

803d TANK DESTROYER BN.



PERSONAL ACCOUNT BY A. R. MALDE

- 1941 ROSTER
- U.S. ARMY OUTLINE OF
BATTALION COMBAT

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PREFACE

This is a story, as well as a narrative or a documentary. It's about 5 years as a member of the armed forces during probably the biggest war this country has encountered. I wrote it to document the years that the few of us who were fortunate enough to stay with the 803rd completed our enlistment in this particular battalion from the time it was started until it was disbanded. It was a period of almost 5 years for the battalion and incidentally a period of 2 days over 5 years for us who were with the battalion.

Some of us were designated non-coms from the beginning. I was designated a common soldier with no particular talents, so this is dedicated to those whose responsibilities laid on their shoulders and to all the men who took part in and were part of the 103rd Anti Tank Battalion and the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

When I enlisted I was a mere 20-years, 2 months and 8 days old. When I finished I was 25-years, 2 months and 10 days old. Some were younger than I, some were older but in a good sense I think it might be noted all of us were a lot older in many ways, when we returned.

We had many good times together, and saw many things not many people live to tell about. My hat goes off to veterans of Korea and Vietnam, many of whom saw more action than we did, but we saw our share of it and that goes for us who were just behind the lines. I would like very much if any who receive this book, who have experiences that should be included in the book would write them up and submit them to me. I would be glad to make them available (in one form or another) preferably as part of this book - if and when it could be revised.

Campaign Participation Credit:

Campaigns credited to the battalion are as follows:

World War II

Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe.

Also awarded to C Company were decorations consisting of Presidential Unit Citation and the Belgian Fourragere.

Following is a summary of service accredited to the 303rd Cavalry, the unit originating the 103rd Anti Tank and the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion:

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

303rd Cavalry

Constituted 1 January 1968 in the Washington Army National Guard as the 303d Cavalry, a parent regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System; concurrently organized to consist of Troop E (see ANNEX 1), an element of the 81st Infantry Brigade.

ANNEX 1

Organized in November 1889 in the Washington territorial militia at Tacoma as the Tacoma City Troop. (State of Washington admitted to the Union 11 November 1889).

Mustered into the Washington National Guard 27 June 1890 as Troop B, 1st Cavalry.

Called into Federal service 18 June 1916 for service along the Mexican border; mustered into Federal service 28 June 1916 at Camp Murray, Tacoma; mustered out of Federal service 15 February 1917 at Vancouver Barracks, Washington.

Drafted into Federal service 5 August 1917.

Consolidated 19 September 1917 with Troop D, 1st Cavalry (organized May 1917 at Spokane), to form Company B, 116th Train Headquarters and Military Police, an element of the 41st Division.

Redesignated 1 November 1918 as the 217th Company, Military Police Corps.

Redesignated 15 January 1919 as the 26th Military Police Company.

Demobilized 14 July 1919 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Former Troop B, 1st Cavalry, reorganized and Federally recognized 18 August 1920 at Tacoma as Troop B, 2d Cavalry (former Troop D, 1st Cavalry--hereafter separate lineage).

Redesignated 16 May 1922 as Troop B, 58th Machine Gun Squadron.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 November 1924 as Headquarters Troop, 24th Cavalry Division

Converted and redesignated 30 September 1940 as Headquarters Company, 103rd Antitank Battalion, and relieved from assignment to the 24th Cavalry Division.

Inducted into Federal service 10 February 1941 at Tacoma.

Reorganized and redesignated 24 July 1941 as Headquarters Company, 103d Infantry Battalion, Antitank.

Converted and redesignated December 1941 as Headquarters Company, 803d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Inactivated 1 December 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Redesignated 13 September 1946 as Headquarters Company, 803d Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and Federally recognized 18 March 1947 in the Washington National Guard at Centralia as Headquarters Company, 803d Heavy Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 February 1949 as Headquarters and Service Company, 803d Heavy Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 September 1950 as Headquarters and Service Company, 803d Tank Battalion.

Consolidated 15 April 1959 with the Medical Detachment, 803d Tank Battalion (see Annex 2), and consolidated unit reorganized and redesignated as Headquarters Company, 1st Tank Battalion, 303d Armor.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 April 1960 as Headquarters Company, 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 303d Armor.

Consolidated 1 March 1963 with Company C, 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 303d Armor (see Annex 3), and consolidated unit designated as Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 303d Armor.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 January 1968 as Troop E, 303d Cavalry, an element of the 81st Infantry Brigade.

Location changed 1 January 1980 to Camp Murray, Tacoma.

ANNEX 2

Organized and Federally recognized 19 September 1940 in the Washington National Guard at Tacoma as the Medical Detachment, 103d Antitank Battalion.

Inducted into Federal service 10 February 1941 at Tacoma.

Reorganized and redesignated 24 July 1941 as the Medical Detachment, 103d Infantry Battalion, Antitank.

Converted and redesignated 15 December 1941 as the Medical Department Detachment, 803d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Inactivated 1 December 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Reorganized and Federally recognized 18 March 1947 in the Washington National Guard at Centralia as the Medical Detachment, 803d Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 February 1949 as the Medical Detachment, 803d Heavy Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 September 1950 as the Medical Detachment, 803d Tank Battalion.

ANNEX 3

Organized 8 February 1910 in the Washington National Guard at Centralia as Company M, 2d Infantry.

Called into Federal service 18 June 1916 for service along the Mexican border; mustered into Federal service 28 June 1916 at Camp Murray, Tacoma; mustered out of Federal service 8 October 1916 at American Lake, Washington.

Called into Federal service 25 March 1917; drafted into Federal service 5 August 1917

Redesignated 19 September 1917 as Company M, 161st Infantry, an element of the 41st Division.

Demobilized 19 March 1919 at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Consolidated 6 July 1920 with Company G, 3d Infantry (see ANNEX 4), and consolidated unit reorganized and Federally recognized in the Washington National Guard at Centralia as Company L, Tank Corps.

Redesignated 16 May 1922 as the 41st Tank Company and assigned to the 41st Division.

Reorganized and redesignated 17 September 1940 as Company C, 103d Antitank Battalion.

Inducted into Federal service 10 February 1941 at Centralia.

Reorganized and redesignated 24 July 1941 as Company C, 103d Infantry Battalion, Antitank.

Converted and redesignated 15 December 1941 as Company C, 803d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Inactivated 1 December 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Reorganized and Federally recognized 5 August 1947 in the Washington National Guard at Centralia as Company D, 803d Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 February 1949 as Company C, 803d Heavy Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 September 1950 as Company C, 803d Tank Battalion.

Reorganized and redesignated 15 April 1959 as Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, 303d Armor.

Reorganized and redesignated 1 April 1960 as Company C, 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 303d Armor.

ANNEX 4

Organized 15 November 1917 in the Washington State
Guard at Centralia as Company G, 3d Infantry.
Federally recognized 30 September 1918 at Centralia.
Mustered out of state service in 1919 at Centralia.

COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 803D TD BATTALION

(Submitted by one of the libraries of the army as
requested earlier)

Inducted 10 Feb 1941

Redesignated 103d AT Bn to 103d Inf Bn AT 24 July 41,
103d Inf Bn AT to 803d TD Bn 15 Dec 41, 803d Tank Bn 13
Sept 46 (date not shown on original document). Arrived
France 13 June 44; departed France 23 Nov 45; arrived NYPE
29 Nov 45. Inactivated 1 Dec 45, U.S.

COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS

13 Jun 44 to 24 July 44

Landed Omaha Beach 13 June. Assigned First Army,
attached to V Corps. Supported infantry attacks vic
Isigny, 15 June. Attached to 3d Armd Div for attack in vic
Villard Fossard 27 June. Reverted to 29th Inf Div, 30
June. In close support of Infantry in securing St. Lo.
Attached to XIX Corps July 44.

25 July 44 to 24 Sept 44

Vic of St Amand, France, In support of 8th Inf in
crossing Alane River, 1 Sept. Provided flank protection
for Corps.

16 Sept 44 to 26 Oct 44

In close support of 30th Inf Div north of Aachen. In
defensive positions vic Hersogenrath, 15 Oct 44. Attached
to VII Corps 27 Oct.

27 Oct 44 to 9 Nov 44

Rest and maintenance, 27 Oct to 9 Nov. Attached 4th
Inf. Div (VII Corps) vic Zwiefall 9 Nov.

10 Nov 44 to 6 Dec 44

Fired harassing, indirect and interdictory fire.

7 Dec 44 to 15 Dec 44

Rest and maintenance. Moved vic of Mondorf, Luxembourg 7 Dec.

16 Dec 44 to 22 Mar 45

Supported drive across Germany to vic of Röhne. Attached to 5th Inf Div Arty Dec 44. (Maintenance of vehicles 7-10 Jan.) Moved to vic of Ettelbruck 19 June. Assisted Inf clean up pockets of resistance along Our River 28 Jan. Attached to 5th Inf Div Arty, maintaining TD defense of Div Area 31 Jan 45. In support of Div crossing Sauer River 7 Feb 45. Crossed Prüm River in support of attack to the East, 25 Feb 45. Moved to vic Dockendorf 26 Feb. Supported infantry in attack to the Kyll River 28 Feb. TD support of infantry in attack and assault crossing of Moselle River 15 Mar. Maintained anti-mechanized defense of Div Area and support of infantry attack South of the Moselle River 16-19 March. Moved to vic of Sponheim, 20 March to Wonsheim 21 March.

22 Mar 45 to 18 Apr 45

Crossed Rhine River, moved to vic Friesenheim, 22 March. Crossed the Main River, moved to vic Frankfurt 27 March. Maintenance and training 30 Mar to 7 April. (Some elements assisted in mopping up enemy pockets subsequent 2 April). Div attached to III Corps, 1st Army 8 Apr. Moved to Ellringhausen, 9 Apr, Continued in support of Div attack. Maintaining anti-mechanized defense.

18 Apr 45 to 27 Apr 45

Engaged in guarding installations and in military government. Attached to 5th Inf Div, vic Ramsbeck, for guard and patrol missions. Reverted to 5th Div Arty in vic Staffelbach, 27 Apr.

28 Apr to 2 May 45

Maintenance of vehicles and preparation for move with Div to vic of Regan 28-29 Apr.

3 May to 8 May 45

Elements support attack to the East, and patrol west bank of Muhl River. Rest of Bn continued anti-mechanized defense of Div area. Moved to Vimperk (Winterberg) 6 May.

A HISTORY OF THE 803rd TANK DESTROYER BATTALION FROM THE BEGINNING THROUGH WORLD WAR II AND UNTIL ITS CONCLUSION

The 103rd Anti Tank Battalion

This will be a history in narration form as I was with the battalion from its inception until it was broken up in 1945.

In the fall of 1940 there was a crisis in Europe as Hitler took his troops into the Sudetanland (better known today and then as Czechoslovakia). I was working at the town newspaper (the Kitsap County Herald) and as there was a radio sales and repair shop down the street (the owner also doubled as the main linotype operator for the paper) there was an amplifier blaring into the streets and one particular day he had it on as loud as it would go and the national news was covering Hitler's speech as he was about to invade Czechoslovakia. The speech was brazen and was not lacking in German inflection and was positive in its intention that the German people were invincible and that they would end up ruling the world and that this was no German pipe dream. Not being able to understand the German language, it was not easy for me to define his speech. However anyone listening would have no trouble understanding the tone he carried to the German people who were gathered in the courtyard below. At each pause in the message the enormous crowd responded with "Sieg Heil!" and the mood grew and grew. Later on the news analysts concurred with my conclusions.

As the days wore from that moment it grew into a feeling that war was inevitable for the United States. Indeed the feeling, even during our high school days, was that we of our graduating class would not be spared the job of participating in this upcoming war. My class graduated in 1938. This was only one of many classes that would spawn soldiers (cannon fodder) for the good of the nation.

One day as I was cleaning up the pages from the paper of that week (I was a printer) a young man came in and we talked about enlisting in the service. I told him I wouldn't enlist in the army as I already had experience in the CCC's with the army and that I thought I'd be happier in the Navy. A week or so later another young man came in and advised me a recruiter was canvassing the town looking for recruits for a new outfit that was being

formed. The rumor was that it was a suicide outfit. This didn't exactly send shivers down my spine and by the time lunch break rolled around I was convinced. I went home for lunch and also to get my parents' approval to enlist. (I was still under the age of consent). My parents probably judged I would have to go eventually (it was during the last stages of the great depression - which affected many families at that time) and that this would give the government a chance to feed at least one in the family. (I didn't mention anything about a suicide outfit).

I got consent and on September 30, 1940 I went (with about 40 other volunteers) down to Tacoma to the armory to put my name on the dotted line. We were all then sworn in. The 103rd Anti Tank Battalion was basically formed at this time. We were not detained except that two of the volunteers who had stopped on the way down to have more than a few ended up in the wrong room, were signed and were immediately dispatched to Fort Warden at Port Townsend to the Coast Artillery. I suspect they were in for a rude awakening the following morning.

Notwithstanding, this indeed was the beginning of the 103rd Anti Tank Battalion, consisting of two cavalry troops of the Washington National Guard and all of its recruits. These recruits were from Poulsbo, Puyallup,

Centralia and Tacoma and were to drill once a week and to be inducted into the standing army of the United States at a later date. The two guard units were from Centralia and Tacoma.

NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING

The following week, after the enlistment of so many volunteers, the National Guard set out to make military men of them. The older members of the guard set up close order drill sessions and with the help of the newly made non-coms this training was actuated and resulted in a well established base for further military training in years to come.

In Poulsbo the designated places for this were farm fields and several sessions were carried out this way. It was soon decided it would be better to assemble the whole company in Tacoma as the Tacoma armory was a fitting place for drilling and the main components of Company A

and Headquarters and the Medics and B Company were formulated in this area.

A Company, however did its drilling on its own and when the time came to be inducted into the main branch of the military the men were very well seasoned. No boot camp was needed for these men for this reason.

It was decided to have these men furnish their own transportation to the Narrows Bridge and cross the bridge on foot (approximately one mile) and meet the army trucks on the other side to furnish transportation to the Tacoma Armory. Shortly after the Company was established this procedure was carried out. This didn't cause any hardship and car pools were formed and each drill night took up the whole evening with going and coming.

On one of these foot treks across the bridge several of us remarked the bridge certainly had a lot of play in it as we could see people who had started off across ahead of us would be lower down into the bottom of the dips of the bridge and actually disappear for a time and then come back up to appear again. We wondered about this but were told this was only a phenomena of the design of the bridge to account for the play that would consequently be a part of the suspension action of the bridge. This seemed logical and was accepted without question until about the following weekend when the bridge collapsed in a wind storm.

