on furlough were quite surprised to find when they returned a few days later that we were working night and day packing for the big boat ride. Company morale was helped greatly by this promise of a real trip. Lt. Cole was transferred to Hq. Company to take over the duties of Battalion Liaison Officer, and Pvt. Birkholz was transferred to Reconnaissance Company on December 18. On December 19 Pvts. Mitchell and Bingham were transferred from this Company to Hq. Company. Pvt. Henry Hill was transferred from Hq. Company to this Company; the same day the following promotions and reductions were made in the Company: Cpl. Landaker was reduced to Pvt.; Sgt. Hansen was promoted to S/Sgt.; Tec/4 Kraft was promoted to S/Sgt.; Tec/5 Conrad Larson was promoted to Tec/4; Pfc. Pitts and Nation were appointed Cpls.; Pfc. Manley and Pvt. Klein were made Tec/5s; Tec/5 Black became Cpl., and Cpl. Thorn became Tec/5. S/Sgts. Olson and Farver were transferred to O. C. S. at Camp Hood, Texas, on December 22, 1942 the same day Pvts. O'Brien, Cornell, Harrison, and Black Cloud were transferred to the 803rd TD Bn.; and Pfc. Biermann was promoted to Cpl.

On The Way

Early on the morning of the 24 of December we arose and, crowded like cattle, rode in trucks over to Gatesville, Texas. As usual, we arrived about four hours before entraining time. However, after many trials and tribulations, we got safely on our way and broke out the spirits. The next day was Christmas, and, while everyone else in the army was eating turkey and what-have-you, we had cheese sandwiches served by Tec/5 Holte—by special request of Lt. Wadle. Holte had done his drinking before the appointed time. By great good fortune we were able to refill our spirits supply at St. Louis and so were able to finish out the trip in the manner in which we were accustomed.

We arrived at Fort Dix, New Jersey, at 2:30 A. M. on the 27 of December and marched a long way to the barracks which were cold and dirty. Here we waited impatiently to get going, not knowing what was in store for us. We were paid very late on the 31 of December, 1942, and men left for their New Year's celebration as late as 11:00 P. M. They straggled in all through the next day in various stages of chagrin and hilarity. An order placing us on a one-hour alert and canceling all passes started the famous "Battle of Fort Dix." We had been informed that no liquor could be taken aboard ship, so we immediately began to drink all that was on hand to forestall the possibility of having any to take aboard ship. This resulted in 43 quarts being consumed in two nights and a day between the bedsteads of Lts. Wadle and Cusick. After this mighty battle was fought and won, we did not leave for another ten days. On January 4, 1943, Tec/5s Holler and Wuttke were again reduced to Privates. After vainly looking for

Marion Outz since leaving Camp Hood, we were forced to abandon hope of his ever rejoining the Company. During our stay at Dix we were injected with every known shot—sore arms were in style.

Day after day we packed our barracks bags and loaded them on our backs along with all our other equipment and hiked around the Post. This was a real test of physical endurance and separated the men from the boys. After many dry runs we finally left the barracks at 2:30 P. M. on 13 of January, 1943, and marched about two miles to the train, where we boarded the coaches for our final lap of the journey to the Port of Embarkation. We rode for four hours and then detrained and staggered down to the Ferry which took us to the loading pier. We passed the Statue of Liberty. We embarked on the USS Monterey at 5:00 A. M. for Casablanca, French Morocco, North Africa. Our destination at that time was unknown to us.

The Monterey was a former luxury liner running between 'Frisco and Honolulu. We were most fortunate in getting all the men quartered in staterooms, which, even though a little crowded, were the best quarters aboard ship. The absence of women was magnified by the increased number of long beards and bald heads during the journey. The trip was made in fine style with only a few men getting seasick. We were never bothered by the enemy from sea or air at any time on the entire voyage. On the afternoon of the 25 of January, 1943, we came into sight of the harbor of Casablanca, and most of us were glad to see land again.

We Arrive In Africa

As we pulled into the harbor we passed the remains of many French ships which had been scuttled only a few months before. We had arrived in a strange land and it seemed almost like a dream to us. The Battalion started to disembark at 2:00 A. M. the morning of January 26. We loaded our baggage onto trucks as we descended the gangplank, formed our companies, and marched to our bivouac area which was about three miles inland. The march was filled with odors of a strange land; in the moonlight we saw the palms and the square-shaped white buildings of which we were to see so much more during the next several weeks. Casablanca literally means "house white" in Spanish or, rather, "village of white buildings," and, truly, that was just what the city of Casablanca was. We couldn't make out the sign boards and advertisements above the buildings, as they were all in French. This added to the strangeness of the night. After a long, tiresome march we left the asphalt streets and wound down a dusty road. Here the odor of horses was very strong. We found out in the morning that we were next to a French cavalry unit—and a Moslem cemetery. A little way down this road the column stopped and upon investigation we were told that our outfit was to stay in this pasture. The dew was very heavy and our shoes were soon soaked, and at 4:30 in the morning it can be darned cold in Africa. We were told that we could use some bales of native hay to lay our bed rolls on, so most of us paired off and carried

a bale about 100 yards from the pile, spread it out, and made our beds. The bales of hay were large and tied up with hand-braided native rope. The hay itself smelled musty and had an aroma about it which made visions of camels, donkeys, and Arabs flash through our minds even before we had seen them. There we lay, our first night in Africa, spread out on this aromatic hay in a pasture, covered with heavy dew in the chilly morning air, the bright stars shining down on us.

We awoke long after daylight that morning, and the weird whistles of the trains came to our ears. From the nearby cemetery came the weird chanting of the Moslem funeral marches. Our late breakfast that morning consisted of "C" rations. For many of us it was the first time that we had been treated to this delicacy. These rations were heated in an old two-wheeled, horse-drawn French field cooker. This apparently was a carry-over from the last war, as was most of the French equipment that we saw in Casablanca. The sight of the dirty Arabs—their camels, donkeys, and horses—we first accepted as one of many strange sights, but which during the following months were to become too familiar and repulsive to us. It was necessary to keep guards on duty constantly to keep the Arabs from our area, lest they steal everything in sight. While we were awaiting our equipment to arrive we were assigned as guards for the Casablanca docks, and for a brief two weeks held

the infamous title of "M. P.s" During this time we stole the British dump blind; men were wearing flying suits, English sweaters, goggles, plus having a substantial supply of English chocolate and food. On February 11 the following reductions were made: Sgt. Pederson, Cpls. Olson and Sprague, Tec/5s Hoeffler and John Smith, and Pfc. Gallagher and Reitan were reduced to Privates. Nolan McEntire was promoted to Sgt. and Elbert Burton promoted to Tec/5. On the 19 of February Olson and Sprague were remade Cpls. and Hoeffler, a Tec/5. Privates Kelley and Speer were transferred to the Company from the 62nd FA on February 21.

Our equipment arrived and we were allowed to fire the guns for two days on a nearby range. This, incidentally, was the first time we were allowed to fire the three-inch gun. After a final flurry of work we took off for Tunisia at 9:00 A. M. on the 25 of February, exactly one month after our landing in North Africa. On this trip we had a very high-priced guard detail because of a small unauthorized jaunt to the Medina by the following men on the night prior to our departure: S/Sgt. Haywood, Sgts. Doug Brown, Karg, and Dyle Smith, Cpl. Barker, and Tec/5s Hoeffler, Holte, and Kinkki. The trip was very disagreeable. Transportation of the entire Company was made in crowded wheeled vehicles. Our tracked vehicles were shipped by water, and the ship our wrecker was on was torpedoed and we never saw it again. The first day we traveled 132 miles to Meknes; next day 227 miles to Oujda, Algeria; next day 125 miles to Sidi-Bel-Abbes, home of the French Foreign Legion. Next day we reached Orleansville; next day 130 miles took us to L'Arba; next day 116 miles to Beni-Monsouer. Finally,

160 miles carried us to Constantine, Algeria, where we again went into extended bivouac. On March 4 the following men were reduced in grade: Cpl. Backlund, Tec/5 Bloms, and Tec/5 Hieb to Private. Applequist was promoted to Cpl., and Holler and Carpenter were appointed Tec/5. On March 6 Earl, Stratemeyer, and Carlson were attached to us as Medics. Pvt. Etcheverry transferred to the Company from 903rd Engr. Air Force on March 10. Backlund was again promoted to Cpl.

Just prior to our departure from Constantine we were able to witness a French execution of a spy by a firing squad, carried out on a rifle range adjacent to our bivouac area.

We pulled out of Constantine to travel 110 miles to Tebessa. Like a mobile arsenal we left Constantine—we carried enough ammunition to supply a regiment; however it did not take us long to learn how to equip combat soldiers. We had a lot of trouble on this trip, burning out eight bogie wheels on the M-10s. We left Tebessa at 3:00 A. M. and traveled 46 miles to Kasserine Valley. We had a terrible road march—it rained all night, everybody was getting stuck because of the muddy road; finally we arrived in Kasserine about 9:00 A. M.

Here we had our first contact with the 1st Armored Division, and they were really glad to see us. Here we put on the finishing touches for our first engagement, and early on the morning of March 17 we went out as advance guard for the force attacking Gafsa.

On the afternoon of the same day we received our first real taste of African rain and mud when we moved into Bir El Hafey.

No contact with the enemy was made in this sector, but Doug Brown almost shot an Englishman whom he mistook for an Italian because of his beret and the small tank he was driving. So deep was the mud here that all wheeled vehicles had to be towed. Each M-10 pulled from two to three jeeps and $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton trucks around. On the 20 we moved south to within 12 miles of Gafsa.

We moved east from here and on the morning of the 23 of March attacked the valley west of Maknassey. In this spot we had our first taste of battle. As we streamed across the valley as part of a combat team of tanks, infantry and artillery, we could see the bursting of shells, both our own and the enemy's. Maknassey was taken and we settled down as flank guards for the forces fighting farther south at El Guettar. Here we were detached from the Battalion and joined CCB, made up of the 27th FA, 2nd Bn. 13th AR, 2nd Bn. 6th Armd Infantry, and others like ourselves. The Company soon gained the respect of CCB. When we knocked out some German artillery at 13,800 yards, General Robinett really looked up and said: "I now have a TD outfit that knows how to shoot." We were really alert here, and full of ginger, almost praying for the German tanks to show themselves. The Company held approximately four miles of the front line and our security sections did a grand job here. Marion De Kock had a dud land in his slit trench just above his feet. Terrible Karg's crew got a good going over from the German artillery late one afternoon, but came out O. K. Many days we waited here for the British Eighth Army to crash through and crush Rommel. It was during this period, on the 28 of March, that Lt. Wadle was promoted to Captain. Here, too, it was that Nolan McEntire made his classic

statement: "It's not the one with your name on it that gets you, it's the shell they send over with the remark 'To whom it may concern.'" On March 29 we had our first casualty—Cpl. Kramer, the Company Clerk, was injured in an auto wreck and was eventually evacuated to the States.

Lt. Peter, on the 27, led a doughty band of men in six jeeps out to reconnoiter a pass through to the coastal plain. They were met by 14 enemy tanks and forced to abandon two jeeps. On this patrol, in the excitement, Boatright who had exhausted his supply of chewing tobacco and was chewing Prince Albert pipe tobacco had his tommy-gun shot out of his hand and swallowed the pipe tobacco. Later that day Lt. Peter and Sgt. Smith and Pvt. Ellibee returned and recovered the jeeps in the face of the enemy. Each was awarded a Silver Star for this action.

Shortly after this patrol we were ordered to move farther west late in the evening. Captain Wadle and Lt. Cusick went out to reconnoiter, and Lt. Henningsen was to bring up the Company. As usual orders were changed. Capt. Wadle left Lt. Cusick, each became lost in the muddle of events, and then Lt. Henningsen got lost with the Company. On April 7 Vonderhaar was reduced to Private, and on the 9 Landaker was made Cpl. and John Smith, Tec/5. The Eighth Army finally broke through and the enemy withdrew to northern Tunisia.

On April 11 we moved 56 miles to Sidi Bou Zid. We saw here some 90 American tanks that had been knocked out by Germans in previous battles. There were no Germans for miles, but we had to move ahead of the infantry to protect them. Up to this time

our cigarettes and PX issue was lousy, our food consisted of "C" rations, and the water situation became acute many times. We were now introduced to the 5 in 1 "U" ration which eased our pain considerably. By this time we were wiseing up and all our surplus equipment was being disposed of in various ways. Weimholt was attached to us from the Medical Detachment on April 14. The same day Cpl. Pitts was reduced to Pvt. and Pvt. Ellibee promoted to Cpl. The following men were transferred to us on April 17 from the 2642 Repl. Bn.: Tec/5 Eller, Pfc. Davenport, Pelliccotti, Wallis, and Pvts. Durovec, Fornal, Foster, Gilinsky, Lucerna and Schmidt.

On April 19 we began our part in the movement of the American II Corps across the British First Army. One hundred miles to Le Kef we moved on April 19, and early the next morning we traveled another 67 miles to Ghardimaou. Here we had our first rest. The area was pleasant and we saw our first green grass. The men were able to clean up a bit and take on a little French wine. On the 22 we left Ghardimaou and traveled 63 miles to Beja. Some knocked out Mark VI Tiger Tanks were strewn about here.

