



# 703<sup>rd</sup> Road Block



Vol. IV #1 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter 3/1993

WE HAVE SOME STRAYS OUT THERE.  
WE NEED YOUR EFFORT  
ONE MORE TIME  
TO  
HELP ROPE 'EM IN!

HAVE YOU JOINED OUR ASSOCIATION FOR 1993?

I.B. is pruning his peach and apple trees, but he has his carbine loaded for "slackers"! \$10 for membership and \$10 voluntary for the 703rd Road Block. Please come through with the "dinero" needed to keep a great outfit on the move!--

I.B. Wagon seller, 320 W. Walnut, Bowie, TX  
76230

703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association  
Bank Balance, 1/23/1993, \$3128.01

Here is the plan to contact our out-of-touch 703rds. We shall use Letters-To-The-Editor on a nationwide scale in order to have newspapers print our notices or letters asking our comrades to make themselves known to us. We want them as members, and hope we can be with them at our reunions in Indianapolis and Springfield, Missouri.

Your President, Fred Hunt HQ) has chosen a Search Team of thirty (30) of our members who will use library references such as the Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media to find the addresses of editors of newspapers in their designated states and areas, then they will address their envelopes bringing them to the Indianapolis Reunion in September to stuff them with provided letters and mailed. A letter head, explanatory letter and sample letter-to-the-editor will soon be sent to all Search Party members in coordination with the mailing of this newsletter.

Those of the Search Team who cannot come to the Indianapolis Reunion in September, should address their envelopes, stuff them with copies of the sample letter or prepare letters on their own that are short and simple to mail by October 1, 1993.

There will be a contest! The state or area that produces the most inquiries from "strays" will receive a jug of "adult liquid beverage" for their own personal use. The winner need not be present.

Fred has already addressed a hundred envelopes to California newspapers. This type of letter has done the job for our division chapters. Fred had the American Legion Magazine put in a "stray" notice, and came up with word from Frank Bresnick (C), Joe Converse (Hq, A), and Irvin Burris (Hq).

If you have any questions call or write Fred and Georgia Hunt, 2447 Wallis Smith Ave., Springfield, MO 65804, (417) 886 3590.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Jack and Ruth Moriarty (2A) 10 Crosby Street,  
Arlington, MA 02174

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### T A P S

Ernest P. Silva, Lt. Col. (Ret.) (B)

Died in Morriston, FL on 2/8/1993 where he had been a resident in recent years. After 25 years of army service he retired in 1964. Besides his long tour of duty with this battalion, he served in Korea. He worked for the I.R.S. in West Chester, Pa. for 10 years. He was originally from Broomall, Pa. Burial was in the Holy Cross cemetery in Yeadon, Pa. The obituary gave no address but that of the Donahue Funeral Home, 3300 W. Chester Pike, Newtown Square, Pa. John C. Wetzel

Louis C. Capelle, Capt. (HQ,A,B)

Passed away 12/13/1992 after a long illness. He completed his studies at the U. of Cincinnati, starring in basketball and "was also submitted to the Supreme Court of the U.S." After the close of hostilities he was a legal counsel at the Nuremberg war crime trials. He served as a Director of the Legal Aid Society. Burial was at the Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. Lucille resides at 200 Haver Road, Dayton OH 45419.

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Ralph L. Henderson Lt. (A)

Not long ago Fred Hunt spoke to Ralph's son. Ralph passed on in March, 1991. He continued in the service after this battalion was deactivated. (See R.B. III, 2, 6/1992, 3)

A LIFT THEN TRAGEDY FOR OUR LIAISON  
Marie Stites

12/11/92 5:43 P.M. A call to Everett Stites told us that Marie was breathing on her own, the hidden threats of her pneumonia to be reckoned with. Her chances appeared to be better. Hugh Livengood (Rcn) visited her with Everett, who appreciated everyone's concerns. Everett felt at ease enough to tell me he hoped to soon turn the 12/92 R.B. over to the printer.

12/15/92 10:10 A.M. Everett called. I asked, "How's Marie?" His voice broke, "Nate, she's gone!" What was I to ask? I expressed my sympathy, and "What can I do?"

"Call Bur, Mac, Hunt and tell them." By this time he could hardly speak. It didn't feel right to ask the usual details. I imagined I saw his tears as he ended the call.

As I tried to telephone, I reached no one that early in the day. I reflected on death, recalling the gift to the dying and loved ones that often occurs.

It was in Normandy after the breakthrough late in July, 1944. Our task force ground to a halt, and our T.D. sections found themselves facing a counterattack that almost broke through the Infantry elements ahead of us. Our attack bombers were strafing over our heads at enemy troops very close in front. IA security was on the right, and Dick Moore was covering with his Garand.

It wasn't long before the counterattack eased. We did not move out till next morning. "Jerry" had abandoned the town just ahead. Back at the destroyer I had asked, "Where's Dick?" Someone said he was hit.

"How badly?" "Bullet wounds in his side! We sent him back to the medics. He was laughing and telling us, 'I'm out of it', and smoking a butt. It was hours after that, word got back that Dick died in the ambulance.

It had seemed that Marie and Dick were going to make it.

Angelo M. Durante Sr. (B)

Angelo turned in his rifle at Waterbury Hospital on December 11, 1992. He put in 46 years with the Waterbury Rolling Mills, retiring in 1982. He was a member of our association and the V.F.W. He coached and refereed Pop Warner Football for 17 years. He and Nellie resided at 635 Buckingham Terrace, Oakville, CT 06779. How about a good word to her. John Czajkowski (B)

Vernon H. Olson (2A)

"Vern" was taken from us when he could no longer fend off leukemia, 1/26/1993. He was gunner in Emmet Caress's destroyer. Jake Mehring loaded and Walt Lange drove. When Harriot's crew and Ed McIntyre were knocked out, it was Vern who made it to Ed with first aid on the run.

Vern drove school bus, worked in industry, and carpentered. With Lillie (Moen) Olson and their three sons' families they resided close by in Marshall County, Minnesota. Lillie is at Rte. 1, Box 191, Newfolden, MN 56738. Drop her a line.

Joe Moen (A) Elmer Langbecker (A)  
Ed McIntyre (A)

BETTY BARRECA WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

"Tippy" and Anne Giovino (C) sent thoughtful season's greetings, and told me that Larry Barreca (C,Rcn) checked out after a long bout with cancer, 9/1/92.

Tippy wrote that Betty would appreciate brief notes from the "guys" Larry might have known. After I joked with Charlie Bornstein about a humorous note he had sent me, I told him about Larry. Charlie and Jean live a short distance away from Betty at 1667 W. 6th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223. He contacted her and expressed his and our sympathy. She's on our mailing list. Is it possible that Larry was in contact with some 703rd "strays" we don't know about? Check it out, Tippy?

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HAVE YOU JOINED THE 3RD ARMORED DIVISION  
ASSOCIATION FOR 1993

Application forms for membership are in the division newsletter for 12/1992. Join and get ready for the division reunion in Indianapolis, 9/1-5/93. Hope you can make it. For more information drop a line or call the 3rd Armored Div. Assoc., P.O. Box 61463, Phoenix, AZ 85082-1743. (602) 840 039 0398.

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OLD BLOOD BECOMES NEW

I.B. told us he caught up with Howard L. Shank (3Rcn), 1201 N. Front St., Apt. 502, Harrisburg, PA 17102. That platoon worked with "C" Co.

Cecil Stagman (HQ) saw to it that Fred Thode joined. Fred will be found at Rte. 1, Box 268, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

Frank Bresnick (C) called Fred Hunt. His first question? "Do you know "Hap" Paulson?" Frank's lives not far from Fred, R.R. 2, Box 424, Pittsburg, KA 66672. Frank learned of our association when he read Fred's notice in the American Legion Magazine. Do you see why Fred is confident that getting our letters to editors will mean more of our men will join us? Also credit Fred with bringing back:

Irvin Burris (HQ) 22253 S. Dan's Ave., Beaver Creek Falls, OR 97004.

Joe Converse (HQ,A) P.O. Box 1960, Williamstown, VT 05679

Seaton M. Perry (HQ), 9 John St., Heuvelton, N.Y. 13654 wrote that he wants to see everyone in Springfield, MO in the Spring of '94. Sure hope he tries to get to Indianapolis to the division reunion as well. He had a great time in Reading. He'll urge Ken Thomas (B) P.O. Box 24, Winthrop, NY 13697 and Howard Richards, whose address we've asked Seaton to send us, to join our association and come to our reunion. Tom and Helen Laughing live about 20 miles north of Ken, a bit closer than Seaton. Maybe he can help get those two "tank destroyers" to "hitch on" at the reunions.

Seaton recalled one of Fred Hunt's yarns in the R.B. We wish he'd tell us one of his own. And that goes for all of you.

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Didn't Know You Had It In You, Leo!

Leo Eatman and Ruth, 2801 W. Birchwood, Wilmette, IL 60091 left the 703rd in Camp Pickett, on to O.C.S. at Fort Knox, off to the 14th Armored, transferred to become a bomber navigator in B-24's so he could drop a few in the CBI theater.

"I'm alive, reasonably well, but do go to my office a couple of times a week." He hopes to see us in Missouri in '94. Why not Indianapolis?

He'll Make It To Indianapolis, Sure!

Richard Langerveld (B) 9856 W. Gull Lake Drive, Richland, MI 49083, is on board, as ever. "I'm doing fairly well, though with some back problems. My two war injuries that put me in the hospital for three years didn't help. With cane and crutches I'm enjoying eight years of retirement. I was County Recorder of Deeds for 37 years.

Hope I can make the Indianapolis reunion this year. I spent a year of my hospital life at Billington General Hospital (Ft. Harrison) in Indianapolis, '45-'46. Let's see that he and Ruth get to "Indy"!

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12/14/92. A great call from Jim Roberts (B). Weeks ago some of us heard he was in bad shape. When we reached him we found it not to be true, and that Jim, Stites, and your editor would be getting together early in December. Then Marie Stites was hospitalized, taken from us, ending temporarily Stites' efforts for our association [liaison, printing and mailing the newsletter to you]. Contact was lost with Roberts. He called, had been operated on for a gangrenous gall bladder, and now back in his apartment. He'll try get to shoot the breeze with us, help fill in what happened when he took 2B up to work with the 504th Parachute Infantry Regt., 82nd Air Borne Division shortly after "The Bulge" opened, 12/20-24/44.

Jim gets around, and can be contacted at 940 Quaker lane, Warwick, RI 02818.

*Give Ben a Boost!*

Ben Kotowicz (HQ) has been recovering after surgery for a spinal tumor, prostrate for weeks, subject to a series of medicines, finally home, then gradually walking without support. He has a kidney infection that keeps him from radiation treatments. He would appreciate hearing from his Hq. buddies. We can reach him at 10101 Belmont, Franklin, IL 60131. Do it !!

Len Straub (A), our association secretary, who wrote us on Ben, is trying to contact Joe Knakal (A Hq) Stan Daniels (A) and Dave Houser (Hq). Anyone any leads?

Joe's A Scrapper!

Joe Moen (A) responded with a holiday greeting card and a letter. He's coming out of a tough scrap with lymphoma that still needs a lot of fight to whip. Maybe he'll tell us how Martha is doing soon. Is Lillie (Moen) Olson, Vern's widow, related to him?

Joe has been in touch with Emmett Caress (A) and "Mike" Miklausich (A). Joe phones Len Straub and Al Miller (A) occasionally. Mike lives an awfully long hike north of Duluth, but we wrote him a note inside an R.B. We wished him a happy birthday with holiday greetings, and asked him to be aware that we want him to be more than a name on our mailing list. Let's have more of us drop him a card as we join Joe, Len and Frank Miller in getting him back in the company.  
Anthony "Mike" Miklausich, P.O. Box 471  
Blwabik, MN 55708

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What is the word on Al and Imogene Miller (A) at 203 W. 14th St., Lamar, MO 64759 ?  
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"OUR FIFTIETH CHRISTMAS TOGETHER"

That was the greeting that Bill and Kathleen Wagoner (2A) sent us. In I.B.'s great load of material he sent your editor, among three snapshots was a shot of Bill and Kathy on their wedding day coming out of the chapel at Camp Pickett. The Chaplain who married them sent congratulations from California. How did he remember?

We urged Kathy to plant Bill down with a tape recorder or a typewriter and get him to get to us some 2A yarns, and sketches of comrades, on the record for the R.B., (this newsletter) and our history.

Will his "buddles" congratulate them and urge them to plan to join us this Fall in Indianapolis and in the Spring of '94 in the Ozarks? Let's have a shivaree in Bristol, CT 06010-5320 at 139 Stonecrest Drive. That'll do it!

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R E S O L U T I O N

9/22/1992

Outstanding Heroism of Clinton E. Reid  
703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion

"Hap" Paulson (C), Henry Gosch (C) and Col. Showalter (HQ) submitted the following

[abbreviated] resolution to the battalion and Third Armored Division.

Reid was ordered with 2C to support the 2nd Bn. 26th Infantry Regt. of the "Big Red One" Inf. Div. on 12/20/44 in the vicinity of Bütgenbach, Belgium at the opening of "The Bulge". There the Germans made repeated attacks against U.S. forces defending the Elsenborn Ridge.

The 2nd Battalion's front was so wide and infantry so few that three of every five TD crewmen had to be used outside the TD as security. That night Reid's crew was suddenly reduced to only himself when Frank Glod's hip was broken by the gun's recoil. Reid, then, singlehanded, had to load, climb back into the gunner's station, select his target, aim, fire, return and reload, always taking care to avoid stepping on his injured companion. Once he even had to back up his TD to improve its field of fire. Although his TD was hit, a friendly tank knocked out the enemy tank before it could finish its kill. The number of enemy vehicles destroyed by Reid's actions is estimated at 5-7 tanks, halftracks, and other armored vehicles. This action appreciably assisted the "Big Red One" in its successful defense of this critical area.

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Hap Paulson, Reid's platoon leader, sought the C.M.H., D.S.C., or Silver Star for him. The best given was a Bronze Star.

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"Because of Clinton Reid's heroism, we his former commanding officers, by this unique resolution announce to him that he was and still is a true combat hero of the highest order, and that we admire and respect him for his gallantry."

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Hap really stuck to it till he found Reid, who had moved to P.O. Box 482, Albion, CA 95410, and spoke to him. Col. Showalter sent him a copy of the resolution and a letter, both published in the 3rd Armored Division Assn. Newsletter, 12/1992.

We certainly hope he is well and will respond with a call or note soon. Maybe we can get him to come to a reunion!

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HELP! HELP! HELP!

MORTAIN

Major Mark J. Reardon (Armor) 2802 S. Columbus St. A-2, Arlington, VA 22206-5000 is writing the history of The Great Tank Battle

of Mortain. See his letter in the December, 1992, 3rd Armored Div. Assn. Newsletter (p.63)

I.B., and your editor have sent him material. Charlie Bornstein (C) has called. Reardon responded to your editor with the following:

"---Using the 703rd T.D. Bn. S-3 Journal you sent me, I was able to confirm the chronology I used for Task Force 3 (Hogan) moving out of CCB Reserve and attacking Hill 278.

If there are any members of the 1st and 3rd platoons of "C" Co, as well as the 3rd of both A & B Co.'s who witnessed some of the action at Le Mesnil Tove, Mortain and Barenton, I would like to interview them.---

Contact him by writing to him as above or call collect at:

(703) 325 4077(Work)

(703) 671 0194 (Home)

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#### 1B ALONG THE SALM RIVER

12/20-24/44

There was plenty to be glum about. It was bad enough to know that the Germans had the attacking power to mangle the 106th Infantry Division in its first combat, but the enemy was not about to stop. Then, when the battalion moved out it lost Lt. Bangs, killed in a shooting accident. Add to that the orders for the disposition of its companies quickly were being changed. At 12/18/44 B reported that they had but 5 TD's that were operational. 2A with the 634th TD Bn. covered the evacuation of the hospital unit at Welsmes, and saw action there before being reassigned to the "Big Red One", 16th Infantry Regiment.

On the morning of 12/19/44 the Bn CP was in Sourbrodt with B nearby in Robertusville. During the day the work of sending elements of the battalion to the 1st Inf. and 82nd Airborne seemed finalized, but certain defense plans had to be revised.

At 1500 a section of 1A was aerial bombed at an intersection roadblock. Barbalinardo and Joe Olson were killed and 2 men WIA. At 1855 C was in position in the vicinity of Bütgenbach with the 26th Inf. Regt. The next morning, as C shifted direction to face an attack from the south, A came over to help.

B (Capelle) had been ordered to join the

82nd AB, and rolled towards Werbemont at 0745, 12/20/44. 1B (Claude Ball) and 2B (Jim Roberts) would head east from Werbemont. 3B (Heril Brown) would remain with B CP. At 0905, 12/21/44, Stites reported that 1B was with the 505th Parachute Inf. Regt. at Basse Bodeux, 2B with the 504th PIR near Cheneux. It was in the dark-of-a-night march, late on the 20th, when both platoons had checked into their positions to help the parachute infantry, who were riled but fresh from a break after a tough battle in Holland.

On the 20th, south along the Salm R. across from Grand Halleux (on the E. side of the river), "G" Co. of the 505th, set up a defensive bridgehead, so Capt. Isaacs sent Lt. George E. Clark's platoon across--where they set up a defense in the town and a strong outpost 300 yds. in front of a small hill. The balance of the company was placed on the west side where it could give supporting fire to the bridgehead. In addition Isaacs had a squad of the 307th Engineers, AND TWO 90 MM GUNS FROM THE 703RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION. No action till 19:45 on the 22nd, than all hell! The outpost was wiped out, all killed. The Germans then attacked Clark's platoon---and as Isaacs reported later, "This was the only time during the war that I saw Germans make a direct frontal assault in the open, charging down off the hill, screaming as they came."

Clark's platoon took them on, but he had to order his men back across the river and had the bridge blown by the engineers. The Germans tried to wade across and "G" Co. did not let one German make it. "In addition to his own mortars, Isaacs was able to get division artillery, and it knocked out one half track, and probably two tanks, as well as causing many more casualties-----."

Isaacs does not mention the role of the TD's in the action, however, he gives much credit to the artillery support he received.

*Could some of that fine support have come from the rounds Ball's section of 1B was firing indirectly Ball told us he was firing across the Amblève R.?? Though without his own observation post, Ball was told that his fire had worked well!*

At 1640 our liaison had reported 1B in the vicinity of Trois Ponts. Probably a section was north of Grand Halleux, and in action along the Salm much closer to La Neuville than Trois Ponts. [See map. R.B. III #4, 12, 1992, 8] They, too, were assigned

Up Front by Bill Mauldin



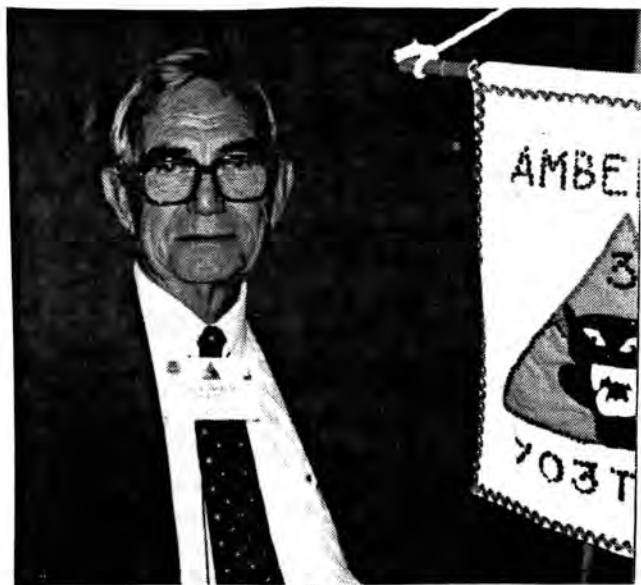
"That can't be no combat man. He's lookin' fer a fight."



"Beautiful view. Is there one for enlisted enlisted men?"



Liège, Belgium, September 9, 1944  
Quai F. VanHogaerden



Merle Goodrich (Hq.)



Marge Miller (A) I.B. Wagonsteller (B,C)



Stan Malinowski (Rcn,B) Jim Roberts (B)



Joe Moen (A) Frank Miller (A)



Jim Santino (A) Len Straub (A)

to keep Kampfgruppe Kelper from shaking loose across the Salm.

That section of 1B may have been led by Crochetière, however the record claims he was with the 505th PIR not far from Trois Ponts. Sometime on the same day, with careful observation, he and his gunner, Morrie, estimated the range so well, the enemy withdrew under his fire. Next day, 12/23/44, at 1800, Crochetière found that an enemy concentration of armor appeared overwhelming. He felt he had better get into position before his two destroyers had to face a frontal attack. His maneuver quickly allowed him to bring fire before he could be fired upon. Morrie destroyed two enemy tanks, and the enemy withdrew. During the action, enemy mortar or artillery fire fragments from a tree burst found their way into the turret and killed Morrie at his sight. Also reported wounded but remaining in action that day were Bengston, Bailey, Johnson and French.

What 1B and 2B did in helping contain Kampfgruppe Kelper along the Amblève and Salm remains incomplete as related above.

Did the complaint of the CO of the 504th PIR who ordered his men into a "senseless" attack, without the 2 TD's he expected, involve Roberts? (See R.B. III #4, 12/92, 5, 8) What crews did Roberts have with him? What, where were his other crews, and what action did they see?

On 12/22/44 at 1640, Stites, reported that 2B knocked out 2 enemy halftracks. 24 hours later, Merle Goodrich, our Bn. Exec., came back from B reporting that 2B had KO'd 2 Halftracks, 3 20mm AA pieces and one ground mount 210mm. gun. He had gone up to B and "took care of a small problem". Back at the Bn CP at 1630, he also told of the action of Crochetière and Morrie. In Col. Showalter's medal recommendation for Crochetière, he gave the time of the action as 1800, 2.5 hours after it had been learned and reported back at the Bn CP.

We need no explanation there. Important for the knowledge of what happened in our role with the 504th and 505th PIR Regts. is the makeup of Ball's crews in 1B, that had been Silva's platoon, and the other crew with Crochetière. Roberts said Crochetière was in his platoon, 2B. Were some of our sections split along that thin line on the Salm so that some of our TD's acted singly?

John, The Barber, Czajkowski (B), will visit with Crochetière and get some facts for us. Roberts will probably give your editor some "dope" in Indianapolis. As to Stites,-- let's remember that he has Marie on his mind. Let's hear from B Co.

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### WAR AND THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE

Just after we punctured the Siegfried Line, I was shifted out of A Co. into 3rd Armored G-2 (Intelligence) to become a junior-grade historian, an observer-scribbler of things world-shaping. My job was as a division combat correspondent, writing stuff for rear echelon civilian newsmen. It was a new lease on life: I had to be up front, but never on the point.

Shortly after I made the switch, I had to go up and observe and write of the action of the 36th Armored Inf. in Stolberg. The 703rd saw some action nearby. The 36th plus other elements of the 3rd Armored were engaged in a lot of house-to-house combat. I seem to recall that Gen'l. Terry Allen's "Timberwolves" had a hand. Since I am an avowed coward, I never wanted to go into that cauldron of flame and destruction--but this was 1944, and an order was an order.

So I went up when things were reasonably quiet, and the dogfaces told me a story that should have been clarified all over the world. I wrote it and got my wrists slapped, but good.

The dogfaces of the 36th told me--and remember, I was not there--that they had been involved in a hell of a fire fight right in the center of industrial Stolberg. You know how it was--burp guns chattering so rapidly they sounded like sheets of canvas tearing, mortars crumping, the steady beat of light machine guns and the heavy stutter of the 50's. Casualties were considerable on both sides, and the medics had their work cut out.

It was, as I mentioned, house-to-house fighting--the grim, close-quarter combat that always falls to infantrymen, those heroic warriors who die in windrows, and are never given their rightful due in the annals of warfare.

There was a street that served as no man's land, rimmed by the shell-pocked and bullet-splattered buildings of a city in torment. The fire was intense and our dogfaces attempted a rush that was defeated.



Curiously, in view of the tremendous torrent of steel pouring down, over and across that horrible thoroughfare, only one American soldier was cut down before his colleagues scurried back to the safety of stone walls. The stricken soldier was wounded and writhed on the pavement, calling for help in full view of the embattled German and Spearhead troops. A gale of fire continued over his head. It would have been suicide for one of the medics to go out there, indeed the fire was so intense that all movement was stymied. The opposing forces hammered away-- while a man screamed in agony.

So sudden that all combatants were caught by surprise, a German soldier ran out of cover. He was unarmed. He pounded out into the street, lifted the wounded American in his arms, and continued right across that hotly contested boulevard into the rubble positions of the 36th Armored Inf. Regt. And miracle in hell, the guns halted their infernal chatter. For a blessed few minutes the Krauts stilled their weapons, and we, open-mouthed, did likewise. The battlefield observed a few moments of armistice. No gun fired.

He came staggering in, bowed by the weight of the wounded American dogface, a lean, muscular German infantryman smelling as they all did, of sweat and cologne. He dropped his burden, and without a word, scuttled back across the road while no man offered ill. For one moment in time and space we were all human beings again, hating our business, wanting to preserve life. The Kraut deserved the Knight's Cross, the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Victoria Cross all lumped together. He was, when you come to think about it, quite a man.

I wrote the story and Major Haynes Dugan, the division's public relations officer, shook his head while he read it. "Hell of a good thing", he muttered, "But we can't use it."

Dugan knew, and very shortly I learned that truth is the first casualty of war. You warp the facts to make a case, and you never admit a spark of humanity or chivalry in the enemy. Perhaps that is necessary.

But I think we can waive the rules now after 27 long years it can't be verboten to tell how a German soldier was brave enough to risk death saving the life of a hated "Ami".

[See Div. Newsletter, 6/81] Frank Woolner (A)

### HOW NOT TO BECOME A TANK DESTROYER GUNNER !

On the Mohave Desert where I joined the battalion and C, it began. There were weekend recreation convoys to Riverside, and my brother, whom I hadn't seen in over a year, was stationed in Bakersfield. When 1st Sgt. Bourassa turned down my request for a pass I turned to Capt. Regas who allowed me to go on my own as long as I made reveille Monday morning. That put me on Bourassa's "S---List" all the way to England. Up the road at a stiff rise, the guys on a Convoy Riverside truck boosted me aboard.

Lucky for me Dick Langerveld (B) got me back in time. Bakersfield was farther than I thought, and the railroad got me back to Riverside after midnight Sunday, the convoy back to camp gone. A fellow with whom I had trained also missed the convoy, and as we hiked in despair of the danger of not getting back in time, five girls on the way to Palm Springs would have taken us back to camp. We thought the desert was no place for them, and they dropped us at an intersection where soon we were holding on in back of a truck with a large lumbering buzz saw. We held on for dear life until we had to part company at Desert Center. Then a dump truck gave us a short ride only out to sand, moon and stars.

Capt. Regas warning stuck to my thoughts in those wee hours after midnight. Suddenly out of the dark came a speeding car right past us. We thought the driver missed us till we saw the brake lights flash. There was Dick who was being taken back to camp by his brother-in-law. He ran us up to the back of our tents, and we just made roll call. It was one of those coincidences. Dick and I were from Michigan, and we both trained in Arkansas.

Next came Camp Pickett, Va., where on Christmas I was assigned to K.P. and Guard Duty. A bulletin board notice told us that being on duty those two days rated a soldier a 3-day pass. Being on Bourassa's "list" meant every one of my tries was turned down. There were plenty more details till I saw a notice that if I volunteered for code radio school at Indiantown Gap, and made it through those maddening "dittidahs", I'd have no details up there. Like hell! Every weekend I was on detail. The officer-in-charge canceled posted notices as if they never existed. By the way, I left school as a qualified C.W. operator and never had to touch a key again.

In England the details were so many, one getting stones from a quarry to extend the motor park, that I never climbed into a T.D. during any firing exercises. Eventually I was in a platoon security section with sandbags, as with some of my buddies, on top of the back of T.D. 12, 2nd T.D., 1C, into Normandy. My destroyer was right back of the T.D. on the top of which Melvin Rand and Ernest Richards were killed. (R.B. III, 6/92, 11)

I was assigned to be the loader on the T.D. although I had never been in a T.D. when its gun fired. It probably was near Fromental when I got a crack at it, gently trying to push in the shell when I was rudely told to form a fist, ram it home, and the breech block would drive my fist and arm out of the way. I found out the hard way; no one told me that there was only 11 inches clearance from the recoil to the back of the turret.

My promotion to "gunner" came in the defensive period in "The Bulge" when our ace gunner, Mel Stoddard, left us with his frozen feet, and I was promoted without ever having fired the gun. I did have a gun sight chart which I still have. I studied its chart of ranges and leads. Later, in January, when we went on the offensive to clear "The Bulge", our destroyer was called up to fire on a German column with several thin-skinned vehicles led by a large, tracked, self propelled gun. They were travelling across our front on the road between St. Vith and Houffalize. I was never able to get the correct leads to do any damage, however, I'm sure that some of the enemy troops who jumped out of the trucks had to change their underwear.

This is my story on how not to become a T.D. gunner in a battalion of which I am very proud.

Jack R. Biddulph (C)

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#### ON THE WAY TO MONT LE BAN

The article in the Road Block, "Sometime  
It's How You Look At It",  
Gave me some names I had tried to recall,  
Pieces in the puzzle fit.  
We were on our way to Mont Le Ban  
Attached to Task Force Kane.  
It wasn't mountain country,  
But a quite hilly terrain.

The Colonel ordered us to take a hill,  
To provide cover for his flanks,

And he took his troops down through a ravine  
Led by a company of tanks.  
Up on a hill about a mile away,  
A Panther tank appeared.  
KA-BOOM, he fired, a flash of flame  
The lead tank had been speared.

We answered his fire with our 90 mm. guns,  
Watched our tracers ricochet, bouncing  
Up toward the sun.  
Four of our destroyers joined in the fight,  
Undaunted, that Panther gunner just  
Traversed right.  
His second round knocked out a tank at the  
Other end.  
The tanks in position between them were  
Sitting ducks--my friend.

I ordered my gunner to hit him with smoke,  
Radioed Colonel, "Sir, this is no joke!  
I'll blind him with smoke. Get your tanks out  
Of there,  
And tell your observer to call in air!

To get out of the smoke the Panther changed  
His position,  
Again we used smoke to cover the mission.  
Each time he moved to where he could see,  
Our platoon's guns all hit him with one  
Round of smoke and three A.P.

Meanwhile in the valley, Col. Kane and crews  
Charged toward Mont Le Ban,  
Like coursers they flew.  
In just a few minutes the valley was clear.  
Told my platoon, "Get the hell out of here!"

As we backed off the hill that damned Kraut  
Reappeared.  
He fired one round at us. I can say it  
Was weird.  
Looking through my binoculars, a pink glow  
I did see.

It was an .88 shell headed straight at me!  
With no time to duck, I prayed hard, instead.  
The radio antenna was torn off by my head!

In a Stars and Stripes issue, or it might  
Have been Yank.  
General Patton had an article extolling  
Our tank.  
"They are the best in the world, "How I  
Wished I could answer,  
"I'd feel a lot safer, if they were built  
Like a Panther!" "Hap" Paulson (C)

GOT AWAY WITH IT

I saved this for last--don't know why. I told this to Capt. Gosch many years ago. I'm the only one in the army who went A.W.O.L. while in camp with no one ever knowing. Truthfully, as best I can recall, this is what happened.

I joined the 703rd on the Mohave Desert. They gave us a tent, and we dropped our A and B bags. I don't recall our officer's name, and he didn't know mine. We were told we'd be going on maneuvers for a few weeks as part of either a Blue or Red Army. The very next day I found a boil on my right cheek so I went on sick call. The Doctor put on medication to make it come to a head, then he would drain it to follow with a few days to heal. I told my officer what the Doctor said, and he said a physician would be with us on maneuvers.

I thought to myself, "b-----y"! I was not going to get sand on this boil, and have it infected. I decided to protect myself.

There was space, about three feet, between the sides of the tents. We were to get out of the sack by 3:00 A.M., and by then I was digging a hole in that space for the burial of my two bags. I stood between the tents till everyone left, and that morning I walked from one kitchen to another till the boil came to a head. Then I went to the Doctor in the "33rd", and he drained the boil and treated it. After that I travelled all over till it was time for the battalion to get back. When I saw the lights across the desert, I went back to my tent, got in between tents and dug out my bags. I rolled in the sand so that I would look like the others, and I entered the back of the tent at the same time the men entered in front.

I was not missed at all. Apparently no one knew I was ever gone. Perversely I even pushed my luck by going to the officer and told him my boil was doing well.

He said, "I told you so---by the way, what is your name?"

Charles Bornstein (C)

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COMBAT PRESSURE

Lt. Henderson (1A) did not handle all situations with the balance characteristic of his leadership.

Just after Christmas the platoon was in Chevron, Belgium. Almost a week earlier Joe

Olson and Ben Barballnardo died, Howie O'Connor and Larry Bretschneider evacuated due to the skill of a Jerry plane bombardier. Henderson had been reconnoitering positions about three miles distant, and when he learned what had happened, he had been visibly disturbed. For the first time since taking over at Camp Pickett some lasting friction developed.

On 12/28/44, ten German tanks were spotted. 2A and 3A moved into forward positions, 1A in reserve. Chevron's police quarters looked like a comfortable place to sleep. John Prior and Walt Pintero moved in.

When O'Connor had been evacuated, Prior had been ordered to replace him as T.D. commander. What bothered Prior was that Henderson did not speak to him, but that he learned of the change he did not want from his platoon sergeant, George Toma. Pintero had never been in top shape since we had left Camp Hood's viruses, and had let Henderson know it. The platoon leader now showed up and angrily ordered the two men to sleep with their section. In almost crying fury he told Pintero he had been watching him for six months, and to "shut up"! It was a bit uncomfortable, but was forgotten, pronto!----

We had business! Capt. Cole at 1930, told us that Task Force Hogan, below Manhay, had not reported, and CCA might be cut off. Hogan had to abandon his vehicles, and his men got back to safety before he did.

Editor

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AS WE FINALLY WENT TO PRESS,  
LOOK WHO'S HERE !

Leo and Agnes Sinn (Hq) hope to be with us in Springfield, Missouri in the Spring of '94.

Claude Ball (B), Linford C. Owen (B), Bob Schutt (A), Dick Langerveld (B) and "Doc" Michaud (Rcn) added sugar to the pot.

John and Laura Erwin (Hq) added sweets and promised to get to Springfield.

Don and Martha Belland (B) fondly wish they could get the spunk to join us.

Russ Steele and Judge John D. Goodin chipped in from the Third Armored.

LOOK WHAT THEY FOUND!

Not only did Fred turn up Joe Converse (Hq., A) in Vermont [p.3], but Joe sent us the address of his buddy:

703rd Road Block-12-

Prosper Ganler (Hq), 922 Elysian Field Ave.,  
New Orleans, LA 70117-8548.

What we want from Joe and Prosper are  
their questions as to what concerns them  
about us. How can we help them? Do they know  
other "strays"? Please join us. and try get  
to our reunions. Ever the best to you!

-----  
HAIL, JOE MITCH!

A call from Bob Schutt (A) some days  
ago, was one of a few who told me that Ernie  
Silva (B) had checked out. Bob told me he had  
been recruited to be Assistant Treasurer of  
our association. He had not retired for long!

This morning he had a note for me that  
Joe and Bea Mitch (C) 258 Spring St., Port  
Austin, MI 48467, reported in his "buddy"  
stray, Steven W. Popovitch (C) 6341 22nd Ave.  
S.W., Seattle, WA 98106. Steve, originally  
was from Pottsville, PA. Joe bought him a  
membership and subscription for the R.B.  
Let's get Steve to write and join us at our  
reunions!

703rd Tank Destroyer Bn.  
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