Our treks to Tacoma continued however and a ferry system was established by the state to continue until a new span could be built. (the bridge wasn't rebuilt until after the war). We continued to use the trucks to carry us to the armory. Drilling at the armory was indeed better than going off into some farmer's pasture. The commands rang off the armory walls and contributed to better rhythm and gave the men more confidence. We also were drilled in small arms nomenclature and maintenance.

GOING OFF TO BE PART OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

On the 10th of February 1941 we all assembled at the armory for active duty. Accommodations were given to us until we were taken to Fort Lewis for permanent quarters.

Our stint at Tacoma was only for a matter of two or three days at the most. Most of this time was taken up with drill and care and cleaning of equipment. Some time
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was given for limited leave in downtown Tacoma. By the time we left for Fort Lewis we were glad to go.

On arriving at Fort Lewis we found ourselves in newly cleaned barracks. Time was spent cleaning putty off newly installed windows and maintaining the immediate grounds and policing the area. Our barracks were scrubbed out and made fit for the housing of our men. Two two-story barracks were assigned to each company and a day room. There was also a small office provided for the company commander, Captain Lawrence Nelson.

There were separate barracks for Headquarters Company farther up on our side of the parade ground and Battalion Headquarters buildings adjacent to one end of the parade ground. A flag was located nearby and a guard house was at the other side of headquarters at the main outer limits of the battalion area. On the other side of the parade ground were B Company and C Company in that order. The medics made up part of the headquarters compound at the headquarters perimeter.

Our armament consisted of one 37mm anti tank gun. This gun was portioned out from time to time for each Company to train with. It was a towed weapon, the prime mover being a 1/2 ton truck. We had no rifles, the army was caught very short of firearms, our uniforms consisted of what the National Guard had to offer but fairly up-to-date although the new helmets were still to be used by any of the military including the Navy. So we used the old wash-basin helmets and considered them appropriate. I was immediately given the assignment of bugler, not necessarily for my talent but it was learned that I played trumpet in my high school band.

Shortly after we arrived at Fort Lewis we started receiving draftees from Fort Ord and Camp Louis Obispo, in California. Some of these were Californians from various walks of life, and others were from the midwest.

Later we received another group of men from California who were mostly from the midwest, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and the farming states. When you hear the word "They grow them big back there" that is exactly true, at least it was in the case of this contingent. These men were primarily well over six-feet and in the 200 lb. plus range. They also proved to be of very fine caliber. They were probably chosen for their familiarity with machinery as many of them were farm hands and mostly all stayed with the battalion until it was disbanded.

Later still, after Pearl Harbor, we received another group of men who were trained-in and proved to be valuable additions to the battalion.

When we talk about a tank destroyer battalion we are talking about an army contingent that only existed for the duration of world war II. Many of us who served in this capacity feel the army was more than hasty in doing away with this group. There were many battalions of this type and most of them are well-documented at Fort Knox at the Tank Destroyer Memorial set up there. There was also an attempt to establish a memorial at Fort Hood, Texas, however it has been abandoned, to my knowledge.

TRAINING AT FORT LEWIS PRIOR TO PEARL HARBOR

The time we spent at Fort Lewis was from February 1941 to July 1942, approximately 18 months.

During this time we set up a cadre of boot camp personnel to take care of the draftees that were sent to us. An area was set aside somewhere in the Fort Lewis area and it lasted for about six weeks.

After that training in all phases of the army procedures were gone into. As we were at this time (and most of our existence) in the infantry we did a lot of infantry exercises. We were finally issued rifles and these also consisted of the old Springfields the army had on hand since WW II, although many of them were of more recent model. The Gerand model had not been given out as yet to most units (probably because it hadn't been fully produced as yet). Finally, later on we were even issued the old Enfields of British origin.

Transportation was mainly by half-ton trucks. These trucks were issued to us because it was ascertained that the battalion would employ towed guns. So we had the trucks but no guns. As long as we were in the towed gun category we were never given any more than three 37mm's for the entire battalion. Light maneuvers were assimilated out on the old pole-line road at Fort Lewis. We did field training out in the old artillery firing range and moved around among the old shell craters.

DOING ARMY MANEUVERS - (The McCleary Maneuvers)

The only full-scale maneuvers given by the army was a local maneuver given by the IX corps for the 41st division located in North Fort Lewis, a new area just built to accommodate more personnel being added to the army, to prepare for combat which seemed grossly inevitable. The 41st was also originally a national guard unit.

This maneuver lasted about a week and though there was much moving around on the roads of midwestern Washington it consisted of mainly sleeping out in the rain with our shelter-halves. Many roadside stores established mainly to accommodate stump ranchers in the vicinity were descended upon and almost wiped out of supplies by hungry GI's.

Sleeping in shelter-halves consisted of sharing your half of the pup tent with whatever partner you happened to pick up and putting up with his sleeping habits and trying to keep dry while the tents leaked badly. Sleeping was mostly just resting. (resting???)

MORALE OF THE MEN

There was and probably always will be a rule in the service that you have to use up all your rations before you are issued more otherwise you will be docked the next time around. This practice was not lost on the command of our battalion so in order to have enough deficit in our gasoline supply we went on various trips of rather scenic value rather than military (although it also took in token maneuvers to make it legitimate.).

But it must be mentioned also that these excursions were also a great moral booster for the men. There were also other activities.

For instance a certain number of men had musical experience so a band was formed, primitive to say the least. However what this band lacked in quality it made up for in enthusiasm. No longer was one bugler needed to perform reveille in the morning or retreat at nightly formations. The band was the pride and joy of the battalion and the commanding officers were justifiably proud of it. However (whether the talent of the band could only be stretched so far or any other reason) the band was used rather sparingly.

however it was not to be denied its day in the public eye. The battalion participated in a smoker at one of the arenas in downtown Tacoma - so the band furnished the music for this event. It seems that many of the men became interested in the event so much of the scheduled pieces to be played fell by the wayside. There were other reasons for the band to be of limited resources. For one thing instruments had to be borrowed (this was probably made harder by the ill-rated performance at the smoker) and secondly but not leastly those of the battalion who had real professional experience refused to participate as band members.

Eventually the band evolved into a drum and bugle corps but that was a long way down the road.

At one time there was a ring erected in the company area as there were a few professional pugilists in the company (one had been a sparring partner for the world's middleweight champ) nonetheless not many fights were put on. Not enough opponents for their particular weight class and the fact that many of the former boxers declined to put on anything but an exhibition and some actually felt they would rather pass on a vocation that was not too gratuitous.

Aside from going down the pole line road in the rear of a half-ton truck (there were many chuck-holes along with shell holes) life was almost dreary. I was on guard duty each 3rd day as the duty was rotated among the three line companies. The headquarters company also received the duty occasionally but not as much as the line companies. I was also spelled off from time to time by another bugler in Company A. the boogie woogie bugler wasn't in Company B however, but in Company C. The best bugler in the battalion was in Company B. He was a regular from the army and was a top notch bugler. We were assigned practice sessions and practiced from the official army hand book for buglers. The bugler from Company B however was soon rated a sergeant and was given a line job with a platoon. Eventually he transferred out to the Philippines after Pearl Harbor.

Ratings weren't given to buglers except as Technician fifth class. this was equal to a corporal in pay but a step below him in rank. Bugling seemed to be my forte and the times I wasn't on guard was given over to routine formation duties with the rest of the company and I was made to fit in the best way possible.

Life seemed to drag on. However occasionally a weekend pass to home and as time passed on eventually a furlough. I was given a week during the fall of '41 and spent the whole furlough working. Foulsbo at that time was the proud possessor of a cod fish plant. The ships that supplied it were sail driven schooners a-la the Gloucester type and caught their fish in the arctic waters of the Bering Sea. At this particular date (in early fall) there were two ships tied up at the plant (with their catch one of the best in years). One ship was a four-master and the other a three-master. They were both loaded to the gunwales with fish. It took a week to unload the two of them - which we accomplished, man and boy, manpower now being scarce.

Work was beginning to pick up and I had participated in working the waterfront in Seattle during the beginning of the blitzkreig before I joined up with Uncle Sam. These were separate stints on Puget Sound freight boat work as the volume of the work couldn't keep up with the work force. One of these sign-ons was with a boat carrying 300 barrels of nitrocellulose to DuPont, Washington. On the way back to Seattle we picked up 150 carboys of Nitric acid. this was a twenty four hour trip.

Getting back to army life, one excursion we had was a combination R&R and operation maneuver to the Pacific Ocean at Westport and Twin Harbors State Park. We bought out the local supply of crab out of our Company fund and dispensed with it. We also had some exercises in road march maneuvers and simulated warfare. We had some free time to acquaint ourselves with an unknown assignment that was to come up later in the year.

PEARL HARBOR

Soon to come would change the nature of our original routine to a battalion on the alert. Not knowing about Pearl Harbor ahead of time, I was finally given a two week furlough starting on Monday the 8th of December and continuing on until the 22. I had the previous weekend starting Friday evening the 5th of December tacked on to make it about 17 days in all. The only thing was that on December 7th we were all ordered back to camp. There was no TV then but the radio became alive Sunday afternoon with the news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese.

At some juncture in this time frame there had been created what was to be later known as the Axis, the three-nation alliance headed up by Hitler of the German Reich; Mussolini of the Italian fascist government; and Hirohito of the Japanese who had already seized Manchuria. The surprise attack didn't exactly catch us prepared. (As was already previously noted, we still had only three 37 mm guns in our anti-tank arsenal).

Taking the road back to camp we encountered convoys of troops from Fort Lewis already on their way out of the fort. Mostly this was to get them out of the perimeter of the main camp. It was a hurry-up decision and we saw trucks along the road that had overturned in the hasty effort to get out of the vicinity.

When we got back to camp we found the whole battalion on the alert. Field equipment was strewn over every bed and the barracks were in a turmoil. It was finally decided we would turn in here as it was too late to get out at the present time. The next morning the battalion was put on full alert and moved out into the field area surrounding the fort. Later in the day an order came down from the main post for two messengers to report to message center. I was acquainted with one of the non-coms that was aware of the order and he asked me if I was willing to go to the main post with him as a volunteer. I decided it was okay so we requisitioned a half-ton truck from the company and went on up. When we reached the main post we found out it had all been a mistake and that they had not really wanted to send the order out but being as it was a routine requisition the order had gone out anyway. We soon had a conference with the sergeant at the desk.

It was decided that the purpose of the requisition was to furnish two men from each army group on a day-to-day basis to distribute the officers' bulletin to the officers quarters on the post. My friend and partner immediately convinced the message center sergeant that we were indeed needed for that particular purpose as long as they were putting out the bulletin (which was on a daily basis). He agreed (as long as it was kept rather quiet - as it didn't actually live up to the original regulation - but the whole fort was on an emergency footing as it was) (wasn't it?).

Meanwhile, the 103rd Anti Tank Battalion was given the assignment of patrolling the Washington Coast to look out for Japanese submarines (Back to Humptulips and Westport). I will tell you of an incident regarding this but first I will say that the entire time the battalion was out patrolling the coast my non-com friend and myself were doing our job at the post.

However it was soon regarded as superfluous to put out the post bulletin, leaving us instead to do just odd assignments from the message center. Our post at the office was just one door from the General in command of the whole northwest area. So the whole assignment was to say the least a rather fragile one.

Each evening we returned to the company area that had been left in charge of two men from the company to keep the barracks warm. We accepted this as we were able to sleep in our beds and also eat the food rationed out at the quartermaster corps at the main post. They were always on double rations just for this purpose to handle transients and truck drivers and the like.

Now for the incident involving another member of the company as told to me by a friend long after the war in fact very recently (within the last five years). It seems that a Japanese submarine was actually sighted off one of the beaches of the area being patrolled by our men. This particular party was able to contact a plane also patrolling the coast. The submarine was sighted by the plane and promptly sunk. My friend added an after-note to this strange story. He eventually transferred into the air corps and came in contact with the actual pilot who flew the plane that sunk the sub and who verified the sinking. Tall stories such as this are left entirely to the reader's acceptance.

All I can say is that these were very precarious times in the western part of our country. The homes were blacked out and the military areas (such as the naval shipyards and other related facilities) were surrounded by barrage balloons furnished by the army.

Chapter 2

LIFE AT THE POST PRIOR TO PEARL AND AFTERWARD

Adjacent to us at the far south end of the post where our battalion area was located was a light tank battalion. this unit had the honor of furnishing background to a movie that was starring Wallace Beery. Farther on North were brick barracks furnished for regular army units. the most prestigious of these was the 3rd division that had many awards hung on its guidon. It was the division of the 99th Anti Tank Battalion, which happened to be our sister outfit. Southeast of us Grey field, which was the home of a blimp (flying part of the time) and various small planes. East of this was a mule detachment. North again the brick barracks continued, home to an engineering regiment. The main post consisted of medics and quartermaster units, the main administration building and the post guard house.

The guard duty was portioned out and divided between the personnel on the post. When it came our turn we were issued live ammunition to guard the prisoners who were being held there as they were mainly candidates for places like Leavenworth. The main guardhouse was another brick affair with bars. (The other barracks also had bars but for other purposes.) We had the distinction on post guard duty to fire the old French 75mm cannon positioned outside the guardhouse. This was done at retreat while the United States flag was being lowered. A blank shell was used which could be heard all over the main fort.

Other than the makeshift band we had for battalion formations we seldom were able to march to military music. However, on one or two occasions we participated in the Fort Lewis post formations. At these formations marching was done to regular army unit bands whose main function was military marches and concerts. The men in our battalion were awakened to what real military parade duty consisted of by marching to the music of these military bands.

Back to Fort Lewis

Eventually the task of looking for submarines seemed to the high command to be of little merit so the battalion was released back to Fort Lewis. In a very short time we were to finally receive armament to carry out the cause we were inducted to fulfill from the beginning.

Chapter 2

Along with receiving the armament we were directed that we would no longer be the 103rd Anti Tank Battalion. We would henceforth be the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. This was cheerfully accepted and the men dedicated themselves to perceiving and employing the new armament: half track armored vehicles. We also received a limited amount of half tracks mounted with the latest version of the old French 75 mm rifle.

Our battalion was now at full strength. We proceeded in maintenance and dedicated ourselves to becoming the new armament force in the U. S. Army. We had two sister battalions now, the 899th TD's and the 776th TD's. One was located at Fort Lewis, the old 99th Anti Tank Battalion, the other located somewhere else in the U. S.

As we had been from the beginning of our induction, we were not attached to any unit except that we received our orders from post headquarters, who in turn received all orders regarding our unit from Army headquarters. We were special units unattached for the time being. We eventually found out what this plan was to entail later in our tenure. We were beginning to realize we were actually being considered for some mission of some kind regarding the war, which had been declared immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

As I mentioned earlier my non-com friend and myself were doing messenger duty for the main post at Fort Lewis right after the declaration of war. It was during a lull in our duties at the post I decided to get a haircut at the post barber shop located just a few feet from our message center. It was there that I found a Seattle newspaper to read while I was waiting to be barbered. As I turned to the front page there was a story of the first casualties reported back from Pearl and I found myself looking at the pictures of two of my friends from Poulsbo who had become Ensigns in the Navy (through their ROTC at the University of Washington). They had both gone down on the battleship Oklahoma when it was bombed and sunk.

