

## **U.S. Army M20 Armored Car Destroyed by Anti-tank Landmine April 6, 1945 in Klepsau**

This M20 Armored Car was from the 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company B, Second Platoon. This battalion was attached to the U.S. Army 10th Armored Division, at this period of time under the command of the VI Corps of 7th Army. During March and April of 1945, Task Force Roberts of the 10th Armored Division's Combat Command attacked from Trier to Crailsheim. Between April 5th and 7th, Task Force Roberts moved through Assamstadt, Laibach, Dorzbach and Klepsau. It was in Klepsau on the 6th of April that this American armored car was destroyed when it drove onto a Teller anti-tank landmine. Of the four man crew two were wounded and the other two died from wounds that they received. The village of Klepsau is along the Jagst River 70 miles northeast of Stuttgart in the German state of Baden-Wurttemberg.

The second platoon commanding officer, 1st Lt. William N. Fudge from Harrisburg Pennsylvania died the same day at the 80th Armored Medical Battalion's clearing station in Dorzbach. Private Walter H. VanCleve died from his wounds three days later on April 9th. The wounded crew members were, Private First Class Clyde Cagle who was lightly wounded and Corporal/Technician 5th Class, Clifford H. Howard. Howard was the driver of the armored car and took many months to recover from extensive wounds. He was in a complete body cast on his return to America.

Task Force Roberts consisted of these 10th Armored Division units:

54th Armored Infantry Battalion, Companies A,B and C  
21st Tank Battalion, Company B  
55th Armored Engineer Battalion, 3rd Platoon from Company A  
609th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 2nd Platoon from Company B

Another 7th Army unit that was in close proximity to the village of Klepsau was the 254th Infantry Regiment, of the 63rd Infantry Division.