



It is the men of a unit who make possible the record of events you have just read—men without whose heroic deeds, hardships endured, and unquenchable spirit such a history could never have been compiled.

On the following pages some of the stories of these men are told — for what happened to them happened to all of us and what happened to us is the story of this battalion.

Thus we served



Headquarters Company



Capt. Lum A. Ingram

During the heat of combat attention is mostly centered on front line men. This is a natural tendency because of the fierce spirit shown by these fighters. When a weapon with plenty of ammunition is put into a man's hands and he has sufficient food and clothing, he also gains a feeling of confidence.

Therefore, men with an air of security show the fighting prowess that is a glowing characteristic of the American armed services.

Everyone can't take part in front line action, that is a known fact. So to a great number of men falls the task of giving those who are engaged in close combat the things which they need. It's not a job where glory is involved but it's one that has to be done in the best way possible. When this battalion landed on the shores of England, Headquarters Co. began their combat, not with the enemy but with the problems of supply. Each day spent in Britain saw GMC's and numerous other cargo vehicles in all parts of British Isles drawing the initial equipment that was to ready our men for immediate combat. They did a beautiful job too. For when the signal came for shipping across the channel, each soldier had every piece of equipment the heads of the greatest combat force history has ever seen, could give him.

The first few days of actual combat were a test. Not only a test to see how well the front line soldier could use the training he had been given but also one to gauge the strength of the most important supply problem ever seen. It was not to be the old story of too little too late. The fate of millions of people depended on keeping a flood of men and materials pushing up to the front. As our troops advanced the difficulty of getting supplies increased. For many days it was a matter of getting into a bivouac area, trying to get a meal cooked and in the midst of numerous preparations receive an order to march. This situation met double trouble to the men of Headquarters Co. For as soon as they were able

to find a place to bed down for the night, there was the ever pressing duty of preparing for the next day's move. There were days that found gasoline and ration convoys chasing the battalion from one town to another only to find that it had moved out.

From the moment the 774th landed in France night time took on a new significance. It became a silent and mysterious cloak, a cloak that death wore while it crept across the torn battle fields of Europe. As each day would come to a close it would bring an uneasiness that made a man's blood tingle.

But as war saw no distinction between night and day, supply trains had to move. Armor could not accomplish its missions without gasoline, foot soldiers couldn't fight without food and clothing.

They were strangers in a foreign country, men from every walk of life who had recieved expert training for work under enemy fire. Nothing more than American civilians in uniform they met the test and conquered the natural fear of being alone in a hostile country, for more often than not supplies were delivered by single vehicles instead of convoys. They won their battle, not one of heralded glory, but of importance nevertheless. With these vehicles armed with only one or two carbines, Headquarters Co. delivered the supplies; the life blood that



Headquarters Company Headquarters Platoon

enabled the firing companies to win battles that added to the size of the club which brought the Wehrmacht to its knees. A success that in itself was the greatest tribute these men could receive for a job well done.

LIAISON OFFICERS



Lt. Shaner



Lt. Beernaert

The C.P. group as organized for combat consists of the Battalion Staff Officers, the Liaison Officers, Communication Officer and enlisted representatives of the S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 sections and the Message Center. Normally the group functions as a separate unit of about 50 to 60 members. In addition to the I & O section, S-1 and S-4 sections, there are radio operators, armored car drivers, machine gunners, wiremen, radio repairmen and often a separate kitchen. Nowhere else in the Battalion is there such a concentration of specialists and technicians. This group is often jokingly referred to as the "brains" of the outfit. A more exact simile would be to call them the "nerve center" for the Battalion.

The S-1 section is responsible for reporting casualties, requisitioning replacements, making promotions, handling recommendations for awards and decorations and other administrative details pertaining to personnel of the Bn. In addition to these duties, the section compiles and maintains the activities of the unit in form of the Bn. History.

The S-2 section compiles enemy information, maintains the situation map of enemy troop dispositions, interrogates PWs, and generally keeps the firing companies informed of current information concerning the strength, identification and capabilities of the enemy. This section also maintains and distributes the supply of maps covering terrain of current operations.

The S-3 Section is the element responsible for the tactical employment of the fighting units of the Bn. This section keeps the Bn. situation map on the location and boundaries of all adjacent friendly troops and objectives of various advancing elements. In addition this section receives from higher Hq. the plans for the employment of TD companies and issues necessary instructions to insure execution of these plans for the particular operation. The S-3 section keeps records of results of operations, number of rounds expended and total number and type of targets destroyed.



Headquarters Company Staff Platoon

The representatives of the S-4 section, who travel with the CP group, keep close liaison with the line companies in order to keep them supplied with ammunition, rations, clothing and replacement parts and vehicles. There are two liaison officers with the CP group. The duties of these

officers are to maintain liaison between the Bn. and whatever higher Hq. the Bn. might be operating with. These officers deliver orders, situations, overlays and verbal instruction, concerning troop dispositions.

