

638th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION



In World War II



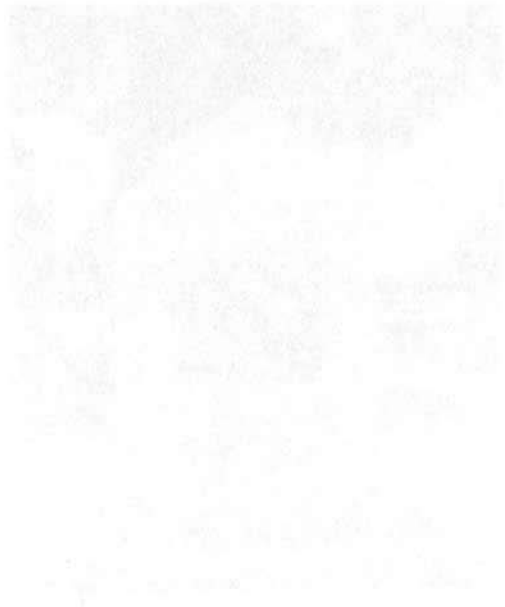
ART R. PAULIN



638th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

MEMORIAL

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Prelude To The Invincible German Tank

By late summer in 1916, World War I had bogged down to a war of trenches. Both sides had battered the other at great cost in manpower and material. While both sides had their war plants producing war materials round the clock the Allied Armies and the Central Powers Armies had settled down to trench warfare. Northeastern France was laced with zig-zag trenches dug by both sides. They dug row after row of these fortifications and joined them by connecting trenches. The countryside was a labyrinth of these ditches. By placing barbed wire entanglements and the extensive use of automatic weapons, artillery, grenades, and mortars, an attack was so costly in life, time and equipment that gains seldom justified the cost. Manpower losses on both sides were catastrophic.

In the battle of the Somme in September 1916 the British Army introduced a new weapon to warfare. It was a track laying, self propelled, armored vehicle that carried weapons, ammunition and crew. It soon became known by its nickname, the TANK. It gave the Allies an edge in trench warfare and was a great moral builder for them. The moral of the German troops took a step down. The mechanized tank soon become a part of every army arsenal. Many versions of these new weapons were turned out by the heavy industries of the warring nations.

Twenty one centuries ago Hannibal and his carthagians used their version of today's tanks. As his army moved east on the northern shores of the Mediterranean to crush the Roman Empire his Army was unstoppable. He crossed the Alps and drove south down the Italian boot. His army was made up of footsoldiers, archers, lancers, horsemen, and war elephants. Firing platforms were harnessed on the backs of these great beasts. Archers and lancers rained death on the defenders from these moving shielded platforms. Also, the sight of the huge monsters created panic among the defenders and many fled in horror as these great beasts advanced. Centuries later these "mechanized beasts of war" created the same feeling of helplessness, fear and panic to the defending troops in World War I and World War II.

This new weapon showed up in many shapes, forms and sizes before W.W. I ended. Each side had produced several versions of this war machine but none were flawless. For the worst performers future plans for production were dropped, while the better designed and more proven performers, the race was on to improve and modify. After W.W. I ended, the Allies did little on Research and Development on the tank and very little on Defense against the tank. They theorized that artillery was adequate defense against these monster machines. This theory held up if adequate number of artillery pieces were in place and waiting for the columns of mechanized monsters to move within range of the artillery positions. But W.W. II was to be a war of movement and maneuvering, moves and counter moves. The tank could move or fire on a few seconds notice. The artillery had to be towed to a position and a fire base had to be prepared. This was a time consuming and back breaking job for the gun crews.

The Great Depression

In 1919 War weary and peace hungry populations throughout the world looked to their governments to lead or help them to a better way of life. They did not want their tax money to be spent by defense departments, they wanted less taxes so they could have a better way of life, so they could use more of their earnings for consumer goods.

For the industrial nations with their raw materials inside their borders, or the industrial nations that had colonies that supplied the raw material, the factories were busy turning out products to fill the pent up demand for civilian goods not available during the war years. Factories throughout the world were humming but this was short lived, supply had caught up with demand. The factories had slowed down, competition had set in at all levels. The industrial nations with the resources within its borders or the industrial nations that had colonies to furnish the raw materials had a distinct advantage over their competitors. As expected, unemployment showed up first in the nations that did not control the source of the raw materials, within a few years this advantage shrank and the world was in a great depression.

Depression is spelled in all languages and it became daily headlines in newspapers throughout the world. The unemployed were walking the streets. Soup kitchens became a household word. A feeling of helplessness had overtaken the idle worker or bread earner. He was desperately looking for leadership from his government. Many leaders began to show up and desperate people were willing to follow them. Most of the leaders fell by the wayside but a handful of them changed our world.

War Clouds

By the mid 30's three powerful leaders emerged in Europe. Each of these leaders had powerful and dangerous goals. These three cohorts were the most deceitful, deceiving, double-crossing trio that ever cut a deal. In a six year period, they fought side by side then turned savagely and violently against each other. These three, Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin will occupy the blackest pages in history.

Mussolini - He and his "black shirts" took over Italy in 1922. His goal was the Restoration of the Roman Empire. His Fascist legions invaded and conquered Ethiopia in 1935-36. The Ethiopian shields and spears were no match for 20th century war equipment - it was a shameless slaughter. His armies had no taste for battle with equally equipped troops and victories after Ethiopia were few and far between. They became a drag for the Germans in North Africa and were often used by the Germany generals as buffer troops or cannon fodder while they tried desperately to save their own African Korps. The Germans also had to rescue them in Albania and Greece and shared their fate on the Russian front. When the Allies invaded Italy Duce's government fell. A year later he and his live-in girlfriend were captured and executed by a partisan armed band near Milan.

Hitler - a talented rabble-rouser who rose from a sub-Corporal in a Bavarian Army in W.W. I to top commander of the German Armed Forces in less than two decades. In the early 30's dozens of groups were vying for power in Germany. Deals were made and dissolved for the slightest gain. Plots, trickeries and scandals were wide-spread. Three powerful behind the scene groups, the Army, the Junkers, and the heavy industry were deeply involved in this period of intrigue. As Hitler neared the top with over 13,000,000 votes from the men in the streets, the money interests became more generous. In a few months, President Von Hindenburg appointed Hitler the Chancellor of the German Reich. However, they surrounded him with a cabinet to control his power and keep him in check. February 27, 1933 was the famous "Reichstag Fire." It happened exactly the way Hitler and his accomplices planned it four weeks before. Hitler's terror machine went into action.

The S.S. had grown to 3,000,000 throughout Germany and these gunmen raged unchecked for days. Murder, sadism and violence eliminated most of Hitler's rivals from the wealthy and powerful down to some of his early cohorts. The control of Germany was now complete. The next phase was to build his war machine and set out to rule the world for the next 1000 years with his Master Race. The next dozen years were the most violent the world has ever known. It ended for him in a blasted bunker in Berlin. He had committed suicide on May 1, 1945 along with his new wife, who had been his live-in girlfriend for many years.

Stalin - Born in 1879 in the Georgian section of Russia. He grew up in a long period of turmoil in the huge land mass called the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). In this structure of government there are many power bases and power begets power. A Communistic form of Socialism under Lenin gained a shaky control of this Union. After Lenin's death in 1924, Trotsky and Stalin jockeyed for power and the most ruthless and shrewdest won. Stalin was the undisputed dictator until his death in 1953. During his reign of terror, millions of people were destroyed by firing squads, mass murder, mass starvation or literally worked to death in labor camps.

These three leaders formed alliances when it was useful to them in their overall schemes and violently turned against each other when their usefulness was spent.

On the other side of the world, another power emerged. Japan was in an expansionist mood in the Pacific and mainland Asia. The war lords, led by Tojo, took the handles of power. Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo formed an alliance labeled the Axis. Many shocking and brutal headlines were made by this trio until their deaths.

Hitler Starts Probing

In 1936 Hitler ordered his troops into the Rhineland with written orders to his generals that if the French or British challenge his troops, the German Army was to withdraw immediately. The British and French response was negative and he had a highly industrialized area under his wing without his tanks firing a shot.

In 1938 Austria was Hitler's next grab. He had skillfully undermined the Austrian government through plots and counter plots that brewed for two years. Top people in political

parties, industrialists, banking interests, fading Hapsburg Monarchy heirs, newspaper publishers and assorted militant groups were allied with and against each other with catastrophic results. The people were in the streets, marches led to riots and riots to brutal clubbings and shootings. Cities were in day and night riot frenzy. The time was ripe and for the first time Nazi tanks crossed a border and moved outside of Germany. For the next seven years Austria existed under the heel of the brutal German boot. The Austrian industries were meshed with the war industries of Germany. The men below 50 years of age were forced into the German Army or into a work force pool to produce material for the German War Machine. The yoke was on and the adjustments would follow.

Before 1938 would end, another grab by Hitler was in the works. This area was labeled the Sedatenland, a fringe of land inside the Czechoslovakian border abutting Germany on the north and west and Austria on the south. Their tie with Germany was their language more so than their mixed blood lines. Hitler's pretext was that these were German speaking people. Again the French and British showed no serious objection to this grab and the German tanks moved in. By late spring in 1939, the German Army had fanned out its dreaded columns and another large chunk of real estate was under the Nazi's yoke. This annexation was crucial in the overall scheme. The German gains were huge coal and ore supplies, an established heavy industry complex, mammoth production plants of quality artillery and rapid fire weapons turned out by the Skoda and Tatra ordnance works, a modern grid of electrical power plants (coal and hydro generated), an excellent rail system and rolling stock, forests with an unlimited supply of timber, a huge pool of highly skilled steel and metal workers, a huge store of gold in the treasury and large reserves of foreign currency in the National Banks, plus another large source of manpower for the German Armed Forces.

Hitler's tank-led columns had taken over all of Czechoslovakia except a few eastern provinces. In the next few years, newspaper headlines and radio broadcasts throughout the world would scream the success of the dreaded German tank and its armored columns over-whelming army after army in Europe and North Africa. To the allied readers and listeners of the war front news, the German tanks were soon to become unstoppable monsters.

Poland

Hitler had 75 tank-led divisions on the Polish frontier on September 1, 1939. In a coordinate plan the German airforce bombed Polish cities, the navy blasted Polish coastal cities and bases, and the German army hit Poland from the north, west and south. The massive land, sea and air attack was furious and brutal. The outnumbered, outgunned Poles fought furiously and bravely against a superior equipped invader but were rolled back systematically. The gallant Poles extracted a toll of tanks, planes and manpower but it was a mismatch from the first shot. While the Germans were battering them from the west, the Russians moved in from the east and in 35 days the fighting was over. The western half of Poland was under German rule, the eastern half taken over by Russia. The occupation lasted

about ten months and this gallant nation was to be rocked again. Hitler started building his tank force in Poland to strike east against the Russians.

Denmark

On April 9, 1940 German tank led troops crossed the Danish border while other troops landed at strategic coastal points. The invaders tanks fanned out and occupied the country with unbelievable speed. Little resistance was offered and few lives were lost. The new order was introduced and enforced by the Germans. The country was plundered and systematically looted and bled white by the new invaders. Denmark had a worldwide market for its farm products. This meat, butter and egg export business would now be shipped to Germany. Any item produced in Denmark that could be used by the German armed forces or civilian population was shipped to Germany. This was followed by the German Army sending Danish citizens to Germany to man the production lines in the German factories. Hitler now had use of Danish air and sea ports and other military installations and denied their use to others.

With the control of Danish airports the northern industrial centers of the British Isles were now within the range of German bombing planes. This new annexation figured in future plans for the invasion of England.

The Germans meshed the Danish industry into their war production output but this became a massive problem to the Germans. The Danes went underground and sabotaged the German war effort in every conceivable way. The German punishment was as brutal as shown in Lidice, Czechoslovakia but it only incensed the Danes to escalate and refine their efforts to inflict damage to the German war effort, their sabotage efforts became highly refined.

Norway

On April 9, 1940 an armada of 125 German ships was approaching the Norwegian coast. The heavy armed naval ships opened fire on the defending coastal batteries while German planes were bombing the Norwegian cities. The troop transports landed at two points and while fierce air battles were raging overhead the tank columns were quickly assembled and rolling to their objectives. The Norwegian, Polish, British, and French forces had stopped the Germans and had retaken some lost positions. The Germans were desperately reinforcing their troops by air both in men and supplies. Meanwhile the German navy took a sound beating by the British Royal navy forces. For two weeks the Germans hung on and made a super effort to pour in men and equipment and accumulated sufficient supplies to apply the tank column tactics that they used to successfully in Poland. Hitler was determined to take and hold Norway. He needed Norway's ore and other natural resources, his source of "heavy water" for on of his later secret weapons was processed there, by having his troops near the Swedish border he could coerce the Sweds to keep their high grade iron ore flowing to the

German war industries, and by occupying Norway he had a cushion on his flank and at the same time denied its use to the Allies. By June 10th the Germans had control of Norway. Like the Danes, who were invaded the same day and almost the same hour, they were overwhelmed, divided and subdivided into hopelessness. As a military force, they were overcome, but like the Danes, the Poles, the Czechs and others, they went underground to battle, harass and weaken this brutal giant in every possible way.

In the Norwegian campaign the German tank hogged the headlines again. The scenario of a dreaded, unstoppable superweapon, the German tank, was being played up by the German propaganda minister, Dr. Goebels, and the world press picked up the tempo. The media, radio and press, were brain washing the world. They covered the new tactics developed by the German High Command of combining the tank, the war plane and motorized infantry into a highly maneuverable long range strike force. A new phase of warfare was introduced to the world's armed forces. The highly visible tank was a red hot topic and the writers and reporters built their stories around this new weapon. As the war expanded the power of the tank soared. By the time Hitler's Panzer columns had overrun much of Europe, the media had built this quality weapon into an invincible, unstoppable super weapon.

Hatred And Conflict Of Two Countries

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 ended with three German Armies closing in on Paris from the east, northeast and north. These invasion routes were the basic battle plans for future wars and future German armies to crush their French neighbors. In peacetime classrooms, the German officers studied the text book invasion plans, made their modifications, and hoped their new theories would advance them in rank in their military career.

In World War I the modified battle plans were dug out and the German armies crossed the frontiers and head for Paris. The Germans almost made it. In desperation, Marshall Joffre rounded up all the French soldiers in Paris and its suburbs. He then rounded up all the taxis in Paris and its suburbs and loaded the Poilus in the cabs and headed for the Marne. They dismounted and Joffre pulled out his engraved polished blade and carved ivory handled sword and drew a line, a long line, in the French soil and said, "They shall not pass."

He turned these Poilus over to General Foch and then made probably his most important military decision, he led the convoy of empty taxis back to Paris and its suburbs. The Bosch did not pass and Paris was saved. The Germans retreated to prepare lines and the war settled to a battle of trenches. A long costly blood-bath for both sides. A war of position, a war of attrition, with men on both sides living in, breathing in and dying in a filth that only a battle field could produce.

For months and month the armies endured, when a new weapon broke the stalemate. The British introduced a track laying, self-propelled armored vehicle that carried weapons, ammunition and crew, The Tank.

A new phase of professional destruction was on the scene and it spawned a long line of technical killing machines that operated on land, sea and in the air. On land the Tank was the weapon that armies were built around. The tank became the spearhead of all armies.

Belgium, Luxembourg And The Netherlands

Before 1940 Hitler invaded one country at a time. In early 1940, he upped that to two with Denmark and Norway as twin invasions on the same day, April 9. Now this Hi Roller was going for a triple invasion - Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands on May 10. Early that morning 89 tank led German divisions moved west, cracking across the borders of these three small countries. The bombers were raining terror and destruction on the larger cities to the west while the tanks and motorized infantry were bulldozing their way on the ground.

The fighter planes controlled the air space above and the Stuka dive bombers softened up strong points for the tanks to finish off. This was timing, tactics and power never before seen. Armor, infantry and air power as a coordinated offensive team. These powerful columns were racing west in parallel pairs to encircle the enemy and or to reach and occupy the coastal areas, to seize the sea coast and airports for their own use and again to deny their use to the Allies. Also the Germans wanted to drive to the Atlantic to divide the Allies and then decide whether to invade England while holding France at bay or vice versa. The French and British were both on Belgium soil. The German's tanks reached the Atlantic and divided the Allied armies.

The Germans had gone to the map room again and dusted off the latest modified road map to Paris. Their preciseness and determination was showing again. You do it, and you do it, and you do it till you get it right. They swung 45 tank led divisions south. They outflanked the Maginot Line taking troublesome spots from the rear. The French reduced their manpower inside the fortified line to use the troops on the Belgium-French border. The Germans breached the line wherever they were willing to pay the price. In Belgium the French and German tanks clashed with 1500 tanks engaged. The French stopped them and even drove them back. The Germans, with power to spare, regrouped and overwhelmed them. Later in the drive to Paris, the Germans had over 2200 tanks and 15,000 motorized vehicles. This power was soon to be turned south with Paris the goal.

France - 1940

Forty-five tank led German Divisions wheeled south toward Paris. A thousand dive bombers screamed to their targets, followed by 2500 German tanks and 15,000 motorized vehicles hauling mounted infantry and fuel, food and ammunition. With its recent victories, the German war machine was strutting with pride and arrogance. Their armored columns were coordinating their tanks, planes and motorized infantry into powerful strike forces. In every engagement they were becoming more efficient, skillful and confident. The tank, with

its tremendous firepower, was the main key to this new war of movement. This war of movement, swift maneuver or lightning warfare soon became known by the war correspondents and media as the Blitz-Krieg. The Blitz-krieg stories always highlighted the use of tanks, and over a period of time the two words, blitzkrieg and tank, became one and the same in the readers' mind. For many months the word Blitzkrieg became the dreaded headlines in newspapers throughout the Allied world.

In northern France, the French, British, Belgium and other Allied forces were fighting gallantly to halt the onrushing juggernaut. In all the areas, Aisne, Somme, Meuse, Seign, Oise, Calais and the Mame, the German tanks moved forward with power. The Allies hoped that somewhere before the Germans reached Paris, they would have to stop to replenish their supplies and materials and the Allies could save Paris as was done in World War I. While they were waiting for this miracle to happen, they were stunned to hear another German army of over 500,000 men behind 3500 new tanks was moving west through the Marne valley on the road to Paris. With German armies closing in on all sides all hope of saving Paris was gone. Thirty days after the tanks crossed the German-Belgium frontier the German troops and tank were in downtown Paris.

Hang On - Buy Time

By the time the German tanks reached Paris, even the most diehard Allied military men had to admit that an aggressive army must be formed around the tank. The German Army with its huge arsenal of tanks was roaring rough shod over much of Europe. German production lines were in place and ever changing, newer and better designed and engineered steel monsters were rolling off their lines in staggering numbers.

The Allies were desperate. At this point they had to hang on and buy time.

The American industries were revving up and filling orders of items on the Allied shopping lists. At the same time we were busy manufacturing products for our own defense departments. We were gradually moving our industries to a wartime footing and by the time the changeover was completed, we had a military industrial complex like the world has never known.

Serious thinking and knowledgeable decisions had to be made on the destination of the products of our early wartime production lines. Our Allies on a number of fronts were desperate for these many supplies and equipment. By the time our production got in full swing we had 60 million people manning these production lines. We became the "Arsenal of Democracy" for the Allied Armed Forces. We were taking our military production right off the assembly lines loading it on ships and sending it to fronts for our Allies. In many cases there was no warehousing involved, no storage. These products went direct from production lines to front lines. The priority products were mostly defensive equipment and material. The Allies had to find a way or weapon to stop the tank. Defense departments went to work immediately to come up with weapons to counter the tank. Many ideas and theories soon surfaced, also many differences of opinions were raised. Much time was wasted before

concrete decisions were laid down. New thinking and new ideas were being heard. The most logical answer to the immediate problem was more artillery.

In the newly revamped U.S. Army Triangular Divisions anti-tank elements, the number of guns was raised from 24 to 68. There the squabble erupted between the Field Artillery and the Infantry as to which arm was to have the jurisdiction over these larger anti-tank units. Also, no guidelines had been established on the indoctrination, training and equipping of these units. Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall's patience had run out because of the lack of progress on this anti-tank problem and he instructed G3 (War Department General Staff) to bypass the Infantry and Field Artillery arms and assume the lead in anti-tank development. General Marshall later suggested consideration be given to creating highly mobile anti-tank and anti-aircraft units as Corp and Army troops. This pool would be available to Divisions and could be attached according to prevailing combat needs.

In 1941 our Army held the Louisiana maneuvers. This was the largest field exercises in Army history. Later in the year another maneuver was held in the Carolinas. In both these exercises old, modified and new tactics, theory and ideas were put in practice. Results were studied, decisions were made and our Army was taking on a new look.

Changes & Updating Army Divisions

We had many problems of inadequate and obsolete equipment and training in our armed forces. We were faced with a new type of warfare. It had changed from a static infantry slugging match of W.W. I to a war of movement covering large areas of land. Our observers in Europe recommended that we restructure our Army divisions by shrinking or streamlining them. By reducing them in size they would be less cumbersome and more mobile and maneuverable in this new war of movement.

Our "square" infantry division was built around four infantry regiments and with its accompaniment numbered about 18,000 men. The new "triangle" division was to be shrunk to three regiments and its organic troops and would be 12,000 to 15,000 men.

Few, if any, road networks throughout the world could handle the huge volume of military traffic of an Army on the move. Massive traffic bottle necks were created by Armies advancing, relocating, or in retreat. The problems were magnified when civilian refugees by the hundreds of thousands were fleeing their homes and choking these same roadways as they tried to flee the battle zones. The new compact divisions would be more manageable and fluid in the heavy traffic areas. This was essential in this new "faster" war of movement.

In changing or reducing the manpower size of the old Box or Square divisions to the new streamlined Triangle divisions a huge pool of surplus, but experienced, military personnel resulted. From this "pool" of military personnel the Army formed "training cadres."

These cadres were the foundations or bases for building future companies and battalions for our rapidly expanding armed forces. As the camps were built, or being built, the Selective Service began sending hundreds of thousands of draftees to these camps for the "cadres" to

train and to transform into fighting men. Before the war ended we had assembled the most powerful military force the world had ever known.

Improvising & Upgrading Weapons

As the American industries were expanding and retooling to move to a wartime footing another Herculean conversion had to be made in our Armed Forces. Our congress had allowed our defenses to shrink to dangerously low levels. Our Army was hardly more than maintenance and housekeeping forces. When maintenance and payrolls were met there was little or none of the allotted funds left for new and better weapons or equipment. After years of operating on constantly shrinking budgets this branch of service was forced into a severe recycling program of modifying or upgrading existing equipment. Some of these weapons were bordering on antiquity before being modified. In many of our artillery units "the French 75" was our main weapon. The first model of this artillery piece was manufacture date in the last century. Our ordinance department had made so many changes and improvements on this gun that it hardly resembled the original model.

Fortunately we had some quality weapons "on the shelf." As soon as production lines could be set up, these weapons were produced in quantity. American ingenuity proved itself again in our rearmament program by improvising. In a number of cases changes or modifications could turn a weapon into a multipurpose piece of equipment.

Shaping Up

General of the Army George C. Marshall was deeply involved in rebuilding our Army. He had a number of Crash Programs cooking in this rebuilding-rearming program. He was an outstanding "organization man" and had a knack for delegating authority and responsibility to qualified people. "Stopping the tank" was one of General Marshall's Crash Programs. In this project he relied heavily on a number of Army experts in Anti-tank warfare. Four of the officers in this group played a big part in forming what would later be known as Tank Destroyer Battalions. These officers were Brig. Gen. Harry L. Twadde, Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Brig. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, and Lt. Col. Andrew D. Bruce.

General Wedemeyer, a graduate of German Kriegsakademie, pointed out how the German Army would rapidly mass their mechanized armored divisions at a given point in the defenders line and swiftly power their way through the defense. To counter this, he suggested we have highly mobile anti-tank units, centrally located three battalion groups attached to field armies and corps, available to counter enemy armored thrusts. He suggested these highly mobile units be heavily gunned and he called them "tank chasers."

The program was getting off the ground.

Theories, ideas, beliefs and convictions were brought forward. Disagreements and disappointments arose but a general plan was established. Many more differences of opinion would follow as there was much to be done.

Training manuals had to be drawn up and printed, tables of organization set, doctrine to be formulated, train-facilities and programs for training personnel were rushed, development of specialized equipment was given high priority, these and many other problems had to be overcome.

By late 1940, stopping the tank had become a special problem that demanded a specialized response above and beyond our general defensive measures. One of the early changes was psychological. The name Anti-tank had a defensive or passive imagery, and was replaced with a more aggressive, positive, offensive, challenging identity, this new arm of the Army would be known as Tank Destroyers.