As the problem of gasoline emerged we found ourselves coping with the predicament that we would need hundreds of gallons more in our supplies to take care of the new equipment. (there was no shortage of gasoline and army personnel could fill up their civilian automobiles at the post service station for ten cents per gallon).

To compensate for the impending shortage the battalion made a road march down into Oregon as far as Roseburg. This was also combined with maneuvering so to speak. At any rate it was an effective way to use up gasoline and served the purpose of cheering up the troops as well.

Over a year of Fort Lewis was beginning to tell on the men as many felt they were being overlooked for duty. As well as that many of the men in line outfits from the fort mocked us and referred to us as "Boy Scouts" and our barracks as "Boys Town". We were very much in waiting for the call that soon came.

Around the first of June, 1942, we received word we would be sent to Fort Hood, Texas, for training for overseas duty. This place was chosen as it was ideally suited for training for desert warfare due to the arid and desolate areas it afforded. Nobody was disappointed. Many of our men had never been to Texas and looked forward to being there. We also missed going on the Louisiana maneuvers which we were to find out later to be a blessing in disguise.

So the next few weeks found us preparing for the trip, loading railroad flatcars with our half tracks and getting other equipment ready to move.

Finally, the order came and we loaded up and found ourselves riding through the southern part of our state and on down into Oregon, Nevada, Colorado, seeing the country change before our eyes and finding a strange new environment unfolding before us. Finally after a day or so we stopped at a small way station in Texas known as Copperas Cove and there we unloaded for our trip to Fort Hood, better known as Camp Hood in those days. We were greeted by an unfamiliar sight, a 3-1/2 foot long carcass of a diamond-back rattle snake lying on the ground before us as we alit from the train.

We found ourselves, finally, in a tented area out in the wilds about twenty miles out from the main camp. The first thing we had to contend with was the heat. What a contrast from the damp cool climate of Fort Lewis. Soon we perceived ourselves to be dehydrating rather fast. The solution to this was a brand-new PX set up just off battalion headquarters just down the slope from Co. A. There everyone loaded up on Coke and Dr. Pepper.

TEXAS

Each morning we stood revile at the top of the hill that held the administrative tents of the company. the rest of the company had their quarters farther down the slope but on level ground. The tents progressed on down the slope. There was an old graveyard north of the area that was being removed from its presents location and transported somewhere else. The exhumation wasn't always too efficient according to some of the wags and there were rumors that some of the contents of the bathing hole we used (where the rivulet was dammed) came from the graveyard. Some said the hard leather-like objects we encountered were actually remnants of the cadaver's diaphragm which didn't deteriorate as quickly as other parts of the body. (this didn't stop anyone from bathing - even though sometimes the water was pretty murky after most of the men in the company had been there first.) However bathing was usually reserved for the period of time available just before getting leave into town.

The towns available were Gatesville, the closest to our part of the camp; Waco, farther down the road and the home of Texas A&M; Temple, farther out the other way from the camp and not as accessible as Waco and farther on down the road Fort Worth and Dallas and Houston and also New Orleans and Corpus Christie, for the more adventuresome.

Most would say Camp Hood was as centrally located as any place could be in Texas. It was hot beginning at revile when the temperature often reached 100 degrees before nine o'clock in the morning. There were Lister bags and salt pills distributed at several strategic locations and these were well used. However, the heat did not bother most of us. the majority of us welcomed the change of climate.

Our stay at Fort Hood lasted 6 months. We trained in the desert-like terrain of the fort and found that both our sister battalions, the 776th and the 899th had also been moved there. We saw little of them, however, although once-in-a-while we caught a glimpse of them in their area.

There was one night maneuver that took place that was supposed to get us familiar with driving in blackout. It lasted all-night and ended in the morning with fatigued and frustrated men sleeping in their vehicles. Many of us became lost in the darkness of the maneuver and found it hard to follow two little specks of light that became the tail-lights of the vehicle ahead. Also the terrain consisted of bared branches of chapporal and sage brush that hampered driving and contributed to the difficulty of the maneuver.

Much of the time was spent caring for our new vehicles which we had received at Fort Lewis. There was a special agent from one of the main automobile producing plants in Michigan instructing us in proper use of them. We had received earlier (after Pearl Harbor) several recruits that became another integral part of the battalion. These were men who were trained in mechanics and radio.

During the time we were in Texas I became enamored in the feeling I would like to be in a line platoon. I was finally appointed as a gunner in one of the squads in the third platoon. This turned out to be a failure for some reasons we need not go into. When the captain finally decided what to do with me, I landed in the motor pool as dispatcher - which seemed to me to be a reasonable place to be.

We spent three months in this wilderness. There was one or more opportunity to secure a little relief from the heat of the day as we sent several vehicles out to the river that was close by the camp. We went swimming - which turned out to be wading. Most of the men who were from the middle west were farmers who didn't know how to swim. This didn't matter, anyway, as the river was only about a foot deep. After trying to swim we battled the horse flies. It's a good thing there were no women within twenty miles as no one had swimming apparel.

Once our three months were over we retired to the main camp at Fort Hood. We finally were billeted in barracks. This is where we found out of the whereabouts of the two sister battalions. Not much terrain training seemed to be on the agenda anymore but a lot of close-order-drill. And we found ourselves next to a company of blacks who were segregated by themselves. They would drill a lot and we found ourselves admiring the rhythm and swing of their drilling. They seemed to respond to this in a way that was very unique. After a short time we even picked up the rhythm in our own drilling. It was very helpful.

Toward the last of our stay there we found that we had been scheduled to go to North Africa with our two sister battalions. They finally left before we did. Meanwhile we started preparation for a move. We knew we were destined for overseas and expected this would be Africa as we had trained hard for it. Toward Christmas we had our gear ready for moving and our half-tracks bolted down to flat cars. We finally moved out a day or two before Christmas and found ourselves moving train-wise through Arkansas on Christmas day heading east on the MKT line.

FORT DIX NEW JERSEY

Our destination was Fort Dix. This was already very familiar to any of us who read Joe Palooka in the funnies. Some of the men were given leave the first night we arrived and spent it in New York City. The rest of us were given leave over the New Year festivity. This I remember well as (after a night of revelry) I awoke the next day in my hotel room in Philadelphia with the Mummers Parade going by under our hotel window. This was the first time I had even heard of the mummers, let alone their parade. The parade lasted for hours. I had slept through the first hour.

Fort Dix was indeed a very interesting place. We were permitted to take leave in New York City, we saw the Empire State Building, which at that time was the tallest building in the world, and were able to take the elevator to the top and view the city from there. We also saw an attraction I feel was one of the most hospitable of any place I have ever been (although the English worked very hard to compete - and as far as friendship, the Texans had no rivals). This place was a USO office downstairs in the flat-iron building in Times Square. It consisted of a rest room that would accommodate several men and offered free throw-away razors to shave with. There was a counter near the entrance that gave away free-tickets to shows, ball games, and almost any amusement available.

To begin with, Fort Dix was (to say the least) a very interesting place. There was a gym located nearby our barracks where a GI could go and work out, shoot baskets or do practically anything. Since we were living in an age where working out was confined to only the pro athletes, a group of us shot baskets instead. It was on one of these excursions we noticed a boxing ring put up in the middle of the gym. A little later we noticed a group of men gathered around and in the ring. On further notice we discovered they happened to be some of the most noteworthy boxers in the world: Jimmy Walker, Jack Dempsey, Jimmy Braddock, Tony Galento, and several others whose identity escapes me. We were too awe-stricken to go over to see what was going on. What I surmise is that it was probably a short dress rehearsal for some event coming up. All in all Fort Dix was some kind of glamour place to say the least. The GI's who were stationed there permanently knew it too. Arrogant is a good word to describe them. Whenever you went to the main post to get anything to work with you could expect a hard time.

Nonetheless we had to carry on our duties, so when we weren't doing routine training and exercises we were getting packed for another move. Our exercises were quite routine but I remember one that consisted of us firing our rifles on the rifle range. The temperature was just about an even zero. I don't know if this is normal for this part of the country but I do know from some experience gotten since that they get much of the weather second-hand from our part of the country, and I think I remember people telling us they had similar freezing weather out west.

Whether it was the weather or what, much of our company and I suspect the whole battalion came down with the flu. Shelter halves were put up between bunks to prevent the occupant next to the afflicted from getting it. The epidemic lasted for only a week or so.

Training was sparse but we did have a couple hikes in the suburbs of the post. We noticed the rural atmosphere was quite noticeable and seemed peaceful and much like our small town atmosphere. However I presume this has changed very much since then. It seems the post may be on the endangered species list.

Aside from doing our usual care and cleaning of equipment, we did calisthenics and visited around the post and packed crates for moving. The rumor persisted that we were on the way overseas, otherwise why were we packing and why were we located at such a benign location?

We were given ample leave (some of us had never had a furlough and those who had only a week). Our leave usually consisted of the weekend - Friday after recall until Monday morning for revile. These were mostly spent in the adjacent areas, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington D. C. for the more adventuresome. Washington was noted for all the volunteer female help there and the rumor had it there were about 20 women for each man. Nonetheless dates were found at other locations as USO shows frequently brought females to the post for recreational dances.

Located next to our battalion was a group of Senegalese soldiers who were part of the French Foreign Legion. They were mostly all blacks and very few spoke English. For this reason we found out very little about them except that even they didn't know why they were there. Their uniforms were of their own.

Weekends when leave was out of the question were spent lounging around the barracks. Jazz music over the radio was of the live big band order and consisted of many bands that hounded the New York area. "New York, New York, if you can make it here you can make it anywhere" as the old song goes. (We also learned from the Sunday funnies that Joe Palooka was still soldiering at Fort Dix - although we saw neither hide nor hair of him). Finally one day we had the company picture taken. A handsome piece of work that is hanging on my wall at home at the present. All our new recruits were in it and our battalion was now at full strength for the first time for many moons.

A lot of our strength had been depleted even before we left Fort Lewis. Some went to Fort Lawton, in Seattle, to be in the Quartermaster movement of supplies to Alaska. They were transferred out. At that time they were the envy of all, which was the result of boredom from being at Fort Lewis for so long; also the fact of their close proximity to the big city when they weren't on the move. Also a cadre of men were sent to Camp Carson, Colorado, to form a new Tank Destroyer Battalion. And not a few transferred out to go to the Air Corps (as there was a real need for pilots). This depletion, then was made up by new recruits. Some of which were under age and had very short training periods before coming to us.

PINE CAMP, NEW YORK

Finally the word came. We were leaving. But Pine Camp, New York? What kind of a sissy assignment was this? We railroaded up the Hudson River on north and then west past Utica, Syracuse and some of the early greek names for cities. Finally we landed at Pine Camp just a stone's throw from Watertown, New York. We landed there in March and found there was still snow on the ground. The natives informed us there were only two seasons in this part of the country: winter and summer, only there were only two weeks of summer.

Actually what we didn't know at first was that our stay at Pine Camp was the beginning of our venture overseas, and even though we wouldn't see combat for a year more we were being prepared for the great invasion the allied forces had planned for western europe.

When we arrived at Pine Camp the first idea that occurred to us was "what are we doing up here in this cool place when our sister battalions were over in North Africa?" We actually felt we had been segregated out and that we weren't adequate for combat. What we didn't know was that the army had other plans.

To begin with, we didn't know at first what it was all about. We spent some time cleaning up the barracks and getting our personal gear in order. We found out we had a huge garage building and motor pool complex adjacent to our company area. Pretty soon various pieces of equipment started filtering in.

Down in Texas I had been relieved of my duties of gunner in the third platoon. The Company Commander sought me out one day and told me I was to be the dispatcher for the company vehicles. Well, at least I had a job other than waking people up in the morning and putting them to bed. My duties with the motor pool kept me busy and I had the full whole-hearted support of the motor pool sergeant who seemed relieved there was someone else available to take care of the paper work.

When we reached Fort Dix, however my motor pool duties came to a screeching halt because we no longer had any vehicles to attend to. (It was assumed all our stuff was waiting at the wharf for us to embark). Actually all our stuff was in North Africa on the beach, waiting for us.

At Pine Camp I finally got my duties of dispatcher again and settled down in the huge garage where our motor pool headquarters were. We started getting small equipment at first, some motor cycles, (a Harley and a couple of Indians) some jeeps, half tons, and then finally what we had never really expected, our M-10s.

Why We Were Sent Up Here

Now it was finally beginning to dawn on us. We weren't going to be stationed here permanently, we were actually getting heavy fighting equipment to use in some part of the conflict; which by now was encircling the whole globe.

Mechanics were busy fine tuning the stuff and my job kept getting more and more complicated. I was coached by Captain Vincent in keeping the records in a neat and concise way and he taught me a lot and I caught on quick. I didn't want to go back to just blowing that horn.

One of the side benefits of working at the motor pool, which was located just beyond the observation of the company, was next door. From somewhere in the deep reaches of the high command they had put a group of about five or six WAACS in the garage next to us. This meant visiting and drinking coffee with them was part of the order of the day. After all the only other time you could see women was out on leave, and getting them on a day to day basis was to say the least, a great boon - as long as it was kept secret from the rest of the company (who were too busy at other things - whatever they were - who cared).

Our M-10s came a few at a time and we were soon at full strength, so what was left to do was to keep the machinery in running order. We had three motorcycles. One of the mechanics took one out for a test tryout. Before I go on into this incident I want to tell you I actually had one going and took a couple of laps around the motor pool at one time. But let's see what happened: Our mechanic on his little test jaunt found himself going off the road and ending up in a barbed wire fence. That ended my experimentation with running motor cycles.

One day we received a group of new officers. They were familiar to us but were more or less new to the company. One of them would be our company commander throughout our combat days. What had happened was the army had sent these men over to North Africa to take charge of our equipment. They had gotten there too late, however, as one of the commanders of the other two battalions had ransacked our equipment and stripped off most of the essentials. The army decided it was no use trying to compensate for it and probably decided to change our mission anyway and to give us our new equipment. We had the colonel of that battalion to thank. Later on these two sister battalions of ours were caught cold turkey on Casserine Pass and one of them (the pilfering culprits) was about 75 percent wiped out by the Luftwaffe. This was verified by some of the GIs from this outfit we met much later.