The message center which is an important part of the CP group operates the Bn. switchboard to which telephones lines to Companies and higher Hq. are connected. It also coordinates the messenger or courier service for all correspondence coming in and going out. The message center also controls the company agents. These are representatives of each company who serve as Messengers to their respective companies in case radio and telephone communications fail. This section also encodes and decodes important messages and handles the air ground identification panels, for communication between the Bn. and friendly aircraft.

There are also members of the communications platoon who operate with the CP group. These individuals constitute the wire laying and line maintenance crew for the entire Bn. in addition to their regular duties of radio repair and maintenance.

The duties outlined above are merely a small part of the duties of the CP group, however. In addition, the individuals comprising the group maintain the guard for the Bn. Command Post, operate the Bn. radio net, and organize and operate the Bn. Hq. itself.

Although its assignments are not colorful and the execution of its tasks more or less routine, this group is as vital a part of the Bn. as a fighting machine, as are the Tank Destroyers themselves.

Personnel

This portion of the book might easily be referred to as the "Story of the Forgotten Section". Not that the members of the Battalion show the least hesitation in referring to the Personnel Section in matters financial, family, personal, and such, where only this Section can be of assistance, but when it comes to throwing bouquets around the Battalion and eulogizing certain departments therein the work of the Personnel Section is almost certain to remain unsung.

A clerk's job is often-times a nerve-racking and mentally tiring ordeal and most outsiders remain oblivious to its scope. The Company Clerk

is the closest liaison between the man doing duty in the Company with his personal affairs back home. Let's have a look-see at the Personnel Section of our Battalion.

The chief of the Section is the congenial CWO Carl R. Peterson, master of song. Due primarily to his amiable personality, working with Mr. Peterson is never a strain. When Mr. Pete, as he has been affectionately termed by all who know him, joined the Battalion in Fort Benning, Ga. in June, 1943, he took complete charge of what was to be the Battalion's Administration Section in combat. During those feverish days of preparation for overseas shipment this section worked diligently, often times well into the night as urgent matters had to be accomplished without delay.

Possibly the Section's busiest days came at Cp. Gordon, Ga. during early 1944, just prior to the Battalion's movement to Camp Shanks POE in NY. All pertinent administrative details, that of each member of the Battalion, and the Battalion as a whole, so essential to an organization earmarked for overseas duty, had to be completed with the utmost of efficiency. The inspections by higher headquarters that followed, of the Personnel records and other administrative functions, made this necessary. During all this time, Mr. Pete, who received his CWO in March 1944 and hails from New Jersey, handled the Section with ease and finesse.

What Mr. Peterson may have lacked in cracking the whip, his right hand man, T/Sgt George Zieverink of Ohio made up for threefold. The oldest man in the Section, Sgt Zieverink demanded certain respect he usually got as regards workmanlike endeavors on the part of each clerk. His seemingly hard attitude kept the boys on the ball even during the most trying days in France when the Battalion was constantly on the move and conditions for performing paper work none too favorable. Harassed at times by the close proximity of the enemy and due to the seemingly never-ending rains and inclement weather during August and September, the major portion of the clerical work had to be achieved within the confines of the crowded and packed GMC which is the assigned transportation. Cpl Mike Endler is the Company Clerk of Hq. Co. The well-liked Pennsylvanian has held this post for quite some time. Mike is a smooth, even-tempered sort of person whose amiable mannerisms make him a welcomed member of the Section. Intelligent and capable Bill Mills of

LI, NY was Co. Clerk of "A" Co. during the Battalion's fastest moving days. In April, 1945, the well dispositioned Mills received a richly deserved break, being transferred back to his Company as Supply Sgt.

When S/Sgt Mills left in April the duties as Co. Clerk of "A" Co. fell upon the capable shoulders of Cpl Leo Handy, who has followed thru in excellent fashion, having had much past experience acting as assistant clerk. Like his predecessor, Handy calls LI, NY his hometown.

Back in February 1945 the Battalion was converted from Towed to SP. This necessitated the formation of a Recon Company. Requiring a man with past clerical experience to initiate the administrative functions of the newly formed company, Cpl Gabriel Tocchi of NYC was assigned Company Clerk. Since the inception of Ren Co. its personnel records and administrative details have been handled flawlessly by the pre-Army accountant.

The big Cpl seen so often intently enveloped in the corner working on one thing or another for his Company is Cpl Ernest Links of Hyannis, Mass. He has spent practically all of his long army career as Company Clerk and knows the routine inside out. Erudite, and possessor of much experience in many fields of endeavor, Cpl. Links portrays the essence of good speech and is the conversationalist of the Section.

Possibly one of the most experienced clerks in the Army is Cpl Ludwig Levy, born in Germany, but proud to call Long Island, NY his hometown. Cpl Levy has been Company Clerk of "C" Co. for over 3 years and is respected by the entire Company. Levy is the interpreter of the Section, being a natural speaking German and proficient in French. His services were put to active use in acquiring billets for troops of this outfit throughout Europe.