On Nov. 27, 1941 the War Department ordered the activation of 53 T.D. Bns. under the control of G.H.Q. A further directive of Dec. 3, 1941 removed all anti-tank battalions from Divisions and placed them under G.H.Q. All T.D. Bns. would be identified by three numbers in 600s, 700s, and 800s. If the anti-tank units were withdrawn from Infantry divisions, the first number would be six. If from an Armored division, the first number would be seven, and if from Field artillery the first number would be eight. The second and third numbers would identify the division the cadre unit was transferred from. Example: 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was from an infantry division - (6) the infantry division being the 38th.

The tank destroyers would develop their doctrine and train independently from the Army. The tank destroyers being a quasi-arm, (not a part of a division) caused some dissention in the ground troops and some petty peevishness or jealousy in the ranks. These peevishness turned to respect for each other when they fought side by side on the battlefields of North Africa and on the continent of Europe.

Foundation Of The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion

We read earlier about the Army streamlining its divisions in changing from the Square to the Triangles. The 38th Infantry Division went through this transition and in shrinking, a pool of several thousand experienced military men were reassigned to our rapidly expanding and restructured Army.

The 38th Infantry Division was originally a National Guard Division of units and personnel from Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia. In the transition or shrinking a number of units became non-divisional and were reassigned. From this pool of now non-divisional troops, the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was formed on Dec. 15, 1941. The framework of the battalion was the experienced troops, (Cadres), now reassigned and the ranks were later filled by draftees furnished by Selective Service.

The original cadres of the now Federalized 38th Division are hard to trace through the maze of reassignments. The anti-tank units were no longer under divisional command but now under a central Army command, (G.H.Q.).

The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was carved completely out of 38th Infantry Divisions field artillery regiments. These pillar cadres were generally from anti-tank or anti-aircraft units. Permanent personnel assignments and re-assignments were now made.

Other changes were also made, on ebbing organic units of the Tank Destroyer Battalions were now companies rather than batteries. Other changes will follow.

The re-assignments of officers and enlisted men to form the framework of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion were as follows - Headquarters: By the redesignation of Battery G (Anti-tank) 1st Battalion 150th Field Artillery Regiment Headquarters Company: By the redesignation of Battery H.

(Anti-Tank) 2nd Battalion 150th Field Artillery Regiment Company A: By redesignation of the anti-tank and anti-aircraft platoons of headquarters batteries throughout the 138th Field Artillery Regiment.

Company B: By redesignation of the anti-tank and anti-aircraft platoons of headquarters batteries throughout the 139th Field Artillery Regiment.

Company C: By redesignation of the anti-tank and anti-aircraft platoons of headquarters batteries throughout the 150th Field Artillery Regiment.

Reconnaissance Company: (Until Feb. 10, 1942 known as Pioneer Company) By redesignation of Headquarters Battery 139th Field Artillery Regiment.

Medics: Believed to be made up entirely of draftees but it is possible a few men from the 113th Medical Regiment structure could have been included. Units can be tracked no matter how many transfers or redesignation, but to track one or a half dozen soldiers is more than a kingsize task.

It is noted here that this battalion was formally organized as the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Light (Towed) Dec. 15, 1941.

It was one of the first Tank Destroyer Battalions to be formed, one of many to follow, before W.W. II would end.

Stateside - Camp Shelby, Mississippi

In 1941 the 38th Division was in Camp Shelby, Miss. They took part in the largest field exercise ever held by the Army, The Louisiana Maneuvers. This exercise was in the Sabine River Valley separating Texas and Louisiana. Some of the Cyclone Division personnel would later become the cadre troops for the forming of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

In March 1942 the new draftees to fill the roster of the new tank destroyer battalion arrived in Camp Shelby. They were housed in tents, each the same as any other one you saw no matter what direction you looked. The first few days we had dozen of visitors as a draftee would walk in the tent, say sorry the wrong tent, and sheepishly back out to try another until he stumbled into the right one.

Our 13-week basic training staring on the drill field. As our vocabulary enlarged, we responded quicker to the commands of the drill sergeant and fewer foulups occurred. Generally speaking, we got the hang of it and went on to the next phase. The most interesting part of training was classes on guns; pistol, 03 rifle and 30 cal. machine gun. Some of our instructors had a little trouble on the three and four syllable words in the field manuals but usually some one in the audience would help him over this word trap. It wasn't a good idea for one person to be too helpful because it seemed there was a constant need for Kitchen Police.

Before we finished our 13 weeks of basic training, we received orders to move to another camp.

Camp Hood, Texas

In late June we arrived in cattle country. We were trucked from the rail head to the bivouac area late at night. In the darkness we pitched tents and crawled into the sleeping bags. The next morning we had to take the tents down and line them up, Army fashion, in a straight line.

In our company area we noticed thousands of cow chips, some of them not grounded long enough to harden. We soon learned which ones to step around because even after you cleaned the army boots, the aroma lingered in the leather.

The cattle were out of the area but the cow snakes stayed. It wasn't uncommon to hear a blood tingling yell during the night as one of these snakes would crawl into someone's sleeping bag to get warm.

Our bivouac area was on range land and 50 miles from nowhere. There was no public or army transportation so weekend passes were not much in demand. Our Sunday recreation was snake hunting and some of those cow snakes were king sized. The rattlers we let live. After we thinned out the snake population we started capturing scorpions. After we caught a few and put them in a tin can, we would dig a circular trench about two feet across and about three inches deep. We would then pour gasoline in the circle trench and put a scorpion inside the circle and light the gasoline. We would place bets on whether it would burn to

death or commit suicide. Most of the time they would commit suicide by stabbing themselves in their back with their own stinger. That was part of our own hardening program.

There was a rock-bottom creek near our company area. That was our shower facility. The water was swift and ice cold. By midsummer the creek was bone dry and we had to use a helmet and a canteen of water for bathing.

The 638th T.D. Battalion was one of the first Tank Destroyer Battalions formed, also one of the first Tank Destroyer battalions in Camp Hood.

Our training was now under Army Ground Forces which supplanted G.H.Q. Army Ground Forces bore the ultimate responsibility of tank destroyer organization training and doctrine. A second agency involved was the Tank Destroyer Tactical and Firing center under Col. Bruce who drew up the organizational charts, prepared field manuals and trained the tank destroyer troops.

Our firing companies now had the M10 destroyers with the three inch guns. The M10 vehicle was the chassis of the M4 Sherman tank with an open top, no turret. The gun was a modified version of the highly accurate three inch gun used by the Army in its coastal defense installations.

The firing companies and support units were getting some valuable training and our equipment was being upgraded. We were getting closer to the type of tools that were needed for the tank destroyers to do the job they were created for. We were still outgunned by the German 88 but we were closing the gap.

As Telly Sovalas said in one of his World War II movies, "Our 75s are bouncing off the Kraut tanks like tennis balls." The three inches of the Tank Destroyers were doing less bouncing and more penetrating. Our kills to hits ratio was improving. And contrary to general opinion not all German tanks were panzers or tiger tanks armed with 88s. They had some tanks of lesser quality than the tigers and panzers and most of them were armed with guns of smaller bore than 88mm.

Our Camp Hood training was to introduce us to our new and better equipment and how to operate, maintain and master it. The psychological angle was blended in by tempering courage, confidence and aggressiveness with intelligence. Think smart were the by words.

Louisiana Maneuvers

We left Camp Hood, Texas for the maneuver area of Louisiana, in the summer of 1942. This three months in the field was under simulated battle conditions. Live ammunition was not used and the umpires issued the paper casualties in men and equipment. Nevertheless, real casualties in injuries and deaths occurred especially during blackout movement of heavy equipment and military vehicles. Generally chiggers, poison ivy and high temperatures plus long exhausting hours of movement and plain old hard work kept these "war games" from being fun things. However, valuable information and experience was gleaned all through the ranks from these field exercises.

The destroyer crews were learning to master their machines, gun crews were getting sharper and our knowledge of camouflage was improving. Transportation crews were learning blackout driving and night deliveries of ammunition, fuel rations. Communications crews were getting experience "laying wire" for field phones, and radio men were sending and receiving messages in code. Maintenance crews were getting "on the spot" training in keeping the equipment "rolling." We were learning "round the clock" soldering.

In the "Battle of the Sabine" you win a few and lose a few, but both the "red forces" and the "blue forces" gained valuable experience that they would put to good use on various fields of battle throughout the world.

Camp Claiborne, LA.

After the field training in the maneuver area we were housed in Camp Claiborne for a few short weeks. We were reintroduced to mess halls, barrack sleeping, and shower buildings and indoor plumbing.

Our daily routine was "by the book," going through the training schedule, watching training films, taking our scheduled immunization shots and methodically placing the check mark in the correct column of the progress and completion report of our training program.

After hours the PX was the "in place" and the beer garden was "social center." The beer was weak and reasonably refreshing but highly unlikely to cause addiction.

Camp Carabelle, Florida

The next phase of our training program was the Amphibious Landings. We spent our last few days in Camp Claiborne blocking and securing our destroyers and other vehicles to flat bed railroad cars, then hopping aboard the pullman cars and we were on our way to Florida, the Sunshine state and its miles and miles of beautiful beaches on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

Our company area was about on the water edge. The beach had a lot of pine trees and underbrush, but under all this cover, there was sand. In fact, our tar paper covered barracks had sand floors that were wet every morning. Being that near the waters edge nighttime moisture saturated everything including clothing, but our body heat usually had our uniforms dried out long before noon.

Our beach landing training was in the Apalachicola Bay - St. George Sound area of the Gulf coast. We would board these landing craft and go out to sea, and assemble in an area north of Dog Island. Dozens of these crafts would line up, side by side, then race for the beach, all landing as a wave, about the same time and about fifty yards apart. Wave followed wave of these craft, as your wave was about to land the wave before had unloaded its men and were backing away from the shore to make room for the line of boats behind your wave. It was tricky maneuvering but those boat pilots were experts. The boats had slanted bows and they would ram the shore at water edge. They would keep the props going forward to

hold bow of the boat on shore while the men were unloading. Some boats had drop ramps in front while the older boats required the men to leave by going over the side. Our boat was one of the older craft. To pull the boats away from shore they would put the prop in reverse and rev it up. This dug huge funnel shaped pits in the sand. If you went over the side of the landing craft and hit one of these pits, you could be in eight or nine feet of water. Not good for a 5-foot, 9-inch G.I. with full field pack on his back. We were in Carabelle for our beach landings and had our first G.I. Thanksgiving menu with Turkey and all the trimmings. More of the same for our first Christmas in the service. Shortly after the new year, we were back in Louisiana at Camp Livingston.

Camp Livingston, Louisiana

We finished our disrupted 13 weeks basic training, spending a lot of time on the firing ranges, learning to use the M-1 rifle, the carbine, Springfield '03, the 45 pistol and rifle grenades.

By this time we were being exposed to a lot of front news about the Pacific theater and the European war. Newspapers from throughout the country were available to us, plus the Stars and Stripes and the ever present "Latrine Scoup." How much was gossip and how much was deliberately planted as part of our indoctrination we will never know.

The stories that we were of particular interest to us Tank Destroyers in training, were reports of huge tank battles on the Russian front and in North Africa. We visioned huge armadas of tanks closing on each other firing point blank. Where tank commanders were maneuvering dozens of tanks, like ships at sea, jockeying for vantage positions to blast away at his opponents tanks. Losses on each side would be hundreds of tanks. Some of the early stories of North African battles where Tank Destroyers knocked out dozens of German tanks, and other stories where Tank Destroyer Battalions were soundly beaten by the African Corps. We didn't like to hear about our losses but it did help us by making us more attentive in learning our new trade.

We were checking off phases of our training schedule one by one, converting us from civilian to soldier step by step.

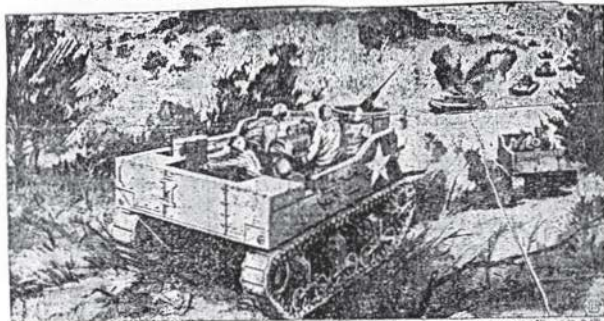
Another Louisiana Maneuver

Back to the Sabine country. By now the pinewoods towns of De Ridder, Hornbeck, Bon Wier, De Quincy, Many, Jasper (Texas, that is). Zwolle and Natchitoches were familiar communities. Most of the men, by now, could pronounce "Natchitoches" as easily as the natives and some could even spell it correctly.

It seemed like this field trip was six or eight weeks of "black out" movement. Our memories of landmarks were more valuable than maps. How the drivers and crews located message centers, command posts, ration, fuel and ammunition dumps was unreal. Some of those drivers knew those logging roads, lanes and cow paths like the palm of their hands.



Fast, Hard-Hitting U. S. Tank-Buster Helps to Roll Back Rommel's Army



Tank-fighting, American style, is illustrated in this theoretical sketch by NEA Staff Artist Carl Johnson. A detachment of German tanks (upper right) has left the scene of a tank engagement in a valley to attempt a flanking maneuver against Allied forces (upper left). But, two U.S. anti-tank destroyers have out-flanked the flankers. Tank-buster at right has just blasted the Nazi leader with his 105-mm. cannon. The destroyer in foreground is wheeling into position as its anti-aircraft gunner fires at the plane.

Driving these vehicles over these routes in daylight wasn't easy, but traveling at night with blacked lights took some special skills. This know-how that they accumulated stateside paid off handsomely later in the E.T.O.

Camp Livingston

By now we had about finished our basic training, taken part in two maneuvers, had a number of field trips and long marches. Many of the men had attended special training courses in camps and forts throughout the country. Our technicians were completing their special training and becoming more expert in their fields.

Our battalion was reduced in size to conform to the new T.B.A. for self propelled tank destroyer battalions. In this new roster were 36 officers and 636 enlisted men, about 170 enlisted men less than the original structure. The enlisted men transferred out were usually assigned to other tank destroyer battalions just being formed, or to older battalions that were under strength.

Our connection with the 38th Infantry Division was about to be severed.

Desert Training Center

In the fall of 1943 we said our last goodbyes to Louisiana and were on a "troop train" heading west to Desert Training Center. We also said another "Goodbye" - Adios to the 38th Division.

We were now Tank Destroyer troops under the Tank Destroyer Command. We were stationed in the desert in the southeast corner of California near Yuma, Arizona and a few miles north of the U.S.-Mexican border, the area is known as Pilots Knob.

The remainder of fall and most of the winter we were on desert maneuvers or working problems. These problems varied greatly, one week we would be holding a pass against an enemy assault, another week we would be on the offense to advance through the pass held by the enemy.

On these problems we were learning many other lessons too, such as how to survive in a weather environment that few of us had ever been exposed to. At night it was so cold that the water would freeze in canteens and lister bags. Fires were forbidden but if you felt during you could dig a shallow trench, partly fill it with dry mesquite, and put a match to it. When this smokeless wood was reduced to red hot coals you shoveled dirt over it, and after sundown spread your blanket on this heated spot, hoping the heat would last until daylight.

Buick Builds New Tank Destroyer



The new M-18, a high speed tank destroyer developed by engineers of the Buick Division of General Motors in co-operation with Army Ordnance technicians and the Tank Destroyer Command, is the latest weapon in the armored vehicle class to be hurled against the enemy in the European invasion. Fully armored and mounting a high velocity 76 MM cannon in its 160-degree power traversed turret, it is capable of speeds of 55 miles an hour with exceptional performance in rough terrain and maximum maneuverability. Designed as a tactical weapon to end the dominance of heavy tanks in modern warfare it has exceptional firepower and ability to outshoot, outstep and outmaneuver the most formidable enemy equipment. At the same time, its low silhouette and superior performance make it an elusive target for enemy guns. It is a full-track, heavy vehicle of approximately 19 tons, with independent wheel suspension, torsion bar springs and compensating linkage. It has an all-steel, forged track of unusual service life. It is powered by a radial aircraft engine, developing 465 horsepower. Power is transmitted to the driving sprockets by a torqueumatic transmission, the latest development in heavy duty automatic transmissions. The new weapon has been in secret production in the Buick plants for more than a year with shipments in volume to the armed services during that period. It's called the "Hellcat" of the Army Ground Forces.

Lieut. ~~James~~ ~~Smith~~ of Harrisburg, Pa., spotted two Germans in a hedge . . . who told us they had been left as outpost guards for an ammunition dump a couple of miles ahead.

In less than a minute, 76-mm shells of our tank destroyers were whistling overhead and there was a tremendous explosion and a plume of smoke marked the end of the dump.

At Ormen, we ran into shellfire from 88's dug in on the other side of the town. Our marvellous 76-mm tank destroyer guns went to work and in half an hour wiped them out. - From a battlefield dispatch by one correspondent, Donald Macdonald in the New York Times, dated "With the U.S. 2nd Army at Ormen, Aug. 14, 1945."

Slugs, slips away. The weapon's secret is speed—twice that of a tank which is, say, 35 miles an hour (also top work—the ability to weave and bob. The "Hellcat" can overtake a tank, start a half pointblank a half-dozen light shots that will drill the tank's armor, then dash out again to safety. Its crew is taught to seek the slower tank's blind spots. Of it can fire from miles of aided by small, low-flying planes.

For protection against planes it carries the 50 caliber machine gun (that, as proved, so effective against Zeros and Messerschmitts). And when it has destroyed all the tanks in the vicinity, the T.D. can seek other targets—trucks, guns or troops. It is quicker to manufacture than a tank, and cheaper.

It is a typically American doctrine, not static but dynamic. Its essence is that the best defense against the Juggernaut of the Blitzkrieg is not simply to await its onslaught; relying on barricades, mines and anti-tank guns, but, whenever possible, to go out after it.

Learn Quick Firing. They teach that today in Texas on a 108,000-acre reservation. Here thousands of young men are taught to stay David to the Goliath.

We were now equipped with brand new M-18s right off the assembly lines. We had civilian crews of General Motors technicians who were monitoring the performance of these new destroyers. Any breakdown or failure of any part was reported immediately to Detroit and modifications were made as quickly as possible to correct the failure. In a way we were field testing a new General Motors vehicle.

Another new experience was how to survive a desert sand storm. When these storms hit they could last for days. They slowed down everything, and if severe, would completely shut down everything, including Army training. Kitchens were shut down and we were on C or K rations until the storm was over.

At Christmas time we had a scrubby desert tree placed in the company area. These weird Christmas tree ornaments proved again the ingenuity of the American G.I. we had a great deal of artistic talent, particularly in our motor maintenance crews. By combining improvising and creativeness a number of empty O.D. ration tins were turned into some very unique Christmas tree decorations.

Weekend passes were given out more freely and many of the Tank Destroyers got their first glimpse of Hollywood, L.A. and the Pacific Ocean. Transportation was a tough problem to the coast so many settle for a trip to the border towns and into Mexico. The spectator sport of "Bull Fighting" was seen by some but most G.I.s would rather watch a good football or baseball game.

By late January we finished out Desert Training and prepared for our next train ride to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma.

Camp Gruber, Okla. (Tank Destroyer Group Headquarters)

Camp Gruber was an assembly camp for Tank Destroyer Battalions preparing for overseas movement. At that time we were on of three T.D. battalions in this camp. Three T.D. Battalions made a T.D. group.

The next five or six months was turning in the old, ordering and receiving new, checking and double checking countless pages of requisitions and doing the same when requisitions were received. The items were mostly personal equipment and headquarters equipment. The destroyers, trucks, jeeps, and other vehicles were being assembled in Pennsylvania and surrounding states near eastern ports of embarkation.

Advance parties were sent to Europe to receive orders on what to do with equipment and personnel where and when it arrived. Billet and assembly area was assigned.

When the paper work was completed and the last furloughs were granted we checked out of Camp Gruber and moved to Camp Kilmer, N.J. near a port of embarkation.

Camp Kilmer, N.J. (Port Of Embarkation)

We arrived in Kilmer after another troop train move halfway across the country. This was mostly a week of ending up the final paper work and waiting for orders to board a troop ship.

Passes were given freely and everyone took a look at New York City. For many it was their first look at a skyscraper. The baseball fan had a choice of the Yankees, Giants or Dodgers. The pure sightseer, it was the Battery at the tip of Wall Street or the Brooklyn Bridge. There was something of interest to satisfy the taste of every G.I. To most of us the friendliness, helpfulness, generosity and genuine concern for us by the New Yorkers impressed us more than mildly.

We had a look at the night life, visiting famous bars, nightclubs and restaurants. In most cases our cash was not accepted, in uniform everyone was on the house and with gusto. We were treated royally. But more important, we had a feeling that they had a great deal of confidence in us on our future assignments. That was a good feeling for us land lubbers to have when we were about to board a ship to cross three thousands miles of hostile water infested with enemy U-Boats.

Now to write home and give our wives or girlfriends, parents, relatives and friends our new A.P.O.s. This led to some weird thinking, a secret address. At first there was a touch of intrigue to it, but if you allowed yourself to dwell on it, your thinking could take a morbid and unhealthy slant. That was a no- no and you kicked it right then and there.

We said goodbye to our barracks living at Camp Kilmer and mounted-up in the 6x6's for the ride to the docks. It was though a tunnel, down canyons between block after block of tall buildings, over a bridge and dismount on the dock - roll call and up the gang planks and to assigned bunks on the ship. A few hours later we were nearing the outer harbor and we said our own goodbyes to the Statue of Liberty as it faded in the distance. The next eleven days we would be aboard a small troop ship, the Marine Eagle, plowing across the north Atlantic.

Marine Eagle Across The North Atlantic

The first day or two aboard ship it was learning our way around the ship, where the mess hall was located and when we were scheduled to eat. We were assigned to a bunk for eight hours sleep and then out for 16 hours while two other G.I.'s put in their eight hours each. Each man was given a meal card with numbers on it, and the card had to be presented to enter the eating area.

Our time on deck was used for classes. We were oriented on the customs and habits of the people of several countries where we may land.

We had several classes of the French language. We learned several dozen key words and how to pronounce them. I don't think we had many A students.

We had no idea how many ships were in our convoy, every direction you looked you could see ships. The fourth day out our convoy merged with another into an even larger fleet of ships. There was always a U.S. Navy ship in sight cutting through or zig-zagging in the convoy protecting us against the U-Boats. A number of times we watched them propel the depth charges over the side and saw the huge geysers of water shoot above the surface. The scuttle-but was that we had two sub attacks while crossing, no one got nosy to try to get a confirmation on it. We were happy and relieved to know that our ship or any in sight were not sunk or damaged. Almost every day several floating mines would be spotted and rifle crews would fire at them hoping to hit one of the protruding detonators and explode it. The ship had two large caliber guns mounted for and aft. The gun crews practiced by firing at floating debris, we were not impressed by their marksmanship.

On one of the lower decks an area was fenced off and that was the library. It had magazines, books, newspapers, games, razor blades and toilet articles, small bibles, stationary and pens. After the first week out the reading material was gone. The G.I.s were bored by now and were reading magazines cover to cover, magazines that they wouldn't look at a few weeks before.

One day we had a massive case of seasickness. Some G.I. asked "How did you like the horse meat we had for the main meal that day?" That did it! Within an hour, half the men aboard visited the rail. The lucky ones were back to normal the next day.

About the tenth day out, we began to see small boats on the water so we assumed we were getting near land. We were soon told that we would be landing in France, along the channel coast. The next morning we were in the outer harbor aft Cherbourg. The Germans sank ships and demolished the port facilities in the customary and thorough German way before they surrendered it to the Allies. Our people were solving the wreckage problems and increasing the daily tonnage though the port.

Our battalion didn't land as a unit in France. Before we left Camp Gruber advanced parties were sent to England on various assignments. When the rest of the battalion reached the English Channel parts of the firing companies landed at Omaha Beach and the remainder of the battalion debarked at Cherbourg.

The Marine Eagle dropped anchor in the middle harbor. Small boats of every description pulled alongside. We were taken to the inner harbor in these small ships, "ducks," barges and anything that would float and move. Our landing dock was a sunken ship laying on its side in shallow water. We walked across the side of this sunken freighter to a floating walkway. We walked single file on this bobbing walkway until we reached land. We were directed to a level area about half the size of a football field. We had roll call and were told transportation would arrive in a few minutes, and that we were not to leave the area. Fifty-yards away a steady stream of trucks were dumping load after load of debris of buildings damaged or destroyed in the battle of the port. German P.O.W.s armed with rakes, picks and shovels were busy spreading and leveling this material. This was valuable real estate and for months was one of the main supply bases for the mountains of war material flowing to the Allied Armies in the E.T.O.