Later on as things began to settle down our new officers decided we needed to be briefed on what the war was doing from week to week. I was selected to do some chart work for this. My job was to clip pertinent drawings from the newspapers (maps of the combat areas) and blow them up so they would be visible when our CO used them to lecture the company. This was fun for me and kept me busy and occupied when my duties weren't needed in the motor pool. It kept me away from my WAACS but Oh well, my new career was just a lot of fun. The lectures took place in the mess hall and kept the interest of the company and was a great moral booster. Most of the news was of the

progress of the Russian front at that time. The war was still in a fairly early stage.

Going into Watertown, N.Y. was an adventure at best, sometimes, as the place was littered with M.P.s. A few skirmishes ensued from time to time. The rest of the weekends developed usually favorably, though and the men found most of the opposite sex and their friends pretty much hospitable. To some of the girls it was a chance to kick up their heels with new faces. It is hard to say how many soldiers passed through this area.

When we finished our tour at Pine Camp we were pretty much outfitted and ready to try out our new equipment.

KILMER

Back to New Jersey, only this time it was to Camp Kilmer, just out of New Brunswick. the billets were fine and the weather was hot. We had inter-battalion baseball as recreation was a must. We also found, again, it was easy to take off for New York City for the weekend.

My duties changed somewhat. It was discerned that my talent for making charts was to be steered to making stencils for marking crates for shipping overseas. It was pretty much understood by now that our destination would be Europe. England was the only place at that time that had any Americans. The fighting in Tunisia was about over by now so our desert training was put on hold.

By the time three weeks passed we were ready to go to our embarkation port and so it was. We left Kilmer and were soon standing on Staten Island ready to board the Queen Mary for our trip to Great Britain.

THE QUEEN MARY

As we stood on the loading pier at New York we noticed at the next pier the overturned hulk of the Normandy, the forrunner of the great ocean ships, built before the war, lying on its side in the water. they hadn't yet decided how to remove the ship.

Boarding the Queen we found our quarters would be on the first deck just under the main deck. The main deck was reserved for officers but our quarters were specially for the service detachment which we found out later was us. Our battalion commander had the foresight to volunteer our services. Our duties were KP, and Gunnery watch. I guess they figured that being gunners for the TDs we would suffice for the guns on the ship. Nevertheless we were the ones. Whatever the job was, we were it, as I found out later. The top deck was entirely of blacks.

What I found out later was that I would have a pin on that had a P on it. It was just this letter on a white background - it meant painter. I was the ship's painter. My good friend the supply sergeant reminded me, "Hey Malde, just think you can go home now and tell everybody that you were the chief painter for the Queen Mary!" I was told when they gave it to me I would be able to roam anywhere on the ship with it. There were guards stationed all over the ship to make sure everyone stayed in their own designated area. I was given a 5-gallon bucket of paint and a stencil brush and stencils and a bunch of boards painted with a black background. The lettering was to be white. (they evidently wanted to make sure I wouldn't run out of white paint.) My working area consisted of a spot just below a companion-way staircase with just enough room for my signs and nothing else. The first day out I was given the job of lettering these boards. The ship listed just slightly from side to side (whether this was from its load or otherwise I have never found out - perhaps if I make it down to Long Beach again I'll ask the tour guides there).

When the ship listed one way the paint spilled out that side, when it listed the other way it spilled the other way. The bucket was brand new and had never been mixed - to my knowledge. The signs were finally completed so I was free to go. The message they carried was "STAY IN LINE" and "KEEP MOVING". I found out later they were for the troops who lined up for their meals.

This ship was tremendous. It was huge. They had made it over and outfitted it with bunks and stripped all the ornamental finery from it. We, being on No. 1 deck still had the original bunk beds. I don't think they were for passengers, they must have been built originally for the crew and catering personnel. All portholes were closed. The ship was in complete blackout. Even on our deck the quarters were so we couldn't see out at all. I think the capacity of the ship was about 5000. We were fully loaded and were steering a zig-zag course to avoid submarines.

The speed of the mighty ship was such that the only way it could be hit by a sub would be if it was way-layed at sea, otherwise no submarine could chase it. The dining room was still being used for that purpose. The British were running the ship including doing all the cooking. The thing that stands out after all these years is that the eggs were always hard-boiled and tasted largely of vinegar. That was breakfast. Some of our men were standing KP but the men from our company had the gunnery watch.

It was after I had completed my sign painting and we were approaching the north Atlantic after having had a big turn off the bahamas, that I decided to have a look at what the rest of my buddies were doing. I had been given a post when we first came aboard at the rear gun, which consisted of a huge 4 or 5-inch gun that was stationary off the aft beam. I was relieved of this post though (and glad of it as it was cold out there) when they gave me my job of sign painter. But since I had this button I decided I'd take a look out the side. I came up on the anti-aircraft gun on the top starboard side in the middle or aft part of the ship or somewhere thereabouts. My buddies, sure enough were manning that gun. We were just off Greenland, heading for the British Isles (almost in friendly waters I presume) when we looked up to see a British Spitfire bearing down on us. It buzzed us and wagged its wings and was gone. We presumed one of its duties was to make sure no submarines were around also. After that an officer spotted me and told me to leave. I don't remember if he took my pin from me or not, but that was the end of my wandering over the ship.

SCOTLAND

The trip was only an amazing 5-days! We landed in Greenoch, Scotland, just out of Glasgow, and were told to keep the portholes covered. At eleven o'clock at night we were told we could open them. It was still daylight! In Scotland it is far enough north for this to happen. We stayed on the ship for the night though as we, being the ship's compliment for this trip, had to be the last ones off. The next day we were entertained by a group of Scottish cleaning women who sang raucous songs and kept the beat going as they worked. It was funny listening to the Scottish accent. For some reason I had always thought this accent business was something the movie-makers had cooked up.

ENGLAND

When we finally left the ship we were ushered into a small railroad car and seated comfortably in the two-abreast seats and were able to see the countryside from either side of the seat. We wondered at the neatness and scrubbed-up look of the scenery all the way down into England. The trip was interrupted half-way to our destination by a group of NAAFI women. They served us tea and cakes. It was the first time for most of us to have

our tea served with cream and sugar. This was to be the beginning of a long and lasting friendship with the NAAFI.

After traveling all day we finally reached our destination at a small camp made up of quanson huts on a gentle slope in an area just out of Swindon. There was a thin layer of smoke in the air at this place all the time as the heaters in each hut burned the local coal or coke. It was early July, the weather was just a bit cool but comfortable. We who were from the northwest were well used to this. It was a lot like the weather at home.

Swindon, as the camp was thereafter referred to, was after we found it out, just a stopping off place. I presume it was a place for us to stay while the billets at Barnstaple were being readied for us. I can't remember what the curriculum contained as it was such a short stop-off, similar to Camp Kilmer.

We did have some training however and on one such trek, I think it was to a firing range, we passed the notable stone-henge. It looked weird in the morning haze and seemed to me appropriately named, as the huge rocks stood out. the town of Bath was also nearby. It's name goes back to the Roman times when the Romans occupied England. they liked their baths, evidently. The town of Swindon was a typical small town in England, but seemed to hold its own as it had a lot of interesting features, including a railroad station from which we could sojourn on into London, which was at least a great attraction.

Swindon had a park and pretty girls picked up eager GIs and vice versa. The town had a few hills. I remember one of my buddies whom I'll quote. "Up the downs we go, down the downs we go." a parody on the old song, "Black Magic."

Our camp was located rather out of town. However it was adjacent to a golf course. The golf course was well maintained considering help and machinery were scarce. A herd of sheep kept the fairways down. There was a NAAFI down at the bottom of the hill at the rear of the camp. English beer was sold there, and many GIs filled up at night to the result of being busted. Many, including the author of this narrative. Details will be passed over. English draft beer wasn't really all that good, but when it is all you can get why knock it? However for the more gentile they tried to have a bottle or two on hand so if you were lucky enough to find a bar that had adequate supplies you could have a choice of gin or scotch. Usually Johnny Walker red label. (watered down? maybe.).

Covering this subject with a broad brush is hardly adequate. There were bars around and about that one could find that were not only adequately supplied but out of the way. This could lead to a congenial pastime, however they were the exception to the rule.

Several evening passes were issued from time to time and even weekend passes were given out. A weekend pass meant you would go to London. There were double decker busses that passed by the camp. This furnished transportation into the city. We were made aware that many of the dwellers in the area had never been as far as London town. The roads were blacktopped, but hardly wide enough to accommodate two cars. This was to be the first time we were cognizant of the fact that U.S. automobile manufacturers were discriminating against their own people. We found out that American made foreign cars were built small to accommodate the narrow roads but were also made of more superior parts that were made to last for many years.

LONDON

Our first visit to London found a place unique as far as anything we had ever seen before. The taxi cabs were like the old time model-t's of 1929 vintage. But as was said earlier the cars were so well built they lasted for years. London was in the trailing end of the blitz. It was a bustling place and had many, many attractions. I think it was on one of these early visits I happened to take a tour of the downtown area and get a glimpse of the government buildings. First of all there was the Westminster bridge that crossed the Thames that seemed to traverse the town. The near side of the Thames supplied The House of Parliament (with Big Ben) and just beyond that was Westminster Abbey (which had a burial area right in its main floor).

Beyond that were government buildings on both sides which terminated at the end of the area with Buckingham Palace. If you were there at noon you could see the changing of the guard, which, even though it was done with war-time field dress, was very impressive. Farther up, closer to the main part of town, was Trafalger Square. What impressed me was on the square was a statue of Lord Nelson but just off the square was a statue of Abraham Lincoln. You could therefore understand there were very close ties between the two countries.

Along with this tour of the government buildings was a visit to St. Paul's cathedral. What seemed common place to them but mind-blowing to me was to see the leveled-off area directly adjacent to the cathedral. It seems the Luftwaffe bombed the area into a pulp but left the cathedral untouched. There was a 10-block area there that had been absolutely leveled to the ground. A bomb or two had hit the parliament building, which was very well defended from aircraft, but which had a pock mark here and there. As far as I could tell Westminster Abbey was rather unscathed. Downtown London also seemed to be none the worse for wear that one could notice, although bomb craters appeared from time to time.

One of the most interesting places in London was the old Windmill Theater. This seems suspiciously like a take-off on Moulin Rouge, which means "Red Mill" - but it was strictly a theater - you could go back to the lobby, however, and get a whiskey or gin or whatever was on hand and bring it to your seat. It made a pleasant relaxation for the show which was hilarious British burlesque. It was here that the show went on regardless. During the worst part of the blitz, the show remained open and the actors and actresses and show people kept the show going with the bombs close enough to shake the building. A showcase of British tenacity.

BARNSTAPLE, A FINAL STAYING PLACE IN ENGLAND

We finally found out Swindon wouldn't be our place of abode over here. We were moved suddenly from Swindon to Barnstaple, England, which was down in Devon and close to the western coast. It is located on an inlet just south of Exmoore or the mouth of Bristol channel. It is noted for making china endorsed by the Crown of England.

We were to be billeted here for 11 months before being sent across to the mainland. We actually took up the whole town. (We were fortunate in that we were sheltered in buildings that had been built for accommodating boarders such as a hotel and the like.) the main billet for Company A was on the main street in the upper part of town, up from the main square, that is. A company itself was in an old hotel building.

Headquarters platoon and the third platoon were located a half block up and just around the corner. There was a main foyer on the main floor with double doors leading to a staircase and to the billets of headquarters and third platoons up above. The foyer was used to store supplies for the battalion.

The main part of the company was in the Simmons building on Main street and had a mess hall on the main floor, with a company supply room in the back across from an alleyway. There was a small room above for the supply sergeant's quarters. The rest of the upper area was for the remainder of the company. The officers quarters were located on the far side of town. The town itself at that time contained somewhere around 10,000 people.

There were some hills surrounding the village and up from Co. A. the street wound down toward the waterfront and then up a hill past a church and onward up toward the outer part of the village and sort of emptied out.

On the other side the street continued downward past the library and cinema house to the town square. Our flag flew on the pole in the middle of the square and the town hall served as quarters for battalion headquarters.

On down the street wound around a good-sized park and on up a slight hill past the billets for the rest of the battalion. At this time the battalion consisted of Headquarters Company, Reconnaissance Company, Medics, and Companies A, B, and C. So the greater part of the battalion was located there. My sense of direction was limited to streets and crossings but ended there as far as north, south, etc.

The greatest asset to all this was that we were given leave to be in the town at any time we were off duty as long as we presented ourselves for reveille in the morning.

Down by the inlet on a long stretch of street along the waterfront was our company motor pool. Sheep were often herded in large flocks along this street. Here it was that I spent most of my time as dispatcher when I wasn't on guard as battalion bugler. I caught guard duty every four days. We marched in formation from the Simmons building down to the main square, where retreat was stood and the colors lowered. A tour of guard duty was 24 hours. Later on we formed a battalion bugle corps (with the remnants of the old battalion band). This took some of the pressure off my job as occasionally the bugle corps took over the changing of the guard.

The bugle corps became famous hereabouts in the following time we were there. We took several trips to other towns to march and play and try to impress the residents. During our frequent visits to the town pubs we were aware very often of Welshmen who seemed to stray into the area from time to time. They spoke Welsh and couldn't be understood. Much singing went on at the pubs. The townspeople and most of the isle of Great Britain took part in this pastime.

THE 803rd TOWN DESTROYER BATTALION

The battalion settled down well in Barnstaple. The men mixed well with the local inhabitants and had a rapport with them that enhanced their stay, and the locals accepted them well and made their stay enjoyable and a feeling of being at home.

There was one flaw, albeit not a very serious one. It was there to stay, and not much could be done to change it as much as some tried. It seemed many of the times the M-10's were driven through the narrow streets the corners couldn't accomodate the huge tanks, therefore the corners lost out. Hence the nickname the 803rd Town Destroyer Battalion.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ETO FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

The 803rd boasted big men. As was stated earlier, many of these men came from the farm fields of the middle west although some of them were reared in more urban locales.

These were the men who contributed to the winning of the ETO football championship, played on Thanksgiving day in one of the stadiums of England (although it slips my memory - perhaps some reader could fill in this stat).

The game was hard fought but the 29th Division won out and it should not go unheeded that at least one third of the team were from the 803rd. Names like Dreher, Breen, Solkowski and others. (I would also be grateful to anyone who could furnish more names in this catagory).

TRAINING WITH THE 29TH DIVISION

As well as playing football the men of the 803rd were attached somewhat to the 29th Division in regard to doing various manuevrs in preparation for the invasion, which evryone knew was imminent. One such exercise consisted of backing up the division in a landing (but it was done from the shore as the equipoment we had had not been given the treatment of waterproofing and couldn't be used in a landing phase mode). However many of the infantry took to the water and assumed a landing of sorts.

We practiced firing our 3-inch guns at the firing range at Minehead, England. About all this accomplished was exercising the gun crews in loading and firing and observing as the shells were shot into the channel thus affording a clean safe display of the range and accuracy of the equipment.