One of the smallest of the crew assigned to the Personnel Section thruout its European trek, T/5 Edward Hair of LI, NY, measures up to the most boisterous and laugh producing of the Section. A medic, doing double duty as Detachment Clerk, T/5 Hair has proved helpful with his aid kits, especially the all-purpose aspirins, but the more important services he has rendered are his morale boosting merry-making and comical antics.

T/5 Alfred Sileo, who, like 3 of his contemporaries in the present aggregation has his home residence in LI, NY, is with the Section acting in capacity of Bn. General Clerk.



Personnel Section

The tenth and last member of the present administrative team is the driver of the Personnel Bandwagon, T/5 Oscar Hartline. He was recently awarded that coveted T/5 for carefully negotiating his GMC, loaded with those all-important Personnel Records, safely across hundreds of miles of European territory. Hartline's presence in the Section has been a most desirable one, except possibly for the fact that he comes from the State of Texas!

Communications & Message Center

From the time this battalion landed on the beach in France, up until it hit Metz, communications was a minor problem with a few headaches. The companies were always close enough to the battalion C.P. for radio

or messengers to handle the bulk of work, and 4th T.D. Group was always in our midst to take care of anything going to higher headquarters. Things took a complete turnabout however when the Moselle River and Metz combined to stop our Eastward trek and we were forced to sit in a position for more than a day and night. Radio and company messengers handled communications for the first week, but when it looked as if we weren't going anywhere for quite some time, telephone service was ordered to be installed. According to a T.D. Battalion table of organization and equipment, no provisions whatsoever are made as far as trained men and wire laying equipment are concerned, but the wire was layed and maintained all through the battalions stay around Metz.



Headquarters Company Communications Platoon

Wire and equipment for laying it was either begged, borrowed or stolen and radio men were pressed into service as wire men. Perhaps no other battalion in the E.T.O. had such a high paid crew. A Tech Sgt, Staff Sgt and a T/4 combined to make as efficient a wire crew as could be found anywhere. Later a P.F.C. was added, and between them have strung over a thousand miles of wire.

The companies were as bad off as the battalion C.P. was as far as equipment and men were concerned, but in every case they surmounted the problem and the platoons were in communication with the company C.P. The radio Sergeants, radio electrician plus one assistant usually being responsible for the wire being layed in the companies. All this was in addition to repairing and servicing the 105 radios in the battalion.

Many events occurred will never be forgotten by the wire laying crew, like the time Sgt Brassard asked General Patton to please move to one side, as he was stepping on the wire that the crew was attempting to put overhead, or the time Sgt Robinson fell off the roof of the truck into the mud three times in succession, when the German 88s had the vehicle bracketed around Metz.

They'll never forget the nights in December and January when they were routed out of bed at 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning to fix a break in the line during sub-zero weather, or the time a Jerry plane strafed and set fire to an engineer truck just ahead of them that was carrying 150 pounds of T.N.T. What a blast that made! There was always something new happening to make the job interesting as well as dangerous. The crew was so sure that the new invention Sgt Dumon worked on for two weeks would solve the wire problem, by being able to locate the break in telephone lines by radio, thus eliminating all the tracing of wire. It was a swell idea, too bad it didn't work, he probably could have sold it to the government at a handsome profit.

The hub of communication in a battalion is message center, functioning 24 hours a day since this battalion has been in combat. It has been understaffed since its first week in France, yet, in addition to its numerous duties the switchboard has been located in Message Center and operated by its personnel, even though none of its members have ever had previous instructions. The mail and "Stars and Stripes" have never failed to reach the men in the companies thanks to the Message Center. All in all the communications section in this battalion had a pretty rough time of it, but ingenuity plus hard work brought them through.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



Lt. Tobill

TRANSPORTATION OFFICER



Lt. Baltz

Transportation

A man, at times, is inclined to be a little boastful; proud of the things he has done and I don't think any of us are exceptions to the rule. So someday, when our children ask us to explain how we won the war single-handed our answer will probably be something like this:

Well, son, to begin with I was in the Transportation Platoon of the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion and a wilder, woolier crew of truck jockeys couldn't be found on the continent of Europe. During combat, you should have seen us zooming down the road doing fifty miles an hour in black-out. Gosh son, I'm sure glad we ate all of those dehydrated carrots to keep our eyes in good condition, otherwise, I don't know how we'd have ever come out alive. We landed in France on August eighth and it was the start of a big time. The streets were lined with people waving, cheering, throwing fruit, flowers and a liquid they called Cognac. That's Buzz-Bomb fluid with a French accent. Was it strong? Well, it was strong enough to make us drive into towns that weren't even captured from the Germans at that time. We sure were a bunch of rough and rugged boys. Actually, it was great experience, for a lot of the boys even learned to cook and talk French.