The trucks arrived and we mounted up. The convoy worked its way through the streets of Cherburgh and then the roadway snaked their way up the cliffs overlooking the city and harbour. After an hour we had reached the plateaus above town and we could see for miles out to sea and down the coast. Much of the wreckage on the western end of the landing beaches was still there and every direction you looked you could see blasted bunkers and wrecked German war material. The trucks pulled into an area and we dismounted. As the crow flies, we may have been ten miles from the harbour but the rest of the way was on the roof. We marched for hours toting our barracks bags with all our belongings. After days at sea our legs were not in the best of condition and that made the march more exhausting. When we thought we couldn't make another mile we arrived at our bivouac area. This was the hedgerow country that made headlines a few months before. Our bivouac area was a small apple orchard and a few acres of farmland that joined it. The nearest town was a crossroads village of Volognes. It was heavily damaged in the fighting but the citizens were returning and slowly rebuilding their lives and the town.

It didn't take the outgoing Americans long to get acquainted with the natives. They had a shortage of cigarettes and chocolate and we had a desire for liquid beverages. The occupational Germans took most of the champagne and good stuff but there was plenty of cidra and calvados in every farmhouse. Rates were soon established and the bartering began. The cidra was pretty mild but the calvados made up for it. Some of the G.I.s said in a case of emergency it could be used for lighter fluid for the Zippos.

The next few weeks we had a wide variety of assignments, duties and classes. Our destroyers, vehicles and other equipment was slowly trickling to us and we were getting it "combat ready."

We had some on the job training on Omaha Beach. Before D-Day the Germans sowed thousands of mines on and near the landing areas as part of their defense of the coast. Many of these mines were still in place and still active. We were to locate and deactivate them. This was a very tedious job to say the least. Those found were taken to a central area and detonated. When a pile of these went off it shook half of Normandy. If there was a building nearby with a slate roof it was a good bet that a new roof was needed after the explosion.

Our firing companies took the M-18s to the coast. Offshore were small uninhabited islands and the gun crews fired at these islands to zero in the new 76mm guns. This closed out our stay in Normandy.

One thing most G.I.s had problems with was pronouncing street and road signs. We think every French kid that dropped out of school took up sign painting. They were the world's poorest spellers. When finishing a sign they would step back to look at it and check it out for mistakes. Sometimes they would even grade their own work, if they thought there was some misspelling, and there was still paint in the brush, they would just place an X behind the last letter. Spelling and pronunciation seldom jived. Example - city of BOR-DEAUX.

Some G.I.s warned not to clear your throat or blow your nose before trying to speak the French language, they claim it is impossible to get the correct nasal twang if these passage ways are cleared.

Moving Up

We left our bivouac area near Volognes by convoy. We drove south through Carentan and St. Lo and then east toward Paris. We didn't get into the city but from the suburbs we could see the Eiffel tower and many of the taller radio towers of the city. We then headed in a northeastern direction through the area of many W.W. I battlefields. We passed several U.S. military cemeteries where thousands of Americans of a senior generation were laid to rest. Every movement of your eyes gave you another straight line of crosses each one precisely placed. You couldn't help but being impressed by the meticulous care given these sacred grounds and it also left you with some sobering thoughts. This was not a morale building road march.

Our last night in France was in the town of Fumay. The kitchen truck set up a curbside mess line. We filled the mess kits and looked for space to relax and eat. These civilians started mingling with the Tank Destroyers, and in spite of the language barrier, they seemed eager to become acquainted. They had a tremendous supply of champagne and everytime you took a sip out of your canteen cup someone stepped up to fill it to the brim.

The next day we crossed the border into Belgium. We crossed the southeast corner of this small war torn country stopping for the night in the Liege area. The next day we entered the Netherlands in the Maastricht area and traveled on to Heerlen. This was a highly industrialized, densely populated Province, a narrow neck of land apart of Holland that extended south roughly thirty-five miles and separated northeastern Belgium from the German Rhineland. We were 400 miles from Cherbourg and within artillery range of the Siegfried Line.

A Part Of A New Army

From the English Channel to the Swiss border the German armies were in retreat. The Allies were gaining ground and confidence each day. The real estate we were taking was costing us more and our supply lines had to be upgraded. As the Germans retreat to their western frontiers their strategy changed from counter offense to defense, and for the next few months they performed with the usual German precision and thoroughness. Hitler's supply lines had shrunk and their manpower was more condensed as the Allies were taking the war home to the Germans. Our success was causing opposite problems for us. As our armies advanced our supply lines naturally lengthened. As enemy resistance hardened our need for more supplies multiplied. As the front lines were lengthened for us, we were stretching our front line manpower dangerously shallow. The Ninth Army in western France was moved to the front late in October and positioned between the British Second and U.S.

First armies. Added to the Ninth Army were two recently arrived infantry divisions, the 102nd and the 84th. The Ninth Army was beefed up rapidly. On Dec. 1, 1944 the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the 84th Infantry Division and was no longer with the Tank Destroyer Group nor under the Tank Destroyer command.

Many adjustments had to be made by the Tank Destroyers in this new chain of command. Basically A Company was assigned to the 333rd Regiment, B Company to the 334th Regiment and C Company to the 335th Regiment. However, the T.D.'s were deployed in many different combinations. When battle plans were drawn up they could include any number of M-18s and crews, and since the T.D.'s were so versatile and highly maneuverable, they were given some unusual assignments. The T.D.'s could have been called "All Purpose Artillery and Tank Destroyers."

In the next six months the 638th T.D.s became an Artillery Jack of all trades as division and regimental commanders found new assignments for these thirty-six hard hitting, fast moving pieces of self propelled artillery. From the time the 638th T.D. Bn. joined the 84th Division at Gulpen, Netherlands until they reached the Elbe River in Germany, the 638th T.D. Bn. saw action in every 84th Division engagement.

Anti-Tank Demon Speeds Nazi Rout

Army Observer, Back From France, Calls M-18 'Hottest Thing in Armored Warfare'

WASHINGTON, [redacted]—Smashing performances in France have proved the effectiveness of the Army's new tank destroyer, the speedy M-18, the War Department indicated today.

"The M-18 is the hottest thing in today's armored warfare," said [redacted] Army automotive expert, who is home from front-line observations with the Third Army.

"It is the streamlined speed demon that put a streak of lightning in our drive across France into Germany," he said.

[redacted], who recently reported back to headquarters of the Army Ground Forces after a month in the Normandy battles, said that the 18½-ton M-18 completely fulfilled expectations of ordnance experts.

Attached to a tank destroyer battalion, [redacted] obtained close-up accounts of the M-18's impressive performance while witnessing action in Brest, St. Lo, Le Mans, Orleans and St. Malo.

The unit which the captain observed once covered sixty-five miles in three and a half hours in combat and in another drive it traveled 165 miles in a day and a half, part of the way under black-out conditions.

The vehicle's mechanical system permits complete installation of a new engine in one and three-quarter

hours. The ten bogey wheels operate independently. Thus one broken wheel will not incapacitate the vehicle, which mounts a 76-mm. cannon. Dual controls permit a change in drivers on an instant's notice, with no switch in positions required.

[redacted] cited one graphic example of the M-18's speed and mobility. One of the vehicles was dispatched to the water's edge on a peninsula across from Brest to blast a German pillbox about 5,000 yards across the water. The vehicle sped to the site, fired for thirty minutes from one changing position after another, then streaked away to protective cover before the enemy could direct fire upon it, repeating the rapid activity at a new point shortly afterward.

The M-18's speed has tended to minimize mine trouble. Once the break-through is made, it moves so rapidly that the enemy finds it almost impossible to strew new mine fields in its path.

That's the M-18 Hellcat designed by Buick in cooperation with Tank Destroyer and Ordnance experts



That's traveling

The Geilenkirchen Salient

This key transportation hub and industrial city played several important roles for the German armies on the northern end of their western front. It was a rail, water and highway hub for supplies for German troops that still controlled all of Holland north of the Rhine River. It was part of the western wall and the most heavily fortified section of the Siegfried Line. In the Geilenkirchen area these heavy fortifications extended east about ten miles and then became less formidable in the Rhine River area. This city was about five miles east of the Holland - German border and less than 50 miles west of the highly industrialized Rhur valley where Hitler's war plants were on around the clock footing, slaving at a frenzied pace, to turn out war materials for the German war machine. The Siegfried Line had to hold, if the Allies breached it most of Germany's heavy equipment manufacturing would be next to fall.

The City of Geilenkirchen straddled the Wurm River. Between the Wurm River and the Holland border we faced the first of thousands of concrete and steel bunkers and fortifications that constituted the Siegfried Line. This was the outer layer of the defense, the most dense and heavily fortified part of the line was between the Wurm and Roer Rivers, an average of less than ten miles. We had our work cut out for us, we were green but we were learning.

The western approach to Geilenkirchen was over a mile of fairly level and cleared countryside and the Germans had every inch of this land covered by artillery and small arms crossfire. There was little cover for the infantryman and even less for the tanks and tank destroyers. It was decided to keep pressure on the city but to put our main efforts on its flanks. A few miles south we broke through the outer bunkers and pill boxes and found a north-south route or corridor with a reasonable amount of natural cover, at least much more favorable than the level flatland just west of Geilenkirchen. We probed and pried our way north behind Geilenkirchen and linked up with the British just north and east of the town. The Geilenkirchen salient was erased, the town was ours even though German soldiers were still staggering and crawling out of cellars and destroyed buildings for the next two days.

To understand the flow of battle in the highly and heavily fortified military zone you must miniaturize your geographic thinking. Many of the G.I.s were born in the wide open spaces of the United States and now were fighting in one of the most densely populated areas of Europe. Squads, platoons, companies or battalions could battle for hours or days to take an objective and when reaching their goal finding it to be a cluster of homes, barns or out buildings numbering a dozen or two structures. Their next objective may be a settlement the same size a mile or two down the road. Before the fall of Geilenkirchen a dozen or so of the small communities in the surrounding area had to be captured, neutralized or destroyed. This "grinding it out" combat pattern would be our basic plan of attack for the next few months.

The bulk of the Tank Destroyer training was to counter the German tank. The Wehrmacht tank led columns ran rough shod over most of Europe and in north Africa and a goal was to link up with their forces fighting in southern Russia somewhere in the middle east. They came dangerously close to realizing this plan but the tides of war started to change. In logistics their supply lines were over taxed, their rolling stock was wearing out or being

destroyed or captured faster than it could be replaced, their war plants were taking a beating from Allied bombers and many other problems began to show.

The retreat had started and the occupied areas slowly started to shrink. The Wehrmacht had changed tactics from offense to defense. The Tank Destroyers had to adjust to the changes and by the time the German armies had drawn back to their own borders after months of retreat, the Tank Destroyers roll had changed in many ways. We were not committed to battle as a battalion and seldom as a company unit. We were fragmented and often as few as one or two M-18s and crews were assigned to an infantry team to take an objective. We were rapidly learning this deadly new trade. As we became more efficient we found that fewer men were needed to carry out an assignment. Fewer men meant fewer targets and few casualties, percentage-wise.

As we drove deeper and deeper into this interlocking and powerful line of defense we learned more and more about its physical design or planned layout. There was always a large heavily constructed concrete and steel main bunker supported by secondary bunkers and fortifications. These secondary bunkers were each in turn supported by a third set of fortifications. No matter if the land was wooded or cleared, flat, rolling, sloped or hilly, it seemed like the invader was always in a line of fire from one of the bunkers, many times he was covered by a crossfire from two or more bunkers. There was no standard field plan for the placing of the fortifications or the type of bunkers or fortifications, each mile of "front" was different in the lay of the land and the importance of the area in the master defense plan. The density of the fortifications was determined by the terrain and its importance to the master plan set up by the defense specialists of the German High Command. We challenged their thoroughness in defense layouts with desire, determination and ingenuity. Students in war colleges throughout the world will spend many hours in classrooms studying the assaults and defense of this heavily fortified border.

Push North Behind Geilenkirchen Then Move Northeast

The 84th Division used three drives carried on simultaneously to wipe out the Geilenkirchen Salient. The three Infantry Regiments worked more or less abreast in advancing and destroying their objectives. Our 638th T.D. Bn. was committed to battle in smaller unit numbers as mentioned earlier. Our A Company was assigned to the 333rd Regiment, our "B" Company assigned to 334th Regiment and our "C" Company assigned to 335th Regiment. Each regimental commander had twelve destroyers and crews to apply as stated by order of battle or as he saw fit, and in turn his battalion commanders had at his service four destroyers and crews to be applied by any of his infantry companies. These number, or assignments, could be changed if battle conditions warranted and changes were made often. Anticipated clashes didn't always happen and unanticipated problems seemed to be the norm.

So while our destroyers and crews were doled out to different regiments we often had a number of destroyer crews battling simultaneously in a half dozen different and distant clashes. This was the pattern of combat in taking the bunkers, fortifications, villages and

towns in the Siegfried line. This new combination of mobile artillery (Tank Destroyers) moving forward with the infantry became a very formidable strike force, it furnished the infantry officer instant artillery firepower to wipe out a gun emplacement, a fortified building or bunker, an enemy tank, self-propelled gun or machine gun nest. Often times this extra firepower was the difference between advancing on schedule or being bogged down and digging in and holding what we gained.

In six days ending Nov. 24, we had taken three key points, Prummern, Geilenkirchen and Suggesterath, and on the way cleaned up secondary strong points at Stegh, Breil, Hunshoven and maybe a dozen or more fortified structures and villages in this three tiered defense system. In less than a week the Geilenkirchen Salient was erased, ending the first phase of a three phase plan to pry our way through this section of the Siegfried Line.

This week we did not see a civilian, all the German civilian population was moved out of this area and to the east before the fighting started.

Also this week the 638th T.D. Bn. set up its first battalion command post and Message Center on German soil. It was in a captured bunker in a 10-15 acre turnip field just south of Geilenkirchen, the Message Center was just inside the same bunker.

Two days later we moved the C-P and Message Center into a basement of a home at the edge of Geilenkirchen. This was one of four homes in a row near a major highway crossroads. These homes were about 10 years old, probably owned by middle income people, and of brick construction and modest appearance. They all had some damage from artillery fire, the damage ranged from slight to almost total, except for the basements. Each basement floor was five to seven feet below ground level, all had outside entrances, the walls were of poured concrete about 30 inches thick and the floors and ceilings of these fortress homes was of poured concrete. None of the four basements showed any great structural damage although the German soldiers defending them drew heavy doses of small arms fire. Homes like these were all part of the Master Plan in constructing the Siegfried Line. The camouflage was A plus. At a distance and from the air they looked just like any other family dwellings.

With the fall of Geilenkirchen the Geilenkirchen salient was erased and the first phase of our three phase drive to blast through the Siegfried line was behind us. However, we didn't take time out to celebrate. We cleaned up some pockets, got our second wind and back to the grind. However, most of us took time out to reflect on this past week, a new milestone for these Tank Destroyers. We were no different from young Americans in all other wars, most of us exhibited the ability of functioning under fire. We proved to our comrades and higher ups, but more important, to ourselves, that we had the courage to do this job.

Reload And Go

On our front the middle layer of the Siegfried Line was aflame. The Germans were perplexed by the number of attacks they were facing simultaneously. The intense pressure the breadth of our Ninth Army front forced them to counter this power quickly and often times not by troops of their choice, but what forces they had in the immediate areas.

Our opposition varied in quality and experience, from their very best to divisions that had been pretty badly mauled and reorganized and rushed in to fill the gaps. The 638th Tank Destroyers were in the middle of this slugfest. We took on their first team and we battled their subs. At times we were slowed down and even stopped, but not for long. We had the momentum and it was necessary to keep rolling if we were to get through this indepth defense line. We like to think they underestimated our firepower and desire and that our tactics, speed and tenaciousness got them off balance. Often our tactics puzzled them and they hesitated too long to commit available reserve troops, the wasted time usually meant more losses for them as the reserve arrivals were just a little late to turn the battle in their favor and only added to their losses.

The second phase of the drive to bust the Siegfried Line was to take the key towns of Beeck, Leiffarth and Lindem. To get them we had to destroy or neutralize the fortifications, bunkers, machine gun nests, trenches and gun emplacements plus tanks and motorized artillery pieces, about like phase one but on a larger scale and faster pace. This territory had a few more hills and ridges than the Geilenkirchen silent so that meant they had to be taken too. Every general wants the high ground, if he has it he defends it, if he doesn't have it he fights for it. In this phase five, hills were fought for, two of the lesser hills had to be taken before we could take the three more important ones. Again we had three drives going simultaneously and moving forward. Three hills were taken and we set up our artillery. From these hilltop positions our field guns could reach the towns of Wurms, Mullendorf, Beeck, Leiffarth and Lindem and all roads in and out of these towns. From the high ground the artillery softened up some of the strong points for our Infantry, tanks and tank destroyers and by having the distant roads in range slowed down the German re-enforcements and supplies badly needed by the defenders.

One by one the hills and towns fell. By now the Germans knew that the U.S. Ninth Army wanted the two towns of Linnich and Juleck as their crosspoints of the Roer River. We had taken the key towns to end the second phase of our drive to get through the Siegfried Line, but for the third phase, the drive to the Roer, to be successful we could not allow the Germans to retake any of these towns or any part of the Siegfried Line. To our north, northwest and northeast were thousands and thousands of German troops, most of them in understrength divisions that had suffered heavy losses. They were combining these remnant troops into battalion size and even divisional size groups. To protect our left flank at the Linnich crossing of the Roer River we had to hold the real estate in the Lindem-Beeck area and not allow the Germans to retake it. So while we were getting ready for Phase III, our drive to the Roer River, we kept one eye on this heavy concentration of German troops in an assembly area a few miles north of Lindem.

Dam, Dam, Dam

After two rounds of slugging the pace slowed, after the next round we had a river to cross. A water crossing means tons and tons of special equipment is needed and it all had to

be hauled by our trucks. By now our transportation department was beginning to feel the strain, each mile gained by the troops meant our supply lines became a little longer. Also, our trucks were beginning to show the wear as the hard torturous miles piled up on these work horses. The six by six's were not fighting machines, but they could have been our most important piece of equipment in W.W. II.

Much of northern France, a large part of Belgium and most of the Netherlands along with the north western part of Germany is known as the low lands (low countries) of Europe. A vast network of rivers make their way to the Atlantic via the English Channel and the North Sea. These rivers in turn are connected by hundreds of canals making this waterway system one of the most bustling shipping areas of the world. Being low land also meant mud.

The Roer River was part of this river-canal transportation system or network. To keep this river navigable the water depth had to be controlled. This was done by creating three reservoirs at its headwater area. By controlling the outflow of these three dams, the Germans controlled the depth of the stream and by the same token could cause an overflow and turn much of this low land in the Roer Valley into a valley of mud. By incorporating the water level and mud factor into its area defense plan the Germans needed very few troops and equipment to adequately defend this section of front. They could conserve their equipment and manpower here and use it in some other area. Unknown to us, this was precisely what they had planned.

The Ardennes Explosion

Fifty miles to the south of us two powerful German panzer armies exploded into the lightly defended Ardennes Forest section of Belgium. The Sixth S.S. Panzer Army was to capture Liege and move on to the coast, while the Fifth Panzer Army was to cross the Meuse River, west of Marche, and move on to Paris. A few hours after the Germans started this twin offensive, the Allies labeled it as a major offensive.

From a military standpoint it was either a major mistake or a stroke of genius. To the less professional they will always come up with the theory that luck played a part in the success or failure of the operation. This was some of both.

Nevertheless, quick action had to be taken and we were deeply involved in it. The Ninth Army front was put on hold and we were rushed in to fill the gap. The 84th Infantry Division and the 638th Tank Destroyer Bn. pulled out of the Lindern area of the Siegfried Line about a week before Christmas.

The Battle Of The Bulge

In a fast 75 mile road march we pulled into the Marche, Belgium area two days after leaving the Siegfried Line. We were no longer a part of the Ninth Army but now attached to VII Corps.

Our division was to take and hold Marche at all cost. Twenty miles to our rear was Liege, a major supply base. If the Germans could take this supply base with its fuel and food intact, they could move on to the coast. We had to hold.

The Ardennes Offensive should have been not much more than a training maneuver for the German Armies. In the spring of 1940 they barreled their tanks through this hilly and forested area. Their main reason for halting then was to gas-up, take on ammo and rations and hit the roads again. They knew the roads, bridges, crossroads and terrain about as well as the streets and landmarks of Berlin.

This was the third war their armies have roamed this part of Belgium. While this area did not have super highways their main roads were on sound road beds and the bridges were adequate for heavy military traffic. The secondary roads were for lighter traffic but furnished hundreds of access routes or connector routes to the main roads. From the military standpoint this area had a good network of roads. Unlike the defending armies of the past who made their stand at stream and river banks, we were going to stop the advances on the roads and at crossroads, deny the enemy of the use of the roads and stop him before he reached the rivers. In the next six weeks there would be hundreds and hundreds of deadly skirmishes involving small groups of soldiers at tiny villages and crossroads throughout the Ardennes.

The War Department called this operation the "Ardennes Campaign," the war correspondents called it "the Battle of the Bulge" and most G.I.s called it the "Battles of the Bulge." To the G.I.s it was one skirmish after another to take a string of tiny villages that were not even mentioned in his Sixth Grade Geography Classes.

Marche

As we rolled into Marche we saw many refugees on the roadside, in the streets and open areas in the town. These were people of all ages except males of military age. These people had all their worldly possessions in a bag over their shoulders, in a little four-wheeled wagon or two wheeled cart, maybe in a wheel barrow or a larger cart pulled by a horse or a cow. They were frantically trying to move out of the path of a ruthless, pitiless advancing army. The rumors were thick and it seemed like everywhere the refugees wanted to go the Germans were already there or soon would be. They seemed numb by their problems.

We were very much in the same boat. The 84th was an island of defense at Marche with no known friendly troops on our right or left flank. Intelligence from Corp or higher up was zero. We rushed out our own reconnaissance squads and platoons and they didn't have to travel far to find enemy armor heading our way. There were about twelve good roads leading to the Hotten-Marche area and German Tiger and Panther tanks were moving our way on seven of them. We had a lot of front to cover and we were spread dangerously thin. We put the most of our manpower at the key crossroads and road junctions and hoped we made the right choices, we did.

At Hotton Co. B. of the 638th Tank Destroyers spotted five German tanks and a half track. The Destroyers picked a firing position about a half mile from the cluster of German

tanks and started pouring it in. Four tanks and the half track went up in flames and the fifth tank was knocked trackless but the 88 was still usable, fortunately because of the position of the trackless tank the gun could not be trained on a target.

The German Sixth S.S. Panzer Army and Fifth Panzer Army were moving west and in strength, but they were having problems too. The fog that covered the Ardennes had grounded their observation planes as well as ours. They had to use ground reconnaissance and this is more time consuming. They also found stubborn and unyielding resistance at almost all the road blocks. They could take the time to eliminate the road blocks or detour around them, but either way it was upsetting their time table. Another "time clock" error they made was underestimating the time we needed to pour in our reinforcements. The 771st Tank Battalion joined us and we welcomed this mobile firepower. Right on the heels of the Tankers was the Second Armored Division and the Third Armored Division. Things were looking up for us and we needed it. The day before our morale was on the down swing after one of our runners came into message center and said the Germans had taken Marche two days before and they had all the towns, villages and roads in a ten mile circle around Marche. He said he heard it over a portable radio that he liberated from a civilian. When asked if he still had the radio he told us the batteries were dead but he had the radio in his jeep. By the time he had returned with the radio we had rounded up about a dozen batteries. We go the thing working and tuned in on the Armed Forces Radio in Paris. After ten or fifteen minutes of music, "Songs of the Forties," the latest "News from the Front" was broadcasted. According to these reports the Germans did have the Marche area. This did nothing to alleviate our confusion, if anything it only deepened our perplexity. What a difference a day makes.

We came to the conclusion that we knew much more about the situation at the front than the people back in Paris. Who could know better? We were the front, or at least a very active part of it. And we were getting help, as mentioned before, we now had the 771st

Tank Battalion, and the Second Armored Division and the Third Armored Division were just a few hours away. This added manpower, gave us mobility and much needed fire power. We knew the Tigers and Panthers were coming, but in many cases, we had the choice of picking the spot or spots where we were to engage them. While waiting for the Second and Third Armored Divisions we kept the Germans busy in offensive and defensive actions. These actions involved small numbers of troops but were fast and furious. The Tank Destroyers were in the thick of it and they gave an excellent account of themselves. History is full of stories of courage under fire. There were many savage clashes in the March sector to add to the pages. The frontline G.I.s braced for the German assaults. In the confusion American ingenuity, sense of duty, and raw courage stopped the invincible German tanks from reaching the Meuse River.