We departed for the famous Mousetrap on the evening of April 27 and took up positions on the southern end. Here Capt. Wadle slept on a dead German and was quite surprised the next morning at the Heinie's closeness. While Capt. Wadle and Lt. Cusick were carrying on one of their many discussions on how to win the war the Germans suddenly decided to end their conversation abruptly with a little shelling, which hit John Smith and Bovill, causing our first casualties from enemy fire. Bakken

drove the car away to a position of cover, camouflage net and all. In this vicinity the CO picked flowers in a farm yard one afternoon that we were unable to take with armor the following afternoon. Here we were on the right of the famous hill 609 and later gave the Anserine Farm along with two artillery battalions a good working over. Up to this time this had been a German strong point. After we had completed our task on this farm the 81st Recon drove right by. April 30 Pvts. Phillips, Eggleston, Bishop, F. Roberts, Mayne, and Robinson were transferred into the Company. The same day Beaver, Treichel, Bishop, and Durovec aided in extinguishing a fired vehicle in which a sergeant of Hq. Company was killed. For their actions in this emergency they were subsequently given a joint citation.

Mateur fell on May 3 and we moved into the valley south of Mateur, on the right flank of the Division. May 4 the enemy let us have it with everything he had, including two dive-bombing raids. In spite of such a heavy punishment only one man was injured, Cpl. Hendrickx. Hanenberg and Byous were hit on May 5, and but a short elapse of time followed before Meyer, White, Kelley, Bishop, and Durovec were also wounded. All men were evacuated except Hanenberg. Late in the same afternoon Lt. Henningsen received word that he had been a 1st Lt. for several days.

On the night of May 5 we moved through Mateur to attack at dawn of the next day. The night move was something we will long remember. Moving back to join the Battalion Capt. Wadle received orders to return to the tankers. It was pitch dark and no one had the slightest idea where we were; we forded a stream already used by a batalion

of tanks. It was necessary to pull each M-10 across because of the slippery bank, and at one time we had six M-10s cabled together. Shells were landing everywhere, and we wondered in just whose lines we were. Capt. Wadle finally located Colonel Gardiner about 3:00 A. M. and on his return gave the Company ten minutes for breakfast and started down the road for the big attack on Mateur. Fortunately the CO and Lt. Cusick had been in the position we were to attack from, the day before, so they knew where we were going.

During the attack of May 6 Capt. Wadle and S/Sgt. Tobiassen were wounded early in the morning. Lt. Cusick assumed command of the Company. The attack failed. We remained east of Mateur all day and at 5:00 P. M. again attacked, this time successfully. Sgt. Larson and Cpl. Olson took over 125 prisoners out of one trench. On May 8, while under heavy artillery fire of the enemy, Sgt. R. Larson helped retrieve an M-10 that had been bogged down in a creek crossing. For this action he was later awarded the Silver Star Medal. From here on we pursued the enemy closely until at last the great day came—May 9—when all Germans and Italians in our sector surrendered. We put all vehicles in high and tore down the road to the sea, where we spent a day and night preventing remnants of the enemy troops from escaping by sea. The Company had the honor of being in the combat team that cracked the German lines and which resulted in the great enemy capitulation on that memorable Mothers' Day of 1943.

During these trying times the Company performed superbly. Sleep and food were out of the question; nights were spent always with no infantry before us, and the Germans

on every side of us were within speaking distance.

While Karg and Lacassie were going down the road one night they hit a live telephone line that knocked them out of the jeep. They reported to Lt. Cusick they had been booby-trapped. Moe, who was on the radio, said: "Be a man, go on." While bringing up ammunition one night Lt. Henningsen got lost and shot some flares so he could be located. Instead of the Company locating him the Germans did, who immediately laid down artillery fire on him and his crew. Lt. Cusick almost went nuts this particular night—everybody was lost, regrouping impossible.

Henry Hill captured two prisoners with a souvenir German rifle and discovered later the gun was empty of ammunition. At one time nearly every driver in the Company had his own personal German vehicle, and the Company gathered loads of booty, all types of weapons from Lugers to machine guns, field glasses, and cameras, to fill our bags. Tec/5 Zeeb in attempting to light a German stove burned himself severely and was evacuated.

The day we left the beach we returned to El Alia, where the entire Battalion was re-joined. For three days we recuperated at El Alia and then moved back nearby Mateur on May 13.

Wajda and Emery were transferred into the Company on May 14. A Battalion Memorial Service to commemorate the Battalion dead was held while we were now at Mateur. We spent most of our leisure time getting drunk, and Lester Hill had a usual terrific load on and became very amiable toward Lt. Cusick. Wajda and Nacho were once

confused enough to drink a little gasoline for vino. Much time was spent by the men in bartering over their German souvenirs, and many were wearing German uniforms so that the CO at times wondered just what army he did have. Capt. Wadle, although still feeling weak, had returned from the hospital on May 16. Weimholt returned to the Medical Detachment of the Battalion on May 18.

On May 21 all the wheeled vehicles and their crews started to drive back to Algeria and the town of Seb dou. All tracks and half-tracks remained to be shipped by rail to the same destination. On the trip back we stopped in these towns: Ghardimaou, Ain M'llila, Beni-Monsour, L'Arba, Orleansville, and Sidi-Bel-Abbes: we arrived at Seb dou, Algeria on May 27. This trip totaled 902 miles.

At Seb dou we received our first disappointment. We had been promised a land of milk and honey by General Harmon, but instead we got desert and Arabs. Everyone was generally unhappy, men's clothing and equipment were in terrible condition and chances for replacements were slim. As usual we were given a big training program by people who never had seen combat, which really made us angry. May 28 Pfc. Wiltenmuth was promoted to Cpl. with duties as Company Clerk.

The Company moved to Port Say, French Morocco, on May 31, to enjoy the pleasures afforded by a rest camp there. This was a 115 mile trip. On this same day Tec/5 Stickel, an M-10 driver, en route to Seb dou by train, was accidentally electrocuted by a high-power line. This death was the Company's first. While at the beach at Port Say we swam, saw movies, and gen-

erally enjoyed ourselves. June 6 we returned to our desert home at Seb dou.

Lt. Fawcett was injured in an auto accident on June 8 which caused him to be sent back to the States. June 17 Lt. Gerald Dotson was assigned to the Company. On June 24 the last railroad contingent arrived from Tunisia, and the Company was together once more. Our dinner of July 4 was excellent, and was topped off by ice cream. The Red Cross girls, really fine sports, were our guests this day. They helped serve dinner and left many doughnuts for the evening meal. Pfc. Brekhus entered the hospital on July 9 and never returned. Sickness was taking its toll of the Company, many men coming down with malaria, some having two attacks. Flies were everywhere and it was almost impossible to control them. The heat during the day was terrific; however, the nights were very cool. Tlemcen, the only decent town in the vicinity, was about 30 miles distant from Seb dou, but the ride in and back was not worth the visit to the city. On July 12 the Company went to the rest camp at Port Say again.

In the meantime a baseball team had been organized, and was coached by Lt. Peter. It was a great ball team. We defeated one of the best battalion teams in Oran and then lost to them when they sent for a new pitcher. The members of the team were: Holler, 1st b., Haider, 11, C., Anderson, 2nd b, Nation, 3rd b, Landaker, lf, Franco, rf, E. Burton, p, Lucerna, rf, and Izydorek, c. Heyne alternated at 3rd and short, and Christenson was a great 3rd inning pitcher. It was during this stay at Port Say that the Company picture was taken. We returned to Seb dou July 19. Pvt. Cota while burning out the latrine one morning had such a good

fire started that he thought he had better extinguish it. Hurriedly picking up a can he thought of water, he threw its contents on the fire and found he had thrown gasoline instead, which didn't leave the latrine a very comfortable place from which to pick up the latest rumors. On July 26 Lt. Cole returned to the Company from Hq. Company.

About this time we became part of the Seventh Army, and it looked as though we were to be in on the Sicily job. Our priority went to A-1 again and we were paid in American currency. This did not seem too bad, as we were fed up on the Tank Destroyer Training Center.

While in the Sebdoou area we acquired our great Company mascot, Shrapnel. Hieb "borrowed" a dog that soon developed into a Company character. He was christened "Shrapnel." In body he is a mess; long of chassis and short of leg. In fact he is one of the most ridiculous specimens of the canine we have seen, a small dog with a bad disposition. But his spirit is mighty. He sees himself as a mighty fighter. If Shrapnel were to view himself in a mirror the reflection, as he sees it, would be truly terrifying—long, powerful legs, a great chest, and muscular neck, a huge mouth with long pointed teeth. In fact, the image would not be unlike a lion. King of the beasts he thinks himself, roaring his challenges to the world. He never misses an opportunity for a fight with another dog, regardless of his opponent's size. He disdains the mere human beings around him.

Quite a few of the men took advantage of the opportunities to hunt gazelle while we were at Sebdoou. Among them were Tobiasen, Alf Johnson, Skar, Foster, Scott, Christenson, Holler, Bakken, Haywood, Mohagen,

Lunde, H. T. Brown, Lt. Dotson, Lt. Peter and Lt. Cole. Many had success and bagged their game. The gazelle were medium-sized animals of the antelope family, weighing 60 to 70 pounds. Due to their great speed and agility and also that we hunted from peeps the hunts were quite exciting sports. The area in which we hunted was on a vast table-land, a high plateau lying between the coastal mountains and the Atlas Mountains, and was about 200 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. It was as flat as a billiard table, covered with parched vegetation varying from thin dry grass to little clumps of bunch grass. The Sirrocos, sand storms, caused the sand to pile up in mounds behind the bunch grass, making the racing hunts quite precarious. Water was precious in this hot, arid country, and we carefully carried and conserved it in five-gallon thermos cans. Even then it quickly spoiled and became brackish. The heat, sweat, unpleasant water, wind-driven sand, and rough riding were more than equalled by the thrills of the hunt. We tried to hunt in teams, but the chase after various gazelle when the herds split usually led us apart. The little animals covered so much ground that even on that flat table-land we soon were out of sight of one another. Due to the lack of landmarks, considerable difficulty would have been experienced locating one another had we not some German flare pistols and tracer ammunition. Skar and Christenson can thank the flares they still aren't roaming among the Arabs. Some groups of hunters were fortunate enough to run into camel caravans. These Arabs in these groups were fine, clean, and upstanding individuals with well-cared for animals, unlike the low type Arabs the French have 'civilized.' The hunts were over-night affairs executed with varying degrees of success. The Maintenance Section seems to have put

the most meat on the table. Toby downed three gazelle, Lt. Cole, three, Scott, two, and Bakken, Holler, and Lt. Peter downed one each. On these trips "C" rations were as welcome as steak dinners back home.

Coburn was dropped from the rolls for physical incapacity on August 4. Cpl. Sundberg entered the hospital for an operation and never returned to the Company. On August 10 Lt. Stoltz was assigned to the Company.

At Sebdu we lived in the dust and sand until we were thoroughly sick of the romantic desert. The Arab was just another dirty character to us and we were anxious to see the last of him and his French masters. During our stay here Sicily was taken by the Seventh Army and our allied forces.

On August 19 an advance detail left to partake in the invasion of Italy. We then waited patiently for orders for the main body of the Company. Carlson, our Medic, was sent from the Company on August 20 to begin his journey to the States for release from the army for being over-age.

On August 21 S/Sgt. Delameter, our mo-

tor sergeant, was transferred to be sent home because of illness. Lt. Peter was made 1st Lt. on the same day. Lt. Peter received a battlefield promotion from Sicily and a few days later it came through again, from 5th Army; he had been promoted twice. This caused our Adjutant no end of consternation. On August 25 the following promotions and reductions were made: To be Private: Tec/5s Fromm, Krumwiede, Togstad, Treichel, and Wild; To be Tec/5s: C. Anderson, Green, Sarkilahti, and Perkins. Treichel was transferred to the Medical Detachment of this Battalion on August 26. September 1 Pfc. Eliassen was transferred to the Company because of physical disability. On September 3 Alf Johnson was reduced from Tec/5 to Pvt., and Pvt. Foster was appointed Tec/5.

We traveled 130 miles to Assi-Ben-Okba, a staging area near Oran, on September 5. On September 15 we boarded the British ship Otranto, a ship which formerly plied to the East of Suez. The accommodations stank. They contrasted unfavorably in every way with the Monterey. Quarters were crowded; lifeboat drill was disorganized; food was poor. We arrived off Salerno on September 21 and disembarked safely in small landing craft.