You should have seen Clyde Glover imitating a chicken laying an egg to make a Frenchman understand what he wanted. Without straining himself too much, Clyde finally got enough eggs to practically feed the company. Of course Nicky Palmer, being a natural business man, was not to be outdone. He bought a bicycle from some G.I. and promptly sold it to a Frenchman for a handsome profit. His next efforts were concerned with trying to buy a horse, but horses being scarce at the time, the deal fell through. But Nicky went on to earn the title of "Ambassador of Good Will" at the old duffelbag and trading post which was located in Verdun. After he and the firing company boys had settled themselves, Toole and Salvati delivered some rations to Verdun and found Nicky in quarters equipped with a bathtub, hot running water and all the comforts of home. Also a complete line of souvenirs which he freely dispensed to the boys of the company.

There's one gang of boys none us will ever forget. It was Wild Bill Mitchell and his ever ready gas section. I guess he got his name from his easy and deliberate movements. There were times that after a fifty or sixty mile drive during the day, Mitch and his crew would unload the kitchen trucks at night and go out after gas. When told that he'd have to have gas the first thing in the morning for the Destroyers, his only reply was, "I guess we'll have to get going".

Then, there was the time at Metz when rationing of gas was so strict that even cigarette lighters suffered. It was rumored that "Mitch" had some moth balls sent from home for the purpose of making the precious fluid go further. During those fast moving days through France, Danny Kane drew the unlucky job of waiting for gas convoys to lead them to new bivouac areas. "Old Dan?" has been known to stand on those lonely corners for as long as twelve hours, waiting for the gas train and not the Fords, to go by. At Metz, it was a common practise for the gas section to drain vehicles that didn't move very often, to get enough gas which would enable them to go for a load. On top of that, the boys had to pass through Gorze and the town was a pretty hot place at the time. The Heinies had observation of the roads so as the trucks would find their way into town the shelling began. It was then that the gas section began to have a great interest in fire extinguishers. Can you blame them?

Instead of their work letting down after the capture of Metz it increased

because of the drive to the Rhine. "Wild Bill" and his crew followed and fed gas to destroyers, which at the time were supporting three different regiments. It turned out to be quite a chase. It was on that drive that Jimmy Imperial "De-Suped" one of those Jerry Super men. Three of those fugitives from a sour kraut barrel decided that they needed the gas more than our battalion did. Their big mistake was in thinking that Jimmy was a Chaplain, for he punched their cards with lead slugs. The outcome of the episode was one son of Hitler "Kaput" and the other two didn't want the gas anyway.



Headquarters Company Transportation Platoon

After running around the continent of Europe for a year, the boys got the urge to settle down, to roost, you might say. So in Zdikovec, Czechoslovakia they managed to get two puppies for their happy family. The two canine members of the outfit belong to Seymour Gressin and Walter Salvati who are lovingly known as Mamma and Papa to the gang.

The other half of Transportation is the Ammunition Section who at this time are probably all suffering from lame backs, technically known as "ammo handler stoop". Actually their troubles didnt begin until they bivouacked on the Bayonville hill near Metz. There the firing companies threw everything at the Heinies except the kitchen sink and they would have thrown that if one was to be found. It was the

duty of the Ammunition Section to see that there was enough ammo piled next to the guns at all times. Day and night, GMC's pulled in and out of the area loading and unloading the battalion's presents to the Wehrmacht. It was at that time, Artie Berkowitz, with the inspiration of his able partner, Sidney Berl, wrote a little poem about being in the army. It went something like this:

J wanted to be in the Army

Four years ago today
I joined the U.S.A.
I packed my kit and baggage
And went on my merry way
I left my folks behind
But I didnt seem to mind
For I wanted to be in the Army.
My new life began
Working for Uncle Sam
Twenty-one bucks a month
I didn't give a damn
Went in as a volunteer
For just about a year
For I wanted to be in the Army.
O the things they shoved at me
Never would rhyme with liberty
They gave me this and they gave me that
They raved at this and they raved at that
What could I say, t'was for the good of the U.S.A.
Now after every meal
No matter how you feel
Breakfast, dinner and sup,
We'd start policing up
I lost my desire
For the old camp fire
I no longer want to be in the Army.

“Bomber Berk” and “Blockbuster Berl” they were known as in those days. We all used to get a big laugh when Sidney would strike a match on a path to show Berky the way into an area.

Old pop Geiger, in his spare time off from hauling, could be found chipping wool or barbering, as the intellectuals call it. The only time the gang was afraid to get a haircut was when Jerry shells were landing in the area. It was a ticklish feeling to have Ray shaving your neck and at the same time expect a shell to come in. Those razors are awfully sharp. I'll never forget the day we delivered ammo to "A" Company on the Arnville hill. We had just finished unloading the ammo, when Cook's truck tires became tangled up in a lot of wire and the Jerries began to shell the area. It happened so quick that all we did was duck which wouldn't have helped us much if the shells had landed closer. When the boys got back to the company, they immediately inquired about getting portable fox-holes.

