

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 63d INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 410 US ARMY

GENERAL ORDERS)

27 June 1945

NUMBER 298)

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 unflinching 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:

OFFICIAL:

Ralph Lavorgna
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Adjutant General

JOHN M. HARDAWAY,
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GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 299)

UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular Number 333, 22 December 1943, as amended, Company "C", 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 Ommersheim, Germany.

This company was assigned the mission of directly supporting the 255th 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, often at point blank ranges, 1280 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, re-loading, 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 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. Two 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. Several destroyers were hit with bazooka fire. With every possible advantage of observation the enemy was able to maintain a continuous and frequently heavy artillery and mortar fire upon the destroyers and his prepared fires at night were heavy and accurate. Every destroyer was damaged to some degree and three direct hits were suffered. Wounded crew members refused evacuation and stayed with their under-manned destroyers. With unflinching courage and the utmost devotion to duty under the most adverse tactical and terrain conditions Company "C" 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:

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