We Enter Italy

The advance detail had preceded us in landing on the Italian mainland by five days. A 28-man rear echelon was to follow our main body in a few days. The advance detail of our Company, numbering twenty-one men and including Lt. Peter who was in charge, left their Algiers' staging area on September 5. They loaded on three separate boats and embarked on September 9. All the men knew that they were headed for Italy, but nobody the exact spot where they would land. The trip was very uncomfortable and monotonous. The weather was very hot and one was very crowded and cramped in his sleeping quarters located in the ships' hatches. Reading magazines and playing poker were the only sources of entertainment. The only pleasant factor of the whole trip was the good chow. This convoy arrived in the vicinity of the beachhead on D plus 7, September 16. Jerry was shelling only a few miles inland and bombing Allied shipping day and night. Due to the fact that these men were unable to get off the boat for three days, everyone including 1st/Sgt. Lunde worked very hard unloading close to 400 tons of gasoline. They all knew that one Jerry bomb would blow the boat all over the beachhead, for it was really a tub of explosives. During the three days off the coast the men went through nineteen air raids. It was impossible to dig in; all they could do was pray that one of those bombs wouldn't hit the ship. They saw the Germans' radio-controlled bomb being

dropped on the British battleship "Warspite." The huge ship suffered only minor damage while the three Jerry planes went crashing into the sea; a great sight indeed. Some careless person took Sgt. Lunde's helmet by mistake during one of the air raids. He considered it an especially grave mistake. Operations on the beachhead were at last getting consolidated. Stevedores came aboard and relieved our men of the unloading detail. All were glad to get off the boat, for Jerry was still bombing. They then bivouaced in the vicinity of Eboli and Battipaglia where they waited for the rest of the Company which arrived D plus 12—September 21.

We, the main body of the Company, bivouaced with the advance detail on the night of September 22. This area was four miles south of Battipaglia, one of the most gutted towns we had seen. We knew we were in combat again—orders would come in, immediately being followed by rescinding orders. We started for the front three different times.

On October 1 we moved out for the front, bivouacing that night at Piazza. It was on this trip that Sgt. Raymond Larson was killed in an unavoidable accident. The next day we moved to Montemareno. We had our first taste of Italian roads—they were nothing more than one-way roads carrying two-way traffic. They ran around the mountains like a corkscrew, bridges were weak

and Thorn wanted a raise in pay since he thought he was testing bridges.

Lt. Peter, with Sgt. Brown's and Barker's two destroyers, went to assist Recon. Company in the vicinity of Benevento. This town taken and Lt. Col. Barney received a Silver Star Medal for this action which materially advanced the speed of the whole army. They returned to us at Montemareno.

On October 8 we moved on to Rotondi, a distance of 41 miles. We then moved into a firing position north of Caserta. Lt. Henningsen and several of the men from the last echelon to leave N. Africa caught up with the main body of the Company here. Some of them had spent over three weeks aboard ship and we had begun to think they had joined the Merchant Marine. At this spot we fired 200 rounds before seeing a single burst. Finally, however, we got an adjustment and did quite a bit of firing. On October 11 Cpl. Olson was promoted to Sgt. We moved into the vicinity of Caiazzo on October 18, the second platoon moving north of the town and the others to the west. The first and third platoons joined the second on the 19 of October, and the next day, October 20, with a platoon of Recon Company, moved north and took Dragoni. They then went into position north of the town. While spotting some enemy tanks a group of commanders were hit by an enemy mortar shell. S/Sgt. H. T. Brown was mortally wounded and died several days later; Lt. Dotson, Sgt. Baukol, Cpl. Hendrickx, and Tec/5 Perkins were also wounded at this same time. All but Lt. Dotson were evacuated. October 24 Cpl. Waggoner was promoted to Sgt. and E. Burton, C. Anderson, Sarkilahti, and Huber were promoted to Cpl. Reece McCulloch and Haider were appointed Tec/5.

On October 24 we moved northwest of Alife and fired 1600 rounds in three hours. By this time we were beginning to accustom ourselves to the Italian mountains and infantry fighting. The progress was slow, but we gained tremendous confidence in the 34th Infantry Division, to whom we were attached. We worked with the 175th FA and 168th Infantry Regiment, a great combat team. October 26 Lt. Stoltz was transferred to Hq. Company, and Lt. Hutchens returned to this Company. De Kock, Mills, and Parkhurst were promoted to Tec/5. Lewis was promoted to Tec/5 on October 29 and the same day we moved to San Angelo d'Alife. On November 4 we moved to a bivouac area near Prata, and the next day moved into positions at Capriati. We injected a little mountain goat blood into the Company for this move, as the M-10s were on the side of a mountain, a rocky mountain at that. It was in this position that our telephone lines were so messed up that we would try and call the first platoon and the attached artillery would answer. More work for Nelson and Hill, our wire section, who had to go out and get them straightened again.

November 7 we made a double crossing of the Volturno River and worked all night getting into positions from which we could not fire. Next day the first platoon moved north of Montequila with infantry patrols, and two guns of the second platoon moved into Ravindola. Company headquarters followed into Ravindola. Supplies for the third platoon, across the Volturno River, were a headache.

Granlie dropped his half-track in a hole in the river. He and Lee were stranded on the hood about ten feet from shore, and looked like two men stranded at sea. The river was too swift to swim. Finally we got

a rope to them and they were returned to shore. Lee was quite cool and wanted to play cribbage while they waited for help. Tec/4 Christenson, our Company mechanic, really did a great job of retrieving this vehicle. He removed his clothes that cold November day, got in the water, and finally succeeded in towing the vehicle out. He was so cold he shivered like a man with malaria chills.

November 9 the first platoon moved back into Montequila and on the next day an enemy artillery shell wounded Sgt. Olson and Pfc. Sidebottom. On the same day Sgt. Crowe was appointed S/Sgt., platoon sergeant of the second platoon. Huber and Hanenberg were promoted to Sgt., and Davis and Lucerna to Tec/5 on November 13. Thanksgiving Day, November 25, the kitchen served a great meal, lots of turkey and pie. The first platoon and two guns of the second platoon went into position west of Roccaravindola on November 29. On this same day Pfc. Togstad was drowned when the wrecker he was driving turned over on a pontoon bridge and fell into the river he was crossing. He was unable to get out. While our guns were in this position we fired almost 4,000 rounds. We stayed in this place for 45 days and during this time the 34th Division, to whom we were attached, was relieved and we were attached to the 2nd Moroccan Division of the French forces. We really had quite a time with the French switch-board operators; we never did get the parties we were calling.

After 85 days on the line for the Battalion we were finally relieved for a rest. On December 24 the Company went to Piedemonte and the men had their second hot shower since arriving in Italy. On Christmas Eve the Company's Frank Sinatra, none other

than Sgt. Doug Brown, spurred on by Christmas cheer, led his fellow songsters in a Hymn singing for the CO and his staff. Christmas Day was spent in cleaning all our weapons for an ordnance inspection. Christmas seems to be our unlucky day. On December 26 the Company was reorganized under a new Table of Organization which necessitated our transferring 30 men to bring us to our T/O strength. The men transferred were: Norris Buer, Thomas Huff, Thomas Thompson, George Badgley, James Blecharz, Harry Cota, Gerald Denny, Harry De Witt, Everett Emery, Doyle Gunn, Arthur Hardies, Henry Hill, John Howe, Wilfred James, Donald King, Raymond Kraus, Hubert Lark, Horace Marsing, Woodrow Mayne, Harlis Pitts, Kermit Rasmussen, Emil Rosenau, Dale Simms, Frank Tuthill, Raymond Washburn, Percy Willey, Juan Nacho, Frederick Robinson, Lucius Burton, and Roland Petersen. On December 26, 1943 Sarkilahti, C. Anderson, Barker, E. Burton, Gunstad, Landaker, were promoted to Sgt., and Shurson was promoted to Cpl. The same day Sgt. McEntire, Cpl. Applequist, Cpl. Gilbert, Cpl. Stenberg, Tec/5 Glasgow, Tec/5 McCulloch S., Tec/5 Smith, and Tec/5 Carpenter were reduced to Privates in conformity with the new T/O.

New Year's Eve was celebrated in a very quiet way except for the terrific wind, snow, and rain storm which brought the Maintenance Section and members of the fourth platoon out in their long-johns to drive tent stakes in a vain attempt to keep their tents up, but to no avail. The next morning was spent picking up pots and pans from the kitchen which were strewn about the uprooted olive trees, etc. New Year's Day, since the storm had not abated, meals were served in a tea party manner at irregular intervals inside the kitchen tent which somehow had withstood the fury of the storm. On Jan-

uary 2, 1944, Sgt. Kraft, our mess sergeant, had two very beautiful assistant K. P.s who assisted in dishing out the noon meal. These two luscious lassies, decked out in rubber boots and raincoats, were from the Red Cross and were making their periodic visit, doling out doughnuts and cigarettes. The Company was informed on the evening of January 3 that we would leave this rest camp.—What old 'rest' camp? During our stay here we had undergone a complete ordnance equipment inspection, reorganization under a new T/O, and complete maintenance checkup of all vehicles, besides sobering Lester Hill up for the return to the front.

We departed for Venafro at approximately 5:00 A. M. in the morning. At this time it was still very dark, and before the CO's vehicle had proceeded very far down the road from Alife driver McIntyre herded the Old Man's car into the ditch. We traveled about 30 miles, crossing the Volturno for the seventh time. We did not have to fight our way across this time, thank goodness. Eventually we ended up in bivouac about three miles from Venafro, knee deep in mud on January 7. Tec/5 Freeman, who prior to going to the hospital had been Lt. Cusick's radio operator and 'General Advisor,' was transferred to a Special Service unit, and we read in the "Stars and Stripes" that he is a referee for the PBS Boxing Matches. The Company moved into a firing position in the vicinity of San Pietro on January 12, on the left flank of "B" Company who had gone in prior to this time. After getting all the vehicles in position and ourselves nicely bedded down, Jerry started lobbing a few presents.

On the night of January 16 the Company again moved forward to the vicinity of Cervera. The only vehicles which made this

trip were the destroyers due to the impassability of the roads to other vehicles. This move, was made after dark through mud which even the M-10s could barely negotiate. While inching our way through the ghost town of Cervera the noise created by the M-10s brought German artillery fire down on the road and which found its mark on Tec/5 Holte's head. (No damage done to either man or machine). We finally ended up on the ridgeline overlooking the Rapido River and Cassino. Miracles do happen! Three jeeps did make the trip with the destroyers. In one of these jeeps was the Northern Minnesota Scout, Sgt. Gunnarson, who, after floundering around in the mud, expressed his desire to find himself in the daylight. The next day, January 17, when the Company awoke from their few hours' nap they found themselves surrounded by good Germans—dead ones. This same day Capt. Wadle, who had just returned from a five-day sojourn at Sorrento, joined the Company and proved his ability to call the German shots. His historic statement to two companions was: "If the next one is 100 yards short we won't be here." (It was, and they weren't!)

That evening while the half-tracks were being brought up to the position Tec/5 Heyne who was driving Lt. Peter's car had to turn around and go back due to a breakdown. While making the turn the left front wheel struck a mine which blew the inside out of the half-track and crushed Heyne's leg to such an extent that it had to be amputated. Cpl. Biermann, Tec/5 Eller, and Pfc. Wallis had gotten out of the vehicle in order to guide it in making the turn. The only damage they suffered was a hole in Cpl. Biermann's helmet liner which he was holding in his hand. Cpl. Biermann was so badly shaken up by the accident that he hasn't won a poker hand since.

It was here at Cervera that the Italians were very helpful to us, in that they would bury the Germans if we would allow them to pull their boots. Snuffy Smith had a great time in this position, being one of the few drivers who drove up 'Hollywood Boulevard' under the nose of Montecassino without drawing any of Jerry's air mail. It was here also that Sgt. Karg mastered driving a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck motorcycle fashion down the same road, a road with more curves than Mae West. Lt. Henningsen and Sgt. Tobiassen boldly moved their platoon CP into a house used as an infantry Aid Station, and were shortly confronted by a frustrated Medical Officer who remarked: "Don't you know that a piece of machinery (half-track) like that draws fire?"—He wasn't telling them anything new.

On the night of January 19 the Company was ordered to move from Cervera to the vicinity of Colli Terance to be in direct support of the 36th Infantry Division who were scheduled to cross the Rapido River and try and outflank Cassino. We finally made a successful road march. As we approached our area we were greeted by one of the largest artillery barrages that we had ever seen, which lighted the area like day. The flashes from the guns looked like some gigantic pinball machine in operation. It was here that the Germans put on their great Nebelwerfer concert featuring the "six-tube pipe organ playing those 'Purple Heart Blues'," a description a doughboy had given the six-tube mortar of the Germans.

The afternoon of January 28 the Germans laid in a concentration on the town which housed about half of us. Pvt. Applequist was caught out in the open when this concentration was laid down and was mortally wounded, dying two days later. Pvts.

Hieb, Crutcher, and Hoffman suffered minor injuries in this action and were evacuated, but returned to duty a short time later.

After we had been in this area a few days we were ordered to reconnoiter for positions on the forward slopes of Trocchio, which was approximately two and a half kilometers from Cassino and under direct observation of the 'Dutchmen' located in the Monastery. Much time was spent sweeping the new positions for mines. Due to a change of orders we never moved into these positions as "B" Company was ordered to do so. (For once a break for us.)

During our stay in this area Capt. Clemens and three staff sergeants from Company "A", 804th TD Bn., were attached to our Company as observers and were in time to be initiated to shell fire by the largest shells that had been used in Italy by the Germans up to this time. The shells left holes large enough in which to put an M-10. We returned the compliment to the Germans by unloading approximately 1000 rounds in their back yard during our stay.

