

BOE NARA Date 0/3/11

In memory of the gallant men of the third platoon whose action and heroic deeds will never be forgotten this postscript is written.

Through the darkness and heavy fog, red flashes penetrated down to the men who stood alerted at their gun and security position, surrounding town of Buschdorf Germany. All was not well this night, German shells were falling every where, to add to the uneasiness of this episode the first platoon was reported pinned down in position on our woody right flank and an attack from the enemy was certain since none of our infantry was to the front. This was the happenings of the tenth of December, our first time on line spear heading with a calvary unit and all were with the grimness of war.

It is said that a new unit is not respected until it prove its self in battle. We were considered as such with the 103rd Inf. Div, until the morning of Dec, 14, 1944. Captain Charles Thomas then first lieutenant and company commander of "C" company received an assignment to take the town of Climbach France, then held by the enemy whose orders were to hold the town at all cost. Comprised of one infantry company, one platoon of tanks and one platoon of tankdestroyers from the third platoon of C company, the company commander took off leading the task force, to unfold a story that will go down in history. First Lt. Thomas Mitchell briefing his gun commanders on situation, pointed out the importance of the mission in that it led to the entrance of Germany. Our halftracks slowly ascended the steep winding road leading toward our objective. Captain Thomas vehicle (m20) got within a thousand yards of Climbach when it was hit by a mine simultaneously being hit by an 88 shell fired from a mark four tank, with standing several wounds as the enemy, raked the vehicle with machine gun fire, Captain Thomas ordered lieutenant Mitchell to bring his gun forward, and at the same time the infantry deployed to the woods on the right. The enemy now awakened to the fact that they were being attacked, opened all its guns on the task force, small arms, machine guns, mortars, light and heavy artillery fire fell deadly around us. It was not long before the first two three inch guns were in position firing like all hell had broke loose. Sgt. Tabron gun crew was dwindled down in size in matter of minutes, Cpl. Peter Simmons fired on every target until he was hit by direct tank fire. T/4. Arthur Perry halftrack driver maned a fifty caliber machine gun repelling squads of enemy soldiers seeking to annihilate the gun crew, he fire vigorously though injured by schrapnel in his left leg. Sgt. Hockaday gun crew also was sharing the brunt end of the ordeal as did every gun crew on the line, Cpl. Shelton Murph gunner took his commands coolly as the commanders picked the targets, he too fought earnestly until he had to be evacuated due to a loss of a leg. Communication was poor between gun crews Pvt. Thomas McDaniel who without regard to personal safety maned a machine gun and fought off enemy foot troops, ran to the second half of the gun section, (who hadnt been called to the line of battle) passed on orders from Lt. Mitchell to come forward, Sgt. Roosevelt Robis and Sgt. Dillard Booker wasted no time in getting gun forward and into firing position. The enemy sighting Sgt Robertson position fired intensively at gun crew. Lucious Riley opened up his fifty Caliber MG Gun raking woods and surrounding territory until the Half Track was hit by direct fire from a Tank Killing him at the Gun. Sgt Dillard L. Booker Position was a little better than all the rest., by some luck his Half Track bogged down in the open field yet he had advantage of being in a slight draw. The enemys observation post in town had been destroyed and we were receiving uncensored rounds from the enemys artillery. The enemy tried vainly to destroyed Sgt. Booker position with both small arms and Tank fire, yet sharp shooter Cpl Burniet Swindell gave the town hell. Sgt. Booker Half Track was depleted of Ammunition very rapidly. Receiving word to that affect T/5 Robert W. Harris started his Ammunition truck forward to be stopped by a Colonel, " Soldier, you cant go up there the enemys fire is too intense," to which T/5 Harris replied, " Get out of my way, my boys are up there " so without regard to his safety Harris drove the Ammunition within fifty yards of Booker Gun the only Gun able to fire. 1st Lt., Floyd J. Starling hearing of the situation the platoon was in, left the CP to courageously rescue Capt. Charles L. Thomas under fire. All can't be recorded of the heroic actions of each individual man but we will never forget those who were able to tell us personally of his actions, Cpl Peter Simmons Cpl, Shelton Murph Gunners Pfc Williams Phipps Geep Driver.

After the platoon had suffered fifty percent Casualties and a loss of over half of its equipment, the platoon almost suffered a complete annihilation at Schillersdorf, France. on the morning of the Twenty fifth of January of 1945 the men who were not on Guard were aroused from their different quarters by Guards who exclaimed, " The jerries are attacking the town, " The Men hastily gather their arms and were placed in position to afford the best fields to fire. This particular morning were very dark the snow was knee deep. The jerries attacked in overwhelming numbers, forcing the infantry to withdraw leaving the TD's guns and halftracks. The TD's fought gallantly beside the doughboys, gallantly. Later when the platoon was accounted for the enemy had captured fifteen of our men including the platoon leader and platoon sergeant thus the platoon had been depleted from fifty-two to twenty men.

It took several weeks to receive replacements, the gun commanders were disappointed to find very few of them with combat training, mostly all were from quartermasters and engineers. Each man was trained as to his particular job, when time permitted. Sgt. Booker had one old man, the gunner, out of a squad of nine, and the gunner had never fired before. The big

test came for his ~~came~~ his men at Bobentel, Germany the 20th of March 1945. This was a particular hot spot the enemy were fighting from pillboxes on the Seffridge line our infantry suffered enormous losses. Sgt. Booker's gun was brought on line during the night and placed on the side of the road facing several pillboxes. Shells fell continuously during the night. The next morning Capt. Walter S. Smith gave Sgt. Booker orders to ~~to~~ destroy two pillboxes. The test for the crew had come. The men quickly put the gun in position as the commander shouted his commands. Samuel Williams laid dead sight on the target missing not once. Robert Nunley pulled the lanyard like a veteran. Clarence Reese ran and passed ammunition to the loader Napoleon King like a track star. James B. Williams though short moved lively uncasing the ammunition. From then on there wasn't no doubt in Booker's mind as to the performance of his men.

These are only a few of the highlights of the Third Platoon which were cited the Presidential Unit Citation, a number of Bronze Stars, also after the loss of their Platoon Leader, First Sergeant Robert Cannon acted platoon leader leading the platoon brilliantly through the rest of their entire combat career.

Composed by:  
Sgt. Dillard L. Booker

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