

802nd TD Bn. Squelches Enemy Armored Threats

Destroyers Roll Thru Jülich



New 90 mm. gun on M-36 Tank Destroyers of 802nd TD Bn. confronts remaining enemy resistance as XIX Corps unit drives to the Rhine.

Targets Include Pillboxes As 90mm. Guns Oppose Nazi War Machine

Sporting the new 90 mm guns, the tank destroyers of the 802nd Battalion are nearing the heart of the Reich, an objective they have had in mind since they first went into action early in the Normandy Campaign.

When they landed in France, the battalion went to work with the three inch guns then on their destroyers, and fired 49,088 rounds before the new guns were adopted. A hard-striking unit, the 802nd TD's are credited with the capture of 451 prisoners, a relatively large number for a TD outfit.

Their commanding officer, youthful Lt. Col. John H. Montgomery, a West Pointer from the class of 1937, is on his second tour of overseas duty. He served in the Panama Canal Zone shortly after his graduation and began to learn the tactics through which he deploys his men to throw fire-power at the enemy.

FOUGHT AT CARENTAN

A few hours after they landed in Normandy, the 802nd went into action in support of the 83rd Infantry Division at Carentan. In the tough fighting that followed Companies "A", "B", and "C" and Reconnaissance gave close support to the Infantry and the anti-tank crews.

It was in this sector that the Germans tried to cut the Allied Lines while American divisions were capturing Cherbourg, and at intervals the TD's fought hand in hand from foxholes with the doughs. The advance continued in the hedgerow country and the 802nd assisted the penetration and capture of Sainteny and Piers.

ACTIVE IN BRITANNY

After the breakthrough south of St. Lo, the 802nd moved on to Brittany and continued to support the 83rd as this division assaulted St. Servant and the historic towns of St. Malo and Dinard. At St. Servant the First Platoon of "A" Company was attacked by a select group of 50 Nazi paratroopers. The platoon maintained its gun positions, killing or capturing more than two-thirds of the attacking force.

In the assault on the Citadel at St. Malo, the towed three inch guns of the 802nd knocked out all surface roads and ack-ack emplacements to make possible the bombing and Infantry onrush which reduced the stronghold and effected the surrender of "The Mad" Colonel Von Auchlitch. Two platoons of Company "A" fired a total of 5,820 rounds of ammo in two days.

HELPED FREE TOURS

The path of conquest followed along the Loire River into Angers and Orleans, from where the battalion's momentum carried it into the city of Tours, which they assisted in liberating.

From France the tank destroyers of the 802nd moved into Luxembourg, where they participated in the clearing and holding of the west bank of the Moselle River in the Echternach area.

When General von Runstedt burst through the American defenses with a fierce counterattack which writers christened "The Bulge", the 802nd was in direct support of the 4th (Ivy Leaf) Di-

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vision. All companies of the battalion were committed to important road junctions and fought off heavy shelling to hold the roads and stave off the Nazi attempt to enlarge the southern flank of the breakthrough and reach the city of Luxembourg. Later these TD's supported the 4th in the initial crossing of the Ore River at Gerendorf, Luxembourg.

After the Belgian Bulge the 802nd was converted from towed guns to the M-36 destroyers. The initial use of these new weapons came as Company "A" supported an Infantry Division in its drive to the Rhine. The 802nd succeeded in stopping long enough to clear out resistance in the Krefeld-Uerdingen sector.

The battalion is also credited with the destruction of 6 tanks, 14 artillery pieces, 11 machine gun nests, 2 troop trains, 9 ack-ack guns, 5 observation posts, 2 ammo dumps, 21 pill-boxes, 14 concrete fortifications, 4 boats and 2 oil tanks.

"Although our primary mission is supposed to be enemy armor", the 802nd crews add, "We're not too particular what we knock out so long as it's German."