Much of the training consisted of just road marching. However this proved valuable as the 803rd was called to pull up and move out many many times after it was called into action. I think we must have moved as much or more than any other outfit in the first army (or any other army).

England proved to be our first winter in Europe. The days wore on with trips out into the moors and with the motor pool busy waterproofing the tanks and trucks and the equipment that would be called on to withstand a dip in the brink when the time came to embark ashore on a very hostile bit of real estate.

The weather was damp and not too cold. Many of us from the state of Washington felt at home with the damp climate although the hint "Jerry was out last night" was a little strange to our unaccustomed ears.

We soon found what many of the Britishers had gone through when we visited places like London and Exeter. Exeter had a space of several blocks that had been cleared of everything by German bombs.

THE SPRING OF '44 AND THE UPCOMING D-DAY

Winter grew into spring and spring culminated with the fraternizing of boy and girl and getting used to sorties into the countryside learning to cope with the bicycle.

Along with spring also came rumors. Rumors that the invasion was imminent. Most of the rumors were unfounded, planted or not. One could find peace abounding in this land however, rumor or not. Of course the country was still on a battle field alert but mostly by now Hitler had very little to throw at the British. One could get a taste of the blitz in London from time to time.

On one such trip to London, I stopped at the Lyons Coffee Shop, located across from the House of Parliament. I met a small man there, dressed in the pin-stripe of the house member. (You could identify these men on the street from time to time.). This particular man seemed very amiable and seemed to single me out to ask a question or two. One of the questions he asked was "How come it took so long for you Yanks to get over here? We had to hold off Jerry for four years before you could come here to help us." The question rather had me stopped for an answer but I think I managed to blurt out, "Well there's a lot of politics involved in getting into a war I guess." Since then, after pondering the fact that Japan knocked out our Navy in Pearl Harbor and having to rebuild our army and

having to build enough arms to accommodate both our allies and ourselves, I guess I could have come up with a better answer.

As the rumors persisted there came a day in late May or very early June when the local gentry informed us that D-Day would be within the next day or two. This was hardly startling as we had been on alert for several days prior to hearing of this. But if this was such a well-kept secret, how come everybody and his dog knew about it? I guess a lot of it was pure conjecture, but the locals certainly knew when an army unit went on the alert (and this was true of most units throughout England, including the forces of his majesty the king) and didn't go out in the field to practice maneuvers, I suppose there was no other remaining conclusion than to suppose the invasion was upon us.

D-DAY

And so it happened as we were geared up to leave, the landing was announced in the news. We had missed it! Our outfit was sitting in Barnstaple while the rest of the army was tearing across the beaches of Normandy!

Soon the orders came to move out and we were sent to a staging area near Plymouth.

One of the first things to be brought to our attention at the staging area was that we no longer had to depend on our Company cooks for food. A bakery had been installed in one of the buildings close by and were giving away **WHITE** bread. It was soon nicknamed "cake".

The cooks weren't given much rest however as the mobile kitchens were put in use in short order and we were fed field rations augmented with white bread.

After a wait of a day (or two or more - it seems inconsequential now) we were given orders to move out again and were led down to the beach. My position was with the Company maintenance vehicle the T-2. It was a modified sherman tank built with a wrecker's boom on it and equipped with a huge camouflage net located just behind the boom. It had a couple of winches and was built to retrieve tanks. (Our mission of course). I had been the company dispatcher so I was given the post having earned a place in the motor pool. My bugling days were over I supposed for all intents and purposes.

Down at the beach we witnessed a little different scene than the one above where we had been waiting. Shipment after shipment of wounded men seemed to be coming in from the continent in various types of ships and boats. We saw our landing ship tank (a name put upon it by the war department) laying in wait for us to load.

A small USO vehicle sat down the road a piece. While we were visiting it for some type of refreshment (probably doughnuts and coffee) one of the ladies piped up, "Is that your tank 'the apple knocker'? (our name painted on the T-2). Yes it is! "Hey, welcome home, I'm from Yakima!"

Chapter three

FROM D+7 UNTIL WAR IN EUROPE WAS DECLARED OVER

The war in Europe was the great page out of the book the 803rd had written itself. Many were wounded, some, more than we wanted, were killed, some were captured by the Germans. But the beautiful thing of all were men who were left to remember the valor and self-sacrifice of the men around them who faced up to the challenge of fighting a fight in a death struggle.

From that introduction to the beaches of Normandy the moral of the men in our tank at least was raised to the maximum. Our tank driver himself was from Yakima, Washington.

When we entered the LST we were funneled down in the bottom deck of the ship, which reminded us from the north of Puget Sound of driving onto one of the great ferries that carried loads of people to and from Seattle each day.

We were half-way across the English Channel when we had a submarine alert. I was halfway between the lower and the upper deck when the alert was sounded. By the time I got up to the top deck they had already started throwing anti-submarine mines into the water and you could see the explosions from the upper deck of the LST. Well we had finally gotten ourselves into the war, it seems.

Nothing more of any event was experienced (as they had either driven off the sub or sunk it - who knows) from that time until we arrived at the beach. We were forced to stay below decks until the morning as by the time we arrived at Omaha the sun was setting anyway. We layed out our various sleeping gear and settled down for the night. My sleeping bag was new and clean and would not see a washing for over a year or more. The stillness of the night was interrupted from time to time by enemy planes who kept popping in and throwing their bombs our way. I think a lot of them landed in the water as you could hear the reverberation against the hull of the LST, Although most of the bombs were dropped too far away to be heard this way.

After falling asleep during the intermittent raids we were awake early and were able to take our bearings. For as far as you could see there were ships in the harbor. I had never in my life imagined the United States could claim that great an assemblage. There were ships of all description and far to the right of this assemblage the U. S.S. Nevada was hurling her 20-inch guns at the mainland of Normandy. But the awesome sight of all these vessels was overwhelming. The Navy was busy on the beach blowing land mines and finishing the job of clearing rubble. The 29th division had been pinned down here for a whole day before they gathered their forces and submitted their lives in carrying out the job they were sent here to do.

One of the men who had transferred to the 29th earlier in the year was met by some of our men. He had been assigned a half track and had spent much time gathering up wounded and carrying them to safety (for which he received the silver star). He told us if we had gone in with the 29th we would never have survived. I believe it!

BIVOUACING IN FRANCE

The maintenance crew is always the last vehicle in the convoy, and as always we brought up the rear in tackling the road up to our bivouac area. On the way we passed the old church in Vierville, that had been virtually gutted by bombs and artillery.

But the impressive scene was yet to come before we reached camp. On the road as we approached our destination was a jeep coming toward us. In the back seat sitting upright was a german soldier in full uniform with no helmet on but with flaming red hair. His hair was flying in the breeze from the speed of the jeep and his face was fixed in a frozen leer. (what a reception for a group of greenies). He was a captive, indeed, and we found out later that he had been a sniper who had been run down by one of our men as he was about to terminate one of our officers.

Our camp was just a short way up the road from the beach and it is interesting to note that the beachhead was only a mile or two wide in some areas.

Drawing guard that night it is no wonder that we heard schmizer noises (burp guns). All the while it seemed to us it was probably some Americans trying out some new found souvenirs. The night drew on without any incidents but we were required to dig foxholes.

Earlier in the day we were perplexed to see in the sky something that resembled the old charcoal driven buses that passed on the streets of Barnstaple from time to time. However these were in the sky and resembled air planes. Of course what we saw were V-1 rockets aimed at London, which we weren't aware (at the time) were wreaking havoc in Great Britain.

ON TO BATTLE

The next day we moved to another area. It was a field that commanded a view of hedgerows below us, and we could hear artillery fire off in the near distance. It sounded ominously like someone banging on a huge oil drum, but not in cadence necessarily. The order came down from battalion to shave off our beards. We complied, as we certainly had all the time in the world to do so.

The booming of the artillery carried on into the night and it was at those moments I, at least, discovered the war was on for good and it was going to last and last.

The next morning, or one or two mornings later, as it were (time has erased some of the precise time) the order came to move out. We drove for several miles (and I don't know if we covered all the ground heading for the front at least we were moving in that direction. When we finally stopped I could hear on the intercom radio the company commander saying "This is it!"

It was it. We pulled into a field full of apple trees and seeming to be an ordinary farm of sorts. However in the next field to us was a corpse of a german soldier. One friend of mine approached me with a quizzical look on his face and said, "Malde, these guys are playing for keeps!"

Later on the intercom radio sputtered and crackled with communication between the line and headquarters platoon. We heard stories like. "They got Suhr's tank with a bazooka!" and "Karnas and _____ are pinned down trying to get Lieutenant _____ out." (the blanks are names that are temporarily forgotten).

We waited most of the day which seemed like an eternity until someone gave the order for the T-2 to go out and get Suhr's tank. We all got aboard the T-2 and found ourselves heading up the hill that led to the rest of the company that had been fighting with the infantry on the other side below.

When we drew alongside the marshalling area of the company that had withdrawn to the top of the hill an officer jumped out into the road and yelled, "Where the blazes do you guys think you're going?" "We're going down to get Suhr's tank!" "Oh no you're not! once you're on the other side of this hill you're a dead pigeon."

The tank had been an object of heavy fire both from the enemy and from our own guns to destroy it so the Germans wouldn't get our slide-x which was a code for our radio conversations.

We pulled into the marshalling yard and found our way among the rest of the company. We found a different outlook in the men who had tasted battle for the first time. The atmosphere was of relieved tension. It is hard to describe how some felt as feelings were both guarded and open but the men had seen what war is really like. One observation was: when the company had joined the infantry (at the bottom of the hill) they came upon men who had not slept (to any degree, at least) since the invasion (which was 10 days earlier). One man described it to me, "They were so tired I saw one man sitting on the body of a dead soldier while he was eating his 'C rations'".

There's not much need to go on and explore this type of occurrence. It is familiar to any man (or woman) who has experienced the heat of battle.

Our company was to discover this was only the tip of the iceberg. We withdrew from this area soon after and I suppose the order came down to do so. I don't know even now how much damage we did or they did. (except I do know we lost one of our tanks by way of a German bazooka).

Some time in the midst of the confusion one of our officers received a bullet in his helmet. It penetrated just far enough to render him unconscious. He was treated by a couple of men from our company and then delivered to the medics. The two men, in the meantime, were pinned down by enemy fire. They remained under cover until they were able to withdraw in the darkness.

Later on we heard of other engagements by other parts of the battalion. Some were quite hair-raising. As we were told a tank from B company overran the enemy lines by six miles. they were able to fight their way back and all miraculously survived.

This was our first day of real combat. The whole battalion was involved and soon it would be more routine, however much more care to survive transpired both as a unit and individually.

We were to find that being a mobile unit the army had use for us in many areas. Ultimately we fought with 12 different divisions (and incidentally - three different nations.). More of this later.

WE JOIN THE FIGHTING FORCES OF THE HEDGEROWS

When we were in the marshaling area at Plymouth, England, we were told we were to join up with the 29th Division to take the city of St. Lo. This seemed to be the immediate task before us, as the emphasis on this task was impressed on us with no uncertain terms. What we would find out would be that the job was by no means an immediate fulfillment. We retired to another bivouac area after our first taste of combat and found shelter in our vehicles for a day or two as the spring rains came in for a few days. The area we were in was a place where there had been much fighting between the infantry and the Germans and among the shell and mortar holes scattered about were remnants of a fight that took place namely parts of human anatomy that had been overlooked by the burial forces that preceded us into the area. However they were probably overlooked very honestly and weren't really the dominant part of the landscape. There was a bone or two, however, seen and with the flesh dried and bleached by the sun.

There was the remains of a chateau close by and turned out to be a visiting place by the men of our outfit. It could have been an ideal place for the enemy to put a few booby traps, but evidently they had to leave before they had time to do same. The chateau turned out to be an interesting place as it had been beautifully laid out in beautiful pastel colors and molding and trim. It was a rather small building, however, probably a stopping off place for some wealthy Frenchman, German or whatever. But it had been pretty well gutted by shells and mortars and didn't have any more value as a shelter of any kind.

There was a GI lying by a stream nearby who was writhing in agony, guarded by two soldiers. We were told he had overdosed on calvadose and the detail were there to see that nothing happened to him until he became well. He had already been there for three days we were told.

The next place we were to stop off was a farm just up the road from a water hole at a cross-road with a few trees and deep ditches on both sides of the road that led up top the back of the area the company was to occupy. Below this was a field that had been used for pasture for the small Normandy farm.

The company bivouacked above the crossroad near and among the buildings of the place. Toward evening a guard detachment was formed to secure the perimeter of the command post and the company area. I was a part of the guard and my shift came shortly before and after dusk. The rest of the small guard detachment spread their bedding in the field below. I had as a guard companion a member of the company who was being kept in the motor detachment and who was a very small young man who had been a student at VMI (Virginia Military Institute) his uncle or relative of some sort had been a U.S. General. This boy had a lot of knowledge of artillery and field know-how he had picked up in the course of his studies at VMI. He was so small in stature, however the brass didn't seem to think he was qualified as a non-com. (This is unrelated to the story I'm about to unravel).

About a half-hour after we had assumed our tour of duty a shell came in and landed below us in the field. My companion's teeth began to chatter and his hoarse voice whispered "If the next one lands above us they're going to drop a lot of stuff right on us!" It turned out he was right as for the next ten, fifteen or twenty minutes (whatever time it took) we received about 200 German 88 shells. All of the shelling was directed at the company area itself and halfway through the ordeal we heard outcries from men in the company. None of the shells landed near us as we were down below the level of the road by then but if any of them had caught the trees above us we would have been sprayed by shrapnel.

Soon after the shelling stopped, an officer and a jeep came by with our first sergeant as a patient in the back of the jeep. He noticed us as he came by and told us, "You guys stay on the ball now!" It turned out he had received the nose of an eighty eight shell in his rectum and it had emerged from his abdomen. He was in the army hospital for almost a year and joined us later and resumed his position as company first sergeant. He must have been sedated very well to be able to be cognizant of us and to talk as he did. One man was killed and several others wounded and

sent back to the states. Private Sergeant (the man who was killed) was subsequently buried in the graveyard above Omaha beach.

This was the beginning of a tour of the European theater of operation in which we helped take the town of St. Lo, helped destroy the Siegfried line and were the first armor across the Rhine, in the third army, while we were spearheading for the 5th Division.

JOINING FORCES WITH THE 101st AND THE 82nd AIRBORNE

During the time between the breakthrough at St. Lo and the subsequent march to the Siegfried Line the 803rd was used intermittently by many of the divisions that were advancing in the hedgerow country.