We were pleasantly surprised one day by another visit by the Red Cross girls who brought us doughnuts and cigarettes. Everybody in the Company was wearing his helmet, but the girls were running around bare-headed just as if they were back in the States. Capt. Wadle, less helmet, upon noticing this, asked one of them if they did not have helmets, and received the reply: "Yes, do you want to borrow one?" He didn't blush—much!

The 36th Division who had been fairly well beat up in their vain attempt to establish a bridgehead across the river were replaced by the New Zealand Division during the

middle of February. These boys missed no opportunity of informing us that they were New Zealanders, too, and not Englishmen. The morning of February 19 they moved into our area, and there wasn't enough room for both of us.

When the moon came up at 1:00 o'clock the morning of February 20, we started our move back to a position at the foot of the northern slopes of Mount Lungo. After we had juggled ammunition trailers half the night and covered seven kilometers in five hours we finally reached our new area. This seemed like Paradise to us, for it was off the German G-T line and offered the Germans little observation of us. The slopes of Lungo, however, gave us a ringside seat for the Heinie shelling of the valley, including the shelling of the Piper Cub airfield, located west of San Pietro.

We just thought we were off the Germans' G-T line. They laid in a few rounds one night that set off a pile of ammunition by Granlie's half-track, setting the camouflage net on fire and also making a few holes in the vehicle. It was a very hot spot for Granlie and Sgt. Roy McIntyre, who were sleeping in the vehicle at the time.

On February 29 Lt. Dotson was transferred from the Company. S/Sgt. Tobiassen, platoon sergeant of the third platoon, was promoted to 2nd Lt. This was quite a blow to the fellows who enjoyed the games of chance with him, for they would not be able to get back the \$300.00 he had won from them just a few nights before. Sgt. Britz was promoted to S/Sgt. to fill S/Sgt. Tobiasen's vacancy. Tec/5 McIntyre was promoted to Sgt. and Sgt. Scott was reduced to Pvt. due to an overage of that grade in the Company under the new T/O. On March 2 Pvts.

Gilbert and McEntyre were appointed Cpl. Sgt. Sturla and Pvt. Durovec who had rejoined the Company but a short time before were transferred on March 17. Lt. Cusick, our Company Executive, was transferred to Headquarters to take over one of those chairborne jobs, Battalion S-4, on March 17.

March 25 we received word that our men who were placed on the rotation list were to leave. Furness, Eller, and Haider were the lucky fellows who had been selected to return to the States. The same day Tec/5 Klein received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds incurred while we were in position at Mt. Trochio.

We were notified on the night of March 25 that we were to be relieved from the line and sent back to a rest camp in the vicinity of Capua. The next day was spent getting ready to move, and that night we began moving out at 2130 hours. The Captain who was riding in the leading half-track remarked to his driver that he hoped the vehicle would run alright, because previously to this whenever we moved it would always stall. Things went well for a mile and a half, and then the vehicle conked out. The Captain got out and rode with Lt. Cole and said he would never ride in his car again. After traveling approximately 30 miles we arrived in our new area about 2400 hrs., and found ourselves in the vicinity of Camigliano.

On March 28 S/Sgt. Haywood was appointed 2nd Lt. and Pvt. John (Snuffy) Smith was promoted to Cpl. You can't keep a good man down is probably what Smith thought, but we know better. Sgt. Doug Brown on March 29 was promoted to S/Sgt., Tec/5 Rossland was made Sgt., and Pfc. Hams Cpl. Tec/5 Holte and Mills were

awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action.

At a Battalion formation on March 30 Captain Wadle, Sgt. McIntyre, Tec/4 Nelson, Cpl. Lee, and Tec/5 Beaver were presented with the Bronze Star Medal by General Keyes, commander of II Corps.

Lt. Cohen, who was attached to the Company, was relieved from attachment on April 15. We moved from Camigliano to the vicinity of Sparanise on April 7. No sooner had we moved into the area and gotten nicely settled when the Captain started scouting around for a suitable site for a baseball diamond. There was a rumor prevailing that he had made a \$10.00 bet with one of the officers in the Battalion that he could pitch a five-hit game and he wanted to get into shape.

An excellent baseball field was made during our first two days in this area. Practice began immediately. After ironing out some of the kinks and sore muscles acquired during a long winter of combat the team was gradually groomed and ready for the season.

After playing a number of practice games the season was started with an opening game against the 3rd Chemical Battalion team. This team gave us a good game under the pitching of Lt. Saint who formerly was on the pitching staff of the Boston Braves. We won our opening game in an exciting last half of the seventh—score, 8-7.

During the following three weeks we played a total of 12 games—winning eight and losing four. Among the teams we played were: 59th FA Bn., 93rd FA Bn., 932nd FA Bn., 95th Evac. Hosp., and 73rd Ordnance.

Burton and Christenson were the two main pitchers for the team, with Chuck Anderson who played 2b and Nation who played ss: being used in relief roles for the box. Izydorek did the catching. Other members of the team were Holler, Vonderhaar, Lucerna, Landaker, Franco, Wendlandt, Idol, Foster, Tom, Hensley, Gilbert, Black, Large, and Lunde.

At another Battalion formation on April 25 Cpl. Biermann was awarded the Silver Star Medal, and Lt. Cole, 1st/Sgt. Lunde, S/Sgt. Mohagen, Sgt. Hanenberg, Tec/4 Buchmann, Tec/5 Granlie, Pvt. Earl, and Pvt. Fornal were presented with Bronze Star Medals, and Sgt. McIntyre was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star Medal by Major General Keyes of II Corps. On the same day one officer and eight sergeants from the 7th AT Regiment of the Canadian Army were attached to the Company for training. They left the Company on April 29 only to return again on May 3 with an ample supply of their weekly ration of whiskey which quite a few of our boys helped them consume.

We had only been in this area for a very few days when two guns and their crews were sent up to the front to fire harassing fire on the enemy at night. Every five days the gun crews alternated. On April 26 we were relieved of this assignment and the crews returned to the Company.

On April 28 six guns from the Company were placed back on the line in a holding position to wait for the great push that was to come at a later date. The remaining six guns in the Company on May 9 were placed on the line which was across the Minturno River. At last, after having read a message from General Alexander to the troops in Italy

in which he said that the next phase in the war in Italy was to totally destroy the German army, the great attack started. Being as we were attached to the 85th Infantry Division everyone was wondering how they would make out, as this was their first major action since coming overseas a few months before.

The Company was in direct support of the 1st Bn., 339th Infantry Regiment. Two guns were in position on the rock (_____), and did some excellent work on the town of Scauri. Direct fire on the brick factory and surrounding buildings kept the area under control. Sgt. Brown with two guns harassed Highway No. 1 with direct fire 24 hours a day, and the road was successfully denied to the Germans. It's reasonable to assume that anything that ventured on this road was knocked out by his crews. The battle raged for two days and the 85th suffered heavy casualties. Sgt. Britz's crews were given the mission of liquidating some pill boxes on hills 53 and 58 which the infantry had been unable to take. After a complete slashing by these two crews the infantry walked up these two hills without a casualty, and from then on we really were the fair-haired boys of the infantry. During this time we had a lot of fun shooting, and really pulverized the Heinie. Parkhurst injured his hand here. Heinie reached over with a heavy counter-battery on the road, but fortunately we were always under cover when this happened. About the 14th of May Scauri was taken and we moved to Mt. Scauri which was uneventful other than a miserable place to get into position. Information was not correct, and we later learned that we were the front and a violent fight was going on to our right. During this time we had an English Captain Haddock attached to us

who really had a lot of nerve. He wanted to be as far forward as possible and got a first-hand view of the war during his stay as an observer.

We were now in support of the 338th Infantry and moved toward Formia through the olive groves with the mission of cleaning out the area. We encountered no enemy and remained in this position unable to shoot over 200 yards direct fire until Formia was captured. Here Rudy Bakken was hit by artillery fire and Granlie became the C.O.'s driver. On May 19 Lt. Von Wald was attached to the Company. We were one of the first to move through Formia which had been badly mauled. Then the Company split, one platoon going to Gaeta and Lt. Cole taking two to Itri. He was one of the first to arrive there despite the fact that everybody in the Army claimed the capture of Itri. On this move we were way out in front of the tanks and provided a way for them through Itri. About 5:00 P. M. we withdrew north of the town where we settled down as flank guard for the division. We remained in this pleasant area for three days doing nothing while Fondi was taken and Terracina two days later.

On May 25 we moved north of Terracina. This town took quite a lacing from the Navy. About two miles north of Terracina we stopped and were placed in a task force to meet up with Anzio. The Pontine Marshes were completely under water, and while on a reconnaissance Captain Wadle and Lt. Cole heard a very true statement of "multi aqua" from an Italian—he was quite right as the Germans did a thorough job of flooding this area. All buildings were reached by at least three feet of water. The task force never materialized as the Germans withdrew and

on May 27 we made a miserable night march to attack Sezze and Priverno. The third platoon went toward Sezze and really had a rough day, they fired a few rounds and suffered no casualties. The other two platoons received a little German greeting on approaching Priverno and were held up due to demolitions. They remained here the rest of the day, and the next morning moved out into the valley and were joined by the third platoon. Confusion was at a high state here with divisions moving across each other and a new tank battalion in action for the first time which did a good job of shooting everything but the enemy. We were squeezed out of this action and went into battalion reserve. As the beachhead was making the main push now the entire Battalion went into reserve. Morale was very high. Many prisoners were taken, and some really looked rugged and had hair long enough to braid.

On May 30 the Battalion made a night march to Cori, a battle ground of Anzio, and there we saw great numbers of German equipment that had been knocked out. No sooner than we had got in than we were immediately alerted to move out. Traffic was very congested and from here out we were to have our hardest going. We moved toward Velletri and soon ran into many stubborn Germans. Constant sniper fire which we were unable to locate kept us cautious. Starting to move to our right the second platoon ran into quite a shelling and the tanks ran out on us. That evening as the maintenance crew were bringing the retriever up to where the Company C. P. was located they turned the vehicle over while making a sharp turn on the road leading out of Cori. Fortunately no one was killed, although Shearer and Holler who were riding on the outside were thrown from the vehicle and narrowly missed

being crushed as the retriever rolled by them down a 15-foot bank. Shearer suffered a broken arm and Holler numerous cuts and bruises. Both were hospitalized. Christenson who was inside the vehicle all the time was shaken up a little, but otherwise escaped injury. On June 1 a freak hit was made on an M-10 and immediately it burned. All the crew escaped although Bloms was badly burned. Ege, Landaker, Lacassie, and Nation suffered minor bruises and burns. All except Ege were evacuated. Along toward evening we moved forward into a wheat field and killed and captured approximately 100 Germans. The shooting was at close range and it was a miracle that more men were not killed by sniper fire. Prisoners were coming in not 20 feet from the destroyers. At the end of this hectic day we pulled back about 500 yards for the evening and were kept awake most of the night by German planes dropping personnel bombs. The next day we moved out into the vicinity of Carabitti. Here we had a day to clean up a bit and do badly needed maintenance. Moving out from here we again ran into trouble. A tank was grenaded right alongside us. Many prisoners were again run out and we started many fires. The next day we moved through Frascati toward Rome and picked up about six prisoners that Lt. Peter carried on the back deck of his destroyer looking for someone to take them off his hands. They had been an obstinate group and had tried to grenade Lt. Peter's destroyer while he was affecting their capture. Sgt. Anderson saved the day for him and we continued on toward Rome. After getting lost in Frascati we got straightened out and started down the home stretch for Rome, a distance of about 20 miles. We were rolling along merrily not seeing anyone, friendly or otherwise, and thought we were going to ride right on into that city. Sgt.

Gunnarson was so sure of it that he changed into his O. D.s on the move so he would make a hit with the local populace. Our first sight of Rome about seven miles away was something we will never forget. The city looked peaceful and quiet, normal enough, other than for some columns of smoke rising around the outskirts caused by German demolitions. Pvt. Fornal was promoted to Cpl. on June 5. About five miles from the city we were stopped by three German tanks. We pulled off the road to deal with them, using the second platoon, but they withdrew and we continued on. As we reached the city limits, troops were coming from everywhere—all roads lead to Rome—and some German snipers who were in hiding were causing quite a disturbance. A little shooting at snipers was done and then we pulled back out of this confusion while some other units advanced into the city proper. The next morning we moved through Rome to guard the bridges across the Tiber River. This trip provided a grand sight as Rome had all the appearances of an American city. People showered us with flowers and were definitely glad to see the Americans. Through and beyond Rome we passed in pursuit of the retreating Germans. Everybody claimed to be the first in Rome, and though we cannot claim that distinction we were the first in our sector on the other side of the city. Again we were in support of the 339th Infantry.—The second platoon generally led the way for them.