Another little incident that Genna and I will never forget was the trip from Thionville to Grunstadt with a load of ammo. On the way we had six flat tires, and then did a Corrigan act and took a wrong road. We found ourselves in a small village by the name of Ernshousen. The GMC minus its duals mired down in a pasture. In trying to winch the truck out, we pulled down a telephone pole. It's a good thing for us that the Battalion passed by the town on its way to Baumholder or maybe we'd still be sitting in that same place. On that same trip, Sgt. Charlie Kemper and his crew had to pick up some ammo that had been left in Wowern. The Burgermeister greeted him supposing that he and La Russo and Thomas were big shot inspectors. Charlie and his crew were shown where all the stray ammo was and Kemper mentioned that he had a sore throat. The Burgermeister overhearing the conversation told Charlie that he had a gargling compound. He called it "Primavino". I could never figure out what that meant but it certainly did wonders. I guess the happiest day of the Ammo section's life was back in Zdikovec when all of the ammo was turned in.

Motor Maintenance Platoon

The part which Motor Maintenance Platoon played in the activities of the 774th naturally consisted chiefly of plain hard work. The men of Maintenance felt that they simply had a job to do. On more than one occasion, however did they learn by actual experience how it felt to be bombed or to have shells landing close by.

Not being of the warrior class, the memories which stay with them and which they like to talk about are mostly concerned with incidents which were not S.O.P. It would take volumes to recount all of these. The following are just a few unconnected incidents picked at random from a rich store of memories.

Remember how silly we felt, acting as M.P.s in England, all decked out in white leggings and belts? Well that isn't nearly as silly as some guys felt walking guard at night on the streets of Sponville; the civilians there had a habit of unexpectedly throwing a window open and throwing a thundermug out into the street. A guard had to remain always on the alert to avoid receiving the contents. "Zeke" Fazekas had an especially close call one night when an old gent's hand slipped and everything, including the pot, came flying out.

One fact which may not generally be known, is that several members of Maintenance established a bridgehead across the Moselle with no assistance from any other part of the battalion. It was all due to a hot tip that beaucoup wine was to be had for the taking in a deserted town on the other side of the river.



Headquarters Company Battalion Motor Maintenance

It was soon after that, one day, that some Heinie planes came over shooting up the town when one of our favorite officers was visiting Maintenance to take a bath. The Platoon beat him to the cellar and he came in a very close second, stripped for action and we do mean stripped.

Also at the same place, the jerries formed a habit of throwing a number of shells into the vicinity every night. The report of the gun could be heard in the distance followed almost immediately by the shell landing nearby. A couple of the boys who lived on the third floor could jump out of bed at the report of the gun and be in the cellar before the shell arrived. That's traveling!

Another record was established by this heroic crew one day in a woods not far from Bayonville, being brave (?) men, no one bothered to dig a slit trench until one afternoon when shells started coming in, whistling overhead and landing not far beyond. Then mattocks, shovels and entrenching tools seemed just to fly and holes appeared in the ground as if by magic. No record was kept of the time it took to dig-in, but it must not have been more than one and three-fifths seconds.

Berus, near Saarlautern, provided Maintenance with its first experience of living in a German town of any size. After scraping the Wehrmacht members up off the streets and settling in the houses, things were not too uncomfortable. Looting, of course, was not indulged in but various furnishings were moved around to suit the occupants. It was there that "Judge" Landis had thirty-seven varieties of clocks hung on the wall of his room and went completely mad trying to keep them synchronized. Several other boys, who happened to be close by when they all started to ring twelve, were also treated for battle fatigue.

But the German town to leave the most lasting impression on the nut and bolt experts, was Ratingen. This is very peculiar because with fraternization being verboten and all, none of the boys know anything about the place except what they have read in their geography books. The town was almost entirely populated, (it says in the book), by very schön frauleins who tried to lead our heroes astray. But being loyal members of the good old Skunk Patrol in Girl Scout Troop No. 97, our lads kept strictly to the three foot wide path they were allowed to walk between the house and the garage. It also states in the book that viele Schnapps

could be obtained there but this also would have required fraternizing so the boys contentedly quenched their thirst with a rather peculiar beverage which became affection-ately known as "Blue Sunoco".

Once, after drinking several spoonful of this potion, Richard Stockham absent-mindedly started whistling. Immediately, fifty-three of the above mentioned frauleins thinking he had whistled at them, rushed to attack him. But Richard, having been raised on diet of crispy, crunchy nourishing "K" rations, managed to beat them off and escaped with his virtue intact and no liebling.

It was there too, that "Jimbo" DiDomenica began to do his post war planning and as an experiment opened a local agency for Chase and Sandborns dated coffee. For some strange reason this made the local citizens schimfft so it was discontinued.

All too soon the time came for the Platoon to leave and numerous civilians stood on the street and waved farewell to the Americanish soldaten. It must have been idle curiosity which prompted them to do so, but the soldaten cast many a backward glance as they departed.

Now the time has come when the older members of the gang are starting to think about leaving the outfit which has been their home for so long. It will seem very strange to them for a long time and the Platoon can never be quite the same.

This account cannot be brought to a close without mentioning one more thought. Back in the days when the big show was going on and a guy from one of the line companies would bring in a vehicle shot full of holes for maintenance to repair, none of the mechanics would pat him on the back and tell him what a great hero he was. But all of us in Maintenance had one thought with us. We couldn't have a decent place where we could work or sleep or eat if it weren't for the fact that all of you joes in the firing companies were up there ahead of us. We want no medals, we didn't earn any. All we'd like is for you boys to think we helped a little.

At this time it is our pleasure to remember the two Recon Platoons who for so long were a part of Headquarters Co. As many fighting teams, they're ranked with the best, and with the boys in Headquarters, they are regarded as a bunch of real swell guys. It was in the vicinity of

Saarburg that the changeover came, and then both Recon Platoons became the foundation for a newly activated Reconnaissance Company. Being so close to them for such a long time we were in one way sorry to see them leave, but happy in another for it gave the men who so ably demonstrated their ability as leaders the opportunity to receive the rewards they so richly deserved. It was not destined to be a case of "out of sight, out of mind" for deeply rooted in our memories are the joys and sorrows we shared together. These are the things men don't easily forget. So with gratitude and admiration for that constant comradeship, we of Headquarters Company offer small tribute to our buddies.

Reconnaissance Company



Lt. Lawrence A. Satterfield

and Sgt. Urban, was subject to many missions that called for close contact with the enemy.

During most of our time in combat, "Recon" consisted of two platoons under the supervision of Recon Officer, 1st Lt. Lawrence A. Satterfield.

There were many interesting and highlighted events during the drives across France and Germany. I would like to mention a few of these incidents, starting with the first "Recon". The first "Recon" under the fiery leadership of 1st Lt. Paul J. Clifford and his able assistants, S/Sgt Coriell, Sgt Griffin

The first recon had its first man wounded on August 27, when Sgt. Griffin's section minus the M-8, was notified by two FFI agents, that they had engaged the enemy at Gaye and needed some help immediately. In the ensuing action Sgt. Griffin was wounded by small arms fire. The effective machine gun fire of machine gunners Pfc. Brown and Pfc. Farrington brought about the destruction of one enemy half-track and its ammunition. Lt. Griffin still kids to this day about the way Pfc. Infantino and Pvt. Glover held him down and forced him to take his wound tablets.

The first "recon" crossed the Moselle River and spent a cold and muddy week in foxholes, as part of the security for A Company's guns which were protecting the bridgehead and bridge known as "88 Junction". After seven days, the platoon was withdrawn from this sector and moved into the town of Noveant, where they established OP's in the daytime and a walking patrol to Aney-sur-Moselle at night. The Germans were occupying the town of Corny diagonally across the river, keeping the platoon pretty much under cover during the day. The OP was used to find locations of enemy guns that were firing into surrounding vicinities at irregular intervals. Due to this, many enemy guns were silenced by the

5th Division Artillery. The night patrol consisted of six men well armed, since they had to pass through the battlefield of Dornat, where the dead were still lying. From Dornat the patrol proceeded to Ancy-sur-Moselle, which was four-hundred yards from the German's front line on the west side of the Moselle. T/4 Amidano, T/5 Gagnon, and Pvt. Rene, all French speaking men, took turns nightly, to lead the patrol, followed by Lt. Clifford and S/Sgt Coriell, both making the patrols every night.



Reconnaissance Company Headquarters Platoon

This patrol barely missed German patrols several times. It was quite a relief to all the men when the patrol returned safely each night. Just a word about the fine meals prepared by T/5 Topmiller, T/5 Eddie Clark, plus little Natalie Ierardi, the man behind the spaghetti and meatballs. The Germans were persistently getting through our lines, laying mine fields and gathering information as to the whereabouts of troop installations. The nightly patrol was cancelled, and the platoon was ordered to set up guard posts and road blocks to counteract this infiltration. These new positions soon paid dividends as a German patrol tried to sneak pass Pfc. Williams and Pvt. Rogers, who were in a concealed position. Pvt. Rogers opened up with his Tommy Gun causing the patrol to flee back toward the town. This alerted the platoon but to no avail

as the enemy disappeared in the darkness. The next morning S/Sgt. Coriell checked the area for some clues and found a burp gun, machine gun ammunition, and a German gun belt with a pistol attached. Pvt. Rogers is now the proud owner of the pistol.