On one such time we received word that we were to pull out to connect with the 82nd Airborne, which incidentally had been fighting off the Germans alone and isolated from the advancing American army during this time. We left for the lower part of the Cerentan peninsula. After a half-day or so of travelling we were suddenly in the area where the landing of the paratroopers took place. The area had indeed taken its toll on the gliders that took part in the invasion as we witnessed countless wrecks of these scattered over the landscape. There were also many parachutes scattered here and there and many were picked up not only for souvenirs but for use as camouflage as one parachute would do well to cover a vehicle. As we drove on in we soon found ourselves in the darkness of a summer night waiting for the column to move on.

We soon found out what the delay was. The company had come to the crossing point that connected us with the troops of the 82nd and it was under fire.

We were waiting to cross a stretch of road of about one mile, one vehicle at a time crossing this terrain without incident. (it seems at a time like this that men get nervous and - although it was contrary to orders from above - certain men choose to light up cigarettes - this caused a flare of light each time a match was lit and we non-smokers suffered the anxiety from this act although we weren't involved - such is the extent of tolerance in tough situations).

After running the gauntlet and finding ourselves in a field of some sorts we decided to bed down for the night

to take advantage of the break in the action. While the rest of the T-2 crew decided to take advantage of the security of the tank I found a ready-made foxhole just a few feet off to the right of the tank.

Sleep came easily and security was felt in the safety of the hole. When I was awakened in the morning it was from the sound of small-arms fire just next door in the field in front of us. the firing commenced near us and gradually diminished as the paratroopers were recovering ground as they went. Stray bullets were flying fast and furious above us and it was an hour or so before I was able to get up enough nerve to crawl from my hole and get into the already overcrowded tank.

We moved on up toward the advancing front later on in the morning and found ourselves on a road approaching the crest of a rise. Some of the parachutists were still in the area and I'll give you an example of the bravery and dedication to battle some of these men had: Two men would work as a team, one walking forward in the middle of a field while the other covered him. When a sniper would shoot at the man in the field the man in the hedgerow would then finish off the sniper.

I don't know how many times this actually worked without the paratroopers being inflicted with undue casualties but we soon found ourselves in possession of a German soldier with bullet wounds in parts of his body (in his legs and - places that weren't death dealing) After being grilled by the company commander the man said he was really a Pole that had been conscripted to fight with the Whermacht. Whether this was true or not the man soon had a free ride to battalion headquarters where more interrogation was no doubt in store for him before being escorted to a prisoner of war camp.

We stayed on the road for a while as the front became more static at this time and while we were waiting this way we were visited by a paratrooper staggering down the road toward us. He came about a third of the way down and collapsed on the ground. We found he had a large bullet wound in his chest. He was offered a cigarette and smoke came out of the bullet hole. He related he had been some where up toward the battle area for some time in the morning and had just now been able to gather strength enough to find help. He had been in the company of another paratrooper, an officer who had also been wounded.

Our tank sergeant and myself decided to go to the top of the rise to see if we could find anybody there who

would be in a similar plight - mainly the officer to which the man had referred. At the top of the hill we found a field where there lay the forms of three GI's and a German. One GI, an officer, was clearly dead, the sweat from the morning encounter dried on his face and his eyes still open in death. Also the German. Farther up one of the Americans also lay and it was quickly determined he was also dead. About this time we started receiving some mortar shells coming into the field. My partner decided to part company and retire back to the T-2. I also decided the same thing but my curiosity kept telling me, find out if that last guy up there in the far corner of the field is still alive. I crawled on my stomach the rest of the way and when I reached him from behind I lifted my hand to his shoulder to get a response from him. There was no response as the body was stiff. Too late for any help for any of these. I found my way back to the T-2 without any injuries, mortal or otherwise.

We spent the fourth of July in a field adjacent to the camp of the 82nd Airborne. The morning calm was once again broken by the rattle of a 50 caliber machine gun being held by three paratroopers (two holding the tripod and the barrel and the other manning the trigger). They advanced this way spraying the hedgerows and going until they ran out of ammunition.

The town of La Haye de Puits was taken at this time and the 82nd prepared for a well deserved R&R. The peace and tranquillity of the camp was often interrupted by incoming shells from the enemy and by the men from the 82nd touring the area in vehicles captured from the Germans.

When the 82nd was relieved, it was by a division newly arrived from the states with no battle experience. The town was retaken by the Germans and the division was held up from taking it back by sniper fire. So the 82nd had to temporarily suspend its R&R and retake the town. From then on it remained in American hands.

One story passed on to me by a very reliable fellow whom I trusted to be truthful, went like this:

An American paratrooper approached him and asked him if he would like to accompany him into town to have a drink of so at one of the pubs. My friend responded very enthusiastically to this invitation and soon they found themselves entering one of the taverns a short way into town. When they stepped inside they found it was completely occupied by the enemy, full to the brim with

German soldiers. Instead of retreating his companion laid his sub-machine gun on the counter and avowed any man that moved would be immediately cut down and then ordered a drink for each of them. My friend had his drink and the two men quickly departed the scene without any incident. My guess is that too many of the Germans had seen too many American western movies. As a sequel to all of this I was told my friend had to wash out his trousers as soon as he could. I'm telling you, this man wasn't known to lie.

I don't think enough can be said of the heroism of the American paratroopers. We were also honored to have our battalion commander escorted by the great commanding General of these two divisions, General (M-1) Gavin. Some of the companies of these two divisions suffered so many casualties that the remainder of the company would at some instances be commanded by PFC's - the only men left.

Now soon would come the time for our men to encounter the enemy forces and break their way through to take up the chase to the Seigfried Line.

ST. LO, THE TURNING POINT

As was stated earlier, in this writing, our first assignment (according to our briefing at the marshaling area) was to be the city of St. Lo, just a little east of the hedgerow country in Normandy.

The nature of the fighting in the hedgerow country and the tenacious resistance of the enemy postponed any action by the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. What really was the determination of the 1st Army and the Supreme Command was a concerted effort to be made by the ground forces combined with the Air Force to make an assault on St. Lo to break the resistance of the Germans once and for all and to create a gateway for a campaign to liberate the rest of France.

THE REST OF THE WAR

Now I will deviate from the format that has been used previously. The reason for this is that the events in my research and recollection are too marbled to separate, although some effort will be made to achieve some sort of chronological order to the rest of the text.

Following will be an outline of our activities as a sketchy map of our part in the upcoming battles and campaigns waged from the time the war was further plotted on the dates and positions held in Normandy to the outbreak on the way to the Siegfried Line in Germany.

Our mission was mainly to back up the infantry in a protection mode and to furnish harassing indirect fire by the platoons of tanks not up on the line with the infantry. The ratio of this was usually one platoon on the front lines furnishing protection for the foot soldiers and the remaining two platoons furnishing indirect fire. During one of these sessions of indirect fire our company surpassed the record of number of rounds fired by any artillery in a twenty-four hour period than any other company in the entire war in Europe.

However often the case was that the entire company would be involved with protecting the infantry. Some of these times were when we were first assigned to a regiment and went all out in hand-to-hand assistance. Then when things settled down the object would be to assume the role of protection and indirect fire.

The 803rd had up until now taken up the help of different regiments it was assigned to in the 1st Army. We were under direct command of army headquarters and followed these assignments as they came up. We had been in a static position situated near a battery of Long Toms just west of St. Lo when we received the word to pull out.

The long toms had been in action for a day or two and our combined area was attacked earlier by anti-personnel bombs dropped on us by the Luftwaffe. How many planes took place in this attack? Probably just one. The reason for this is that the attack stopped abruptly after the German plane was blown out of the sky by an accurate 50-caliber machine gunner from one of the vehicles in the long-tom contingent after it had attempted a low-level pass.

So the order came down to pull out and we moved into an area forward of where we had been (we found out later it was about 5-miles west of St. Lo). It was rather early in the morning when we rolled into the area we were assigned to and most of the time was given to relaxing and playing poker. About eleven it seemed the sky all of a sudden filled with fighter planes headed east and flying directly over us. This was a very large group of planes as it consisted of many wings and formations. Suddenly the sky again was filled with B-26's and other light bombers, such as the ones we used to see flying sorties out of England when we were stationed there. Then the sky was filled with B-24's, B-17's and British Lancasters, all heavy bombers.

Flack went up from below and soon we saw B-17s hit and even destroyed as well as other hits, but the casualties seemed light in comparison with the volume of the attack. It was later found out that over 3000 planes took part in this raid. The rain of bombs was devastating on St. Lo and casualties were also received by Americans on the ground along with a prominent U.S. senator and an American General.

When I visited the graveyard at Omaha beach many years after the war was over I was lucky enough to find myself in the same room with a pair of Americans who were in the country to oversee the upkeep of the gravesite in lieu of the up-coming memorial weekend. One had been a battalion commander of a tank destroyer battalion attached to the 30th division. It seems the 30th was located just ahead of us. The story from him was that smoke was laid down to mark the positions of the Americans. However a wind came up and moved the smoke to the west, thence causing heavy casualties on our own men. He said his own outfit was almost entirely wiped out.

The bombing raid softened up the enemy resistance in St. Lo and soon our men were in the town mopping up and finding more resistance than was expected. One captain in B company had been with A company for a while as a lieutenant. He had vowed to the men he would be the first officer to set foot in the town. Whether this transpired or not, he was immediately killed by a sniper and laid to rest at Omaha Beach cemetery.

ST. LO BREAKTHROUGH

The ST. Lo breakthrough was as was promised the turning point. From there on it seemed the Germans were living on borrowed time and it was obvious to most of us who were depending on a quick and decisive termination of the drive against Hitler and his war machine that this meant there would be no more huddling in hedgerows, no more anxiety of being overrun and sent back to the beachhead, and to many it seemed a beginning of the end and the end seemed certain.

There was still fighting to be done, battles to be won and what many of us didn't fully realize, I suppose, was that the campaign had just begun. Fighting was still going on in isolated regions. The Germans were just as stubborn now as ever although the backbone of the Wehrmacht was disintegrated. Once the allies found a few roads leading into the interior of Europe it was theirs for the taking.

The 803rd was called upon many times in the new sweep taking place east of St. Lo and its many spoke-like roads leading into the interior. It is no wonder the allies considered it a key victory.

Some men suffered wounds one died from a booby trap and sporadic battles crept up only to be dispatched with prisoners taken from Hitler's legions. Some of the engagements included Vire, St. Amand, Falais Gap, and suddenly we found ourselves in the wheatland, a rural part of France west of Paris that was in early harvest as the farmers were just beginning to cut their crop. We found it a refreshing contrast to the apple tree crops we had left behind. The days took on a late summer feeling and it was plain this was the prime time of the year for these parts.

Soon we were traveling north and came as close to the city of Paris to see the Eifel tower off in the distance. From there on it was seeing new country from the side of a tank going up the road at a little better than an easy pace. The villagers were ecstatic and threw flowers, kisses and brought favors right out to the passing column to show their appreciation for the liberation.

The more populated area north of Paris gave way eventually to the approaches to the low countries. the wide areas gave way to canals and it was soon to be noted the terrain was to be a lot different from here on. It was on the way into Belgium we passed a group of our tanks in field adjacent to the roadway on which we were traveling. The most noticeable thing was the gun on one of the tanks had its barrel peeled like a dandelion stem with three spikes curled back. What had happened? There had been a small group of tenacious Germans waiting for an opportunity to take a crack at the advancing column. They let many of the vehicles pass before deciding to take on C company's tanks. It was like shooting fish in a rain barrel. We just plain lost three tanks. (I honestly don't know if any of our men were killed but I'm sure some of them were wounded.).

One of the most noticeable things that I recall was the immediate difference as soon as we passed into what is called the Flemish side of Belgium. It was an entirely different race of people. The southern people were dark complected and swarthy, and very friendly. they found themselves suddenly liberated and made sure we knew they were grateful. Also in this area we passed a group of men who were standing alongside the street on which we were passing. They were American seamen who had been captured by the Germans at some time or other and had been in a prison nearby and had been released when the American army came on. Needless to say it was a joyful occasion for them and also for us I might add.

We spent enough time in the low countries to find also that although the Flemish people seemed unfriendly they were content to let the war pass on. These people were obviously more nordic than the people immediately to the south of them.

It was the last part of August and we were still pressing on until we found ourselves overlooking an area where there was a lea or pasture-like grass valley below with a few fruit trees and interspersed beyond we saw for the first time -- the Siegfried line. It seemed deserted, however, in looking through field glasses it was obvious

there was a skeleton crew aboard. We all felt we should go on in and claim it, but the order came down from SHEAF we were to stay in place. We found out later it was because our supply lines had been stretched so far it was at that time impossible to wage an effective campaign.

THE HURTGEN FOREST AND AACHEN

Finally enough supplies and fuel arrived to keep the campaign going, and also the edict came down from on high that we were to confiscate whatever we needed from the Germans or their people if and when it was available and we needed it for subsistence.

The fall season wore on and we were dividing our time between Belgium and Holland, finally on September 9 the main body of the 803 was called upon to capture part of the Siegfried line.

There was one company held in reserve, however and A company was sent up into Holland to contain a pocket of Germans and placed under the direction of the Belgian Brigade who in turn were under the British.

Several contacts with the enemy occurred here and the task force was well able to contain the pocket. At one time my group, the maintenance crew, pulled out an overturned tank well in sight of a pitched battle between our infantry and their infantry. The Americans had laid down smoke so detection was not too easy for the Germans. We managed to haul out the tank but under mortar fire.

We pulled out another tank another time, while the infantry was providing machine gun fire cover, however we received no mortar fire this time.

During this time we had been bivouacked in a Belgian man's farmyard. This particular farmer's main crop seemed to be turnips as he had a huge pile located near his house which was shelter for not only his family but also for his animals, who shared the dwelling just beyond the partition that separated them.

We slept outside although we used part of the house for convenience, such as storing food and as a part-time dining place. One evening just after dusk we were rendered a display of tracer fire penetrating our bivouac area. It lasted for about two minutes (it seemed longer) there was no more action from then on. We kept a perimeter watch however and each took turns at the post which consisted of a machine gun nest. It was a rather lonely vigil as only one gunner was assigned and a four-hour watch meant no sleep and keep on the alert for an enemy attack.

In the meantime the rest of the battalion were hip deep in combat going after the Siegfried line. Most of this consisted of breaking apart the dragons teeth and barbed wire and booby traps therein and advancing the tanks to the pillbox and actually poking the gun barrel in the opening or slit and firing rounds of fire into the pillbox. This did crack open that particular part of the line and allowed access of the rest of the troops of that sector. Being with the Belgian task force proved to be of a lesser strain to be sure.