On June 6 we were about 20 miles north of Rome and were being held up by German armor. The second platoon and half the first had quite a fight and Sgt. Barker again came to Lt. Peter's aid by getting a German tank just as he was laying in on Lt. Peter's destroyers. In the meantime Lt. Haywood

moved to his right about 1,000 yards to engage some German tanks. Sgt. Burton successfully liquidated a "Ferdinand" and Lt. Haywood and Sgt. Anderson were selecting a position for the other destroyers when a round of artillery came in and seriously wounded Lt. Haywood and Sgt. Anderson and lightly wounded Jensen. Through all of our recent close fighting these were our first serious casualties. Lt. Haywood died two days later. He had been one of our outstanding sergeants in the Company who was promoted to an officer. His loss was keenly felt. From here we went into Battalion reserve with a promise of three days rest. The men were quite exhausted as we had taken a lot of physical abuse. The second platoon made a glorious trip to Rome and returned to our area that evening fully reflecting the spirits of a happy group. On June 10 S/Sgt. Crowe who had been platoon sergeant of the second platoon was sent home on rotation. At the same time Sgt. Lacassie, and Parkhurst, and Holler returned from the hospital.

As usual our rest was cut short and we moved to Monterosi. From there we made one movement after another which included the towns of Ronciglione and Montalto. Here we were in a very pleasant area and on an hour alert, but we were able to mess out of our kitchen, do a lot of fishing and swimming, and generally relax. Tec/4 Christenson was promoted to S/Sgt. on June 13, and Lt. Von Wald was relieved from attachment with the Company and transferred to Hq. Company on June 17.

June 19 we were attached to IV Corps and moved to Grosseto where we joined Task Force Reme. We remained in the assembly area here until June 23 and then moved to Pagnanico.

On June 24 the order came in transferring Captain Wadle, who had been our Company Commander since we were stationed in Camp Hood, Texas, to Headquarters where he was to take over the duties of Battalion S-3, which was later referred to as a PBS job. Everyone in the Company hated to see the Captain leave. His untiring efforts in getting the Company in shape for overseas duty and his superb leadership during our many days in combat will be remembered by all. On the same day Lt. Culp was transferred into the Company. Lt. Cole, leader of the first platoon, took over the duties of Company Commander, Lt. Peter from the second platoon became Company Executive, Lt. Culp took over the second platoon, and Lt. Henningsen the first.

We were organized under a new T/O on June 27 and the following promotions were made: S/Sgt. Christenson to T/Sgt.; Tec/5s Ege, Franco, Holte, Kinkki, Large, Thorn, and Wilhelmi to Tec/4s; Pfc. Earl became Tec/5.

On June 28 the Company was ordered to relieve "C" Company who were working with the 81st Reconnaissance Battalion near Monticiano.

On June 29th the following men were transferred from the Company due to over-strength under the new T/O: Lt. Hutchens, Cpl. Black, Pvts. Wadja, Mehle, Meyer, Berg, Capps, Coviello, Etcheverry, Izydorek, and Roberts, F. The same day we accomplished the relief of "C" Company and moved out with one platoon attached to each Rcn. Co. Thorn's destroyer was immobilized due to a mine which he hit while they were on a special mission. There were no casualties in the crew. From the 1st to the 4th of July the company was kept on the move.

The following men were wounded during this period: S/Sgt. Britz, Cpl. Edaakie, and Pfc. Ford. Lt. Henningsen who must have figured that a screaming meemie was coming into the bed with him ran through a thorn patch to get under one of the destroyers without getting a scratch. The men who were with him claimed that all they saw was a blur of white shorts as he streaked for cover. On July 6th we were in the vicinity of Collato at which time Lt. King C. Culp was taken to the hospital and never rejoined the unit. During the period from July 7th to July 13th we moved through Casole d' Elsa to vicinity of Pusciano where Sgt. Lacassie's destroyer hit a mine lightly wounding the Sgt. who was evacuated to a hospital. Also on July 13th Sgt. Gunstad left the company for the States on rotation. The Company moved from Pusciano to the vicinity of Fatt. d' Castagno on July 15th. It was at this time that S/Sgt. Brown was appointed 2nd Lt. and took over the second platoon as platoon leader. The Company moved to San Vivaldo on July 18th at which time Sgt. Barker was appointed S/Sgt. Word was received at this time that we were to be here for a few days so the time was spent on motor maintenance, changing tracks etc. On the 21st we moved to Montiano where the 1st and 2nd platoon were put in reserve and the 3rd platoon moved out taking up defensive positions in the vicinity of Castganova. On July 24th Cpl. Scott was appointed Sgt. On July 25th Sgt. Smith and Tec/4 Large were slightly wounded by enemy shell fire. On July 27th we were relieved from the 81st Rcn. and assigned to the 91st Division. This was good news, as our job with the 81st Rcn. had been to keep contact with the French forces on our right and the Americans on the left which gave us a sector approximately six miles wide. Everyone in the company could truthfully say that the

past month had been the most strenuous since we first went into combat. All during this time we were without any infantry support except for periodic support from the French Goons. The trails on which we travelled were such that even goats quit using them long ago. The trails, roads and fields in our sector were heavily mined, and our recon. friends lost many of their vehicles and quite a few men due to this. We also lost eight destroyers due to mines. All through this period we underwent quite heavy artillery and small arms fire. One day Sgt. Britz shot a hole through the side of a house, after the smoke cleared away a kraut had enough nerve to look out the hole and attempt to fire his rifle back at our people. He is now a very good Kraut due to the marksmanship of our destroyer crews. The company moved to the vicinity of Bucciano arriving late on the morning of the 28th. At this time Sgt. Runemark and Tec/5 Willingham left the company for temporary duty in the United States. Also Tec/5 Parkhurst was placed on Special Duty with the Natousa Radio School in Naples. After arriving at Buciano the 2nd platoon moved out taking up positions in Montopoli. A peculiar situation existed here in that business went on as usual even though it was a front line town.

On the night of the 30th we were relieved

from the 91th Division and ordered to move to the vicinity of San Gimignano where the 85th Division was assembled and to whom we were assigned. While the 2nd platoon was moving out of Montopoli the enemy started shelling the town, seriously wounding Sgt. Sarkilahti who was evacuated to a hospital.

The period from July 31st to August 10th was spent maintaining our equipment and generally getting outfitted for future operations. On August 8th Tec/5 Mills was promoted to Sgt. and Pvt. Riddle promoted to Corporal.

On August the 15th the company moved with the 85th Division to the vicinity of Miniato where we took up indirect fire positions. On August 17th Lt. Tobiassen was promoted to 1st Lt. On August 22nd Sgts. Lacassie and D. Smith returned to the company from the hospital.

On August 27th we were relieved from the 85th Division and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Florence. The city of Florence was off limits but it seemed that the fellows had found a private way into the town without being seen by the M. P.s and enjoyed the sights immensely.



France Bound

On the evening of September 4 the Company was ordered to join the Battalion who were bivouaced near Cerbia. On the same day S/Sgt. Mohagan left the Company for a thirty day furlough in the States. After joining the Bn., word was received that definitely put us on our way to France via Naples, which was to be our point of embarkation.

On the evening of September 6 we started our trip to Naples. The Company was separated into two groups. The destroyers and half-tracks, with crews, were routed by way of Piombino where the destroyers were turned in to ordnance, and half-tracks and destroyer crews made the trip to Naples by boat. The remainder of the Company convoyed there, stopping one day at Rome, and arriving at Ippodromo, a staging area near Naples. On September 8 with the half-tracks and destroyers crews arriving September 12. A few days after our arrival we drew our new destroyers. The gun crews immediately proceeded to clean and otherwise get them in shape for test firing. The remainder of our time here was spent drawing clothing and other personal equipment, passes and daily trips for some of the boys to the beach.

M 36, ↑

Cpl. Shurson was promoted to Sgt. and Pvt. Hamberg to Cpl. on September 16. Cpl. Edaakie and Tec/5 McCulloch were reduced

to Pvts. and Pfc. Reed promoted to Cpl. on September 18.

On September 27 we moved to Nisidia which was one more move toward France. Prior to leaving Ippodromo for Nisidia all the vehicles were numbered to facilitate the loading on the boat, as per usual though, we need not have wasted the chalk or effort, as the vehicles were eventually loaded as they were called for.

We stayed in this area until October 1 when word was received that we were to load a 1:00 o'clock that afternoon. By six thirty that evening we were loaded and ready to depart. The boat on which we were loaded was an L. S. T. (Landing Ship, Tank) and was not noted for its luxurious riding capacity as the Monterey, the boat in which we came over from the States on. At 5:30 the next morning we started on our way to France. There were quite a number of the fellows who fed the fishes the first day out, as the ocean was really kicking up a fuss.

We were on the boat two nights and three days. On the evening of the third day everyone crowded to the fore part of the boat, upon our entering the harbor at Marseilles, in order to get a better view of the destruction to the harbor facilities caused by our bombing and shelling. After much maneuvering to clear boats scuttled by the Germans, we docked at approximately 7:30.

We Are In France

Unloading operations were begun immediately. As the vehicles were unloaded they proceeded to a bivouac area which was located approximately nine miles from the dock. After some of the strays who had gotten on the wrong road had been rounded up and brought in, we were all off the boat and in our area at 10:30.

As usual upon entering a new land, the first questions asked were how long we were going to stay here and if there were going to be any passes to Marseille, because while driving through town the scenery had appealed to a large number of the fellows. Rumors were running rampant as usual, as to when we were going on the line, etc. The day after our arrival in France, which was October 5, Tec/4 Frank Childs was reduced to Pvt. and transferred to Hq. Company, and Pfc. Iverson was promoted to Tec/4 to fill the vacancy created by Child's reduction.

We started receiving passes to the surrounding towns a few days after our arrival. Aix seemed to be the main attraction because here we were able to take in a dance every evening. It did not take many trips on pass before everyone was looking forward to pay day. Prices were very high as we had found from previous experiences in Africa and Italy.

On October 12 we received word that the destroyers were to be sent by rail on October 18 with the half-tracks following a few days later. From that time on the forenoons were

spent getting equipment in shape, the men being able to go on passes in the afternoons. October 20 the destroyers and crews were loaded on trains and shipped with the half-tracks leaving on October 21, destination for both elements being Epinal, France. Cpl. Gilbert was appointed Sgt. on the same day.

On October 24 the remainder of the Company departed from the Staging area by convoy, arriving at Nomexy, France on October 26, distance traveled: 347 miles. Part of the destroyer group had already arrived at the area with the half-tracks and remainder of the destroyers coming in from three to four days later. After all the vehicles had arrived and one looked around the area and saw all the new tents and other equipment the men had with them, one could tell that they had had pretty good hunting. Pfc. Davenport was appointed Cpl. on October 28. On October 29 Tec/5 Joe Klimesh joined the Company from the 2nd Repl. Depot. He was the first replacement we had received since Africa. It was here at Nomexy that we received definite word in regard to going back on the line. We were attached to the 44th Infantry Division and departed for Moncel, near Luneville at 0700 hrs. October 30, arriving at 1000 hrs. That afternoon at 1700 hrs. the 1st and 2nd platoon moved to the vicinity of Embermenil, taking up direct fire positions on the high ground to the north and northeast which at that time was the Infantry front line. The 3rd platoon taking up a reserve position in the vicinity of Laneuveville. It was while occupying these positions

that we first came across the trenches that were used in World War I. On November 2 Pfc. John Hoffer, and Cpl. Leon Riddle were wounded by enemy mortar fragments.

It was rumored that at the 2nd platoon's positions Tec/4 Holte was keeping the Infantry's morale up by telling some of his tall tales which only he can tell.

On November 10 Tec/4 Holte was lightly wounded but not evacuated to a hospital.

We received word on November 11 that Melvin Pederson, who had entered the hospital previously, would not be back with the organization. Pederson was one of the original men in the Company since its activation in February, 1941.

On the evening of November 12 we received orders that the Division would attack. Our third platoon who were in a reserve position were placed in indirect fire positions to give artillery support with the other two platoons remaining where they were. Everyone was hoping that the weather would clear up. It had begun to snow and visibility was practically nil. That same evening our artillery opened up with a tremendous barrage the likes of which we had never heard. They fired all night until H-hour which was around 0700 hrs. in the morning at which time the Infantry attacked. Visibility was still poor due to the fog and light snowfall. Lientry was taken by our Infantry shortly after the attack had gotten under way. The high ground and woods to the east and north of the town gave them considerable trouble, which held them up until the 16th at which time they succeeded in clearing the area. Around noon of the 17th the 1st and 3rd platoons moved into position east of Lientry to support the attack of tanks and Infantry

on Cemenoncourt and Igney ridge. The attack was successful and both places were taken that night. Our platoons did considerable firing in support of it. Lt. Cole and Capt. Wadle who were in a light tank picked up ten or twelve prisoners complete with Lugers which was the first loot we had picked up in France. They also captured two 88 mm. AA guns intact without drawing a round. We also received word the same day that Hoffer would not be back with us because of the wound he had received at Emberminil.

The next day an attack was launched to clear the area to the south and east of Igney and in the direction of Foulcrey. This attack also was successful. The first and third platoons knocked out three MG nests in concrete emplacements from World War I. The second platoon who had been in support at Igney joined the other platoons and the Company was assembled once again intact to the southwest of the town.

The next morning the Company moved to the town of Foulcrey to support and attack on Ibigny and the ridge beyond it. A sharp fight developed for this ridge. At approximately noon the same day we broke through the enemies' defenses at this point and occupied St. George which was beyond it. The defenses which we had just come through had been the most elaborate that we had ever encountered, trenches, barbed wire entanglements and anti-tank ditches everywhere. This break through was what higher headquarters had hoped for. We had overrun artillery pieces, shot up supply trains and generally ruined any attempts by the enemy to set up a defense line. Our second platoon accounted for the supply train, while Nation from the third who was not to be outdone,

picked off an enemy infantryman with a direct hit at 2,000 yds., while sniping with the 90. That afternoon and evening the French 2nd Armored moved up to exploit the breakthrough.

The next day, November 20, orders were that the Infantry and ourselves would move out and clean up after the French armor had moved through, primary mission to take and clear Sarrebourg which was the Division objective.

On the morning of the 20 the Company moved out to support an attack on Sarrebourg. Meanwhile the French were moving down the highways clearing the roads, but bypassing the enemy positions on either side. Early in the afternoon we took up positions on the hills north and west of the town, firing on pillboxes and enemy infantry moving in the town and on the other side. By this time the French were already through and on the east side heading for the Rhine, leaving us to clear out the snipers. That evening the Company assembled in the outskirts of the town in some buildings from which they took nine prisoners before they were able to settle down for the night. The next day orders were to help the Infantry and tanks clear out the town and occupy it. Clearing the town was accomplished early in the day and the Company assembled in a German garrison for the night. Some of the fellows spent a very enjoyable evening consuming some of the vast quantity of liquors that the Germans had left behind. On the same day we were notified that S/Sgt. Barker who had gone to the hospital previously would not be returned to this organization.

At approximately 0700 hrs. that same evening we received orders that we were relieved from the 71st Regiment, 44th Division,

and placed in direct support of the 114th Regiment, same division. On December 22 at 1000 in the morning the Company moved to Brouwiller where the Regt. CP was located, staying there that night and moving to Veschien on the 23 which was Thanksgiving day. Our kitchen truck was brought up and set up in a creamery where we ate our Thanksgiving dinner late in the afternoon. Lt. Henningsen who was platoon leader of the first platoon was transferred to Hq. Company at this time. He had been with us ever since coming overseas and everyone hated to see the old cornhusker leave.

In the meantime we were alerted to move through the Saverne Gap. Everyone was sitting around waiting for the order to move out. Meanwhile the Infantry having captured a prisoner learned that the Germans were planning an attack from the direction of Schalback. Orders were immediately changed and we were ordered to take up defensive positions in the vicinity of Schoenberg. This was accomplished, the Company arriving at its destination late in the evening. Later the same evening we received a change of orders and the Company moved out before daylight to the vicinity of Metting.

At this stage everything was in a state of confusion as far as the situation was concerned. Our own people were running into friendly mine fields which had been hastily laid as a defense measure, and the information received on the radio was coming in so fast that it was contradicting itself.

The third platoon immediately moved out taking up positions south and west of Rauwiller. The first and second platoons taking up positions to the left and right of Schalback. We arrived in Metting at daylight.

By this time everybody realized that it

was the real thing and orders were received to move our platoons to meet the attack. The day's activities were more or less confined to the third platoon area who fired approximately 100 rounds in support of the Infantry who were attacking Rauwiller. That afternoon the second platoon moved from their positions to the right of Schalbach to Siewiller and took up positions vacated by the second platoon.

Later that evening we received information that the Germans were planning an attack in our direction with Schalbach as their objective. The next morning the first and third platoons moved out to cover all approaches to the town. At approximately 0830 hrs. the Germans launched an attack with 15 or 17 tanks supported by infantry and artillery. At this time we got in some good licks, broke up the attack and, according to the 106th Cav. OP, we knocked out six tanks, one armored car and made a lot of their doughboys answer roll call. Immediately after the attack started the 2nd platoon was moved back from Siewiller taking positions in the vicinity of Rauwiller. Everyone held their positions for the next two days with the 2nd platoon moving out on the 28 November and going to Rauwiller.

The same day we received orders that we were relieved from the 114th and placed in support of the 71st. The next morning before daylight the Company moved out immediately to support an attack on Eyewiller, which was successfully completed with the second platoon moving out and taking up positions in the vicinity of Wolshof. The first platoon who had been at Postroff were then moved to Eyewiller where the 1st and 3rd platoons were assembled for the night. There was no further moves until December 1, at this time the 1st and 3rd platoons moved

to Berg with the 3rd platoon moving from there to Rexingen. The following day the third platoon after supporting an attack on the high ground beyond Rexingen moved to Adamswiller. The 2nd platoon moved to the high ground overlooking Mackwiller to support the attack on the town which was unsuccessful. The next day, December 3, they renewed the attack. The 2nd platoon really did some fine shooting in support of this attack.

At times they were shooting at Germans who were upstairs in the buildings with our own Infantry downstairs. Also they shot through a window of one building through two walls and set fire to a German half-track on the other side. This attack was successful and we occupied the town. The third platoon moved to Mackwiller on December 4. On December 5 the 1st and 3rd platoon moved to support an attack on Lorentzen. It was while making this attack that Burton's destroyer hit a mine. Schmidt was seriously wounded, Gilbert and Klimesh escaping with minor injuries. All were evacuated to a hospital except Klimesh. The following day the 71st Regiment was placed in reserve and the Company was assembled in the vicinity of Diemeringen. On December 7 the 2nd platoon moved to Butten. The Company stayed in these positions until December 10 when it was assembled at Montbronn. On December 11 we received word that Schmidt who was injured from the mine explosion had died. Also Lt. Cole was appointed Capt. Lt. Brown was appointed 1st Lt. and Cpl. Nation appointed Sgt. The same day the second platoon moved to Enchenberg. The next day they moved to Petit Rederching to support our "B" Company where the Germans were counterattacking with tanks. After knocking out one German tank, Shurson's destroy-

er received a direct hit and burned. Everyone escaped injury except Shurson who wrenched his shoulder while getting out of the destroyer. He was later evacuated to a hospital. The first and second platoons also moved to Enchenberg at this time. On December 13 all the platoons moved out to support an attack on Sierstahl and the high ground beyond. The 3rd platoon going into position to the south and east of Siersthal with the 2nd and 1st platoon going into position in an army camp in vicinity of the Fredenberg Farm. It was here that we first came in contact with the Maginot Line Defenses. S/Sgt. John Britz was promoted to 2nd Lt. on December 14. He was acting platoon leader in the 1st platoon since Lt. Henningsen's transfer. At this time all platoon leaders were former enlisted men in the Company who had been promoted to 2nd Lt.

The period from December 14 to December 22 the Company was engaged in support of Infantry and tanks neutralizing pillbox and Forts of the Maginot Line Defenses. The most predominant of which was Fort Semershoff. This Fort was emplaced on a hill, its guns being able to fire in any direction in the divisional sector. It was 800 yds. long and 200 yds. wide. From outward appearance it looked like a series of pillboxes with machine guns and 75 mm. guns mounted in them. But according to reports and photographs it extended deep under ground, with each gun connected by a series of tunnels. In pre-war times the French had a garrison stationed there. The fort was of such solid construction that our 240 mm. artillery and bombs could not neutralize it. It was only after thousands of rounds of ammunition had been expended on it were they able to get some penetrations. The platoons were placed in direct firing positions to try and

knock out the guns and pierce the steel doors in the tunnels so that the engineers could go up at night with dynamite and seal them up. The 1st platoon at a range of 400 yds. fired 15 rounds into a steel door ten inches thick, ten rounds penetrating it. They also fired at an observation post. While they were doing this a German was shooting back at them with a Burp gun.

Activities of the 2nd and 3rd platoons as taken from annex to S-3 report No. 49.

Company "A", 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, in support of the ----- Infantry Regiment, ----- Infantry Division, whose sector is completely dominated by this Fort, was given the mission of firing on the apertures and neutralizing the guns. A reconnaissance was made of the Infantry front lines. These positions were on a steep slope in a forest, which was, in itself, an obstacle for a Tank Destroyer.

The next position reconnoitered was on a slight ridge about 1000 yards from the Fort at 722517. Directly in front of the fort the ground rises slightly and the barb wire, steel posts and underbrush cut out a good view of the apertures. Since this area was under direct fire from the Fort, it was necessary to dig the Destroyer in, which placed the gun below the apertures. The brush and small trees in the front of the Fort were in the path of fire and could not be cleared by the projectiles. This tentative position could not be used.

A thorough reconnaissance was then made to the left in the ----- Infantry Sector and positions were located in the vicinity of 718518. This position was, however, under direct observation by the enemy and was heavily shelled from the North, Northwest,

and East by enemy artillery and self-propelled guns. This area had many pill boxes and it was decided to go into position by two pill boxes close to the Koanerhl farm. The Fort could be plainly seen from this position at a range of 2100 yards. One gun would be dug in in the earth works on the North side of one pill box. A bull-dozer dug a gun position at night, and the gun position was further built up with logs and sand bags until nothing but the tube of the gun could be seen. While the bull-dozer was working, artillery was placed on the Fort to cover the noise of the bull-dozer. This was necessary since the gun was within self-propelled range from the left, rear, and front. The next position was selected at another pill box 100 yards to the front and slightly to the right of the first gun. This gun had protection of the pill box from the North, but was vulnerable to fire from the front and rear from direct fire, and was within easy range of enemy artillery on its right. The front and rear were built up with logs and sand bags for protection against direct fire weapons, and the side against artillery. The construction of these two positions involved the work of 100 men for approximately twelve hours and a bull-dozer for approximately four hours. When the positions were completed, the gun tubes were the only target for the enemy, and it was felt the crew would be able to shoot it out with the Fort without having the M-36's knocked out and preventing them from neutralizing the guns in the Fort. The minute the guns opened up they would be seen, as the flashes were under observation from three sides. To distract the enemy's attention, a fire plan was worked out. "B" Company in position in the vicinity of 706525 and 703529 was to fire on the high ground in the vicinity of 726547 or any other enemy activity to the North to prevent firing on the

two dug-in guns. Fire was to be laid down intermittently to discourage enemy tanks or self-propelled guns from occupying this ground with armor, as they had previously run tanks into these general locations. One platoon of "A" Company in position in the vicinity 706514 was to furnish a base of fire on the cupolas of the Fort, and was to attract the attention of the Fort. These guns had a hull down position and no effort was to be made by this platoon to conceal their flashes from enemy observation. Artillery concentrations were also planned on the cupolas. A tank was put into position at 721-515 and every part of the tank was sandbagged but the tube. The tank could not fire high explosives since his trajectory would not clear the brush in front of the Fort. The tanks phone was tied into the Tank Destroyer telephone line. While the two Tank Destroyers were firing, no friendly artillery would be fired at the front of the Fort. It was decided to open fire with one gun and bring the other gun in after the first gun had been located by the enemy. An observation post was secured about 800 yards from the front of the Fort to sense the rounds for the gunners. Two telephone lines were laid from the observation post to the guns with a battery pack radio at the observation post as an alternative means of communication if the wire was shot out. This was a party line consisting of the Battalion commanding officer, the observation post, tank and the two tank destroyers. All parties listened in and could easily communicate with any party without being involved in the mechanism of a switch board.

The reconnaissance for an observation post was made during daylight and selected in the vicinity of 727521. During the night the observation post was dug in, sandbagged,

camouflaged and wire laid to the observation post. It was occupied at 0600 hours. About 0830 hours the sun came out, the sky was clear, and it was evident that it would be an excellent day for observation. The shadows were bad about mid-morning so the firing was withheld. At 1100 hours three large apertures were very evident and a large port hole was on the left, which indicated a smaller artillery gun or large caliber machine gun. At 1145 hours one tank destroyer opened fire on the center aperture with high explosive super-quick fuze with the tank observing the rounds to locate the target. Three rounds of high explosive super-quick fuze were fired and lost. The fourth round was observed on the Fort and the adjustment on the aperture was made. The ammunition was changed to high explosive delay and about 20 rounds were laid into the aperture with about ten rounds going directly into the aperture and the rest hitting the slope and sides of the aperture. Four rounds of high explosive with %105 fuze were fired. These hit in and around the aperture and seemed to make a great blast and flame in the aperture and smoke began to come out of the aperture. The observation post then brought the tank in with armor piercing cap on this aperture and about 40 rounds were fired, of which approximately ten went into the aperture, the balance hit the sides of the aperture and the face of the fort. The dispersion on this gun was large and it was quite impossible to get accurate shots from the gun.

The tank destroyer was then registered on the right aperture and about 25 rounds were fired, half of these going into the aperture. Five rounds of the T105 were fired at this aperture with two rounds going into the aperture and the same blast effect was observed, but smoke did not come out of this aperture.

The second tank destroyer took the left aperture under fire and about 25 rounds were fired into this one. Hits were again made in and around the aperture. Three rounds of T105 were fired at this aperture and part of the upper part of the aperture crumpled from the effects of one of the rounds. The port hole on the left was taken under fire. This was difficult to hit, as it was much smaller, and about thirty rounds of high explosive were fired with about six direct hits in the hole. Two T105s were fired, but neither hit the hole. The right aperture was again fired at with eleven rounds of high explosive with hits made in the aperture.