The 5th Infantry Division started the attack towards the Fortress City of Metz. The first recon was sent on their right flank to keep the Battalion posted on their progress and to assist Company "B" in any way possible. Our patrols moved along behind the infantry each day. Pvt. Dominowski and Pvt. Rene had some exciting times on these patrols. The platoon then took possession of Marley, which the infantry had bypassed, capturing fourteen PW's, and holding the town for a day and a half until "B" Company moved in.

Besch

The mission at Besch was to be a forward OP watching the towns of Nening, Borg and Weis for enemy activity. At this time the 11th Panzer Division was on our front, guarding the initial approaches to the Siegfried Line. Both elements put out mine fields plus trip-flares to help counter-infiltration. During the time at Besch, there were many bitter nights, during the cold spell, and moments of tension as German patrols tried nightly to come through our lines, using many means of camouflage against the snow-covered fields. One incident worth mentioning: During the early hours one morning, a German patrol consisting of six men dressed in white capes and coats, tried to worm their way passed Pvt Rene who was on guard. Rene opened up with his .30 cal machine gun causing the enemy to flee minus one burp gun, two bazookas, and much demolition material.

During the stay at Besch, Cpl Infantino claims the platoon got trip wire fatigue as it was nothing for them to be alerted four or five times nightly. If it wasn't the Germans tripping the flares, a cow or rabbit would. Also at this point, Sgt Griffin was the recipient of a thirty day furlough to the States, the first in the Battalion. I would also like to say a word about S/Sgt Webb, Mess Sgt, who delivered a Christmas dinner to the boys with all the trimmings. The greater time spent at Besch, we were attached to the 3rd Cavalry Group or better known as Task Force Polk until the 94th Division moved in to launch the attack that eventually cleaned out the enemy.

Saarlautern



Reconnaissance Company First Recon Platoon

At Saarlautern the first "Recon" was put into a security position along with "B" Company's guns. Leaving their vehicles in a position of cover, they proceeded on foot to a position covering all approaches from the south. The greater part of the night was spent digging in, as Fritzie could see everything that moved in the daytime from his fortified positions. During this escapade T/5 Gagnon, and Pfc Scott had a narrow escape when a German shell hit three feet from their foxhole, causing nothing more than a case of the shakes. After four days, the platoon moved to Wadgassen on the Saar River's edge, directly across from the town of Bous, another link in the Siegfried Line. The mission was to walk patrols along the river bank, nightly, just in case Fritzie would try to infiltrate to our gun positions. The town of Wadgassen was subject to heavy artillery and mortar fire, with an abundance of sniper fire from dug-in positions across the river. One trick the enemy pulled was to set-up trip-wires across the road we patrolled with tin cans attached, covering this area with small arms fire. Nothing materialized with the enemy, but there sure was plenty of tension and sweat until the last patrol came back nightly.

Warwern to Pellingen to Obersehr

The first "Recon" was sent out on a mission to contact "B" Company at Obersehr and give them any assistance possible, as they were being hard pressed by elements of the German 6th SS Mountain Division. After many attempts to get the platoon through with their vehicles and with no success, Lt. Clifford finally made his way to Pellingen and there reported back to the Battalion CP the outcome. Our orders were to get to Obersehr no matter how. After much deliberation and briefing of terrain etc. Lt. Clifford asked for six volunteers to accompany S/Sgt Coriell and himself on foot cross country to Obersehr. That patrol consisted of Lt. Clifford, S/Sgt Coriell, Cpl Infantino, T/5 Hantke, T/5 Gagnon, Pfc James, Pfc Williams and Pfc Brown. Armed with one burp gun, seven Tommy Guns and one bazooka, the patrol made its way over hill and dale through the enemy's line until it reached the first building in the town of Obersehr. Lt. Clifford gave orders to stand still and listen for some kind of a sound or sign so that we could make contact. After ten minutes of this, the Lieutenant decided to try the other side of town. We took about four steps and all "Hell" broke loose around us, caused by our own artillery which was pin-pointed on the outskirts of the town. During the scramble for cover, Lt. Clifford was slightly wounded. The patrol reorganized and decided to make its way back to Pellingen. It was lucky for us, because all friendly troops within the town, were ordered to shoot at anything that moved. On the way back, it rained and snowed continually making you think that every step you took was the last since it was impossible to walk without making a racket. I can safely say, every man of the patrol is sporting a few extra grey hairs today.

Final Drive to the Rhine with the first Recon

The first section was assigned to travel with "B" Company, and the second section with "C" Company. The first section under Lt. Clifford and Sgt. Georgiadas had many anxious moments as bridges were blown up in front of them, heavy artillery fire and small arms sniper fire, as they made their way to their final objective, Ludwigshafen. The second section, traveling with "C" Company, had a few incidents worth mentioning.