Soon after this we crossed into Germany and noticed for the first time we were occupying German buildings and houses. The Siegfried line fell on October 25 according to my records. One evening after chow I had felt rotten all day and decided to turn in early about six o'clock. I had my sleeping bag laid out in a shed far enough away from the main camp so as not to be disturbed if I needed to catch up on some much needed sleep. After about an hour in which I decided I probably had a cold coming on and the rest would do me good, the order came down to pull out. It was drizzling rain and had been all day.

We were on the road for the better (better?) part of the night so when we finally pulled off the road we found ourselves in a thick wood. In the meantime the rain had turned to snow and there was about two or three inches of it accumulated. We were to remain here for weeks although we weren't aware of that when we pulled our sacks off the vehicles and proceeded to bed down in the snow. My favorite place after a road march was under the T-2 (our tank) although the snow was underneath, the tank was warm above. This was the Hurtegen forest.

We found out that this was to be one of the bloodiest battle-grounds of that part of the campaign. We were attached to the 4th division and supported them with both ground support and indirect fire. The infantry was deployed in the woods. Our tanks would advance for them and they would follow and stay in our tank tracks to avoid land mines. This went on for days. When the Americans gained a mile the Germans would retrieve it at night and lay booby traps and mines for the next advance.

Being in the rear of the line at company headquarters we had a view of the road that brought wounded from the front. They came in all types of vehicles ranging from ambulances to jeeps fashioned by the medics to carry at times two people and also rigged up with racks to hold intravenous tubes. There was a steady stream of these vehicles coming down the road the entire time we were in the Hurtegen forest.

One night the Germans decided to pick on our company headquarters. There was a scattering of maintenance men, cooks, some clerks and the first sergeant and the company officers in this area. The maintenance crew had built a bunker consisting of a dug-out covered with boughs and more boughs of fir. This was to keep off rain and also anything else that may want to penetrate. The cooks had also a likewise bunker. There were also several smaller bunkers scattered around the company area. One of these contained yours truly and another member of our maintenance crew. I had to stand guard one night, my partner being the company clerk, who was also at times my recreation companion. As we were passing the time waiting for the time we were to be relieved so we could go back to our various places of rest there came in a terrific shelling.

The shells were scattered over the company area and seemed to be missing everything until we heard cries of agony and moans from the bunker on the slope just above us. Soon the shelling stopped and a detachment was sent back to battalion headquarters with our wounded cooks. One of our cooks was killed outright. This depleted our supply of cooks although we had enough left who had slept in other arrangements.

Some time after, we had moved to another location. I was asked if I would go to battalion and do some work for the adjutant. Not knowing what this was until I got there I borrowed a jeep from the company and found myself talking to the battalion clerk who informed me I was to compose some Christmas greetings to be used by each company to send back home.

When I had completed the job it was rather late and when I got back to the company it was dark. I parked my jeep alongside the maintenance tent (a huge tarp that was held up by two outside poles and a line between each pole to keep the tent up.) and threw my sack in the tent and sacked out. Waking up in the tent, dark as it was, it seemed strangely quiet in there and I could hear shells landing close and in the company area. This went on for a while and quit and I went back to sleep.

The next morning I awoke and saw that I had been alone in the tent. I went outside and reconnoitered the situation and found that the company had all moved to a better location farther down the hill where there were bunkers that had been built by previous infantry men. The bunkers has been made from empty shell crates and various odds and ends of lumber and some were very ingeniously built.

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Somewhere back in time from the time we left the hedge row country and gone into the low countries we had various attacks upon us. It is too confusing to recall each and every one of these incidents. One such time we had moved in beside a Red Cross hospital and bivouacked and dispersed on the other side of the road. We received an attack by the Luftwaffe although everyone escaped with no casualties (one was almost killed but suffered no physical injury). Later we discovered the attack had been centered on the Red Cross hospital across the road.

Finally we were ordered out of the Hurtegen forest and were destined for Luxembourg. The 4th division had been reduced to about one-fourth of its strength and we were relieved by two full-strength infantry divisions brought up from the Ardenes. We learned later this was Eisenhower's "calculated risk". The risk was that the fourth division, as badly shot up as it was, would take over the territory that had been held by the two previous divisions. The breakthrough came just a short time after that and after we were settled in at Luxembourg so it seemed the risk proved just that.

We pulled out of the forest and stopped at a place on the road, overnight, where we were next to a pub. Some of the men disobeyed orders and had more than one drink (or at least enough to countermand the order that came down from the captain: "You can have a few drinks if you want, but don't get drunk.") Later on these men were to be transferred to the infantry (as punishment?).

About a week after we had settled in a town in Luxembourg the breakthrough came. We had been busy with taking care of our equipment and repainting tanks and settling down to R&R when the line platoons were ordered out as the Germans had indeed created a new front.

When we traveled from the northern part of Germany to the south into Luxembourg we traversed the entire breadth of the territory later to go down in history as the "bulge". Somewhere along the way we passed an ordinance depot and as fate would have it one of our tank drivers took the opportunity to have his tank inspected and repaired for whatever needed to be done.

After a few days of waiting for the red tape to clear and for someone to give him a release so he could get back to his outfit, he noticed a more increase in movement and to be blunt more of a frenzied attitude (more frenzied than usual) going on among the technicians. He also noticed more vehicles leaving and a state of pandemonium setting in. So when he inquired he learned, "The Germans are just a few miles down the road and coming on fast!"

Needless to say our man decided at that moment to not wait for the red tape to clear up but to make haste and get back to the good old 803 and let the chips fall where they may. The chips were falling all the way back and he found he was only just miles ahead of the advancing Germans.

He found out how fast his tank would operate under extreme pressure and managed about 40 mph at top speed. But it was enough to keep him ahead of the Germans.

The thrust of the German advance lay to the north of our position at our R&R location. However a day or so later the main contingent of the battalion was to go to the flank of the invasion in a containment effort.

GERMANY, DER VATERLAND UNDER SIEGE

"Mount up, get ready to move out!" This had been an order repeated over and over again since we first landed on the beachhead months back. We had gone from one division to another fighting with them and affording protection for their men in the shadow of our tanks. The infantry was always glad to see our armour and it was like a security blanket to them.

The mount up order was still to be a common thing and movement from one part of the front to another was still the very much in place, but something had changed. We were no longer under command from the general staff but from here on out would be more or less permanently attached to the 5th division for the rest of the war.

Our men did well protecting the flank of the bulge while the 5th division was on the line. The way the bulge was contained is history now. It was a dark cloud on the victory advance but we knew the allies would take the Germans out and they did. I will always remember the morning, Christmas morning I believe or maybe it was New Years day, but we greeted the day by looking up at clear skies and we knew the 8th Air Force, the RAF and the rest of the air contingent of the allies would have a field day as long as the clear weather lasted, and it did until the German bulge was as much as destroyed.

From then on we found out what the people of Germany really felt when they weren't being held up by propaganda and myths about their invincibility. The contrast of dealing with former enemy as opposed to liberated French, Belgians and Dutch was awesome in a way because the German people seemed to cower as we confiscated their dwellings for shelter and even took food when it was available. This seems unfair when you think the civilians were more or less innocent but we knew also just a short time earlier they were against us and would have cleaned us out if they could but everyone tried to put it out of their head and that included them.

ADVANCING WITH THE THIRD ARMY AND THE FIFTH DIVISION

It seemed to us being permanently attached to a division took a little of the pressure off the stress of carrying the fight from one front to another. Being contained with this outfit seemed to to be a fulfillment of an objective that had never really been spelled out to us from the beginning. One thing we were to find out from this time on was that we were spearheading the third army with the 5th division. This is the division Patton picked to lead his advance to the Rhine. What culminated therefor was that we were the first to reach the Rhine and cross it, although lets give credit to the engineers who built the bridge on which we crossed.

In the meantime, we crossed and recrossed the region ahead from our position in Luxembourg. However we did have a chance to rest up finally when we were given R&R in a country house of a prince of the Luxembourg monarchy. The building had been obtained by the infantry but left in good shape so we found ourselves with a good roof overhead and a feeling of belonging to the royal family (although this, it must be realized, had to be fantasized to some degree).

We were in a sort of wonderland, more like a post card environment because it had snowed and the country around us was rural farmland but I, probably more than some, had the opportunity to look around because my job now was to get the mail from battalion and bring it back to the company.

The luxury of this lasted about a week.

The luxury of this lasted about a week.

When we left we found ourselves in a sort of wasteland of wrecked buildings and abandoned buildings of sort some of which were of the more rural type of farm communities in the no-man's that formed the gap between the more industrialized part of Germany, and eastern France and western Germany.

It reminded me of a wasteland because the people were poor and the abandoned stores looked to have been stocked with (ersatz) imitation food (so to speak) because some of it seemed composed of pure sawdust (which I suppose was flavored by something to some extent).

We shifted around awhile waiting for the bulge to fall and supporting our line platoons which were darting in and out of the combat regions applied to the 5th division.

Finally we ended up at the edge of the Rhine and waited for the engineers to complete the bridge which was being built under the watch of the Germans (who seemed helpless to prevent it).

THE FIRST TROOPS IN THE 3RD ARMY TO CROSS THE RHINE

Yes, the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion led the 5th Division, which led the third army across the Rhine. As was stated earlier, the crossing of the Rhine seemed unopposed. But there was opposition as the battalion moved forward. But it was very sporadic and it seemed the end of the war was not too far away at this point. The actual Rhine crossing was (according to my records) sometime between March 22 and March 30.

I can tell you about the first day when we crossed. We were a combat company and when we stopped some 10 or 15 miles inland we found ourselves in an abandoned town that had a town square and a town hall and we found a lot of German police helmets laying here and there (very ornate and distinguished looking german-style gear). What this had to do with this abandoned town I have no idea.

But it was here the company was to bivouac for the night and soon the CO commanded me to go back and get the mail (which was back at battalion, across the river). I had to have a companion in my jeep to furnish rifle protection while I drove and one such man accompanied me. He had originally transferred into our outfit from the infantry, having had two men killed in the same foxhole he had occupied with them and having survived this with no bodily harm, he had also been in the bunker in which so many of our cooks were wounded and one killed.

We set out back to battalion and when we came in sight of the pontoon bridge we noticed they were taking prisoners across on foot (about four abreast). So we parked in the road and waited for the bridge to clear. In the meantime a lone German plane came over and as it was flying over the bridge so much flack flew up it seemed impossible for the plane not to be hit. But it wasn't and its path took it directly over us (out of the range of the flack) and it decided to let go its bombs at that point. The first one landed in the field to our right, blowing a hole the size of a house and the other a second later landed in the opposite field, to our left, with a crater of the same proportion.

At this point my partner said he had enough and asked me to take him back to the company and get another partner. This I did and the next time we approached the bridge they were still taking prisoners across but the amount had been diminished somewhat. So we worked our way in and soon found ourselves on the far side of the river. But just then another German plane came over and the flack went up again, only this time my partner just bailed out of the jeep and left me alone for awhile until the flack diminished.

On our way back from battalion we had to pass convoy after convoy of trucks and equipment waiting to get across the bridge. My driving was a little poor by then as it was about midnight, and I happened to hit the water can on the side of a jeep that had not quite gotten into the line. The can was knocked off and the officer who rode in the jeep was irate. I backed up to see if I could do anything and found myself facing a full colonel of the MPs.

After a little interrogation he let me go and luckily it was the last I heard of the incident.

So now we had a new oyster on our plate. We were across the Rhine and well on the way to victory. The 1st army was across up in the north due to a lucky break in which the wehrmacht forgot to blow their bridge behind them. It can't be said there was no resistance. There were skirmishes and any close encounter with the enemy no matter how one-sided was not without danger. But everyone now seemed to realize the back of the German army seemed to be broken.

Further proof of this came with the command that we were to go 100 miles north to assist the 1st army in cleaning up a pocket of resistance in the Ruhr region. This was accomplished without casualties.

A cache of alcoholic beverages was discovered by one of the companies here and before they were able to make off with any of this well-sought-after objective the cache was confiscated by the MPs. The high command felt we had something coming for this and so a bottle of spirits was doled out to each man in the battalion. This discovery was made in a huge cavern somewhere up in that sector and was said to contain the main hoard of booze stolen from their European captives by the Nazis.

NOW WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO SEE THE END IN EUROPE

After we had assisted with the cleanup of the pocket in the Ruhr, we continued on into the interior of Germany and through Austria and into Czechoslovakia. The fall of Aachen seemed to be the straw that broke the back of the Germans but who knows? The failure of Hitler's thrust into the Ardenes was not to be discounted.

After arriving in Wallern we found ourselves in a position of just maintaining a perimeter of static holding to receive the hoards of Germans surrendering and coming to the American side to escape the Russians.

One morning when I was picking up the mail at battalion I was about to return to the company when some men informed me the president had died. Harry Truman was now president. I had heard very little of him and aside from feeling very sad about a great leader didn't know how to feel about the new Commander-in-Chief. A few days later we were told the Germans had surrendered in Berlin.

It was no surprise to me. On my trips to battalion during this time I saw thousands of German soldiers giving up and coming on in, walking on foot in loose formation. There were piles of rifles stacked as high as three-story buildings in the fields as I passed and German vehicles by the hundreds parked in other fields.

So this was it, the war was over. We were ready to go home whenever the order came. It didn't come right away, however as we were sent to Neuremburg to guard DP (displaced persons) camps. We saw the destruction that had been dealt upon this city and saw men and women busy cleaning up the rubble brick by brick.

The rest that follows is narrated in the section that follows the appendix.

APPENDIX

OUTLINE FOR WRITING HISTORY OF 803rd TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, CO. A

Pre War Days and the 103rd Anti-Tank Battalion August 1940 to February 10, 1941

- (1) Hearing Hitler's Speech
- (2) Enlisting in 103rd Anti Tank Battalion
- (3) Going to Drill
 - a. Drilling at home
 - b. Drilling at Tacoma
 1. Crossing the Narrows bridge
- (4) Collapse of Narrows bridge
- (5) Going to drill at Tacoma
- (6) Going to Fort Lewis to train with the army.