The tank destroyer was then brought in on the right aperture with armor piercing. Twenty rounds were fired at the aperture and about half of these appeared to go in, while the others hit the sides. Smoke started to come out of this aperture. Twenty rounds were fired at the other two apertures with the same results. Fourteen rounds were fired at the small port hole on the left and again it was difficult to hit the hole. About three rounds were considered as direct hits.

A total of 122 rounds of high explosive, fourteen T105, and 74 armor piercing cap were fired at the three apertures and port hole. Once a round of high explosive delay went into the aperture an exact estimation could not be made of the results or the exact part of the aperture hit. It generally produced a flame that covered the entire aperture and a great deal of smoke and debris could be seen. The T105 fuze seemed to produce a greater blast and flame and its effects were even more difficult to assess than the high explosive delay. The armor piercing cap could be observed easier and rounds were seen from the observation post that appeared

as hits right in the center of the aperture. It is estimated that about 30 percent of all rounds fired were direct hits within the apertures with the balance being in the close vicinity of the apertures. Quite frequently near hits on the sides of the aperture would cause debris to fall into and on the base of the aperture. Both tank destroyers were used since there was such a small difference in their gun-target line that both guns were equally effective. A great amount of physical work, thorough reconnaissance, and careful planning made it possible to successfully execute this mission, and it is believed that a great deal of damage was done to the apertures of Fort Simserhof and the firing was successful.

On December 18 Pvt. Roger Gonzales was assigned to the Company. Also the same day Sgt. Huber received light injuries from German artillery fire.

On December 22 the Company received orders to move to the vicinity of Zetting, where the 44th Division was taking over part of the 3rd Army sector. After reaching this point, plans were made for preparation of a Christmas dinner. We were not taking any chances this time on having to move out like on Thanksgiving Day. The kitchen truck was brought forward and set up in a bar-room. The town hall was located on the upper floor, which was cleaned out and used as a mess hall. Everyone was hoping that we would stay here a while due to the good accommodations we had. But no such luck; word was received that we were to move one platoon to occupy positions in the vicinity of Sarguemines. The night of the 23 the platoon moved out, only to be relieved of the mission and moved back the next morning. We were not taking any chances now that the Company was together again so we had

our Christmas dinner on the 24. On the evening of the 24 the third platoon moved out taking up positions in the vicinity of Gros Rederching. The 3rd platoon also moving to positions on the high ground overlooking Bliesbrucken. The 2nd platoon stayed in Zetting that evening and moved to take up indirect fire positions to the north of Dieding. On the same day Capt. Cole was taken to a hospital for an operation and Lt. Peter took over command of the Company. The 1st platoon moved from Gros Rederching to the vicinity of the Moronville Farm. On the 26 Sgt. Scott and Tec/5 Wuttke were injured by a shoe mine. Both were evacuated to a hospital. On the 27 the 2nd platoon moved up and took up the first positions that the Company ever had in Germany. On the 30 the kitchen was again brought up to Woelfling to serve a turkey dinner on New Year's Day. They were busy all day the 31 baking pies etc., in preparation for the event. Also on the 31 Willingham who had been home on furlough to the States came back to the Company. The evening of the 31 we received word that a German attack could be expected at any time. Everyone had a premonition that it would happen that night. It was while talking about this threat that the conversation was switched to the Company's activities during the past two years. We had come a long way from Casablanca to having one platoon in position across the German border via the Italian way.

Promptly at midnight the expected German attack began to materialize. The 2nd and 3rd platoons were forced to pull back due to the withdrawal of the infantry. It was at this time that the kitchen truck was ordered back to the rear echelon taking our New Years Day dinner with them. This attack lasted until the 6th at which time we

were able to form a line which held. In the meantime on Jan. 1st we received an order making all Pvts., Privates First Class which was accomplished. On Jan. 3rd Cpl. Davenport was slightly wounded and evacuated to a hospital. On Jan. 5th Sgt. Moehagen returned to the organization after a furlough in the States. On January 6th Pfc. Tommy Martin joined the company from the Med. Det. this Bn. On January 8 we received two replacements, Pvts. Williams and Yielding. On the same day we were ordered to send one platoon to the vicinity of Rimling to help the 100 Division. The 1st platoon under command of Lt. Britz was selected for this mission. It was while reconnaissance was being made prior to going into position that enemy artillery killed Cpl. Hams and wounded Cpl. Lewis. Previously to this, Cpl. Hams had destroyed an enemy half track loaded with infantry. Orders were that the platoon was to be split into two sections. One section to take up positions in Guising while the other to proceed to Rimling and help the infantry hold the town. S/Sgt. Burton was in command of the two guns at Guising, Lt. Britz taking the remaining two to Rimling. On the way to Rimling one of the destroyers became mired in a creek bed which left only one gun to go into the town, which it did. The next day the Germans threw an infantry attack supported by tanks which was beaten off. The gun crews were shooting at German infantry at 40 yds. During the course of the day they knocked out two tanks, one of which was a Jaeger Tiger Tank with a 128 mm. gun mounted on it the other of which was an American tank they had captured and were using. That evening orders were that our infantry was to evacuate the town. The destroyer which had become immobilized due to battery failure made it necessary for the gun crew to leave on foot, which they did

after further destroying the vehicle. The gun crew was the last to leave the town. Our own artillery was already falling in it before they were able to do so. Through the fierce enemy action during the day and our own artillery barrage that night, all men were able to escape without injury.

Late in the evening of January 9th, we received word that our "B" Company would relieve us and we were to take up their former positions. We moved to Sarreinsming where we remained for better than a month. Sgt. Burton was promoted to S/Sgt. and Cpl. Backlund was promoted to Sgt. on January 10. On January 12, Tec/4 Franco was sent to the hospital where he was reclassified and did not rejoin the unit.

The following men were appointed Pfc.'s on January 14th. Chutko, Davidson, Elser, Eskin, Fila, Gonuales, Hart, Hoy and Zielding. Pfc. Wallis was appointed Cpl. on January 15. 1st Lt. Ritter joined the company on January 17th and took over the duties of liaison officer with the infantry. Pvt. Sorenson who had been a member of our Hq. Co., was assigned to the company on January 18th and made Pfc. the same day.

On January 28th we received word that Sgt. Runemark who had gone home on rotation, had been discharged from the Army. On the same day the following promotions were announced: Cpl. Reed to Sgt., Tec/5 Idol to Sgt., Tec/5 Skar to Tec/4, and Pfc. Edaakie to Cpl. On January 28 Pfc. Ford was promoted to Tec/5. Pvt. Herman Voelinger joined the company on January 29th. On January 31st, S/Sgt. Lacassie was appointed 2nd Lt. On February 1st Tec/4 Hoeffler entered the hospital where he was reclassified. Sgt. Smith was promoted to S/Sgt.

on February 3rd to fill the vacancy created by Lacassie's appointment to Lt.

On February 4 the Company was taken off the line and bivouaced in Dieding for a rest. Even though we knew that it was going to be short, everyone welcomed the idea. On February 6th, Lt. Peter who had been our Commanding Officer since Capt. Cole entered the hospital was transferred to 7th Army Hq. to take over the duties of Ass't Anti-Tank Officer. Lt. Peter had been with the company all the while we were overseas and was greatly admired by all the men in the Company. Capt. Cusick formerly with the company, who had been our Bn. S-4 during his absence from us, rejoined the unit at this time to take over the command of the Company. On February 8th Pfc. Pellicotti and Hill were appointed Cpl. and Tec/5 respectively. Pvt. Keen was assigned to the company and Tec/5 Beaver appointed Cpl.

On February 10 the company went on the line taking up Anti-Tank positions with the infantry to the North and East of Gros

Rederching. On February 12 Pfc. Williams left for the States on Furlough.

On February 13 the following joined the company: Pvts. Scrooges, Shelton and Woodmans. Lt. Ritter was transferred to "C" Company on February 20. Cpls. Davenport and Ellisbee were appointed Sgts., Pfc. Hakenson and Hill were appointed Cpls. on February 22. On February 24th Tec/4 Wilhelmi left the company for a furlough in the States. The following men were appointed Pfc. on March 2nd, Shelton, Voelinger and Woodhams. Sgt. Fornal was reduced to Pvt. on March 9th. On March 14 we received word that our army was making an attack through us the next morning and that we were not going to be the actual participants which was good news. Our orders were to support the attack from the positions we occupied and after it had pushed out of range we were to be placed in Army Reserve. This good news was short lived though, on the night of the 15th we were placed in direct support of the 63rd Division who were at that time bucking up against the Siegfried line.



We Arrive In Germany

We moved out the same evening arriving in the vicinity of Enshiem, Germany the afternoon of the next day. This was to be our first operation operating as a company on German soil. We did not do much of anything the first day due to not being able to get contact with the infantry and nobody seemed to know just what the situation was. The day of the 17th all of the platoons moved out to the Northern edge of town and fired on pill boxes. It was while they were doing this that Sgt. Parkhurst and Pfc. Hensley were slightly wounded, though not hospitalized. On the afternoon of the 18th the third platoon moved over to the extreme right taking up positions to protect the right flank. At 2:30 the attack started on the line proper, the first and second platoons moving up to positions 400 yds. from the pill boxes from which positions they fired into the apertures in order to protect our infantry who came up to clean them out. The third platoon also did considerable firing, knocking out two 75 mm. guns which had been firing at us with extreme accuracy. It was at this time that the platoons became more or less mixed up due to the number of destroyers that had been sent back for repairs, etc. Lt. Britz was slightly wounded from the deadly fire the Germans were laying down on the destroyers. That evening two destroyers from the 1st and 2nd platoons moved up through the dragon teeth, the remainder of the destroyers less the third platoon moved back to town for the night. The four destroyers

that stayed up on the line were continually shelled during the evening. One artillery shell hit S/Sgt. Smith's destroyer knocking off the hatch over the radio operator and Buck Canterbury reached and pulled it back because he said that the stars were shining in his eyes. The next day the 19th, the destroyers would fire all their ammunition and then pull back, reload and go back and fire again. It was while they were up on one of these missions that the destroyer that S/Sgt. Waggoner and Sgt. Rossland were riding in, was hit killing the two Sgts., slightly wounding Pelliccotti, the remainder of the crew escaping without injury. Lt. Britz whose drawing power was still good was also slightly wounded at this time, when a Panzer Faust (German Bazooka) knocked out his destroyer. The third platoon moved back with the rest of the destroyers moving out that night with a company of Infantry to occupy the ground forward of the next line of pill boxes. It was at this time that the infantry took a lot of prisoners which indicated that the line was weakening and wouldn't be long until we would be through it. The next day a breakthrough was made. All the destroyers assembled in the town staying there that night, the company moving out on the morning of the 21st to Grundviller, France back with the old 44th Division. Everyone agreed that the 63rd Division was the only Division that we could compare with the old veterans outfits that we had worked with in Italy. Pvt. Whittaker, Voellinger, Richards, Ridley,

Smith, Clifford and Smith, Forest, joined the company on the 22nd. Sgt. Huber was appointed S/Sgt. Cpl. Hamberg appointed Sgt. and Tec/5 Bonner appointed Tec/4 the same day we moved back. On March 23rd Pfc. Boatright was appointed Cpl. and Pfc. Hellman appointed Tec/5. Sgt. Landaker left the organization for the hospital on the 24th never rejoining us, with Pvt. Ortiz joining the organization on the 25th. Our stay here in Grundeviller we knew would be very short, time was spent getting everything in shape preparatory to moving out which we did on the evening of the 25th arriving in the vicinity of Fischback, Germany on the morning of the 26th. Orders were then received that we were to cross the Rhine. We moved out and arrived at Sandtorf meeting no enemy resistance. Orders were then received that the 44th Division was to attack Manheim. The company moved out passing through the following places: Walehoff, Kafferthal and to Manheim. Resistance was scattered and no casualties were suffered with the company. The company was then assembled at Elheim where we received orders to move to the vicinity of Harreshausen which we did on March 31st. On April 1st Tec/4 Holte left the company for temporary duty in the States. On April 2nd Cpl. Beaver was appointed Sgt., Pfc. Gilinsky appointed Cpl. and Pvt. Bachand was assigned to the company. We moved to Somborn on April 5th. Our mission being to protect the left flank of the 7th Army. The first and second platoons moved out taking positions to the Northeast and Southwest of the town. On April 5th 2nd-Lt. Britz was appointed 1st Lt. On April 7 we were placed in Army Reserve and ordered to move to Werback which we accomplished on April 8th. On April 10 the following men were appointed Pfc., Keen, Ortiz, Richards, Ridley, Scruggs, Clifford Smith, Forest Smith, and Whittaker. On April 12

the following men were placed on temporary duty in the States, Sgt. Gunnarson, Cpl. Ford, Kenel Klien and Gene Eggleston to accompany prisoners of war as guards. On April 15 we were ordered to move out and pursue the enemy who were retreating according to reports we had, toward the National Redoubt Area which was located generally along the Austrian border. We passed through the following places: Wurzburg, Michelfeld, Fornsback, Jebenhausen, Wiesensteig, Altberlingen, Illerrieden, Westerheim, Eberbacks, St. Anna, Vils, Reutte, Lahn, and Unterdorf where we arrived April 6th.