By taking and holding Marche we had cut off the advance spear head columns from the main German forces following them. We had cut their supply lines and they could not be resupplied with fuel, ammo and rations. After we cut the lead troops off the British forces moved in and cleaned out the Germans west of Marche. While the British were mopping up,

TANK DESTROYERS

'Shucks, Thats Easy, Sir', Says Corporal, And TD's Spew Fire

BY PFC. BILL DORMAN

One clear, sunlit morning when the German advance ceased to engulf Marche, Belgium, a small group of infantrymen and two tank destroyers were holding a town east of the city against overwhelming odds.

An infantry colonel asked one, blue-eyed Cpl. James Fleming of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion to knock at a house the Germans were hiding. The 22-year-old destroyer commander grinned.

"Shucks, that's easy, sir," he retorted climbing into his vehicle. Moving the destroyer into position, he was joined by hisatoon leader, Lt. Charles F. Bryson. They drove the destroyer a street corner in direct line of fire with the house. Preparing to blow the building with a round of high explosive, Fleming saw an anti-tank gun near the door.

Quickly he ordered the ammunition changed to armor-piercing to blast the gun as three Germans rushed from the house.

Fleming held his order to fire, thinking they wanted to surrender.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Bryson, standing a few feet from the destroyer, had seen two of the Germans preparing to load the gun. Desperately he yelled to Fleming, trying to make himself heard above the roar of the destroyer's engine.

The youngster heard him just in time.

"Give it to them," he shouted to the gunner over the interphone.

The first round missed the gun but struck a personnel carrier a few feet behind. Fragments tore the three Germans to bits.

The second round destroyed the gun.

Fleming then ordered a round of high explosive fired into the house, raving the brick building like paper. From the smoking ruins seven battered Nazis crawled.

"That afternoon we had a hell of a fight," said Fleming.

"The Germans tried to kick us out of town. We were in a defensive position on the slope

of a hill just outside town when they opened up with artillery and mortars.

"We saw Germans rushing down the hill in waves, like the movie, YOU know. We fired point blank into their bunched ranks with high explosive, and they fell like wheat.

"When they got to within 50 yards, we pulled back into town firing from between buildings so fast that the doughs told us later it sounded as if the town was filled with tanks. We used time fire and tree bursts until the Jerries broke and ran.

"That night we couldn't sleep hearing the screams of German wounded lying on the slope. They never knew how small the force was defending the town."



Cpl. James F. Fleming and Lt. Charles F. Bryson.

**Five Up, Five Down
When TD's Hit Krauls**

A sharpshooter's outfit is the Second Platoon of Company B, 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Two of its destroyers were standing behind buildings on the south edge of Cible projecting the Laroche highway when five German

vehicles were sighted 2300 yards away.

Taking careful aim, the TD's opened up with a burst of two armor-piercing shots at each vehicle. The krauls inside the vehicles took off on foot.

Later an artillery observer confirmed the destruction of three Mark IV tanks, one self-propelled gun and one general purpose vehicle. The platoon is commanded by Lt. Maxwell E. Lee.

we were holding off the main forces of Germans preventing them from joining their advanced columns west of us.

By the last week of the year 1944, the two powerful German Armies were so far behind in their scheduled goals of advance that they had to make an instant change of battle plans. They had to extract these two armored armies from the Ardennes to save them. Their skilled and savage retreat was more bloody and costly than their advance. Bloody and costly to both sides.

What Happened To Christmas

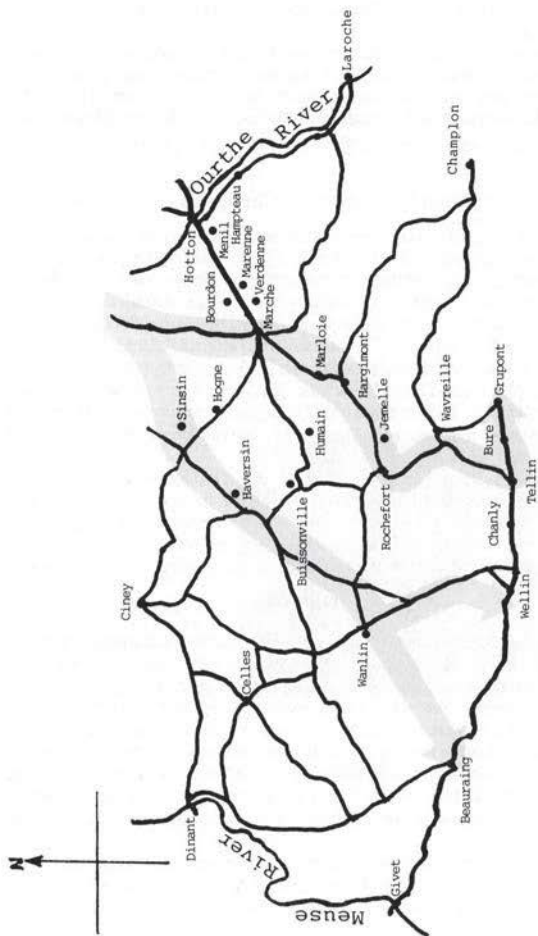
The British relieved us at Marche. They had cleaned out the German advanced units in the north, west and south parts of the ten mile circle around this highway hub. The Germans had reached the peak of their penetration, they fell short of their goals. We had stopped their best. German General Sepp Dietrick's Sixth S.S. Panzer Army was almost near enough to Liege to smell our "gasoline dump" and General Manteuffel Fifth Panzer Army reached Celles about five miles short of the Meuse River. The Sixth S.S. Panzer Army could not roll back his right flank at Malmedy and Stavelot and kept slipping south on his drive to Liege. By altering his route to Liege he put more and more military traffic on fewer and fewer available highways. This congested traffic made juicy targets for our Air Force when they could find a hole in the foggy skies. The Seventh Corp had done its job on defense and it was time to go back on the offense.

After the British took our place at Marche we moved east and joined up with the Second Armored Division as an Infantry-Armored Team. On our flank was the 83rd Infantry Division joined by Third Armored Division for a second Infantry-Armored Team. Our assignment was to drive south, as fast as possible and link up with the U.S. Third Army to cut off the escape route of the German tanks and troops in this advanced Ardennes pocket.

Back On The Defense

By January 2 we had regrouped on a line from Hotton to Manhay, a distance of about nine miles, in hilly and forested terrain. We moved south on a nine mile front and took our towns, villages and crossroads with light fighting. This disturbed us, we knew there was power and know-how out there, yet we took a dozen or so objectives that offered us very little resistance. While we were savoring this streak of luck Mother Nature furiously stepped in with snow, sleet and below freezing temperature. We had some adjustments to make and fast. Staying alive in a combat zone was on your mind around the clock, now nature slammed another furious challenge of us to cope with, staying alive and functioning in extremely violent winter weather conditions. The only consolation was that your opponent was facing the same brutal elements.

We continued our drive south for our three main objectives Loroche, Samree and the junction of the Laroche-Leige to Houffalize highways. Our progress was slowed by the weather conditions and a desperate enemy defensive efforts.



Cutting off the lead armored columns from main forces of two German armies moving west thru the Ardennes.

The snow was one to four feet deep depending on what part of our sector you measured it. But any depth was a major handicap for our infantry and armor troops. The icy roads were a disgusting problem. The slightest loss of traction could end with the vehicle in the ditch or blocking the narrow road. Trucks, tanks and tank destroyers faced this hazard. Another problem was fluids freezing on some of our equipment. In the dochamps area we spotted a German tank and half of an infantry company and our Tank Destroyer gunner could not zero in on them because the fluid in the turrets mechanism had frozen and the barrel could not be raised, lowered or traversed.

On our final drive south with our goal the town of Hauffalize it was taking hill after hill, ridge after ridge and village after village in a race to Hauffalize.

This two weeks of combat was a supreme test of the military men of our division. The test came in many forms and situations. To list a few:

Roads - Most were hazardous to impassable but both sides were desperately attempting to use them. In an area near Laroche a Tank Destroyer crew spotted a German tank and three or four squads of infantry slowly moving on a glass slick road. The T.D. gunner was tracking the tank waiting for a clean shot. The traction on the mirror slick road was so delicate that the round from the T.D.er's gun spun the Tiger tank around.

Self-Preservation - Moving in deep snow or on icy surfaces required more time and thought for good footing, also consumes more energy, speeding fatigue. Exhaustion often entered your mind but somehow you had the stamina to get you through. If you reached this stage you made every effort to stay awake, to go to sleep could mean freezing to death. You also found ways to protect your lips, ears, fingers and toes, a few days of wet socks and boots could be frozen feet. Also living in snow effected your eye sight and made judging distance more difficult. All these trials were extra problems of survival but you never overlooked the purpose of this drive. We were furiously trying to cut the escape route of a huge bag of prisoners, they were mostly experienced combat veterans who were fighting desperately to prevent this from happening.

We took a few more hills and towns before we captured Hauffalize. The same day we took Hauffalize an advanced party from our division joined up with platoon from the Third Army to seal the bag. This was a two week drive with 10 days of hard fighting in bitter and severe weather. A number of times elderly civilians of the Ardennes told us this was the deepest snow and lowest temperatures of their lifetime.

We had a few days rest and were moved about 15 miles east to clean out a pocket of Germans between Hauffalize and St. Vith. This rectangular area included the villages of Bovigny, Gouvy, Ourthe and Beho, had railroads and highways that the First Army would be using heavily in the next few months. The 638th Tank Destroyers wound up their Battles of the Bulge on this assignment.

By the time the German armies were driven back to their border they had lost over 100,000 men and over 700 planes. They came in with about 45,000 vehicles of all kind but not half of them made it back to Germany. The 84th Division knocked out 47 German tanks, we don't know how many of the 47 the 638th T.D.s clobbered. In fact, we didn't even know

WANTED HELP, SO TD'S KNOCK OUT TANKS, HALF-TRACK, ETC.

All the colonel wanted was a little help, so the lieutenant said "Yes" and knocked few off the docks — two tanks, a personnel carrier loaded with trucks, a half track and a captured American TD.

While Lt. Royce F. Adams, platoon leader with the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was covering a road block near Marlole, Belgium, a colonel from an armored division asked him to rescue some of the elements trapped by the Germans at Harzin. It was a rush job, as a Jerry armored column was approaching the encircled vehicles. Adams led his platoon through the infantry front lines and took up positions on a ridge overlooking Harzin. Capt. Edward Tyrant opened on two German tanks at 2000 yards. He used four rounds of armor-piercing shells and knocked out both tanks.

Meanwhile, Lt. Adams spotted an American truck loaded with Germans in a field at a range of 1400 yards. Sgt. Nick Jurawich, destroyer commander, went to work. With one round of high explosive he blew up the truck, killing or wounding the Jerry.

When German stretcher bearers began carrying the wounded toward an American half track, he noticed it had no markings. Working it fastly like a well-oiled machine, the target was given to Sgt. Willard Tronick, who promptly blew it to hell with two rounds of high explosive at 1400 yards.

It was getting dark, but they picked up another target, so the Lieutenants fired three rounds for effect and laid the fourth on a captured American tank destroyer.

638th Tank Destroyers

Sgt. Hubert E. Wright, Sgt. Ernest Lee Watson, Sgt. John A. Cossoway and Pfc. Joseph Smith were on a patrol when they came upon a British staff car halted at an American road block. In a clear English accent, an officer in a British uniform asked if the road were clear of enemy troops. Sergeant Wright said he didn't know. The officer thought a moment and then jumped into the car and roared away. Later the Americans rounded a curve of the road and saw a number of German armored vehicles warming up. While they watched, the British car arrived, the officer stepped out, shouted commands in German, pulled on a tank cap and ducked into one of the vehicles.

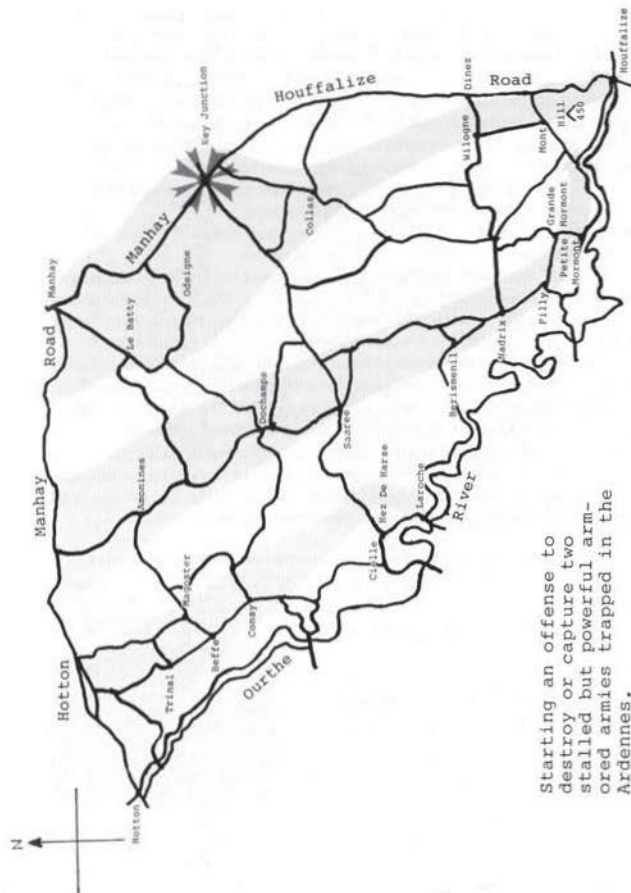


Tanks are hidden among snow-covered pines while they wait for the signal to move forward. The tanks are concealed not from planes but from German artillery observers on nearby hills.



—(Signal Corps Photo: NEA Telephoto.)

Men of a tank destroyer battalion of the 84th Division in action in Belgium, retrieve their tin cigarette tins in woods. Left to right, Corp. Mike Spears of Troy, Kansas; Pfc. Johnny C. Wilcox of Portland, Ore.; Corp. Earl Pitts of Coffeyville, Kans., and Pfc. Stewart P. Jaeger of Chicago.



Starting an offense to destroy or capture two stalled but powerful armored armies trapped in the Ardennes.

we were to stop and count them. The heavy losses of manpower and the severe losses of tanks, artillery, trucks and other rolling stock was serious loss to the German War Machine. Our losses were heavy but overall not near as damaging. A low note to us was that towed tank destroyers were often overrun by the enemy. The time element was too great, the time to move in and set up; the time to hook up and pull out was too great of a handicap for fast moving mechanized warfare. Remember this normal back breaking work was now being attempted in deep snow and on icy surfaces that tracks or wheels could not get traction. All the towed battalions were soon converted to self-propelled battalions.

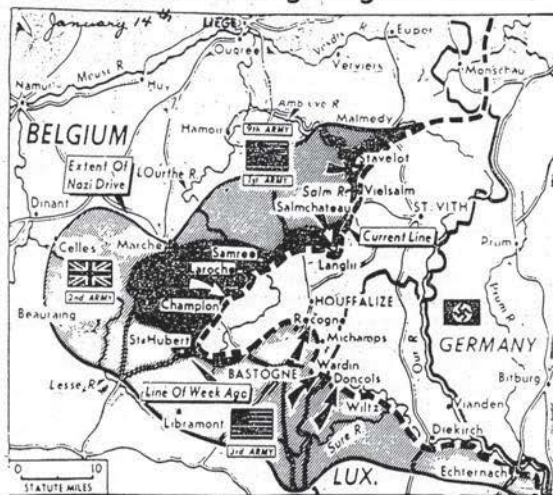
To those who took part in the "Battles of the Bulge" almost every man could tell of some unusual happening and sometimes unbelievable happenings.

We heard many times of Tank Destroyers joining small groups of friendly troops and helping them fight their way out of some desperate situations.

We have read that many veteran observers considered the Ardennes Campaign the hardest fought and bitterest campaign of the Allies in Europe. The bitter hostile weather, a desperate and skilled enemy, and terrain and weather programmed at its very worst had some E.T.O. veteran observers state it was worse than anything they had ever witnessed.

The blending of Tank Destroyers and Infantry was producing some powerful combat units. They were learning how to work together to become a more polished combat machine. There was a growing air of mutual respect among these troops. The Infantry welcomed the new addition of the fire power at their fingertips, instant and on the spot, as opposed to long distance, time consuming and questionable communications between distant gun crews and the action areas. The destroyer crews welcomed the protection the infantry gave them against enemy infantry and their German bazooka teams. This was "on the job" training in team work and the results were very costly to the German war machine.

German's Shrinking Belgium Salient



Hacking into the German salient from the north, American First Army troops yesterday drove beyond Langlier while the British advanced on the western end and United States Third Army men gained on the south. The black area is territory gained by the Allies during the last week. The shaded area is territory recaptured previously in the enemy salient. Associated Press

ETO REUNION



The first persons Pvt. Gordon Brattain, center, met after his liberation from the Germans were a couple of friends from his home town of Noblesville, Ind., Lt. Charles A. Wann and First Sgt. Joseph L. Casey of the 638th Tank Destroyers. Brattain was captured at Salerno.

American Tank Destroyers Bag Grounded Enemy Planes

BY HAL BOYLE

ORLEANS, (Delayed)—It is a rare day on the battlefield when armored units bag enemy planes, but when the Americans were cleaning up around Orleans our tank destroyers came up so quickly on one airfield a few miles north of the town they caught a bunch of German planes sitting on the ground.

Some of the tank destroyers crashed right through hangar buildings and ran right over the planes, crushing them. Other units of the column just cut loose with their guns and began whanging their shells into the planes. It took only a few seconds to turn them all into bonfires.

Nazis Take to Woods.

Pfc. Thurman McGee from El

woods," he said, "but we caught them. Those fliers were so used to riding in airplanes they didn't want to hoof it very far and most of them gave up pretty easily."

"One bunch of 40 surrendered to one of our 400-mm ack-ack gun crews. They threw away their arms and crawled out of the woods. They don't like to fight much on the ground."

One American tank did a good job on three trucks loaded with ferries outside Orleans. They just blew them to pieces. We learned later that the Germans were coming to Orleans from Paris on a three-day furloage.

Souvenirs in Demand.

McGee and two of his friends, Sgt. Richard Rossman of Racine, Wis., and Pfc. Cico Miles, Davis City,

Back To Linnich And Across The Roer

On February 3, we were back in the Ninth Army and back in our old battlegrounds. The neighborhood was kind of run down when we left, now it was really bad. While we were down south these towns were targets in artillery duels and many of these buildings were raised by these exchanges of fire. When artillery razes buildings that means they lower the height of walls, or eliminate the walls, or reduce the walls to a pile. The artillery guys overdid it, they even turned most of these "beautiful bunker basements" into slum areas.

In the meantime we were going after the three dams at the headwaters of the Roer River. It was a loosing battle to the German defenders but before they pulled out they systematically damaged the system and flooded the low lands in the valley. This delayed our river crossing another two weeks so we used this time to practice the job of having some dry runs of river crossing.

Feb. 23, Companies A and C of 1st Battalion of 334th Infantry Regiment crossed the Roer River, long before daylight the entire Battalion was across. Once again we were about to cross up the German defense plans. They had figured, over two months before, that the Ninth Army was going to cross the Roer at Julich and Linnich. They had prepared their defenses in depth east of the rivers edge. As soon as the 1st Battalion crossed the river they headed north, not east, to take Korrenzig and Rurich. While the 1st Battalion was moving north, the 3rd Battalion had crossed the Roer and was mopping up the bridgehead area. Most of the captured German defenders were still groggy from the massive and prolonged artillery barrage that plowed up their defense area. In less than twelve hours we had heavy bridges across the river and a bridgehead about two-and-a-half miles long and over one-half mile deep. This included the two towns of Korrenzig and Rurich.

In the interrogation of enemy defenders of this bridgehead the prisoners all mentioned the massive barrage delivered before and during the river crossing. In the planning of the crossing every gun in the Division was to take part in the barrage. This included our 76 MMs on our destroyers, even the smaller bore guns on our armored cars.

After the 1st Battalion of the 334th Regt. crossed the Roer in assault boats our engineers ran into some setbacks on the three-foot bridges they were to install. They had the first bridge across and were anchoring it to the far side when enemy small arms fire drove them back into the river. The second bridge was completed and ready for use when a number of boats from upstream were carried by the swift current into the structure and ripped it out. The third bridge was completed and foot troops were ready to cross when a German artillery shell cut the steel cable that the boats were tethered to.

The heavy duty floating bridge was put in service about on schedule and trucks, tanks and tank destroyers started pouring across.

While the bridge building was going on several German fighter planes strafed and bombed the area. We had our first look at a jet war plane, the German ME 262 fighter. Our fighters were high upstairs when they saw the two jets and instantly dove to come down on the jets' tails at top speed. The German pilots were aware of this and put the pedal to the metal and pulled away from our fighters as if our planes were standing still. This left a strange

feeling in the pit of our stomachs. We were always hearing of Adolph's secret weapons that he was going to bring out and win the war. We were reducing the size of his Wolf Packs of submarines that preyed on Allied shipping. We still respected his Tigers and Panthers but proved by leaving them rusting and burned out all over Europe that they could be stopped. The Buzz Bombs, that terrorized southeastern England and supply depots in Belgium, were being neutralized by destroying the launching pads. We could visualize a few thousand of these planes controlling the air space over much of Europe and prolonging the war and another secret weapon or two and he may even win this thing.

The two ME 262 jets that we saw a few minutes before came back for another pass over the bridge building site. Our anti-aircraft guns knocked one out at tree top level near the bridge site, the second was hit and seen smoking as it disappeared over the ridge, then a pall of black smoke when it crashed.

As soon as the 638th Tank Destroyer Bn. and 771st Tank Bn. crossed the Roer, they each sent one company north to join the Infantry in the Korrenzig, Rurich and Baal area. Before the tankers and destroyers joined the infantry in the Baal area, the infantry was getting its artillery support from friendly nearby batteries on the western side of the Roer.

We had worked our way through the Siegfried Line and then crossed the Roer River. We were about to enter a new phase of warfare.

Our first two phases were about as different or opposite as could be imagined. In Phase one we were assault troops demolishing one of the most elaborate and detailed defense lines ever constructed. In Phase Two we were the hunter and the hunted, challenging the most bitter and the most hostile weather mixture that could be concocted, this side of the arctic, in the Ardennes.

Now our flexibility, among other things, was to be tested again.

Roer Bridgehead Secured

As mentioned earlier as soon as the 334th Infantry crossed the Roer at Linnach it moved north and took Korrenzig and Rurich and moved on to Baal. As the Tank Destroyers and tanks crossed a company of each moved north to join the Infantry to finish off Baal. As the rest of the Infantry, Tank Destroyers and Tanks moved north the villages and towns of Granterath, Doverhahn, Doveren and Huckelhaven were captured. In most cases the Germans counter-attacked, but the extra fire power of the Destroyers and Tanks took care of the German tanks and broke up or threw back the counter-attack. We moved on to capture Hetzerath and Houverath and now had control of all the towns in our zone of advance four to six miles from the river.

We knocked out some Mark V tanks, self-propelled guns and half tracks but there was a noticeable lack of 88s and heavy artillery. We think they pulled them out of this area and positioned them east of Linnach to form a welcome committee for us after we crossed the Roer. If so we like their thinking.

We were getting a mixed bag of prisoners. When we would capture large groups we found they were taken from a number of divisions and hastily thrown together and ordered to march to a town to help defend it against our advance. As they drew near the town they unexpectedly found we were waiting for them. This points out some of their communication problems and we wanted to help that along.

In one of these little towns we decided to give them the "Lightning Treatment." We barreled into town, right down the main drag with all guns "blazing" including the rifles of the infantry men riding on the destroyers. By the time we reached the opposite city limit we had Rambo-ized the town. This was 35 or 40 years before Rambo I, Rambo II, etc.

Task Force Church

General Church had put together a tough compact, armed to the teeth army on wheels. This was our version of the Railsplitters Blitzkrieg. General Church had put this plan together months before but up to now the time, terrain, place and conditions were not right to lunch it.

The German Armies were reeling back on both the Eastern and Western fronts. There were large numbers of troops and huge amounts of war equipment to be shifted to critical areas to try to stop the onslaught. Their transportation department was facing some serious problems and they were mounting. Their losses of rail and highway rolling equipment far exceeded what their dwindling factories could replace. In logistics they had a lot more checkers than they had squares on the checker board.

Now was kick-off time for Task Force Church and they hit the road. This column included units to meet and overcome any anticipated opposition in its path. The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion helped beef up the firepower of this Task Force by furnishing "A" Co. and "C" Co. They barreled their way to the town of Steeg, their first day. This was nine miles from the kick-off point.

In this nine mile run we passed through a number of towns and villages, the names of some we did not know. The resistance varied. In some villages we fired at anything that moved as we drove on through. At Lentholt we stopped just long enough to remove a well constructed roadblock at the edge of town and blasted away another in the center of the town, on one of the side streets we destroyed a battery of unmanned 75s. Our wide ranging recon troops overran and destroyed a battery of eight 88s on the Holton-Wegberg road. North of Wegberg the Germans blew a railroad highway overpass where the tracks crossed the highway. After a short holdup we cleared a lane and moved on. As we neared Richelrath we caught a supply train of 15 horsedrawn German army freight wagons. Our big guns made a messy mess of this stretch or highway and roadside.

When we entered Motzerath at the start of this bustout, we were surprised to find the civilian population in the town. Until now all German settlements we encountered the civilians had been evacuated before we arrived. We presumed we had cleared the last zone of defense of the Siegfried Line.

Our column was several miles long and no matter how hard you try to keep a set distance between vehicles, the column becomes elastic and the distance between vehicles becomes greater or smaller. On several of the short delays while roadblocks had to be eliminated parts of the column came to a halt. When our vehicles stopped some of our troops would check buildings and homes lining these streets or roads, to see if German troops were inside. In many cases they found food on the table, or cooking on the stove, ready to be served. No doubt a short time out was taken to gulp down some home cooked food. Also, the G.I.s deduced that wherever Germans were living - beer was to be found.

We reached our projected goal at Steeg and decided to try one more leg. We wanted Walduiel and found it protected by defenses at Steeg, Berg and Eicken. The three outpost towns contained some strong enemy positions. We faced permanently placed 88s, protected machine gun positions, dug in tanks and mine fields and German paratroopers who were willing to fight. It was a 12-hour slugging match before we knocked out these four towns and took off for Boisheim, three more miles up the road, and had it by daybreak. Most of the German troops were sleeping when we took over the town. The Task Force group that entered the town of Boisheim after daylight spotted a number of well placed anti-tank guns covering the approach to the town. The troops that manned the guns were rousted out of warm beds and into the prisoner of war bag before daylight.

When Task Force Church took Boisheim, the rest of the division and remaining tank destroyers, were right on the flanks of the task force in our assigned corridor of advance. All the divisions other fighting men plus the attached Tank Destroyers and tanks, were engaged in fighting for, and taking of, the dozens of other towns and villages within our advance zone borders.

Our prisoners taken was multiplying and so was the number of tanks, artillery and other enemy heavy equipment destroyed or captured. In most of the engagements there was no let up in savagery of action.

Regrouping At Dulken-Suchteln

Seven days after crossing the Roer River our division had moved north and taken a triangle land area bordered by the towns of Boisheim-Dulken-Suchteln. This was a hard fought twenty mile drive to gain control of another transportation zone.

In this triangle the Germans were using the rivers and canals, the railroads and the highways and all of these systems were overtaxed. The mass tonnage was overwhelming their logistical ability and their available freight equipment. Central coordination of German troop movement and material was breaking down and we were getting into position to take advantage of it.

Germany had an excellent highway network throughout the nation and we want to thank Adolf for building the Auto-bahn and upgrading the other roads and highways in the system.

Most of the terrain from our advanced position on to Berlin was favorable "tank" country and we were thinking Berlin. After all no other Allied army was nearer to the German capital than the U.S. Ninth Army.

We were preparing to move east in still another style of combat.

Task Force Church was a big success on our first try in western Germany. We were entering an excellent network of top quality roads and topographically the lay of the land was favorable for mechanized warfare. In the future more of these columns will be assembled and they will be made up of units designed to meet anticipated resistance. Our Tank Destroyers with their speed and fire power were a vital cog in these fast hard hitting power columns.

On To The Rhine

After a brief pause in the Dulken-Boisheim-Suchteln triangle S3 had given orders to the three regiments to advance. Each regiment was given a route to the town of Uerdingen on the Rhine River. The routes would take the Railsplitters through the towns, the important ones at least, in the divisions advanced zone of action. Beyond our zone border on our right flank was the Second Armored Division, and on our zone border on our left flank was the Eighth Armored Division.

The first obstacles in route were water crossings and the engineers had to put in bridges for the track and wheeled vehicles. This bridging delayed us more than enemy action. The 333rd took the towns of Oedt, Stiegerheide, Kempen, Unterweiden, Huls and Inruth while the 335th took Vorst and St. Tonis. As these two regiments took Krefeld the tailing Task Force of Tank Destroyers, Tanks and 334th was to drive through Krefeld and on to the Rhine at Uerdingen. The Task Force was three or four miles from the river town when it was ordered by higher headquarters to change course and take Homberg. In the Homberg-Duisburg area there were two heavy bridges across the Rhine and these bridges were less than three miles from each other.

The 334th trailing the 335th ran into some heavy fighting just north of St. Tonis and later at Mors where the fighting was even more savage. This action delayed the task force at least 10 hours but the enemy lost large numbers of heavy artillery, half tracks, and a huge ammunition dump.

While the 84th Division and Tanks and Tank Destroyers were on an altered course to the Rhine they were moving in parallel columns to the two bridges 10 miles north of the single bridge site they set out to take at Uerdingen.

The 335th fought through Niep, Bettenkamp and Baerl to take the railroad bridge only to see it blown up as they were taking the west bank.

The 334th had taken part of Homberg and had maybe half the city when the Germans blew the highway bridge.

In ten days we had advanced 45 miles from the Roer River crossing at Linnich to Homberg on the Rhine.

We had successfully executed the Task Force concept with two important breakthroughs in this 45 mile drive between the two rivers, the Roer and the Rhine.

We captured or destroyed high numbers of heavy artillery of all sizes, a number of tanks and a large mix of combat vehicles, trucks and trailers. We blew up a dozen or more ammunition and supply dumps. We were no longer announcing dozens or hundreds of prisoners of war but now reporting in thousands.

Brief Pause At The Rhine

After we reached the Rhine the Army Engineers were working day and night checking damaged bridges and selecting sights to put new ones across this hundreds of miles of river. The U.S. Ninth, U.S. First and U.S. Third Armies wanted to cross this barrier and prepare for their march to Berlin.

With us the action had dropped off to cleaning up bypassed pockets in our area, and putting artillery on targets on the east bank of the Rhine. Many of our troops miles behind us were busy battling troops that we powered through on our drive to the Rhine.

We had ringside seats to watch wave after wave of Allied bombers winging their way to German industrial targets. And maybe for the first time, leisurely and relaxed, watching a dog fight as the fighter planes cut up the skies. At high altitudes we couldn't tell the good guys from the bad ones. We spotted a P-51 on the tail of a German fighter, the Kraut dove down to get speed to shake the P-51, but our guy stayed right on his tail and squeezed the trigger and that was all he wrote. In unison a yell came up from hundreds of G.I.s just like they were in a football stadium and the home team just made the winning touchdown.

While on the west bank of the Rhine the versatile Tank Destroyers were called on to do another odd job. On the eastside of the river the Germans were using tall industrial smoke stacks and Flack towers as observation posts. They had to be knocked out. Capt. Golden and twelve destroyers of Co. B. of the 638th T.D. Bn. received this assignment. A Fire Direction Control center was set up and the twelve destroyers were lined up on the levee and started firing. Those Germans knew how to build smoke stacks too. When the shells hit the bricks would fly and soon they had so many holes in them they looked like swiss cheese but the hits finally brought them crumbling. On one of the flack towers our hit cause a tremendous explosion and fireworks so we assume that it was manned and they had a good supply of ammo in the tower. Just to the left of one of the Flack Towers and within sight of the river bank a dutiful housefrau was hanging laundry on a clothes line in her yard. Lily Ponds was the guest of the division brass for this show, in fact, they had a ringside seat in an abandoned Flack tower on our side of the river.

Less than a week after we reached the Rhine at Homberg the Allies had a stroke of luck about 100 miles south of us. In the U.S. First Army sector their Ninth Armored Division came to a railroad bridge across the Rhine River at Remagen. It was not heavily damaged or strongly defended. The tankers raced across and established a bridgehead. Other U.S. troops raced across and enlarged the bridgehead while repairs were made on the bridge.

3 Nazi Rifle Guns, 4 Flak Positions Hit by 84th Div. TDs

WITH 84TH DIV. TDs, Germany, April 10—A couple of Davids, wound up and knocked the hell out of three Goliaths. It happened when the 84th Div. was breaching the famous gate of Westphalia to reach the plains of Hanover. The bridgehead across the Weer was barely two hours old and the crossing site was getting a lot of artillery.

Covering the crossing from Minden was the Second Platoon, Co. C 638th TD Bn. Commanded by 1st Lt. Royce Adams of Manitowish. We it was raining, the morning mist hung low over the river and the TD boys couldn't locate the enemy fire.

Then, as if in answer to a prayer, the mist lifted and there on the flatlands across the river were three German railroad guns and some flak pieces in a 12 car train.

Although outgunned plenty, TD commanders Sgt. George Elze, of Bonville, Ind., and Sgt. William Tronick, of Cross, Wis., gave the order and sergeants Robert Euter, also of Bonville, and James Reese of Giehausen, S.C., at 12 with 35 fast rounds.

The bag was three 100mm anti-air guns, four 20mm flak guns, four machine guns and any number of trucks.

At the Verdingen bridge, northeast of Aretfeld, the Second Armored Div. fought



its way down to the Rhine's edge, after battling in Verdingen and Kaldenhausen. The bridgehead was not as well defended as had blown that bridge. 100.

Another good-sized haul of prizes, how the ground forces can call for air support the minute they run into my to augment the 20,000 previously trouble. When the information captured during the current campaign

Paris, April 8 (AP)—U. S. Ninth Army tanks broke loose today down a superhighway to Berlin—128 miles ahead—with nothing seemingly in front of them but the Elbe River, as the Allied First Airborne Army struck again to seal off two German armies in Holland.

The entire western front was ablaze and the Germans were streaming westward for what may prove a decisive battle on the U. S. Third Army front, 130 miles southwest of the capital.

British Close to Bremen. The British Second Army drove up within artillery range of Bremen and laid siege to that U-boat center. Allied airborne troops were dropped over a wide area of northern Holland Saturday night, and had established radio contact with Canadian First Army armored columns driving for a junction.

The Canadians were but 11 miles from the Zuider Zee and less than 100 miles from the last good route of escape open to the Germans out of Rotterdam and Amsterdam after smashing through three-fourths of a mile of the road and railway center of Meppel.

Another Canadian force hammered northward into Haren, 31 miles from the North Sea and 42 miles from the big Port of Emden.

The U. S. First Army joined the Berlin derby within an 18-mile thrust that swept up the ancient university city of Goettingen and 15,000 wounded troops. The First pressed at least two miles beyond to within 143 miles of the Reich's capital.

The U. S. Army, badly shaking its Second Armored Division, batted up five to six miles from Hannover, and in the Ruhr pocket fought into Dortmund and Gelsenkirchen too, the basin's biggest cities, after taking 13,417 prisoners Saturday.

The British Second Army, after driving up seven miles west of Hannover, abruptly veered northward and was reported 64 miles from Hamburg, Germany's second city and biggest port.

WITH THE 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION in Germany—1st Sgt. Murray Rothman, of Brooklyn, knew something big was up when he saw several squadrons of P-47s take off from the air field he was visiting. Fifteen minutes later he heard that the 8th Army had crossed the Rhine.

Rothman, of Co. G, 334th Infantry, had been spending several days with a tactical reconnaissance group, learning how the Air Force coordinates its work with the infantry.

The airmen had explained to him how the ground forces can call for air support the minute they run into my to augment the 20,000 previously trouble. When the information reaches the air base, a huge map is



1st Sgt. Robert T. Gillette was the only man in the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion to be awarded the Red Star Medal by the Russians. The Russians cited the sergeant for his role in liquidating some German AT guns at Schackenberg.

638th TD Photo.

consulted. This map tells exactly where every squadron is at the moment. The squadron nearest the area of resistance is directed to knock out the enemy and then continue on its original mission.

Sergeant Rothman says that the men at the air base credit artillery liaison pilots for being as daring as any fliers in the Army. Infantrymen readily agree.

The Air Force men also were interested in infantry problems. Rothman answered such questions as "What is done with enemy towns are taken?" and "How does the Infantry take care of civilians?" The fliers were especially interested in all phases of infantry tactics.

At mess the infantryman's shiny, new "Rallsplitter" insignia prompted a discussion.

"Say, you're a Rallsplitter," one aviator remarked. "Do you fellows have your own publicity agents? We sure read a lot about you."

Sergeant Rothman modestly replied, "Hell no, we're just a good outfit, that's all. We make news when we move... and the 84th does a lot of moving."

While the First Army was pouring troops across and enlarging their holdings the Germans were pulling troops from all up and down their east bank of the Rhine to contain or push back the invaders at Remagen. By reducing the defensive troops and equipment across from our crossing site we were able to speed up the building and completion of our bridgehead at Wesel. It also thinned out the number we would face after we crossed and moved east.

Before the 84th Division crossed the Rhine the Division regrouped into three strike forces or combat teams, each regiment being a combat team. The Ninth Army furnished each combat team with 85 or 90 six by six trucks so the Infantry was on wheels. Besides the mounted infantry each combat team had one company of Tank Destroyers, anti-aircraft units, engineers, one Tank Company, Reconnaissance, Medics and Field Artillery and cannon groups. We carried five days of rations, artillery ammo was increased 30-50 percent and small arms ammo was doubled. The combat teams were to race to their assigned objectives, bulldozing their way through the opposition to reach their goals. The divisions immediately behind us were to engage the enemy and secure the areas we powered through.

Over the Rhine, On To The Wesser

We were back in the run-down neighborhoods again. Blasted, demolished, rubble and ruins was the fate of almost any town or city that contributed a product or part to the German War Machine. This was the northern half of the highly industrialized Ruhr valley. The area of heavy industry, of steel to be fabricated into ships, submarines and railroad equipment and the dreaded unstoppable heavy tanks that spread terror through the ranks of crushed armies of a dozen or more European and North African countries. By air and land this valley was relentlessly, systematically and vindictively being totally destroyed. By wars end this valley would be a fifty-mile junk yard, a crumbled monument to Mars and Adolph.

Our three combat teams crossed the Rhine at the town of Wesel and were to advance to the Munster area. However, the opposition we meet was not as severe and determined as was anticipated and we were ordered to continue on to the Wesser River area. We had the momentum, and if the enemy couldn't stop us, why stop ourselves.

In this jump we did not come through unscratched. All three combat teams encountered numerous road blocks of various intensity, sometimes halting us for several hours, until we cleaned it up and wedged on.

In the 333rd combat team the Tank Destroyers took out a roadblock in the Bielefeld area and a few miles farther up the road erased two 88s before they could fire a shot.

In the 335th combat team the Tank Destroyers were used in the same roll of taking out roadblocks. At Telgte several dozen defenders gave up before the T.D.s came within range of their panzerfausts.

The 334th met about the same opposition and rolled into the Wesser River area on the autobahn at Lohne near Bad Oeynhausen.

In four days the Division on wheels had rolled 100 miles from the Rhine crossing to the Wesser River.

Disgusted German General Calls It Quits

While the engineers were scrounging around for equipment to bridge the Wesser River the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion Headquarters moved into Bad Oeynhausen and set up Battalion Headquarters and Message Center in the Bosse Hotel.

We went to a weapons carrier that was parked beside a building several doors down the street, to get some equipment. On the way back to message center we saw a tall erect man dressed in civilian clothes and he was motioning to us. We had him to cross the street to our side. He spoke English and said he wanted to see our highest ranking officer. We asked for his "soul" book and found out we had a German General.

We started toward the message center and he motioned to a short heavy man across the street. The short guy opened a wooden gate and soon a big long German touring car came purring out the driveway and followed us to message center. We told Pfc. Frank Stowe, who was pulling guard duty at the hotel door, to tell Col. Davis we had a German General who wanted to surrender. As we were standing in the rain near the hotel entrance the General was telling how dumb the Americans fought a war, "like a bunch of cowboys and Indians." they set up a layered zone defense against us. As soon as we break into the second layer and face what they have waiting for us we veer to the right or left into a different zone. Very unprofessional and aggravating. We asked Pfc. Stowe what's the holdup inside. He said they are looking for a broom to sweep the mud off the floor. When we went inside the floor was clean, the desks were orderly and everything in "apple pie order," the cleanest neatest, most orderly C.P. and message center in the E.T.O.

This General said he was in charge of all communications in this military area and his communications was "in chaos, impossible."

Two days later we received several bundles of the Railsplitter newspapers. The big bold headlines read "84th Division Captures German General." We read the story word for word but none of us could find any mention of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the unit the German General surrendered to.

We had two cowboys and three full blooded Indians in our company. They were not impressed by the German General but they did like his 12 cylinder touring car.

By the time the General's "limo" left the area it was slightly "stripped down." A message center runner lifted the license plates and wired them on his jeep. Someone latched on to a heavy fluffy lap robe that covered the backseat. There were four red, white and black triangular Swastika pendants mounted on the front end of his limo, that vanished, I have one in my scrap book today.

Discharged German General Gives Himself Up To Destroyers

Nazi Bosses Defend Cities

WITH 84TH INF. DIV., Apr. 10.—A German major general who gave himself up to the 638th TD Bn, with this division led an American officer that the defense of German cities had been put in the hands of local Nazi garrisons.

The general, who said he had been discharged from the Army the previous week, urged himself in because he had no civilian papers. "I had, in his words, 'might prove most embarrassing.'" The only explanation he gave for his discharge was "the manner in which I made mistakes in my office."

Fifty-seven years old, the general was dapper and well-dressed in civilian clothes. He spoke in the firm Prussian manner popularized in film saga.

He said he had been in command of the Hanover Corps Area prior to his discharge. Before September, 1943, he was chief signal officer of a German army group in

Old man Two-Six, threw the tie was up and decided to throw in the towel before the authorities caught up with him. A. Generalissimo in the Wehrmacht, the tall, hairy gent gave himself up to the 84th Infantry Division because, although having been discharged from the Army a week ago, he still had no civilian papers, which, in his words, "might prove most embarrassing."

The general, dressed in civilian clothes, presented himself to the guard in front of the 84th Tank Destroyer Battalion CP and demanded to see the "Commandant". Sgt. Joseph 8th Army Has Battle.

A field dispatch said an American 8th army armored unit suffered heavily in a sharp tank battle just outside the captured town of Ockenberg, five miles south of Wesel.

Nazis in that area were reported fleeing across the Rhine in ferries, rowboats, and anything that would

Nazi Defense Rolled Back To Point North of Krefeld

By Ernest Leiser

Star and stripes float widely

WITH NINTH U.S. ARMY, Mar. 4.—The Germans were rolling up what was left of their defense line west of the Rhine today, pulling it north of Krefeld, as new American elements swung eastward and punched their way near the river's edge.

Official reports, which a week ago were describing U.S. bridgeheads east of the river, now spoke of the dwindling West "bridgeheads" west of the Rhine and east of Germans fleeing across the river in an effort to form new lines on its east bank.

The last major German "bridgehead" on the northern plain had been squeezed to a 20-mile strip about eight to ten miles deep, running from Duisburg to Wesel. Ninth Army and Canadian First Army Forces, newly linked, were jointly pushing the enemy back toward the Rhine.

84th Beyond Money

The 84th Inf. Div. which had been slabbing north, veered toward the Rhine. On the heels of yesterday's capture of

Across The Wesser At Barkhausen

The engineers bridged the Wesser River a few miles south of Minden and our three combat teams crossed without too much opposition, mainly because, from the military point of view, it was not a likely or choice spot for a crossing. For this reason it was lightly defended. As the bridge head was expanded we moved into area defenses and into some heavy fighting for two busy days. The 638th Tank Destroyers were in the thick of it blasting road blocks and buildings where the Germans made a stand. "C" Company's T.D.s (2nd Platoon), with the 335th Infantry, destroyed two railroad guns, 15 cars of ammo and a large fuel dump at Lerbeck. Another platoon of "C" Co.'s T.D.s took out two large self propelled guns while blasting roadblocks at Buckeburg with the 334th Infantry. In the meantime the 333rd Infantry and T.D.s at Eisbergen knocked out nine big railroad guns.

While we were going at it on the ground the German air force tried a different tactic in the air. In desperation they took a page out of the Japanese air force manual and introduced suicide missions. The Luftwaffe sent up almost 200 ME-109s to ram our B-17s as they made their bombing run on Hanover. The Germans lost about three-fourths of the 109s and our air force several dozen B-17s. We were maybe ten miles from Hanover and had a ringside seat, if we dared to take our mind and eyes off our work.

Our three combat teams were almost neck and neck racing east toward Hanover. We met pockets of resistance and roadblocks at almost every crossroad but we were able to break them up, some times by firing as we moved forward, without any serious delays.

It seemed like we were in a race to get across overpasses and bridges and secure them before they could demolish them. We were way ahead of their schedule of our time of arrival. On several occasions we engaged German units on roadways on their way to defend town that we took and passed through several hours before. At Holtensen the 334th and T.D.s overrun sixteen 88s before the Germans could man them and turn them on us. A number of times we would come on a collection of tanks, half tracks and personnel carriers and engage them and knock out part of the pack while the rest retreated down the road to regroup. Before they set a plan of action we were on them again and cleaned up the rest of the pack.

Red-White-Blue

We were refining our tactics and were advancing under task-force battle order code - Red-White-Blue

Each task force was made up of three groups Red was group "A," white was group "B," blue was group "C"

When we met the enemy: "A" was to engage and blast through, "B" was to engage and secure the area, "C" was to pass through and follow "A".

We were reeling off the mileage and creating unplanned problems for the German High Command. Their troubles were snowballing and would grow into a massive avalanche in a few short weeks.



(Associated Press Wirephoto; By Signal Corps Radio)

9TH ARMY TROOPS RIDE TANK DESTROYERS TO "KEEP UP" IN GER

Pfc. John E. Hibbs Stages One Man Assault On Nazis

BY CPL. MARION E. WHITE.
It all happened on Christmas Eve when the Germans were mounting a powerful salient into American lines in the Ardennes.

Pfc. John E. Hibbs, of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to the 84th, was acting as forward observer for a tank destroyer when he saw a machine gun nest behind a heavy wire fence. He fired one rifle grenade into the fence and knocked a hole in it. A second grenade wiped out the machine gun nest. Across the street he saw five Germans enter a building to set up another machine gun nest. He swung his rifle to the window and fired a grenade through it, killing or wounding the crew.

Then Hibbs spotted an enemy self-propelled gun concealed in an alley. A tank destroyer only 50 yards away was unable to bring it down, so Hibbs—out more grenades and returned to a position from which he could throw at the gun. The vehicle pulled out to escape the grenades and ran into the fire of the tank destroyer which promptly knocked the gun out and killed the crew.

At this time the tank destroyer came under heavy mortar fire. As it attempted to withdraw, the motor failed. Because of the intensity of the mortar fire, the crew abandoned the destroyer. Hibbs climbed into the vehicle and discovered that the trouble was in the foot pedal. Hibbs fixed it, and drove the destroyer away. He has been recommended for the Silver Star.

Gen. Simpson's United States 9th Army had Duisburg, population 431,000 and Europe's biggest inland river port, almost in the bag. Lt. Gen. Patch's 7th Army captured Mannheim popu-

Powerful armored and Infantry forces of the American First and Ninth armies also were teamed up in converging attacks on an estimated 100,000 or more Germans trapped in the Ruhr pocket. The enemy commander, Field Marshal Walther Von Model, was believed also to be in the trap.

The whole Ruhr was ablaze from allied bombs and shellfire and field detachments said the Americans advanced as much as six miles into the pocket today against weakening opposition.

Berlin spokesmen admitted that Hannover was rocking under a "drumfire" artillery barrage, but they claimed that American attacks on the city had been re-

638th TDs Play Hide And Seek On Banks Of Rhine

Never hitting from the same place twice, the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion daily plays hide and seek with the Germans on the eastern banks of the Rhine.

A plan was devised to keep the enemy guessing: Lt. Robert Parker, commander of the Recon Company, seldom likely looking targets and good shooting positions for the destroyers.

Then just before dawn the tank destroyers creep into position, and blast hell out of the Jerries. After the targets are demolished they withdraw to their billets for breakfast.

—The same positions are used only once, and the Germans never know where to expect the fire.

All types of targets are plentiful — factories, dugouts, gun emplacements, buildings, cranes, smokestacks, trains and barracks.

Company C, commanded by Capt. Robert Kline, Elkhart, Ind., had a naval engagement with 10 German barges which they spotted on the Rhine. Four were sunk, three set on fire, and the others damaged beyond use.

The men of Company B, commanded by Capt. Almon J. Golden, Peru, Ind., specialize in knocking down smokestacks. It has become almost a game with boys being made by the gunners as to the direction the stacks will fall.

"It's very easy," says Pvt. Joseph L. Grosso, of the Bronx, N. Y. "Just like chopping down trees, hit 'em right, and they fall where you want 'em to."