Reconnaissance Company Second Recon Platoon

They travelled along with "C" Company until the objective of Birkenfeld was taken. The next morning, a "Recon" M8, consisting of Sgt Urban, T/5 Hantke, Pfc James, and Pfc Rene, was assigned to a 302nd Regt. I and R Squad to reconnoiter the roads and wooded areas leading to the much needed bridge spanning the Nieder River at Nohem. Starting out at 0600, we made our way to the town of Rimsberg. No opposition was encountered although we fired a few rounds at some Heinies fleeing over the hill. We then started out for the town of Nohem, and as we approached the outskirts, we were fired upon. The M-8 was rushed to the front of the patrol to make its way down to the vicinity of the bridge, where it encountered enemy sniper fire from the other side of the Nieder River. The M-8 was put into a position to cover any approaches the enemy had to blow up the bridge. Sgt Urban and Pfc James cut loose with both machine guns neutralizing any sniper fire. With the I and R Squad protecting our flanks and rear, we stayed in this position until elements of the 778 Tank Battalion relieved us. The two tanks that arrived were then ordered by Col Haggerty to take, with the aid of the I and R Squad and the M-8, and secure the high ground overlooking the

main road to our next objective, Baumholder. The next day, as we pulled out for Frankenthal, the armor left the front of the drive and once again a "Recon" M-8 was put in front of our destroyers, and acted as spearhead until they hit trouble, in which case they pulled to the flank, and let our 90 mm's finish the job.

Second Recon

The Second "Recon" under the competent leadership of 1st Lt Walter E. Gerding and his capable assistants, S/Sgt Latti, Sgt Potter, and Sgt Bognanni, had its first smell of gun powder on the 13th August when the platoon had a mission to reconnoiter the routes east and west to Argentan. It was during this mission that we sustained our first casualties and loss of equipment due to enemy mines. In the vicinity of Villeaines, the first section's M-8's rear wheel struck a mine, completely destroying the M-8, and wounding our two messenger bike riders, T/5 Wiesehan and Pfc Mitchell. Due to these injuries, Wiesehan could not report back for combat duty.

The following day in the vicinity of Pre-en-Pail an FFI agent came running up the road warning us of approaching enemy troops. The battalion was in the process of moving out, with the Second "Recon" and "C" Company ordered to investigate and engage the enemy if necessary. The "Recon" M-8 consisting of S/Sgt Latti, Pfc Reuss, Pfc Malo and Pfc McKinley, was sent out as the point, and two peeps whose machine gunners, Pfc Jonas and O'Niell, to be flank protection for the M-8. The enemy was spotted by S/Sgt Latti and he immediately ordered his 37 mm gunner to open fire, and it was here that Reuss scored his first hit, unfortunately for the Fritz that stopped it. The enemy fled, but not before thirteen prisoners had been taken and one killed, that we know of.

Ober Tunsdorf

In Ober Tunsdorf, the Second Recon had to set up OP's and watch for enemy activity in Orscholz and surrounding areas. This particular mission was considered by the platoon as a rest camp. The men will never forget the meals that were prepared by "Long Tom" McAllister, Pfc Molnar, and Pfc Lovas, as a matter of fact after our combat days were

over Molnar returned to his first love, and became one of the cooks in the new Reconnaissance Company.

In the battalion stay on the Moselle, the Second Recon, the first section, was put in the town of Noveant as OP's watching for any enemy activity in the town of Corny on the east bank of the Moselle, Lt Gerding, Pvt S/Sgt Vincent were wounded and T/5 Stanley Wszolek killed.

T/5 Wesley, observing from the OP, saw an FFI agent returning from Ancy sur Moselle cut down by German machine gun fire. Without consideration for himself, he crawled to the wounded man and managed to get him to the medics.

During this time the second section relieved the first "Recon" on the east side of the Moselle and took over the security positions along with "A" Company's security section in the vicinity of Arry and spent most of the time hailing out our foxholes.

From Maurielles to Metz

After being relieved from positions near Ft. Driant, the Second Recon, along with two platoons of Company "B", was attached to the 1st Battalion, 11th Regt., 5th Division, and was assigned with them to support the infantry advance on the big push to take the fortress city. The platoon was organized and placed in the ruined village of Maurielles, on the northern flank on our salient below Metz. (A few hundred yards from Purple Heart Avenue.)

Following days of comparative quiet, during which time the platoon was billeted in a tiny room to take advantage of an undamaged roof, the drive was finally launched. By the end of the first day, the first objective, Fey, had been taken, and the second platoon had been moved into town, in the vanguard of "C" Company, who relieved "B" Company at the start of the push. Under heavy mortar fire, positions were selected, but on a rush call from the Doughs, T/5, Thompson's M-8, with Lt Gerding on the gun and Pvt Frakes loading was pulled into position by Sgt Bognanni and gave direct fire at pillboxes overlooking the town. Sustaining light vehicle damage from accurate mortar fire, it was decided to pull back for the night to prevent further loss of equipment.