The period from April 16 to April 21 seemed to everyone that it would never end. We were all sweating it out as we knew that the termination of the war was soon at hand. The resistance we met was all foot troops, who were well armed with small arms and Bazookas, and occasional artillery fire. One of the most disheartening incidents was when the 1st platoon moved through Welschheim and as they approached the outskirts of the town, the destroyer that Lt. Britz was riding in was hit by a Bazooka and destroyed. As the crew was getting out of the destroyer Pfc. Stenberg was killed and Lt. Britz and Sgt. Idol were wounded by heavy enemy sniper fire, this happened on April 20. One other time on April 25th, the 2nd platoon, together with the C. P. group were moving toward the town of Bottingen, the German infantry who were in the woods which bordered the road let the destroyer, retriever and C. P. Track by but opened up with small arms and bazookas when the small vehicles came up. Davis and Nelson who were riding in a captured German car were the target of a Bazooka man, who destroyed their vehicle and wounded Davis. The first part of the column proceeded on to Bottingen, the remainder turned around and came back. The next

morning the destroyers and CP were ordered to come back which they did with all guns blazing, bringing with them plenty of loot. Lt. Tobiassen received the Bronze Star award for his action in getting all the small

vehicles back out of the trap. There was also times when we were moving at night that German vehicles could be heard moving on another road parallel to us. Pfc. Bovill was slightly wounded on April 29.

Last Stop: Austria

At Lahn, Austria on April 30, the company was ordered to assemble, the reason being that the terrain was such that we were more in the way than doing any good. When we received this news everyone figured that the war was over for us, which we learned later was true. On May 2nd Tommy Martin who had recently returned from the hospital joined the company. Also the same day we moved to Erhwald, Austria where everyone was billeted in buildings, the kitchen crew started to prepare meals and we were just waiting for the good news that V-E day had been declared. On May 6 Sgt. Shurson was evacuated to a hospital eventually ending up back in the states via medical channels.

It was at this time that orders came down to move to Lahn, Austria, where our company undertook the duties as temporary occupation troops. Our job was to put the finger on all suspicious persons and round up the remainder of the German troops and nazis, as well as SS troops who were still in hiding. It was necessary to establish road blocks to check all civilians, soldiers, both allied and enemy, and vehicle traffic for proper passes. All unauthorized persons in our area had to be apprehended for at this time there were many wanted Nazis on the loose. Cpl. Fornal was promoted to Sgt. on May 12

while Pfc. Sorenson was promoted to Cpl. on the 13th.

We moved back to Erhwald at this time, where we were billeted in a four story hotel, Sonnespitz, a modern building with all facilities intact. Seven of the local populace were hired by the company to serve meals, wash dishes and keep the building clean. Beer was purchased at a neighboring village and was kept on hand at all times in the hotel. I don't think that the high command would have liked our modern version of billeting the company when taking into consideration the accomodations we had set up.

On May 16 1st Lt. Chester M. Johnson joined the company, while Lt. Lacassie was appointed to 1st Lt. and Pvt. Silva joined the company on the 17th. In Erhwald the company continued its duties as in Lahn as temporary occupation troops. Captain Cusick our company commander had complete charge of the town and was known as the little Burgermeister. Tec/4 Wendlandt and Cpl. Bierman, who spoke German, were the interpreters. Three men from the CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps) were also stationed in town and they were of great help when we picked up any suspicious characters. Capt. Cusick's ice box cure made a few of them talk when brought up for questioning.

Word was received on May 18th that Alvin Anderson, who had entered the hospital two weeks previous due to a throat ailment, died on May 14th. We received orders transferring Stompro, Fromm, J. Smith, Parkhurst, Dyle Smith and Holler to the states for discharge on May 20. Lt. Britz and Tec/5 Davis returned to the company from the hospital on the 24 and 25th respectively. The following promotions were announced on the 27th: Sgt. Mills to S/Sgt.; Cpls. Sorenson and Wallis to Sgts.; Tec/5s Berger and Jensen to Tec/4s; Pfc. Ives to Cpl. and Pfc. Canterbury to Tec/5. Also on May 31 Pfc. Damberger, Johnson, McCulloch, R.; and Voellinger were promoted to Tec/5s; Pelliccotti to Sgt. and Wuttke to Tec/4. Tec/5 Lewis and Pfc. Bovill returned to the company from the hospital on June 5th. Bovill was transferred to a Separation Center in the states for discharge on June 22nd.

About this time we were beginning to hear rumors in regard to what was going to

happen to the outfit. It was making the rounds that we were not due to sail for home until January; that we were going back to the states as a unit to be deactivated and that the company would be broken up and the men sent to another outfit, the latter being more or less what happened.

As it turned out, orders were received at Battalion Headquarters that the 776 TD Bn. was to be made a regular Army unit and that all men with 85 points or more would be transferred to the 601, 705 and 813 TD Bns. which were to be deactivated and the men returned to the states for discharge. The 776 TD Bn. was in turn to get all men from the 601, 705 and 813 TD Bns. who had less than 85 points. This changeover was to take place the latter part of the month. This was quite a blow to a lot of the fellows who had been with the outfit for a long time, some since it was activated in Minot, N. Dak., in 1941. They would have liked to remain in the company and gone home as a unit.

Headin' Home

It was more or less a red letter day when the first group of 23 men left the company on June 30, to be followed by the remainder of the company on the 5th of July, less six fellows who were to remain in the old organization and help the new fellows take over.

When one reminisces the part he played in Co. "A", 776 Tank Destroyer Bn., he will agree that the record attained by the company was only through the ability of the officers and men to work together in harmony as a unit of which we can all be proud.



Our Own Company "A"



Gather around my buddies,
And listen while I tell
The story of an outfit
Who deserves its name right well

Commanded by Captain Wadle,
A fighting bull was he,
With the utmost confidence in his men
These men of the fighting TD

We organized back in the States
Roughly two years ago,
I'll never forget our basic training,
My gosh: but it went slow

Next came those stiff maneuvers
I'll tell you we did gripe;
They had us plowing thru the mud
At times in the middle of nite.

We spent many days on the firing range,
From sunrise until dawn
They taught us how to knock out a tank
To shoot every type of gun

We finally learned our jobs
As well as the next man's too.
Our crews worked in precision
Yes, these jobs we now could do.

Our Security, Anti-Aircraft, and Gun Crews
Were ready for the real McCoy
Willing to show they could do their bit
Upon some distant soil

Our Battalion was boosted to fighting strength
Embarking orders came down
Morale shot up 100 percent
North Africa: We were bound.

We heard a lot of the Jerries;
They're experienced fighters, we know
As green and untried troops we sailed
To battle this ruthless foe:

My buddy Non Coms are with me today
In the battlefield we had been
Sgts. Sturla, Brown, Brits and Lars
Our Sections? They're fighting men

I'll never forget thruout my life
The battle of Mateur
Twas one of the bloodiest I've ever seen
Tougher than at El Guettar:

Through heavy enemy fire
Our company pulled in place
The bombs they dropped from 109's
We were blazed by 88's.

They fired on us for hours,
Retreat we did not know,
The firm conviction of every man
Was to die or beat the foe

We answered them back with 155's
And our deadly 3 inch guns,
Blasting the hell out of dugouts
Whatever we thought was a gun.

Word came down that our Captain
Wasn't with us any more
An 88 had found its target
Bursting in front of his car

Next in line was our Executive,
He took our Captain's Command
A cool-headed, reliable officer
Respected by every man.

Word came down through our radios
To prepare for the initial drive,
We synchronized our watches
And attacked at a quarter of five.

The enemy showed tough resistance,
Our casualties numbered fast,
Thank God: their lines we penetrated
Victory in sight at last:

The Jerries surrendered by hundreds
Upon our guns steady blasts
Our planes held air superiority
Our mission accomplished at last

We'll not fight our next battle for glory
Nor will it be fought for fame
But let me tell you, my buddies
We'll fight to keep our name.

(Written by Sgts. Russell Karg and Dyle Smith after the German Surrender in Africa.)

Men Killed In Action, Co. "A" 776 T.D. Bn.

Tec/5 Harold H. Stickel
Sgt. Raymond E. Larson
S/Sgt. Harold T. Brown
Pfc. Norman Togstad
Pvt. Carl A. Applequist

Pvt. Ferdinand J. Schmidt
Cpl. Stanley E. Hams
S/Sgt. Alvin K. Waggoner
Sgt. Arthur B. Rossland
Pfc. Henry O. Stenberg

2nd Lt. John B. Haywood



Awarded Presidential Citation per GO 298
Hq63rd Inf Div 27Jun45

Anderson, A. E. (Died)
Backlund
Bakalar
Beaver
Berger
Biermann
Boatright
Bonner
Bovill
Buchmann
Burton
Byrne
Canterbury
Carpenter
Christenson
Corke
Crutcher
Damberger
Davis
Davenport
Davidson
Edaakie
Ege
Eggleston
Ellibee
Elser
Eskin
Fila
Ford
Fornal
Foster
Freihage
Fromm
Gallagher
Gilinsky
Glasgow
Granlie
Green
Gunnarson

Hakenson
Hamberg
Hansen, R. L.
Hanson, O.
Hart, D. T.
Hellman
Hensley
Henson
Hieb
Hill
Hoffman
Holler
Holte
Hoy
Huber
Idol
Ives
Iverson
Jacobson
Jensen
Johnson
Karg
Keen
Kinkki
Klein
Klimesh
Kraft
Krumwiede
Landaker
Lang
Large
Larson
Lee
Lucerna
Lunde
Manley
McCulloch, S.
McCulloch, R. R.
McEntire

McLean
Mills
Mohagen
Nation
Nelson
Oneal
Parkhurst
Pelliccotti
Phillips
Piatz
Reed
Reitan
Riddle
Roberts
Rossland (KIA)
McIntyre
Shelton
Shurson
Siler
Singleton
Skar
Smith, John G.
Smith, D.
Sorensen
Speer
Stenberg (KIA)
Stompro
Thorn
Tom
Voellinger
Waggoner (KIA)
Wallis
Wendlandt
Willingham
Wiltenmuth
Woodhams
Wuttke
Yielding
Earl

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS 63d INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 410

US ARMY

GENERAL ORDERS)
 NUMBER 298)

27 June 1945

UNIT CITATION

Under the Provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular Number 333, 22 December 1943, as amended, Company "A", 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion is cited for courageous performance of duty in combat under exceptionally difficult and hazardous conditions during the period 16 March 1945 to 19 March 1945 in the area of the Siegfried Line north of Ensheim, Germany.

This company was assigned the mission of directly supporting the 254th Infantry Regiment in its attack to break through the Siegfried defenses so that armor could enter the Saar-Palatinate region from the south. In a terrain highly unfavorable for attacking armor, fortified with all the ingenuity the enemy could command over a period of years, and, defended stubbornly by a desperate foe, the destroyers of this company repeatedly occupied exposed firing positions and brought devastating direct fire upon the two main belts of the Siegfried Line until the fortifications were neutralized or destroyed. For sixty continuous hours the gallant destroyer crews, without rest or relief, fought in their open turreted, lightly armored vehicles. Deafened by the continuous firing of their own guns and shaken by the constant pounding of enemy artillery, they fired, at point blank ranges, 1172 rounds of 90 mm ammunition into the strongly built pillboxes of Germany's last line of defense. Only darkness permitted the withdrawal from the direct support but enemy bombardment, infiltration, and the necessity for night maneuver, reloading, refueling and maintenance made rest impossible. Due to the high rate of fire frequent cooling periods for the guns had to be allowed and in these periods the crews continued their support of the infantry, firing the .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine gun from the exposed deck of the destroyers against enemy infantry. Moving with the leading assault units and seriously restricted in maneuver by the nature of the terrain and defenses, the destroyers were dangerously exposed to direct artillery, bazooka, anti-tank grenade and sniper fire. Three high velocity anti-tank guns were knocked out during the course of the action. All destroyers engaged were forced to beat off the frequent enemy infantry attacks with fragmentation grenades and small arms. One destroyer was hit with bazooka fire and burned and several others were hit. With every possible advantage of observation the enemy was able to maintain a continuous and frequently heavy artillery and mortar fire upon the destroyers. His prepared fires at night were heavy and accurate. Every destroyer was damaged to some degree and two direct hits were suffered. Wounded crew members refused evacuation and stayed with their under-manned destroyers. With unfaltering courage and the utmost devotion to duty under the most adverse tactical and terrain conditions, Company "A" aggressively maintained its direct support of the infantry until the battered enemy was forced to withdraw and the mission was accomplished.

By command of Brigadier General HARRIS:

JOHN M. HARDAWAY,
 Lt. Col., G. S. C.,
 Actg. Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

RALPH LAVORNA
 Lt. Col., A. G. D.,
 Adjutant General

RESTRICTED