Lt. Gen. Simpson's United States 9th Army, breaking German resistance in the northern Ruhr after a tank battle, now was possibly 40 miles beyond the Rhine. It had forged across one big but unaimed river in the Ruhr to within 60 miles or so of a junction with the 1st Army at Paderborn. A junction would sever the Ruhr industrial area from the rest of Germany.

Goshen Tank Destroyer Man Given Medal

GOSHEN, Sgt. Morris H. Herring, who is serving with the 6th Army in Germany as a member of the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion with the 84th, has been awarded the Bronze Star medal for heroic achievement.

The citation issued by Maj. Gen. A. R. Bolling, his commanding officer, reports that the decoration was for "heroic achievement" in Germany April 21, 1945. "When infantry called for cannon fire upon enemy machine gun positions, Sgt. Herring left his tank destroyer to make a reconnaissance and determine the exact location of the enemy, returning to his tank to make accurate fire which destroyed the hostile installations.

"As he finished this mission his tank destroyer was subjected to a flank attack by an enemy rocket launcher team. Quickly swinging his turret to the flank, Sgt. Herring fired upon and killed the hostile soldiers before damage was done to his vehicle."

His wife and young son and his parents all live in Goshen. He entered service March 23, 1942, and has been overseas several months.

TD's Victors in 'Naval Battle'

A task force of Tank Destroyers chalked up what is undoubtedly the first naval engagement for this branch of the service.

Commanded by Lt. Joseph "Admiral" Herkes, of Hynd, Penna., the First Platoon of Company C, 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, lined up on the bank of the Rhine and blasted away at German barges anchored on the opposite shore. Machine gun and some small arms fire answered their salvo, but the enemy fleet, consisting of six barges, was routed.

Two boats were sunk, one was set on fire, and the other three were damaged.

Capture Of Hanover

Our three columns or Task Forces were fighting their way east and at the same time positioning themselves for the battle of Hanover, Germany's twelfth largest city. We had information that they expected us to strike at the south and southwest part of the city and they were frantically planning and building their defenses in these areas.

In the meantime the German chain of command was disintegrating. In many areas high ranking officers took it on themselves to round up idle, and sometimes weaponless, troops and form a fighting force of these leaderless troops. Most of the veteran troops saw the handwriting on the wall and their thoughts and interests were on something to eat, stay alive and hopefully find a way to their homes and families.

In our advances we were racing past clusters of several dozen to several hundred unarmed and leaderless enemy troops whose only interest seemed to be to get off the roads and out of our way and not hinder us on our way eastward. Taking prisoners was almost a thing of the past, a waste of time, and a mounting problem of feeding and caring for them.

Our two Task Forces came roaring into the city from the lightly defended northside. One Task Force severed the northeastern part of the demolished city, while the second Task Force drove to the heart of the city and took over the civil and governmental remains. Before the defenders could get their guns turned north the Third Task Force with "C" Company of 638th T.D. Bn. over ran them from the west and southwest. The debris covered streets from the bombed out buildings slowed us and was almost as much of a problem in our advance as was the defenders. The business section, the apartment areas and the industrial sections of this city was near total ruin.

In nine days we barreled east 150 miles. This made great headlines but we were facing some serious transportation problems. Our overloaded, high mileage trucks were wearing out. These trucks were fully loaded driven long and hard and exposed to the most brutal, on and off road, conditions. We were no longer systematically knocking out German trucks, but now making an effort to spare them and using them for our own needs. We painted out the German cross or swastika and stencil on the white star and added them to our battle convoys. We were also taking German busses, vans, trailers and anything with wheels and putting them to use. Our Task Force looked like a gypsy caravan or a ragtag gorilla force. Abandoned equipment was much more noticeable as we drove deeper into Germany. We were recovering many of our six by six trucks, tanks, half tracks and jeeps lost to the enemy in earlier battles. Outside Hanover we ran 15-105 MM German artillery pieces and a number of four-wheeled trailers. These trailers were large wooden boxes on wheels used to haul supplies. In one we found large cartons of woolen sox for the troops. We threw a large carton in the back end of our weapons carrier and within two days every G.I. in message center peeled off his damp dirty sox and replaced them with the liberated hosiery. In another wooden trailer we found genuine German Army issue toilet paper, carton after carton. We didn't liberate it, too rough and coarse, almost like sandpaper. But now we knew why the captured German troops were always so surly, sullen and generally in a rotten mood. We understand

all German front line troops were issued this custom made product three to five days before expected combat.

The capture of Hanover was a kingsize military prize. Not only was it Germany's 12th largest city, it was a premium transportation hub. Canals and rivers for water transportation, the auto bahn and half dozen major highways for military and truck movement, and a rail center to all parts of Germany. The industrial area was leveled by waves of Allied bombers and the massive fires that the explosions ignited. The utility systems were in shambles and health problems were showing up. The troops that followed us would handle these problems and we would continue our drive east. We were less than 150 miles from Berlin.

To The Elbe And On To Berlin

Our goal was to reach the Elbe River in the Wittenberge area and secure bridges before they were destroyed. We had enough gasoline to take us beyond Berlin, a generous allowance of ammo and a regular issue of rations. Fuel and ammo had top priority with provisions made to air-drop rations if needed. Many G.I.s were inviting themselves to dinner in the German homes, sometimes by gun point, so the air drop of rations wasn't a big thing. By now we were burned out on the warehouse meals and ate them mostly to prevent hunger and renew energy. The invasion of German kitchens produced thousands of stories to tell when we get back home and had a few beers.

One story told in the 638th T.D. Bn. message center was of two T.D.ers opening a back door and walking into German kitchen at breakfast time. The woman of the house was frying bacon on the kitchen stove and the master of the house was sitting at the table by a large slab of smoked bacon. When the T.D.s came in the man sprang to the side of his wife to protect her. One of the T.D.s pulled out his bayonet and sliced a few more strips from the side of bacon and motioned for her to put the bacon in the skillet. The two T.D.s sat at the table while she prepared the bacon. The master went to a cabinet and pulled out a loaf of bread and broke and tore it into large chunks placed on a cloth and set it on the table. He then rummaged through a pantry and came out with a small jar of plum preserves. He then poured the erzats coffee. The T.D.s feasted. Time to leave so one T.D. took the bayonet and was going to cut the rest of the slab of bacon in two and share it with the couple. She got real brave and with her fingers moved the bayonet blade to a spot about two inches from the cut end. The T.D. moved the bayonet back about the middle of the slab and was going to divide it about even. She moved her body against his, let out a few giggles and moved the bayonet blade back to about the two inch mark. He shrugged his shoulders and cut the slab of bacon about where she suggested and he gave her a smile and a Donke Shien or thank you, then took the bread cloth off the table and wrapped it around the larger part of the bacon slab and headed for the door with about eight or ten pound slab of top quality country smoked bacon tucked under his arm. As the T.D.s left she was screaming like a banshee as she waved the small cut of bacon in the air and they couldn't make out what he was yelling.

Two of the three divisions task forces continued on its race eastward. The 335th regiment, a company of T.D.s and other T.D. personnel remained in the Hanover area to deal with several large concentrations of German troops north and northeast of Hanover. The T.D.s were billeted in a beautiful castle, Scholls Honsbuch, that belonged to one of royal families of central Europe. This was genuine wall to wall luxury in every way, including a wine cellar that had a large selection of the world's finest liquids. In a few hours this group of G.I.s were adjusting to their plush surroundings a British officer drove up and informed us that this "Royal Property" was off limits and we would have to vacate the grounds. Before we left the royal grounds we visited the royal wine cellar and gathered as many souvenirs as we could conceal. When the convoy pulled out of the royal grounds some of the vehicles carried more gallons of liquors than gasoline.

While the two advanced task forces continued their race to the Elbe, and on to Berlin, they met various levels of resistance from token to heavy fighting. Ironically our battalion and divisional rear echelon troops, as well as the division that was following our advances, were often times in heavier fighting than were the advanced or most forward troops. As the task forces raced and blasted their way east many German units were bypassed. High ranking German Officers were trying to move these cut off and by passed troops south to the Harz Mountain area them move and set up defenses in the mountains of Bavaria in southern Germany and carry on the war from these mountain defensive positions. With their supply and transportation system in shambles this was more wishful thinking than sound military planning.

Clogged Roadways

For the last week our battle orders were becoming hard to follow. We were racing east on the German roadways at a much faster pace than our planners projected. Often our orders were changed and we were ordered to pass our objective and proceed to the next. We were gorging mileage in the very heartland of a demoralized, perplexed, former giant that was about to go to his knees. The last few days we were blasting, slashing and powering our way through his defenses at an accelerated pace. Now we were facing some unforeseen problems.

It was not uncommon to meet several hundred or even several thousand unarmed German soldiers who had given up or wanted to surrender. Usually they were ordered to keep moving west but to move off the road surface as our vehicles came their way. As an added incentive they were told that food and medical attention was available in the rear areas to the west.

We also met large groups of civilians. These were people from many nations that the German Army overran and shipped these people to Germany to use as slave laborers in their war plants and on their farms. Many were undernourished and dressed in rags, but hilarious with their new freedom.

At the edge of one small town we came to a factory building near a railroad siding. On the siding were six rail cars locked and sealed. We broke open the doors of these box cars

and they were loaded to the roof. Two cars had nothing but gourmet and top quality fancy foods from France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. We saw tins of bacon, hams, beef and pork, skinless and boneless sardines in olive oil, glass jars of tiny carrots and tins of asparagus. The other cars were loaded with top quality clothing probably from the fashion centers or leading stores of Paris and southern France. While we were giving these cars a quick check we heard a loud noise and a lot of yelling at the end of the railroad siding. We drove to the far edge of the rail yard and saw a half dozen German soldiers running to a woods and to our left several hundred scrawny looking people behind a sturdy twelve-foot wire fence. We drove to a large gate that they were trying to push open. We motioned for them to back away and we put the weapons carrier in four-wheel drive and eased up to it and slowly forced it down. They came stampeding out of that enclosure and just about mobbed us. They slapped our helmets, pulled our uniforms, grabbed our arms, kissed our hands, slobbered all over our faces and hands and blessed us. Some were laughing hilariously, some were crying, most of them were doing both.

We asked if any of them spoke English and dozens of hands shot up. One thin man with a horribly pocked face said he spoke English, some. He lived in a seaside town in Belgium across the channel from England. He told us the building was a German food plant and they processed jelly, jam and preserves for the German government. He took us to a second story office that overlooked the production lines of the plant. A lot of the equipment was in shoddy condition and most of it kept operational by temporal or ingenious repairs. A food inspector would have it burned to the ground. Our next stop was the barracks where the laborers, men and women, slept. These were long narrow buildings with three shelves running the length of the buildings. There were shelves about eight feet deep on both sides of the center aisle and the height between shelves about four feet. This was the sleeping area for the workers. There were no mattresses to lay on, just raw boards, no bedding except the rags they could scrounge or pilfer. We stopped about thirty feet inside the door, the odor was so rank we didn't want to see anymore. When we got outside he pointed out a long mound of dirt in the center of the cobble stone courtyard. Under the dirt was turnips. The mound was open at one end. In the mornings the workers marched by the mound and they were given a turnip. They then went to a pump for a cup of water and that was their breakfast for the last eight days.

Before we left we saw another sight that we will probably never forget. These two hundred plus men and women found and were emptying the six freight cars. It was a scene that Hollywood couldn't duplicate. There were women running around wearing three or four dresses, one over the other. One little gal about five-foot-four wearing enough hats to bring her up to about six feet. Another woman, tall and with large feet, trying to walk across the cobble stone freight yard in a pair of stylish dress shoes with four inch spike heels and the shoes several sizes too small for her feet.

We had a lot of sorrow, pity and deep compassion for these mistreated men and women but there was no way we could keep from laughing after seeing the show they put on in that freight yard. Down at the other end of the freight yard it was a different story. These half-starved or starving people were emptying the two rail cars that contained the top quality

and gourmet foods. They were opening the containers anyway they could and with hunger driven gluttony were eating this food right out of the cans or jars. There had to be some serious and maybe fatal results of this eating frenzy on shrunken stomachs.

The man from Belgium asked us to turn him over to our M.P.s or intelligence department. He claimed he was part of the underground and headed a cell in that plant or area. We agreed to do that and in less than an hour we flagged down a jeep with two M.P.s and turned him over to them. The next evening we saw four M.P. jeeps going past us, in the lead jeep in the passenger seat was the Belgium directing the driver to make a left turn. We doubted his story about the underground connection, maybe we owe him an apology.

By now it was a common sight to see more and larger groups of American and Allied Prisoners of War. Some of these men were captured in north Africa and had been in a number of German POW camps. Most were thin, under nourished and under fed but wild with happiness and joy. Many wanted smokes, and no matter if you just opened a pack or were down to your last cigarette or two, you gave the pack. These guys got special treatment in every way and for some it was none too soon.

Another happening on the brighter side was "mail call." The first one for several weeks for most of us. Some of the G.I.s hit jackpot and had a fist full of mail. Then the ritual starts. Each G.I. slips away from the crowd and establishes his own little territory, or turf, or sanctuary and rips open the envelopes. He races through each letter hitting the high points and on to the next letter. Then starts all over, but the second reading, each word on every line is taken in, devoured and digested, he is on Cloud Nine, but gradually floats back down to reality, orients himself to his surroundings but feeling a little taller.

Along with the mail call were several bundles of the Stars and Stripes. The big news was that the U.S. First Army linked up with our Ninth Army in the eastern part of the Ruhr Valley and trapped German Army Group B. In this Group B were 21 German divisions, 325,000 enemy soldiers, and their equipment, under German General Model. This was the largest single surrender by the Wehrmacht during W.W. II. In this bag were 30 German Generals, however Model chose suicide over surrender and disgrace. A few weeks later we read that over one hundred German Generals took their own lives during W.W. II.

The Elbe

We were now within artillery range of the Elbe and Whittenberge on the east bank. We hoped to surprise the Germans and take and secure a bridge or two before they could destroy them. But another change of orders from Ninth Army headquarters. Our division was not to cross the Elbe River. Instead we were to take and secure an area of about forty miles of the west bank of the Elbe. Roughly this was about 20 miles upstream from Whittenberge and about the same distance down stream from this city. Our division zone and area of responsibility on the left was the river's edge near the village of Gorliben and on the right near the town of Werben. On the north, near Gorliben, the area was mostly wooded, on the south a small stream running parallel to the Elbe had to be crossed to reach the Werben area river edge. This 40 miles of river had many bends and curves. Inside one of these bends with the river to their right and left and at their back, a willing and determined enemy force could make an assault on one of these pockets very costly. Unfortunately for us a number of bends were occupied by small groups of German troops and some of them were still willing to die for Adolph. They knew that all was lost and the remains of the German War Machine was being pulverized by massive blows from the east and west. Rather than surrender they chose to fight, giving their all, making the trade off as costly as possible to us. After we had engaged the last of the die-hards the shooting war was about over for our Tank Destroyers.

For the next week it was a "crowd control," a patrol assignment of keeping the hordes of surrendering German troops moving west, taking care of the now free Allied prisoners of war in our area, helping the liberated forced laborers to get back to their homelands and to get a local government functioning.

One of our toughest problems was preventing retreating German soldiers from crossing the Elbe and surrendering to us. They remembered, or knew of, the brutal and savage treatment of the captured Russian soldiers and the Russian civilians who were in the path of the advancing German Armies. After three years of brutal warfare the Russians had the Germans in retreat and were unleashing four years of built up hatred on the reeling German troops. The Red Army was rolling on a frenzy of revenge and the German soldier was desperately trying to escape the wrath of Stalin's blood thirsty and unstoppable troops.

We were less than 50 miles from Berlin and probably could not have reached the city before the Russians but we could have been in on the fall of Adolph Hitler and his warped vision of the Third Reich.

There was mixed feelings among the G.I.s. Some wanted to cross the Elbe and be in on the fall of Berlin, others took inventory of their past exposure decided they were lucky to be among the living, why press your luck.

It was a political and military decision made at the very top. The combat troops, as a whole, were satisfied at the order to stop at the Elbe. They knew in the heat of battle the unexpected usually happens. With two mega, but friendly forces, closing in on a desperate enemy many unforeseen and deadly mistakes would undoubtedly occur. The friendly forces



General Bolling Commends Four Attached Units

Four units attached to the Rail-splitter Division were praised recently by Brig. Gen. A. B. Bolling, commander of the division, for the assistance they gave the division in helping stop von Rundstedt's counteroffensive.

Since Nov. 18, when the 84th went into action in the Gellenkirchen sector of the Siegfried Line, the 57th AAA Battalion has protected the division, artillery and its air strip from air attack.

« At a time after we came to Belgium when the Luftwaffe was determined to make the breakthrough a success », declared General Bolling, « the 57th AAA Battalion had a grave responsibility ».

The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which joined the division Nov. 19, slugged it out with German Tigers, Mark IV's and V's and laid road blocks when the

Railsplitters stood alone for two days at Marche. Their toughest fight was south of Marche, when the tank destroyers helped knock out enemy armor threatening division positions, sometimes firing at point blank range.

Another attached unit, the 771st Tank Battalion, played a prominent role in the defensive fight around Verdun. Light and medium tanks of the battalion, working with the Railsplitters, helped fight off German troops attacking both frontally and from the rear and supported the advance of the infantry when the advance started.

Companies A and D of the 87th Chemical Battalion worked both attached to and in direct support of the infantry. Their 4.2 mortars were especially effective during the early phases of the division's Belgian campaign.

could, unknowingly, inflict heavy casualties on each other, this could lead to some serious and maybe unsolvable problems between Russia and the Allies.

At this point, for all practical purpose and reasoning, the war with Germany was over. The German War Machine was completely and unmistakably destroyed. The nation's government in chaos and much of the nation in ruins. Germany was krupt. The formality of signing a surrender was just a matter of time. Until then we were soldiers and policemen. The chain of command in the German Army was broken, in many cases the high ranking officers were no longer in command of the troops and tens of thousands of leaderless troops wandering from place to place looking for guidance. There were also bands of renegade troops in our area that cause us some problems. That could be contagious so these groups were taken care of swiftly.

We gradually made the change-over from combat troops to occupational duty. Many G.I.s pulled some strange assignments but since combat was behind us there were not many serious gripes.

At this time the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion had completed 171 days of front line action and took part in every engagement assigned to the 84th Infantry Division. Our divisions corridor of advance, within the boundaries of its responsibilities, was from Geilenkirchen to the Elbe River, 300 + hard fought miles. This does not include the Battles of the Bulge.

The Allies did not want this war to end in an Armistice, a truce, a cease fire or a temporary suspension of hostilities as World War I. The goal was the complete destruction of the German military and Hitler's form of government. They wanted every German citizen to see Allied troops walking in their streets and occupying their land. If there was a trace of aggression in their makeup, in their past, present or future they can compare a few years of conquest to a lifetime of defeat.

The Link Up Of The U.S.A. And The U.S.S.R. Armies

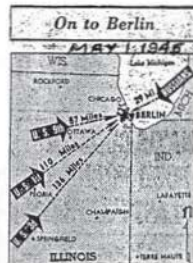
For several days we heard the artillery rumbling east of us. The Germans were retreating toward us and the Russians in hot pursuit. We were on the lookout for the Russians all up and down over 40 miles of river front.

On May 2, 1945 our 84th Division made the first contact with the Russian troops. Soon after the meetings became so numerous up and down our 40 miles river front that no one bothered with formality. Most of the troops that our Tank Destroyers met were Cossacks. Most of the Cossacks troops were from Mongolia or other eastern areas of Russian Asia. They had their ponies and an unlimited supply of Vodka. We noticed many were armed with Thompson sub-machine guns and they thought it was hilarious when we called them "Tommy Guns." No doubt these troops never heard of the Lend-Lease program nor the 12 billion dollars in aid we gave the U.S.S.R. during W.W. II.

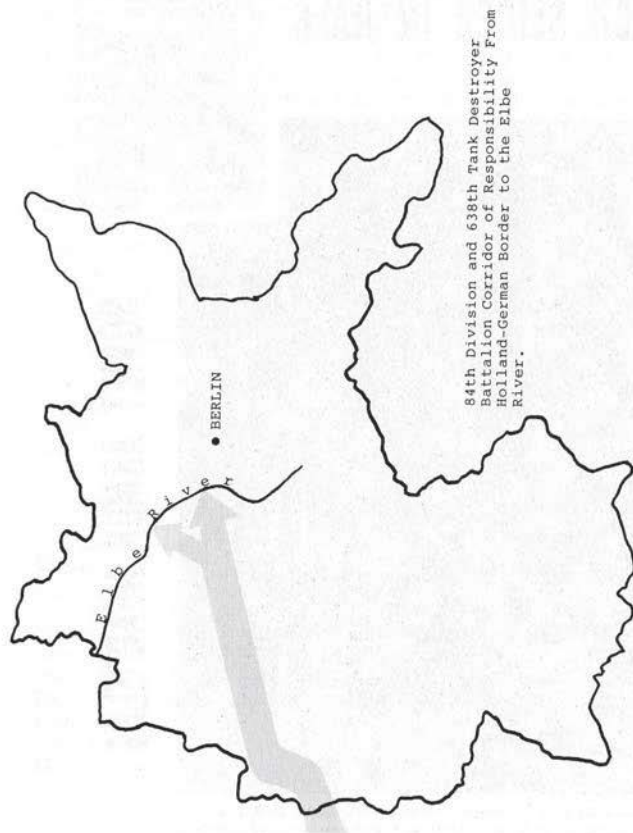
REICH SLICED IN HALF



Tank destroyers and men of the American 9th Army's 30th Infantry Division advance through rubble-strewn Magdeburg, Germany, whose fall to Yanks was announced yesterday.



SOVIET ARMOR NEAR ELBE



84th Division and 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion Corridor of Responsibility From Holland-German Border to the Elbe River.

Unconditional Surrender -- V.E. Day

In central Germany from the North Sea to the Alps there were massive pockets of German troops under a loose leadership of high ranking German officers. These leaders were contacting Allied commanders to arrange a cease fire and an end of the war. With arrogance to match their rank they listed the concessions and exceptions we would have to make for them to end the war. In all cases they were turned down. They were sternly told that nothing but unconditional surrender would be accepted by the Allied Powers.

The final surrender papers were signed May 7, 1945, by the Germans in Reims, France at the S.H.A.E.F. headquarters. The set time for all cease fighting was 12:01 A.M. on May 9, 1945. On May 8, 1945 similar papers were signed by the Germans at the Russian Headquarters in Berlin just a few hours before the 12:01 A.M. May 9, 1945 cease fire for all of Europe. V.E. Day was here at last.

Establishing Local Governments

From the Alps at the Swiss border to the shores of the North Seas the Allied Armies were setting up local governments in every village, town and city in Western Germany. The full transition from combat troops to occupational troops was evolving for us. In our division area of occupation there were several hundred villages, towns and cities. In each of these settlements, towns and cities we selected or appointed a burgemeister to establish a local government. These "mayors" were swamped with problems, problems of every conceivable nature. They had to establish a police force to maintain law and order, a health department to treat the sick, and injured, supply medicines and furnish safe drinking water, furnish and distribute food for the hungry, house the injured, homeless, and restore the utilities and sanitation systems to name a few of the countless problems.

All these major projects had to be put into a reasonable working order to establish minimum or basic living conditions. Each of these major projects had dozens of spin off jobs that had to be done to get the systems functioning. Many of these spin-off jobs fell to us and we had some unusual experiences and odd calls. We had a hot call at Message Center to send a truck, driver and two helpers to pick up water at an Army Water Purification station, on a small stream about a mile from our C.P., and deliver it to a clinic set up in a school building nearby. We unloaded a six by six and took off for the water station.

When we pulled up a sergeant told us to load 25 - 5 gallon cans and be on our way. We told him a Col. so and so ordered it for a new clinic and aid station and we were expecting a full load. He reminded us that we could come back as many times as we wanted, but his orders were to limited the loads to 25 cans until the second portable water tank was full. That ticked us off, we broke our backs emptying the truck to get a load of water, we could have gotten 25, 50, maybe even 75 cans on without unloading any of our equipment from the truck.

Another "off the record" job was a request by a burgermeister to repair a downed telephone line from his town to a neighboring village. In an apologetic way he asked if we could furnish the wire as it may take some time for him to locate this hard to come by item. We located the break and repaired it. We tested the line by calling his office. He answered and was greatly pleased to find the line in working order and asked us to stop by his headquarters on our way back to our area. When we pulled in the parking area he was at a side door waiting for us and he handed us a burlap bundle all tied up. In sign language he put his finger on his lips signifying we were not to tell where we got the bundle. When we left the parking lot he was still thanking us. In the bundle were two bottles of wine. It was good stuff and we enjoyed it that night.

We received orders from Division to move back to a rural area about 20 miles south of Hanover.

After about a month of patrolling and supervising and assisting the new local governments we were preparing to move to southwest Germany. All of Germany would be divided into four occupational zones. The British, French and American zones would be West Germany, and the Russian zone would be East Germany. The area we were now stationed in would become part of the Russian zone. We were preparing for the road march to the American zone and waiting for orders for our scheduled use of the German highways that we were routed on for this move.

In Convoy To The American Sector

The orders came down for the 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion to move south to the area of Germany that would be occupied by the American armed forces. The highways of Germany were under strict control of the military and permits or orders were needed to travel these highways. This was a massive movement of troops and equipment and every move was measured in time and miles. A convoy had to hit a check point at a specified time and the last vehicle of the convoy had to clear this point at a given time. The routing was assigned and time of use was enforced.

On the road march destruction was seen everywhere, every populated area had war damage, the only difference was the degree of destruction. Even the thinly populated countryside that supported a highway or railroad bridge, a canal or river dam or lock was pock-marked by air force bombing or artillery shelling.

Near Essen a huge railyard with dozens of side by side spur tracks was filled with burned out and rusting freight cars and locomotives too numerous to count even when traveling by in a slow military convoy. What the bombers missed the artillery crews zeroed in on.

In Dusseldorf, Kassel and Cologne we zig-zagged through these cities following routes that were bulldozed through the rubble of bombed out and destroyed buildings, seldom moving more than two or three blocks before turning right or left, following a street where the building damage was less or the rubble and debris was not as great. Twisting and turning,

zig-zagging two, three or four miles through these rubble canyons often was less than a mile distance as the crow flies.

Our convoy moved through Ruhr Valley in a more or less north to south direction. This area was densely populated and often the center of a street was the boundary line or city limit separating two towns or cities. A year or so earlier it was the most highly industrialized area of the world furnishing the tanks and war material for Hitler's war machine, it was reduced to a fifty mile junkyard.

Our convoy moved on to southern Germany. The destruction seemed less, but it was because the big cities were farther apart and in general this part of Germany was less densely populated. As we traveled through Frankfurt (on the main) and Mannheim the steel girders of the domes of their great railroad stations were the only part of the depots left standing. These were two more cities to add to the "bombed out" list. The scale of destruction to many of these German cities and industrial areas seemed to match the importance of war material produced in their areas war plants. The Allied planes zeroed in on their targets from the air and the ground forces pulverized anything that stood in the way of their advances.

The Neckar River Valley

Our road march ended in the Boden Province of southern Germany. This is the foothill country of the Alps. We were stationed in a small town of Hessmersheim located on the beautiful Neckar River a few miles down stream from Heidelberg. This area suffered less war damage than any area of Germany we were in. There were no huge war plants in the immediate area and it was near Heidelberg, known throughout the world as a great medical center. It was declared an "open city" and there was to be no military action, offensive, in the area. The great hospitals and their vast facilities were used by the German military to treat their most serious wounded.

Our stay in the Neckar valley and the village of Hessmersheim was less than two weeks. Few passes were granted to our Tank Destroyers but those who received them headed for Heidelberg to take the city, the scenery and sample the beer. Most agreed the beer in this part of the Germany was much better than that in our Ninth Army area. As in all parts of Europe we found cigarettes and chocolate bars were good "barter material." But they also wanted "toilet articles." For a bar or two of toilet soap or a bottle of brilliantine, you could swig more beer than you could handle.

Our stay in Germany was about to end and our long slow steps back to the states was about to unfold.

Convoy To Northern France

Orders came down and we were to move to Camp Boston in northern France. We were routed through Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, through the Saar basin and the city of Saarbrücken and across the German-French border into the Lorraine province of France.

This area was a highly industrialized, heavy industrial zones on both sides of the border. These provinces were sitting on top of huge deposits of coal and iron ore. Needless to say our Air Force visited them often and our Third Army battered its way through this area as the Allies were rolling back the German armies. Our convoy passed through the fortress city of Metz and Verdun and many other battle sites of W.W. I. We also passed several American military cemeteries of W.W. I in the Argonne province. We arrived at Camp Boston, near Suippes, France after a long but interesting road march.

This huge camp was a crossroads for troops coming from or going to the states, a stopover point between the U.S. and Germany. We were quartered in the Lucky Strike area of this huge camp. Troops billeted in this area were scheduled to return to the states. It was also the ultimate of the service game of "hurry up and wait!" We had a lot of time to kill waiting for our next move. Passes were yours for the asking and transportation was furnished to nearby towns and W.W. I battle sites. In one section of this camp an area was fenced off and outside the fence were platforms and plaques where you could view part of the trenches occupied by troops in W.W. I in the battle of Suippes. We couldn't read the French plaques.

Reims was the nearest large city and probably the most visited since it was the location of the one of the world's greatest cathedrals. We noticed scaffolds at several areas of this great building and we found that workmen were repairing damage done to the edifice during W.W. I. A new tourist attraction to Reims was the school house where the Germans signed the surrender papers a few weeks before to end W.W. II.

We also found Camp Boston to be a great commercial area. German army bayonets were going for \$35, German Lugers and P-38 pistols were \$60 to \$75 and the walnut handle S.S. troop dress daggers were \$100 and up. This camp was a profitable stop for the Tank Destroyers.

Our Third Trip To Belgium

Another road march order came down and we moved out of France, crossed the border into Belgium and settled into Camp Top Hat near Antwerp. This was the last stop before boarding ship to sail for the states. Again it was "hurry up and wait."

Like Camp Boston, entertainment was organized. If you wanted to box, play football, baseball or basketball, you signed up. If you wanted to be a spectator to these sports, there were seats available. There were a number of movie houses showing the latest hits from Hollywood, London and Sweden and a half dozen or more U.S.O. shows every afternoon and night.

Word got around that Brussels was the place to go, more action than Paris, so a couple of dozen Tank Destroyers decided we would see what Brussels had to offer. When we got to the transportation center they were lined up for blocks to go to Bussels. A half dozen of us got into a shorter line and visited Gent. This is a beautiful old city with some of the oldest churches, bridges, castles and government buildings in Europe. We hired a two-horse coach and driver to tour the sites. After seeing a number of buildings we let the coachman know

that we were thirsty. In nothing flat we were at our first stop. We had him park the rig and accompany us. He knew some great watering holes. In most of them the refreshments were sold by the bottle and not the drink. We toasted the bridges, canals, churches and the building where the United States and Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent over a century ago. We made it back to the transportation center before it closed for the night and back to Camp Top Hat.

We had a lot of confidence in the horses and felt sure they would get the rig and driver home safely if the driver did not roll out of the carriage.

There were some "non-combat" troops in Camp Top Hat who were also on their way back to the states. They visited our area looking for souvenirs to take home. We showed them our "booty" and disposed of our less desirable items at the new inflated rates. At these prices we parted with items that we didn't plan to sell.

Good Bye Europe

We left Top Hat and boarded the S.S. Claymont Victory in the Antwerp harbor area. When the ship started to move you thought you were sailing across a large farm. The ship was sailing only a few yards from the canal or river banks and crops were growing to the water's edge. We reached the mouth of the river and sailed through a long narrow bay before entering the North Sea. We moved southwest through the Strait of Dover with its chalk cliffs on the right and Calais on our left. Soon we were in the English Channel and had our last look at the Normandy beaches and the port of Cherbourg. A few hours later we saw Lands End, the southern most tip of the British Isles and we were in the Atlantic waters. For the next week we would see nothing but open water of the north Atlantic until we were off the Canadian and New England coasts. The return trip was like a cruise compared to our trip over in convoy and under constant threat of a U-boat attack. Also on our way over you asked yourself if you would be a credit to your uniform. You wanted to be. By now you had your answer to the question and you never excluded the part that luck and fate played in your survival. Another sobering thought was we won our war in Europe but there was another one being fought on the other side of the world and every Tank Destroyer on board was convinced that we would be going after the Japs by spring. Our actions and accomplishments in the Ninth Army were on record and we felt this was a ticket to Tokyo.

By now scuttle-butt on board was we would land in the Boston harbor in two days. The card and crap games were starting to break up as the big winners "sopped up" most of the gambling money. One of our Tank Destroyers was one of the big winners but he would not reveal the amount of his winnings.

Back In The States

We docked in the Boston Harbor and disembarked. We had roll call and then mounted up and went by convoy to Camp Miles Standish. In the next two days we were processed and groups were shipped out to Forts and Camps throughout the country. After

arriving at these posts we were given Thirty Day Recuperation Period Furloughs and we scrambled for home. Most of the Tank Destroyers were living it up on their furloughs in the month of August when the newspapers and radios told the world our Air Force dropped the world's most powerful bomb on a Japanese city of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945, and before the week was over another bomb was dropped on another Jap city of Nagasaki, August 9, 1945.

It was difficult to comprehend a weapon that could inflict casualties in six figures but after living through a year of brain warping happenings we didn't think too deeply of this "monstrous" weapon other than the fact that it was in our arsenal, we possessed it exclusively and we felt it would play an important role in our invasion of Japan.

On August 14, 1945 Japan surrendered.

The two Atomic Bombs unlocked the brains of the powerful military leaders of Japan. They were planning a last ditch stand with total mobilization of the population. They were bringing troops from Asian mainland operations to defend the homeland. And some reports were they were hoarding hundreds of plans for "kamikaze" or suicide missions when the Americans attempted to invade the main islands of Japan. Japan now had the Baka plane, a winged bomb piloted by a Jap pilot to its target and his death. The huge Tokyo Bay area was the heart of Japan and that is where they expected the main landings and they started to plan and construct the defenses. The 638th Tank Destroyers Battalion was scheduled to land in the bay area in March 1946.

Our 30 day recuperation furloughs were ending and we returned to Fort Benning, Georgia. These recuperation furloughs were followed by 21 more days of furlough. These "vacations in uniform" furnished many joyous occasions of being with your loved ones, relatives and friends but somehow you couldn't enjoy this time to the fullest, there was that black cloud hovering over your head. You could not dispel the nagging reminder of Tokyo Bay in March. What is the quota on luck and how is my supply?

October rolled by and the furlough about over, had to be back in Fort Benning early in November.

The Tank Destroyers in that part of the camp were going bananas. The point system had lowered again and most of the members who were in service, or inducted in March of 1942, were now eligible for discharge. Those who did not want to re-enlist were shipped out to other camps throughout the country and were mustered out. The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was inactivated November 7, 1945 at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

The battalion earned four battle stars in the European Theatre of Operations. They took part in the campaigns of Northern France, The Rhineland, The Ardennes and Central Europe.

The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion was a wonderful group of responsible, aggressive, courageous and determined men. They gave an excellent account of themselves and I am extremely proud to be one of them.

Letters Of Commendations and Citations

Units of The 638th Tank Destroyers took part in every 84th Infantry Division engagements from Geilenkirchen to the Elbe River and in every bitter battle of the Bulge in the 84th Divisions corridor of responsibility.

Headquarters
638th Tank Destroyer Battalion

APO 339, U.S. Army
28 March 1945

To The Men Of The 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion...

I'm proud of you! From the lowest ranks on up, you have distinguished yourselves on the field of battle. You have fought valiantly, and well. At Geilenkirchen, Beeck, Wurm and Lindem, you not only fought and beat the Germans, but you conquered another enemy, Mud! In the Ardennes, at Hampteau, Rochefort, and in the Marche area, you again proved your worth by decisively trouncing "Jerry" under the all but impossible weather conditions encountered there...Through snow, sleet, and freezing temperatures, you drove the Germans back, until the Battle of the Bulge was nothing but a memory...Now we're entering the home stretch!

In your drive to the Rhine, through Granterath, Waldeniel, Krefeld and Moers, you fought unceasingly! Long hard, weary days of fighting and sleepless nights...this is the final round.

You have gone through battle side by side with the doughboys of the 84th Division, and together have established an enviable reputation. No mission has been too tough, No task has gone unfulfilled.

You have helped to make the title "Tank Destroyers" a name respected by our Allies, and feared by our enemies.

You have done your job well, and under the stress of combat have shown yourself to be a great fighting unit. Once again I want to say, I'm proud of you, proud to be a Tank Destroyer.

Harold L Davis
Lt. Col., FA
Commanding

Headquarters 84th Infantry Division
Office of the Commanding General

APO 84, United States Army
5 March 1945

To: All "Railsplitters" (84th Infantry Division and attached troops)

You men can accomplish anything you set out to do!

At Geilenkirchen, Beeck, Wurm and Lindem you drove through the length of the Siegfried Line. In the Ardennes you went on the defensive for a brief period and turned the

advance of the German counter offensive, then pushed the enemy back on his heels under the most impossible fighting conditions. You crossed the Roer River, broke through the German line and in five days time advanced 42 miles to the Rhine River.

In the advance to the Rhine you covered a greater distance than any other division on the line - through heavier fighting. After reaching a point only 4500 yards from the river, your direction of advance was changed to the north, giving you still another nine miles to go. Without hesitation, you continued to advance.

Upon reaching your objection, after long hard, grueling days and cold, sleepless nights, you still wanted to push on, and asked for authority to cross the river.

You have accomplished what many thought was impossible. Without your drive and determination, without your spirit and courage, the drive would not have been accomplished as expeditiously -- the credit is yours.

Once again I want to congratulate you for a job well done -- a mission successfully accomplished. Once again I say I am, as you are, very proud to be a "Railsplitter."

A.R. Bolling
Major General, United States Army,
Commanding.

Headquarters Ninth U.S. Army
Office of the Commanding General
APO 339

330.13 15 March 1945

Subject: Commendation
Thru: Commanding General, XIII Corps, APO 463, U.S. Army
To: Commanding General, 84th Infantry Division, APO 84, U.S. Army

1. Last November the 84th Infantry Division succeeded in making a name for itself in the course of a very few days when in its first operation, it reduced the enemy strongpoint of Geilenkirchen, thereby facilitating the advance of the Army to the Roer River. Again your division distinguished itself when it was thrown into the "Battle of the Bulge."

2. It affords me extreme pleasure to make note of another fine performance turned in by the 84th Infantry Division during the execution of operation "Grenade" just concluded. Your speedy installation of bridges and expeditious seizure of key towns east of the Roer River contributed greatly toward getting the operation off to a successful start. Thereafter your rapid advances, accomplished despite an extraordinarily exposed left flank, were among the

outstanding features of the entire operation. Your division was one of the few engaged which fought its way all the way from the Roer River to the Rhine River, never losing its momentum.

3. The fine record made by the division during the recent operation requires no embellishment. However, I wish to make record of my deep appreciation of the splendid performance of the task assigned to the division, and to commend every officer and man for his individual contribution.

/s/W.H. Simpson,
/t/W.H. Simpson,
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding.

330.131st Ind
Headquarters XIII Corps APO 463, U.S. Army, 21 March 1945
To: Commanding General, 84th Infantry Division, APO 84, U.S. Army

In forwarding the above commendation from the Army Commander which has my whole-hearted concurrence, I wish to say that the superior performance of your division in operation "Grenade" contributed immeasurably to the successful completion of the Corps mission.

/s/ A.C. Gillem, Jr.
/t/ A.C. Gillem, Jr.
Major General, United States Army,
Commanding.

Headquarters 84th Infantry Division
Office of the Commanding General

8 May 1945

To: All Railsplitters, and all personnel of Attached Units:

On this day of cessation of hostilities in the European Theater of Operation, you men are to be congratulated. You can look back with pride to complete success in combat -- to the breach of the Siegfried Line at Geilenkirchen, Becek, Wurm and Lindern; to the utter defeat of the German counter-offensive in the "bulge" in Belgium; to the crossing of the Roer River and the breakthrough to the Rhine and the capture of the cities of Krefeld and Homberg to the crossing of the Rhine and the race to the Elbe River; to the capture of the city of

Hanover and numerous other cities; to the liberation of tens of thousands of displaced persons and Americans and allied prisoners of war; to the capture of over 70,000 German prisoners of war; to the meeting with the Armies of our Russian Allies; and now to the complete collapse of the once proud German Army.

Throughout your entire time in combat you Railsplitters have done your job well. It is your drive and courage, your "know how" and physical strength and endurance, your fighting spirit and will to win which have been responsible for the success of the division. Each one of you rightfully should feel a sense of personal triumph on this day.

Now that combat in this theater is finished, we will assume the role of occupational troops, at least for the present. This task is one which will be much different from combat, but it will be difficult none the less. It is expected that you apply yourselves to your new jobs with the same willingness and the same effectiveness which brought you to victory with such a fine record.

Whatever you may do -- wherever you may go -- you should be, as I am, very proud to be a "Railsplitter."

A.R. Bolling
Major General, United States Army,
Commanding.

Headquarters
Tank Destroyer Center
Camp Hood, Texas

Office of the Commanding General
14 August 1945

Lt Colonel Harold L. Davis
Commanding Officer
638th Tank Destroyer Battalion
Fort Benning, Georgia

Dear Colonel Davis:

Upon the return of your battalion to the United States, I wish to express my sincere gratification for the part your organization performed in the conquest of German arms. That mission has been accomplished. The enemy has been sought, struck and destroyed. It is natural that we at Tank Destroyer Center are grateful and proud. From this distant OP, I have followed the advance of Tank Destroyer battalions from El Guettar to Bizerte, from Salerno to Anzio and Rome, from Normandy to Paris and the Rhine, and across the Remagen Bridge

and on down the highways to final victory in Europe. On that march the roar of your motors and the crash of your powerful guns has been music in the ears of all Tank Destroyer men.

We know of the long hours of unit training and individual preparation that made these accomplishments possible and I wish to assure you that you have given us all enhanced pride in the black panther shoulder patch.

To the comrades and families of your men who will not return, I and all personnel of my command extend deepest sympathy; to those who have returned, we extend hearty welcome and commendation for a job well done. In the weeks ahead, representatives of this Center will have the pleasure of visiting you personally at your Camp.

Your battle wise units now face the Japanese enemy under new conditions. We know you will adapt your battle-tested tactics to the new needs of the supported arms. May God strengthen your arm, sharpen your eyes, and protect you as you "Roll TD's Roll."

Sincerely yours

A.O. Gorder
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

Roster Of 638th Tank Destroyer Battalion

Officers

Adams, Royce F., 1 Lt.
 Andrews, Eugene, 2 Lt.
 Barrow, James L., 1 Lt.
 Blair, Joseph R., 2 Lt.
 Bower, Willard W., Jr., 1 Lt.
 Browne, Walter A., 1 Lt.
 Bryson, Charles F., 1 Lt.
 Brumbaugh, Howard, 2 Lt.
 Burcham, Freeman, CWO
 Chesney, Andrew J., 2 Lt.
 Davis, Harold L., Lt. Col.
 Drapin, Sidney R., 1 Lt.
 Edwards, Harvey A., 1 Lt.
 Fairchild, David T., 1 Lt.
 Forst, Arthur, Capt.
 Geforos, Elmer B., Capt.
 Golden, Alonzo J., Capt.
 Hall, Monroe S., 1 Lt.
 Harroz, Edward, 1 Lt.
 Harmon, Ronald C., Capt.
 Hass, Otto L., 1 Lt.
 Hipp, Dickson G., Maj.
 Herkness, Joseph E., 1 Lt.
 Kennedy, Taylor L., 1 Lt.
 Klewin, Frederick A., 1 Lt.
 Kline, Robert R., Capt.
 Ledoux, Norman E., 1 Lt.
 Lee, Maxwell E., 1 Lt.
 Lancaster, Leion E., 1 Lt.
 Mahier, Frederick W., Jr., 1 Lt.
 Martin, Melvin C., 1 Lt.
 McAfee, Donald M., Capt.
 McCullough, James D., Maj.
 McLaughlin, Charles P., Jr., 1 Lt.
 McNell, James L., 1 Lt.
 Medley, Donal I., Capt.
 Moore, Thomas J., 1 Lt.
 Nopper, William R., 2 Lt.
 Padgett, Leon, 2 Lt.
 Parks, Rector, Capt.
 Parker, Robert E., 1 Lt.

Pester, Earl H., 2 Lt.
 Roberts, John L., Capt.
 Roote, Jesse T., Capt.
 Saltman, David, 1 Lt.
 Silence, Joseph F., 1 Lt.
 Smalley, Jack R., 1 Lt.
 Spiceland, Evans C., 1 Lt.
 Sutton, Harold D., WOJG
 Stoetzel, Eugene S., 1 Lt.
 Wann, Charles A., 2 Lt.
 Youngren, John A., 2 Lt.

Enlisted Men

Headquarters
Company

Adler, Glen D., Tec 4
 Andrew, Bradford D., Tec 4
 Arendt, Werner H., Pfc.
 Bell, William T., Tec 5
 Beltran, Manuel J., Pfc.
 Bernler, Roland J., Tec 5
 Boyles, Floyd C., Pfc.
 Braden, John A., 1 Sgt.
 Brooks, Charles T., Tec 5
 Brothers, Howard T., Tec 5
 Buttermann, Eugene F., Tec 5
 Cain, William R., Pfc.
 Calhoun, Charles E., S/Sgt.
 Carnahan, Gerald R. S/Sgt.
 Cauler, Clarence G., Pfc.
 Chavis, Henry M., Pfc.
 Colantuoni, Samuel C., Tec 4
 Corrigan, Francis A., Tec 4
 Countryman, Highley H., T/Sgt.
 Crase, Elmer L., Tec 5
 Dante, Selwyn L., Pfc.
 Davis, Coleman E., Pfc.
 Dillard, Fred, Tec 4
 Dodson, Clarence E., T/Sgt.
 Draisker, Robert R., Tec 5
 Dunning, Ralph H., Pfc.
 Dytko, Walter, Pfc.
 Easterday, Clifford M., Tec 5
 Eaton, William J., Tec 5
 Eckert, Adolph W., Tec 5
 Elmore, Woodrow W., Tec 5
 Embry, Noble, Pfc.
 Farley, John D., Pfc.
 Feldman, Francis D., Tec 4
 Franklin, William E., Tec 4
 Gable, Edward C., Tec 4
 Garber, Ira J., Tec 4
 Gibson, Harry B., T/Sgt.
 Harding, George C., S/Sgt.
 Harr, Richard E., Pfc.
 Henderson, Dale D., Pfc.
 Hicks, Joseph W., Tec 5
 Holder, Alva C., Pfc.
 Houff, John M., Tec 5
 Huettig, Howard W., Pfc.
 Humphrey, Hoyte C., Pfc.
 Hunton, David L., Tec 5
 Kelch, Leslie L., S/Sgt.
 Kelly, Thomas M., Tec 4
 Kent, John R., Tec 5
 Kish, Ernest, Tec 4
 Klees, Raymond B., Jr., Tec 5
 Klein, James H., S/Sgt.
 Kosup, George E., Cpl.
 Kraayvanger, William G., Jr., Pfc.
 Kuhn, Roland C., T/Sgt.
 Lilly, George D., Pfc.
 Linville, Melvin, Pfc.
 Lucas, Jean R., M/Sgt.
 McCrary, James E., Pfc.
 McKeighen, Henry K., Jr., Tec 5
 Maciejack, Chester, Tec 4
 Madden, Charles A., Pfc.
 Massa, James F., Tec 4
 Medici, David A., Tec 5
 Mellendorf, John L., Pfc.
 Merhar, Milan J., Tec 5

Mohr, George C., Tec 5
 Muckler, Adolph C., Tec 4
 Munnagh, Marion M., Pfc.
 Nagy, James, Pfc.
 Pacey, William E., Tec 4
 Paulin, Arthur R., Tec 5
 Peer, Oliver N., Jr., Cpl.
 Prior, Allen F., Tec 4
 Prusinski, Carl, Tec 5
 Quade, Orian E., T/Sgt.
 Reber, Oscar J., Pfc.
 Ruble, Robert T., Jr., Tec 5
 Ruggieri, Joseph, Sgt.
 Salazar, Marcos L., Pfc.
 Salyers, Loyd, Pfc.
 Schmitz, Cyril H., M/Sgt.
 Schulgen, Robert F., T/Sgt.
 Schultz, Maurice R., Tec 5
 Shiff, Owen D., S/Sgt.
 Shive, Richard W., Cpl.
 Sickler, John C., Tec 5
 Smith, Edgar L., Tec 5
 Smith, Willard L., T/Sgt.
 Snow, Galen H., Tec 5
 Spinnelli, Anthony, Tec 4
 Stewart, Morris B., Pfc.
 Stowe, Frank A., Tec 5
 Sweeney, Edward F., Pfc.
 Taylor, Alvin M., Tec 5
 Taylor, Jonnie E., Pfc.
 Todd, Edward H., Cpl.
 Toth, Ernest J., Pfc.
 Turner, Joe G., Pfc.
 Vacanti, Vito, Pfc.
 Vickers, Paul O., Pfc.
 Wall, Estill, Pfc.
 Welch, Charles D., Tec 5
 Woods, Roy O., Tec 5
 Woods, Wesley P., Pfc.
 Zutavern, Albert R., Jr., Pfc.