More Pre-War Days to Pearl Harbor January 10, 1941 to December 7, 1941

- (1) Taking examinations at Tacoma Armory.
- (2) Going to Fort Lewis 2 or 3 days later.
- (3) Policing the barracks and the grounds at fort Lewis
- (3) Getting the job of bugler
- (5) Getting new draftees from fort Ord, California
- (6) McCleary maneuvers
- (7) Battle of Humptulips
- (8) Going home on furlough in September
- (9) Going home on furlough on Dec. 5
- (10) Pearl Harbor

Pearl Harbor Puts the Whole West Coast on a War-Time Footing December 7, 1941 to Aug. 2, 1942

- (1) Patrolling the Coast looking for submarines.
 - a. The Sunk Submarine incident
- (2) Christmas at Fort Lewis
- (3) Getting Half-tracks in January, 1942
- (4) Taking field exercises with our equipment.
- (5) Going to Oregon with half-tracks
- (6) Going to Texas

Texas

Aug. 2, 1942 to December 24, 1942

- (1) Bivouacking in the field at Camp Hood
- (2) Three months in the desert
- (3) Three months in garrison
- (4) 899th and 776th
- (5) Leaving Camp Hood for Fort Dix

Fort Dix, New Jersey

December 25, 1942 to March 3, 1943

- (1) New York city and Philadelphia
- (2) The flu epidemic
- (3) Picture of the Company
- (4) The Senegalese (French Foreign Legion)
- (5) The gym and Tony Galento, Jim Braddock, Dempsey, etc.
- (6) Off to Pine Camp

Pine Camp, New York

March 3, 1943 to June 2, 1943

- (1) Pine Camp and Watertown, N. Y.
- (2) Getting M-10s
- (3) Snow on May 1
- (4) Off to Camp Kilmer

Camp Kilmer, New Jersey

June 2, 1943 to June 23, 1943

- (1) Leave to N.Y. and Philly
- (2) Packing for overseas
- (3) Inter-battalion baseball
- (4) Leaving for Ellis Island - port of embarkation

Crossing the Pond - England

June 23, 1943 to June 13, 1944

- (1) Crossing the Atlantic on the Queen Mary
- (2) Avoiding submarines
- (3) Co. A, all duties
 - a. All gun posts (me temporarily on after gun)
 - b. All KP
 - c. Me painter
 - d. Being buzzed by a Spitfire

(

- (4) Arriving in Glasgow 5 days after leaving New York
- (5) Arriving in Swindon 1 day later
- (6) Seeing bomber formations going over
- (7) Seeing Stonehenge
- (8) Leaving Swindon 3 weeks later
- (9) Arriving in Barnstaple

ONE YEAR IN BARNSTAPLE

- (1) Billeted in Simmons building (and one a block away)
- (2) Mess hall in Simmons building
- (3) Drum and bugle Corps
 - a. marching to town hall for retreat
 - b. marching on exhibition trips
 - c. guard duty in Barnstaple
- (4) Leave in London
- (5) Company with inhabitants
- (6) Learning maneuvers with the M-10
 - 1. Left flank maneuver into the bog in the moors
- (7) 803 Town Destroyers
- (8) Practicing firing off Minehead
- (9) Adjacent troops to the 803rd
 - 1. The 29th Division
 - 2. The 8th Airforce in London
- (10) Getting in shape (or keeping in shape)
- (11) Leave in Exeter
- (12) The RAF adjacent to the 803rd
- (13) The NAAFI
- (14) The USO
- (15) Visiting the natives
- (16) Getting ready for the big invasion
 - 1. Waterproofing the vehicles
 - 2. Training with the 29th division
- (17) Getting the rumors from the natives
- (18) Waiting for the orders to go on in

Crossing the English Channel
June 9th to June 13

- (1) June 9 - Leaving Barnstaple for Plymouth
- (2) Waiting period at Plymouth
- (3) June 12 - Getting ready to load at Plymouth
 - 1. Waiting at the debarcation cues
 - 2. American Red Cross workers (women)
 - 3. Ambulances coming in from France
- (4) Loading and crossing the Channel
- (5) Submarine off convoy sunk

(6) June 12 - 13 Laying off Omaha Beach getting bombed

JUNE 13 - LANDING AT OMAHA BEACH AND STARTING OUR PHASE OF THE WAR

Omaha Beach and Normandy
June 13th to June 15

- (1) Unloading at Omaha Beach
- (2) Bivouacing near Vierville
- (3) Seeing the first captured German
- (4) Standing guard and listening to the burp guns
- (5) Seeing the V-Bombs going over heading for London
- (6) Shaving off our beards by order of battalion HQ
- (7) Listening to the artillery blasting all night
- (8) Order to move out early June 15
- (9) June 15 - a day of infamy for the 803rd TD Battalion
 1. Our first taste of battle
 2. Seeing our first dead
 3. Getting the action from the Company intercom
 4. Almost being wiped out trying to retrieve a tank
 5. Re-uniting with Ernie Jensen of the 29th division
 6. Seeing a lot of shook-up guys in the rear assembly

Our First Baptism of Fire - Getting a Shelling
June 15th to June 27

1. Finding lots of Calvados
2. the chateau
3. 10 in 1 rations
4. Getting shelled by 200 88mm German artillery shells
5. One man killed, several wounded.
6. On guard at the crossroads
7. Taking our 1st Sgt. away in the medics jeep

Rejoining the 29th Division
June 30 Back with the 29th

Joining up with the 82nd Airborn
July 1 to July 8th

1. Move out to Cherbourg peninsula
2. Running the gauntlet under fire
3. Finding a foxhole right by the T-2
4. Waking up in the morning with small arms fire overhead

5. Advancing up the road to Le Haye Du Puits
6. Wounded paratrooper on the road
7. Looking for McVey
8. Flushing out snipers
9. Wounded Polak in German uniform
10. Bivouac with the 82nd Airborn
11. Being shelled on the 4th of July
12. Stolen German jeeps
13. 82nd takes L H d P
14. 8th losing it
15. Story of Edgar Moore
16. 82nd using 50 caliber mg to clear out hedgerows
17. 82nd takes LHdP

Getting ready for St. Lo
July 8 to July 17

1. Located on small knoll with long toms
2. Air attacks
3. Plane shot down
4. Moving up to vicinity of outskirts of St. Lo
5. The 3000 plane air assault on St. Lo
6. Line platoons move into St. Lo with 29th division
 - a. Captain Vincent killed at St. Lo

Cleaning up after St. Lo
July 21 to August 20

1. Attached to XIX Corps
2. Vire
 - a. McLaughlin killed by booby trap
3. St. Amand, France - July 25
4. Percy Falls, 28th Division - Aug. 1
5. Falais Gap - 9th Division - Aug. 14
6. Pursuit across France - 9th Division
7. 28th Infantry Division to Elbeuf

Crossing France, Belgium, Holland to Seigfried Line
August 30 to September 9

1. Crossing Aisne River and providing flank protection for Corps - with 8th Division
2. Northern France, Belgium and Seigfried Line - 78th Division

Assault on Seigfried Line
September 9th to November 9

1. Back with 30th Division north of Aachen
2. Co. A sent back to Holland attached to 2nd British Army and Belgian Brigade battle of Wassen Canal
3. Assaulted Siegfried Line Oct. 25 with 30th Division
4. Drove mail route with Rosen back to battalion
5. Aachen falls
6. Made Christmas messages at Battalion

Battle of the Hurtgen Forest
Nov. 9th to December 7

1. Sig Dahlberg killed - Pedrini, cooks wounded and evacuated one in bunker left untouched
2. Meat wagons every five minutes
3. Rode with mail to battalion - death valley
4. Fired harrassing, indirect and interdictory fire from Nov. 10 to Dec. 6

Battle of the Bulge and Luxembourg
December 7th to December 15

1. Relieved with 4th Division for rest
2. Met by fresh troops
3. Arrive in Mondorf, Luxembourg for R&R, Maintenance
4. R&R interrupted by battle of the bulge Dec. 10
5. Attached to 5th Division, 3rd Army
6. Battle of Bulge continues

Christmas in Luxembourg - Bulge breakup
December 16 to January 7

1. Froglegs for Christmas
2. Sunshine new years day
3. German army broken up and demoralized

New R&R Billets in Luxembourg Prince's Country Lodge
January 7th to January 19th

1. Lodging in castle
2. New job carrying the mail
3. Driving in the snow in blackout

Moved out to assist cleaning up - Ettelbruck, Our river,
in support of 5th Infantry
January 19th to Jan 31

1. Moved to vicinity of Ettelbruck Jan. 19
2. Assisted infantry cleanup pockets of resistance along Our river Jan. 28
3. Attached to 5th inf artillery maintaining TD defense of division area Jan. 31

Kept up advance in support of 5th Division
February 1st to February 28

1. FEB. 7 crossing Sauer river
2. Feb. 25 crossing Prum river
3. Feb. 26 Moved to vicinity of Dockendorf
4. Feb. 28 supported infantry attack to Kyle river

Continuous cleanup and advance - reaching the Rhine
March 1st to March 21

1. March 15 TD support of inf assault crossing Moselle
2. March 16 - 19 Maintained anti-mechanism defense of division - support of attack south of Moselle
3. March 20 Moved to vicinity of Spanholm
4. March 21 Moved to Wensheim
5. Some contact with Mongol Russians separated from units

CROSSING THE RHINE - FIRST ARMOR IN 3RD ARMY ACROSS RHINE
March 22nd to March 30

1. March 22 - Moved to vicinity of Freisenheim
2. Made trip back to battalion for mail - had to drive to bridge twice - much anti aircraft fire
3. March 30 to April 7 Maintenance and training is scheduled

Attached to First Army to assist in mopping up the Ruhr Pocket - moved 100 miles north and back again after cleaning up elements
April 7 - 8

Moved to Elleringhausen with 5th division
April 9th to April 28

1. Engaged in guarding installations and in military government.
2. Attached to 5th Infantry vicinity of Ramsbeck for guard and patrol missions, Reverted to 5th Infantry Division Artillery in vicinity of Staffelnbach

END OF WAR IN VIMPERK (WINTERBERG) (WALLERN)
April 28 to May 9

1. April 28 - 29 Maintenance of vehicles and preparation to move with division to Regan
2. Elements support attack to the east and patrol west bank of Muhl river. Continued anti-mech defense of division area
3. Moved to Wallern, Czechoslovakia
4. War over - stayed in Czechoslovakia watching rest of German army surrender and piles of equipment
5. Civilians marched to shallow graves to view atrocities
6. Germans charging into the American sector to give themselves up. Equipment, rifles, motor vehicles and a mass of humanity coming over to our side to escape the Russians.

Shortly after the breaking up of the Company the order came to move out. We spent a while traveling from our location near Passau to Furth, which is just on the outskirts of Neuremberg. What you have read about this town is true, it was not much more than a pile of rubble and the German people, men and women, prisoners of war and even some children were already busy trying to put it back into shape.

The summer wore on and the time spent in Furth was filled by leisure part of the time and the rest of the time we were appointed by the high command to stand guard duty on the huge DP (displaced persons) compound in Neuremberg. This was a way for the allies to impose unjust and unusual punishment on the innocent. The only crime these people had committed was to have left their homes and fled to the allied lines to escape any persecution from the Germans.

However we did our part in helping to confine these people. Years later TV documentaries confirmed that many of these people were still in these camps. Not exactly concentration camps but camps of imprisonment nonetheless.

We had on one occasion a party with some good German beer and hired a German brass band (the oompa kind). It was a way to break up the tension.

Later in the summer we were sent down to a replacement center near Augsburg. We put on new patches as we were assigned to the 28th artillery. We wore the crossed cannons on our lapels (instead of the crossed rifles). It seemed to me this was unfair as we had been under the infantry and had primarily fought with them throughout the training and combat periods. We also wore the patch of the 28th artillery on the opposite side of the shoulders from that of the tank destroyers.

During the time we were in Bollinger awaiting dispatching orders, the word was received the war with Japan was over. there was no VJ Day celebration. the news was received passively by all the troops who really didn't have too much reason to celebrate as the war was over for them anyway and they'd all seen enough of it.

We were there a few weeks before we were sent to Camp Lucky Strike in La Havre, France, to await shipment home. We were in a tent city of 30,000 to 40,000 people and adjacent to a compound for German prisoners. We avoided these places but in recalling some contact with them from the other side of the fence we encountered mostly sneers. There was not much compatibility and much hatred passed through these wire fences.

After living in these tents we were sent up to Camp Chesterfield, another replacement center and finally shipped out for our trip home.

We went home on a Liberty Ship which was quite a come down from the Queen Mary, the ship on which we came to Europe. However to add insult to agony we encountered huge ground swells just off France and after a day most of the inhabitants of the ship were seasick. Needless to say it didn't contribute to a pleasant departure. Later on the voyage we also encountered the tail end of a hurricane that had played itself out from the Gulf of Mexico. After ten days (twice the time it took the Queen Mary to cross the ocean) we landed up the Hudson river. From there we were delivered to Camp Shanks and from there to the train that crossed the United States and finally ended up in Fort Lewis for our discharge.

Discharge took only a couple of days and in the end we were interview by a Psychiatrist and had cursory medical examinations and finally handed our "ruptured duck" and our discharge and sent home.

Roster of 103rd Antitank Battalion at time of induction 2\10\41

Roster of Officers

Attached Officers (ctd)

Liet. Col.
Charles W. Goodwin
Capts.
Lilburn H. Stevens
Mac B. Benjamin
Jesse L. Haire
Lawrence J. Nelson
Thomas H. St. Clair
Frank A. Lough
Robert R. Vandenberg
Lewis A. Convis

1st Lieuts.
William M. Adams
Howard S. Kresky

2nd Lieuts.
Romain L. Hollis
Byron D. Keely
Charles A. Robins, Jr.
Philip S. Dickey III
John H. Gerwig
William A. Barner
Walter C. Olmstad
Arthur L. Poole
Robert E. Vollendorff

2nd Lieuts.
Donald T. Baker
Theodore A. Bordeaux
Donald J. Brown
Harold Buerstatte
William K. Doherty
Edward J. Ellis
William H. Nixon
George F. Richard
James E. Skewis
Harold E. Townsan
Cecil L. Vollendorff

1st Lieuts.
Norman E. Goodman
Gordon McA Payne
William H. Stewart

Attached for Duty
Capt. Harley W. Bryant

Headquarters Company

Corps. Contd.

Privates

Captain
Thomas H. St. Clair
1st Sgt.
Frank S. Aquino
Tech Sgts.
Thomas G. Marzano, Jr.
Harry Sellers
Hugo E. Staake
St. Sgts.
George F. Maughan
Norton M. Wells
Sgts.
Jack T. Cowan
George E. Frank
Ray J. Fiorino
Benjamin F. Hall
Daniel A. Kelly
Fred C. Menicacci
Carl H. Nelson
Gustave J. Witt
Corps.
William G. Ahearn
Augustus C. Barnett

Charles J. Colburn
Will C. Kilde
Carl J. Knecht

Pvts. 1st Class
William T. Armstrong
Edwin M. Balfour
Robin T. Beardsley
Jack D. Boone
Joseph G. Fitzpatrick J
Charles L. Hammelsmith
Lloyd M. Kvernivick
Fred L. Kolilis
Glen R. McCullough
Donald D. Peterson
Robert L. Robinson
Otto C. Schenck
Frank P. Stiltner
David M. Stokesberry
Orville P. Wick
Donald R. Wilhelm

Robert J. Addison
Richard A. Besrdsley
Donald W. Bourgaize
James R. Boyce
Lawrence M. Brown
James H. Butcher
Everett L. Braden
Glenn J. