

Mules Might Give Horse Laugh To 805th TD's Immobilized Motors

WITH THE 5TH ARMY, March 6—Although isolated by mud and ice on the summit of a ridge overlooking the Po Valley, half of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion continues firing on enemy pillboxes and personnel and keeps up a combat record begun in Tunisia.

Only by means of field radio and pack mule does the battalion maintain contact with the outside world. Yet it maintains constant fire on German positions, celebrating today its 400th day of combat.

Even the battalion's command post, from which Lt. Col. Camden W. McConnell of Punxsutawney, Pa., directs his men, is isolated in this mountainous country.

The isolation bothers the battalion's personnel, not so much because of the inconvenience, as because of embarrassment at mechanized soldiers having to be dependent upon jaunty Italian mules that unconcernedly climb the steep slopes on which the unit's mobilized equipment would bog down.

In England and Tunisia, the 805th Battalion was equipped with half-tracks and 75 mm. guns, and in southern Italy with three-inch guns towed by 6x6 trucks.

INITIAL BATTLE

When it entered combat in Tunisia, tank destroying was mostly a "hit and run" affair, with each crew naming its own stakes. On busy days, more than a dozen German tanks were destroyed. Two days after firing its first angry rounds on Feb. 16, 1943, 16 enemy tanks were knocked out by A Company, then led by Capt. Andrew A. Hamlet of Phenix, Va.

Pioneering problems were plentiful. There were no phone communications to higher headquarters; liaison officers traveled great distances and rarely found the 805th command post which displaced two and three times a day; the half-tracks traveled 40 or 50 miles a day on various sectors threatened by German tanks. The battalion suffered its gun losses at Kasserine Pass, but had its revenge with a

Harry Hopkins' Son 'Short Snorts' Stalin

LONDON, March 6 (UP)—A Sgt. Robert Hopkins, photographer son of President Roosevelt's personal adviser, made Marshal Joseph Stalin a "short snorter" at Yalta, a London Daily Herald columnist revealed today.

Sgt. Hopkins obtained a tenuous note at Yalta where he took pictures. Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt who were both "short snorters" signed a bill along with young Hopkins who then obtained Stalin's signature.

greater toll on the enemy. In one historic incident, Pvt. Zenon E. Trasewick of Bridgeport, Conn., knocked out five Mark IVs with exactly six rounds.

The three-inch towed guns which the battalion brought to Italy entered the lines on Nov. 30, 1943, near Mount Magliore. At the headwaters of the Volturno River and across the hills north of Venafro, the 805th supported the French Expeditionary Corps and later the 34th Infantry Division for a month at Cassino. The 805th's next sector was the Anzio beachhead—with the 1st Special Service Force and later the 3rd and 36th Infantry Divisions for a total of 91 combat days before shoving off for Rome.

Forward observers, Cpl. Peter R. Shapov of San Fernando, Calif., and Sgt. Keene W. Nesmith of Fruitland, Wash., operated a 3rd Division observation post and both won Bronze Stars for adjusting the fire that liquidated three German tanks and a flak wagon. Near Cisterna, 1st Lt. Arpod Sabo of Buffalo, N. Y., boldly jumped on a Mark VI and emptied his carbine on the crew, after he and Sgt. Phillip Malahoski of Eyrone, Pa., had halted the tank with bazooka fire. A Distinguished Service Cross was given Lt. Sabo

and a Bronze Star given Sgt. Malahoski.

For several weeks near Rome, the 805th men trained and maneuvered. Their new tank destroyers first contacted the enemy below Pisa at Colle Salvetti, where their roles were artillery and antitank. Acting as infantry, the reconnaissance company, commanded by Capt. Congress W. Ellerbe of Lakeland, Fla., held a portion of the front lines at Pisa.

AIDED INFANTRY

Over the Gothic barricades from Florence to Firenzuola and past Mount Altuzza into the Idice Valley, the battalion supported variously the 85th, 88th, 34th and 91st Infantry Divisions. During a fight near Castel De Rio, Sgt. Fred Golini of Astoria, Long Island, sped his destroyer ahead to open fire on a farmhouse from which 35 Germans ran outside and were captured by A Company.

Last October the 805th men ran their angle-climbing machines to the summit of a ridge that falls to the Po Valley. They soon became isolated.

Activated during early 1941 from Pennsylvania National Guardsmen, men of the 805th Battalion have received the following decorations: Two Distinguished Service Crosses, three Silver Stars, three Legion of Merits, 25 Bronze Stars, and 120 Purple Hearts. The battalion in all has supported four corps, seven divisions, and four task forces.



MULE TRAIN USED TO SUPPLY TROOPS WINTER '44. PASSING BN CP.

REUNION AUGUST 3, 4

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