Medical Detachment

Brooker, Billy E., Cpl.
 Buchanan, Emerson W., Tec 4

Copeland, Charles C., S/Sgt.
 Davenport, Robert L., Pfc.
 Gallardo, Oscar B., Pfc.
 Gejejan, John, Tec 5
 Hayashi, Bert Y., Pvt.
 Jasper, Kenneth E., Tec 4
 Macias, Joseph, Tec 5
 Ofer, Cosmas F., Tec 5
 Pitall, Tony C., Pfc.
 Starr, Albert D., Pvt.
 Stovall, Samuel, Tec 3
 Vanore, Andrew Jr., Pfc.
 Ward, Laurence D., Pfc.
 Weinograd, Sidney, Pfc.
 Westbrook, Horace L., Cpl.

Company "A"

Abraham, Nathan, Pvt.
 Alexander, George P., Cpl.
 Alwine, Floyd L., Pfc.
 Arnold, Eldon C., Tec 4
 Atnipp, Alvin T., Pfc.
 Barmore, J.B., Tec 5
 Bell, Clyde, Tec 4
 Beres, Ernest, Pfc.
 Berge, Raymond K., Pfc.
 Binay, Lorán O., Pfc.
 Bland, Lester, Sgt.
 Boan, Willis E., Tec 4
 Brackett, Byron E., Sgt.
 Brooks, Walter F., Pfc.
 Buckley, Wilton S., Pfc.
 Cage, John W., Jr., Pfc.
 Capella, Joseph P., Tec 5
 Calvitt, James B., Pfc.
 Campbell, John, Pfc.
 Carwile, James G., Cpl.
 Casassa, William L., Cpl.
 Ceccorulli, Dino, Cpl.
 Champfer, Franklin E., Pvt.
 Chess, Neal, Pvt.
 Childress, Buford W., Pvt.
 Chnupa, Paul K., Jr., S/Sgt.
 Cisneros, Trinida, Pfc.

Collop, Vern T., Pfc.
 Condon, Costa C., Sgt.
 Cook, Harold A., Tec 5
 Coursen, Franklin M., Cpl.
 Daily, Lawrence C., Pfc.
 Deel, James L., Pfc.
 Deneke, Wilfred H., Tec 4
 Depoy, Samuel J., Sgt.
 Derrickson, James H., S/Sgt.
 Dilbert, Louis A., Pvt.
 Divens, Samuel D., Tec 5
 Doms, George W., Tec 4
 Dye, Arthur L., Pvt.
 Edwards, Lester M., Tec 4
 Ellerbusch, Clarence L.
 English, Eldon T., Pfc.
 Eytcheson, Robert L., Sgt.
 Farrington, Norman H., Tec 5
 Faulkner, Joseph T., Jr., 1 Sgt.
 Figg, Roy J., Cpl.
 Flemming, Fred, S/Sgt.
 Ford, Arthur L., Tec 5
 Franklin, Earnest F., Pfc.
 Fratt, Louis A., Pvt.
 Freyberger, Cleo J., Tec 4
 Friendly, Elven D., Sgt.
 Garling, Cecil C., Cpl.
 Gentry, William W., Pfc.
 Goens, Maurice F., Sgt.
 Goffinet, Anthony A., Cpl.
 Green, Alex W., Pfc.
 Gribbin, Clement, Pfc.
 Grotti, Renato, Pfc.
 Guin, James W., Pfc.
 Haaf, Harold, Pvt.
 Hamm, Joseph E., Pfc.
 Hardesty, David W., Cpl.
 Harper, Clarence, Pfc.
 Hedgeth, Howard, Pfc.
 Hess, Carl R., Pfc.
 Hessemann, Henry A., Sgt.
 Hill, John W., Tec 5
 Holloway, Clyde J., Tec 4
 Holton, Floyd P., Sgt.
 Humphrey, John T., Jr., Pvt.
 Irwin, Virgil L., Tec 4

Jackson, Richard R., Sgt.
 Jarvis, Roy, Tec 5
 Johnson, Leland E., Cpl.
 Jones, Frank W., Sgt.
 Jordan, Josh, S/Sgt.
 Kallam, Norman W., Sgt.
 Kelllogg, Gladstone B., Pfc.
 Kirschner, Donald J., Pfc.
 Klackic, John, Pvt.
 Klingerman, Albert R., Jr., Tec 5
 Knobeloch, Lloyd B., Tec 5
 Koch, Clarence S., Sgt.
 Koehler, Arthur C., Pfc.
 Koestner, Arthur, Sgt.
 Kunkel, Otto L., Tec 4
 Lashley, Huey C., Tec 5
 Lebrun, Edouard A., Tec 4
 Long, Arnold G., Tec 4
 Long, Edward C., Tec 4
 Ludwig, Donald W., Sgt.
 Madlung, Edward C., Sgt.
 Malinski, Alexander P., Sgt.
 Malinowski, Edward, Pfc.
 Mazanek, Frederick B., Cpl.
 Mazur, John J., Pfc.
 McCarthy, Thomas A., Tec 5
 McCroskey, Sam P., Sgt.
 Modos, Steven C., Tec 4
 Moody, Archie E., Tec 4
 Moore, Robert B., Sgt.
 Morgan, Richard R., Jr., Cpl.
 Mosora, Jack, S/Sgt.
 Mulligan, Rocco R., Tec 5
 Murphy, Thomas F., S/Sgt.
 Murtagh, Robert E., Pfc.
 Napper, Orville, Pfc.
 Nest, Walter F., Cpl.
 O'Hair, Ormond M., S/Sgt.
 Otterson, Ralph, Pfc.
 Overcash, Bert A., Pfc.
 Palmer, Floyd L., Cpl.
 Parker, Dallas W., Pvt.
 Patton, Claude H., Pvt.
 Pavoni, Joseph S., Tec 5
 Petrozzelli, Fred J., Pfc.

Pfeifer, Clarence A., Jr., Pvt.
 Puskar, Adolph J., Pvt.
 Ray, Lonnie L., T/Sgt.
 Roethe, Clyde P., Sgt.
 Rossi, Michael L., Pfc.
 Roy, Samuel E., Cpl.
 Royalty, Harvey C., S/Sgt.
 Rubbo, Edward J., Pfc.
 Salecki, Peter J., Pfc.
 Salyer, Brownie, Sgt.
 Schneidermiller, Charles H., Pfc.
 Schnell, Oscar F., Tec 5
 Shrull, Bulie D., Tec 5
 Simmerman, Dora F., Cpl.
 Staven, Caney C., Pvt.
 Sohn, William J., Tec 4
 Smith, John H., Cpl.
 Somers, Arden G., Tec 5
 Sponaugle, Russell F., Ph.
 St. Clair, Ray G., Tec 5
 Stephan, Robert L., Sgt.
 St. John, Richard E., Pfc.
 Sumrell, Fred A., Tec 4
 Szweczyk, Peter, Pfc.
 Tapp, Robert E., Cpl.
 Tomlinson, Lloyd E., Tec 5
 Tumey, Robert L., Sgt.
 Villard, Louis A., Tec 5
 Walters, Ralph T., Tec 5
 Weltzin, Gerald P., Sgt.
 Whitty, Robert W., Cpl.
 Willett, William R., Pfc.
 Witsiepe, Ernest R., Cpl.
 Youngs, John R., Pfc.
 Zafa, Frank J., Tec 4

Company "B"

Adcock, Marvin E., Pvt.
 Adcox, Jackie L., Pvt.
 Allen, Clarence, Tec 5
 Anderson, Laurence W., Pfc.
 Ball, James E., Pfc.
 Barfield, John I., Pfc.
 Barley, Henry J., Pvt.
 Barnes, Leonard R., Cpl.
 Beale, Julian C., Tec 5
 Benjamin, William G., Cpl.
 Berg, Melvin R., Tec 5
 Berger, Herbert J., Pfc.
 Blackard, Robert L., Jr., Cpl.
 Blacklock, Grover D., Pvt.
 Borsuk, John A., Tec 5
 Buck, Don C., Tec 5
 Carney, Paul K., Cpl.
 Chestnut, John M., S/Sgt.
 Cole, James K., Tec 5
 Cook, Wilburn, Pfc.
 Cullins, Oves B., Tec 5
 Bauby, William E., Pfc.
 Davis, Edwin N., Tec 4
 Davis, Leon R., Tec 5
 Dean, Harvey L., Tec 5
 Deistler, Ernest A., Tec 4
 Densmore, Theron S., S/Sgt.
 Deom, Dennis F., Tec 4
 DeSoto, Anet, Pvt.
 Dunning, Archie, Pvt.
 Elkins, Owen J., Tec 5
 Elson, Harry E., Sgt.
 Elyosius, Donald A., Pfc.
 Favre, Alfred F., Sgt.
 Finney, Daniel L., Pfc.
 Fischer, Lawrence J., Tec 5
 Fischer, Weltmert A., Pfc.
 Flatley, William, Jr., Sgt.
 Fleming, James F., Jr., Sgt.
 Gendler, Samuel, Pfc.
 Gennes, Bernhard B., Cpl.
 Gilmore, Robert L., S/Sgt.
 Goldstein, Harold B., Pfc.
 Goldthorpe, Glenn C., Pfc.
 Graham, Edgar J., Tec 4
 Grauvogel, La Verne H., Pvt.
 Gravett, Ralph, Tec 4
 Gross, Perry T., Tec 5
 Guillaume, Ellsworth W., Tec 5
 Haase, Albert E., Pvt.
 Hacker, Johnny E., Sgt.
 Hall, Joseph E., Sgt.

Hardin, Metz D., Jr., Tec 5
 Hartwick, Victor J., Cpl.
 Henderson, Virgil M., Pfc.
 Hill, James W., Pfc.
 Hloros, James G., Pvt.
 Hochgesang, Carl, Tec 4
 Hunt, Arthur, Cpl.
 Hunt, William E., Pfc.
 Hyde, Clayton L., Sgt.
 Ingerson, Donald V., Cpl.
 Jackson, Arnold, Pvt.
 Jones, Orville P., Tec 5
 Jones, William L., Tec 4
 Kalb, Oscar E., Cpl.
 Kareem, Abell, Sgt.
 Kash, Oliver G., S/Sgt.
 Kean, Russell, Pvt.
 Kennedy, Robert M., Jr., Pvt.
 King, Herbert B., Pvt.
 King, Joseph L., Pvt.
 Kinnett, James H., Pfc.
 Kirby, Vance L., Sgt.
 Kirchner, Carl H., S/Sgt.
 Leap, Joseph E., Tec 4
 Leonard, Ernest R., Tec 5
 Lewis, Ermiel C., Tec 4
 Lewis, Robert K., S/Sgt.
 Litzler, James G., Tec 4
 Lo Grasso, Joseph A., Pfc.
 Logsdon, Bernard L., Cpl.
 Loveday, Howard, Pfc.
 Luck, George C., Tec 5
 Mainhart, Albert R., Pvt.
 Malvitz, Arnold E., Pvt.
 Maranto, Frank, Pvt.
 McCrobie, Charles L., Tec 5
 McFall, Thomas S., Cpl.
 McGraw, Willie M., Cpl.
 McNamara, Francis M., Pvt.
 Miller, Robert A., S/Sgt.
 Morrison, George E., Pfc.
 Morroni, Michael J., Pvt.
 Newcomb, Joseph D., Sgt.
 Nichols, John E., Tec 5
 Osborne, Harold D., Sgt.
 Parrott, Kenneth H., Tec 5

Parsons, Carl R., Pvt.
 Perryman, Fletcher H., Pfc.
 Petit, Ernest O., Pfc.
 Petoskey, Henry S., Sgt.
 Poole, Thomas E., 1 Sgt.
 Portugal, Ignacio G., Tec 5
 Prather, Floyd C., Pfc.
 Priszak, Victor, Pvt.
 Pruitt, William D., Cpl.
 Qualkenbush, William C., Tec 4
 Quintero, Antonio J., Pfc.
 Rains, Ova L., Cpl.
 Rakauskas, James A., Pvt.
 Rademacher, Mike J., Pfc.
 Rassi, Leonard J., Pfc.
 Remanszka, Joseph T., Pfc.
 Renner, Paul E., Sgt.
 Rippy, Robert M., Cpl.
 Robben, Charles F., Sgt.
 Robertson, James C., Pvt.
 Schnackner, Irving, Tec 5
 Scuderi, Richard, Cpl.
 Scurtu, Theodore, Sgt.
 Seiberling, Thomas P., Sgt.
 Seiler, Louis J., Tec 5
 Shellenbarger, Robert L., Tec 4
 Sloan, Miles E., Pfc.
 Smith, Freddie E., T/Sgt.
 Smith, George H., Pfc.
 Smith, Milton, Pfc.
 Snellen, Abel B., Tec 5
 Soviak, William, Sgt.
 Spurrier, Ivan L., Sgt.
 Stillwell, Norman C., Tec 5
 Stinson, Lyles B., Cpl.
 Stratton, Robert F., Cpl.
 Taulman, Floyd W., Cpl.
 Toombs, Elvis C., Pfc.
 Trusty, William J., Cpl.
 Underwood, Marvin W., Tec 5
 Wade, Robert P., Tec 4
 Waldroff, Bruce A., S/Sgt.
 Westfahl, Donald F., S/Sgt.
 Williams, Frank P., Tec 4

Willis, Clyde, Tec 5
 Yount, James S., Pfc.

Company "C"

Acosta, Salvador A., Pfc.
 Adams, Ellis H., Pfc.
 Allen, Joseph H., Pfc.
 Altman, Lawrence C., Tec 4
 Anson, James R., Tec 5
 Avery, Howard, Sgt.
 Barfield, Paul J., Tec 5
 Bell, John W., Tec 5
 Bergmann, Albert C., Pvt.
 Bishop, Alexander R., Tec 5
 Blakeman, Chester L., Tec 5
 Blizzard, James, Cpl.
 Bogg, James, Pfc.
 Branch, Clyde A., Tec 5
 Broad, Carl B., Pfc.
 Brown, Walter G., Cpl.
 Brinegar, Joseph M., Pfc.
 Casey, Joseph L., 1 Sgt.
 Cecil, John R., S/Sgt.
 Clark, Marcus G., Pfc.
 Cleveland, Arthur, Jr., Pvt.
 Collier, Charles M., Tec 5
 Cooper, Charles E., Tec 4
 Corie, Leroy, S/Sgt.
 Cox, Alfred P., Pfc.
 De Vries, Gilbert, Cpl.
 Doolittle, Robert L., Pvt.
 Dunn, Elmer S., Pfc.
 Elzer, George J., Sgt.
 Engle, Russell P., Tec 4
 Euler, Robert S., Cpl.
 Faircloth, Robert D., Pfc.
 Faulkner, Howard M., Tec 4
 Ferguson, Roy B., Pvt.
 Fickert, Clarence E., Pfc.
 Friend, Paul W., Tec 4
 Foltz, Aubrey R., Pfc.
 Hagedorn, Leo B., Sgt.
 Hammond, Arthur V., S/Sgt.
 Harr, Jacob, Tec 5

Harmon, Wilson, Pfc.
 Haislip, Samuel R., Pfc.
 Harrison, James W., Pfc.
 Harrison, John W., Sgt.
 Hensley, Elbert J., Cpl.
 Herndon, Thomas B., Pfc.
 Herring, Morris H., Sgt.
 Hester, Dan C., Cpl.
 Hibbs, John E., Pfc.
 Hobson, James S., Pfc.
 Hogan, John E., Pfc.
 Hommel, Floyd L., Tec 5
 Howe, Clyde R., Sgt.
 Hudson, Cecil N., Sgt.
 Jarboe, Herman M., Pfc.
 Johnson, Henry F.D., Sgt.
 Jones, Robert, Cpl.
 Julian, Herald R., S/Sgt.
 Juncua, Dewey J., Tec 4
 James, Virgil L., Sgt.
 Juraevich, Nick G., Sgt.
 Kaplan, Irving, Sgt.
 Kemp, William L., Pfc.
 King, Graham B., Tec 4
 King, William O., S/Sgt.
 Knowles, Marvette M., Pfc.
 Kocot, John P., Pfc.
 Kolehmainen, John I., Tec 5
 Kynett, Kenneth W., Pvt.
 La Hair, Arthur F., Tec 4
 Lehan, Robert D., Pvt.
 Lore, Samuel M., Pfc.
 Loy, James C., Tec 5
 McDonald, Robert D., Pfc.
 McGarity, William A., Pfc.
 Mann, Dan, Pvt.
 Manck, Charles T., Pvt.
 Martin, Glenn G., Tec 4
 Martin, Vivian G., Tec 5
 Martin, Willis E., Pfc.
 Mercer, Homer L., Sgt.
 Meredith, Curtis, Pvt.
 Merrill, James F., Tec 5
 Moore, William E., Cpl.
 Morrison, Joseph M., Cpl.
 Motorzi, Peter, Pfc.

Mueller, Bernard A., Cpl.
 Mullett, Victor R., Cpl.
 Mulvey, Joseph P., Tec 5
 Munday, Charles A., Sgt.
 Neukam, Edgar M., Tec 4
 O'Conner, Patrick F., Tec 4
 Prather, Robert O., Cpl.
 Pendergraft, Otis H., Tec 5
 Plumlee, Eunice E., Pfc.
 Prather, Aaron, Pfc.
 Putnam, Leonard T., Pfc.
 Reece, James L., Cpl.
 Rinsema, George, Sgt.
 Roske, Robert W., Sgt.
 Ross, William M., Tec 5
 Russell, Howard R., Pfc.
 Ruemell, Robert F., Pfc.
 Saunders, Preston E., Tec 4
 Schlemo, Albert E., Cpl.
 Scroggum, Elmer D., Pfc.
 Seidner, Lester T., Sgt.
 Setliff, Pickets H., Tec 5
 Sharafinski, Leonard O., S/Sgt.
 Sharpe, Raymond L., Pfc.
 Shephard, David J., Pvt.
 Shullian, Harry, Cpl.
 Smith, Clayton, Pfc.
 Smith, John R., Pfc.
 Smith, Odell T., Pfc.
 Smith, Victor G., Cpl.
 Snyder, Howard D., Tec 5
 Sollee, Clinton W., Pfc.
 Spaulding, Clem L., Tec 4
 Stephens, Owen, Cpl.
 Strozewski, Anthony A., Pfc.
 Surma, Edward J., Pvt.
 Suwalkowski, William J., Tec 5
 Szymanski, Joseph M., T/Sgt.
 Tackett, Louis L., Jr.,
 Taulbee, Ernest D., Pfc.
 Taylor, Hugh E., Cpl.
 Tilley, Raymond S., Jr.,
 Tronick, Willard E., Sgt.
 Tvardik, Edward E., Cpl.

Ulatowski, Edward, Pvt.
 Vandergriff, Kenneth W., Pfc.
 Vilcek, Leo, Cpl.
 Walker, Paul G., Tec 5
 Warfield, Johnson C., Pfc.
 Werner, Karl F., Tec 4
 Wheeling, Troy, Pfc.
 Williams, Holes A., Pfc.
 Wolfe, Grafod, Tec 5
 Varbrough, James F., Pfc.
 Young, Billy, Pfc.
 Youngblood, Robert W., Cpl.
 Zoeller, Elmer J., Sgt.

Reconnaissance Company

Akers, Arthur D., Pfc.
 Alderton, Robert H., Pvt.
 Alitzer, Medford B., Pvt.
 Beadles, Donald T., Sgt.
 Belew, Robert A., Tec 5
 Bennett, James O., Pvt.
 Bennett, John R., Pvt.
 Beckman, Edward A., Tec 5
 Billib, Raymond E., Pfc.
 Blades, Thomas E., Pvt.
 Brinkley, Clyde B., Tec 5
 Brown, Jesse, Pfc.
 Browne, Francis G., Pvt.
 Bryan, William L., Pfc.
 Bryant, Paul E., Pfc.
 Burdine, Bertrand, Pfc.
 Butcher, Herschel L., Pvt.
 Calabrese, James R., Cpl.
 Cheser, Seymour, Pvt.
 Coin, Wilton O., Tec 5
 Condit, Abraham L., Pfc.
 Conner, Dudley P., Pfc.
 Cook, James A., Tec 5
 Coppage, John A., Sgt.
 Crawford, Wilson, Jr., Tec 4
 Crowley, Clarence E., Pfc.
 Davis, William C., Pvt.
 De Biasi, Desio, Pfc.

Dickerson, Jerrell B., 1 Sgt.
 Dickerson, James L., Tec 5
 Dollins, Lloyd S., Tec 5
 Duffy, Charles V., Pfc.
 East, James F., Pfc.
 Ellis, Glover J., Sgt.
 Elsner, Ervin G., Pfc.
 Ficcoat, George R., S/Sgt.
 Fizer, Tom R., Tec 4
 Ford, Havey, Tec 5
 Frost, Ivan H., Pvt.
 Fuchs, Theodore, Jr., Pfc.
 George, Eldon W., Pfc.
 Guesman, Glessner W., Pvt.
 Harris, George S., Pvt.
 Hartwick, Robert S., Tec 5
 Harper, Isaac D., Pfc.
 Hawley, George T., Sgt.
 Hawley, Wayne F., Tec 4
 Hedrick, Reid L., Pvt.
 Heeke, Othmar A., Tec 4
 Heidorn, Robert J., Pfc.
 Hendrickson, Marshall D.,
 Pfc.
 Henry, Charles E., Jr., Pvt.
 Hester, Edward F., Sgt.
 Hicks, Theodore S., Tec 5
 Holt, Robert F., Pfc.
 Hoover, William D., Cpl.
 Johns, Gatton D., Pfc.
 Keyes, Keith W., Pfc.
 Kemper, Cornell J., Pfc.
 Lanier, Phillip H., Tec 5
 Lewis, John S., S/Sgt.
 Loppnow, Harold F., Pfc.
 McCutcheon, Jesse J., Pfc.
 Mann, Earl A., Sgt.
 Markland, Raymond J., Pfc.
 Marsh, James E., Pfc.
 Mason, Louis T., Pfc.
 Masterson, William T., Tec 5
 Meier, Alvin J., Cpl.
 Miles, Raymond, Pvt.
 Miller, Wayne T., Pfc.
 Moers, John F., Tec 5
 Nelson, Jack, Pfc.
 Nordhoff, Joseph B., Jr., Pfc.
 Nordstrom, Donald R., Tec 5
 O'Conner, Walter L., Pfc.
 Oler, Walter L., Pvt.
 Osborn, Charles H., S/Sgt.
 Palmer, George W., Pvt.
 Peffley, Kenneth, Pfc.
 Pela, John P., Tec 5
 Perrelli, Joseph J., Tec 5
 Phillips, Charles R., Pvt.
 Pickard, Clyde, Pvt.
 Pike, Robert O., Tec 5
 Pinkston, Wilbert, Cpl.
 Raisanen, Leo P., Pvt.
 Reed, Bennett W., Jr., Pfc.
 Reel, Woodrow, Pvt.
 Reid, Rufus J., Tec 5
 Renfrow, Clifford, Pfc.
 Richards, Clyde O., Sgt.
 Richamond, Robert W., S/Sgt.
 Rosser, Alfred R., Pvt.
 Rospo, Samuel, Pfc.
 Ruffin, L.C., Pfc.
 Schmidt, Joseph F., Tec 5
 Sells, Arthur V., Sgt.
 Seger, Paul L., Pfc.
 Sheridan, James M., S/Sgt.
 Siudowski, Alfons R., Pvt.
 Smith, Joseph, Pvt.
 Smolik, John E., Pvt.
 Snyder, James E., Tec 5
 Solodky, Leonard, S/Sgt.
 Sommers, Glen M., Sgt.
 Streatle, Garland E., Pfc.
 Taylor, Woodrow C., Cpl.
 Thomas, Eugene F., Pvt.
 Vanlandingham, Henry A., Jr.,
 Pvt.
 Voelzel, Charles E., Pvt.
 Waddell, Woodrow, Tec 5
 Wagner, George R., Pfc.
 Walden, Ernest L., Sgt.
 Walser, Aubrey C., K.I.A.
 Washkul, Nicholas, Pvt.
 Watson, Glenn S., Pfc.
 Watson, James V., Jr., Pvt.
 Wilson, Charles L., Pvt.
 Wilson, Lawrence R., Pvt.
 Wilson, Lester G., Pvt.
 Williams, Joe B., Pfc.
 Willis, Herbert L., Pvt.
 Whitam, Virgil H., M.I.A.
 Wright, Hubert E., S/Sgt.
 Wofford, Joe Y., Tec 4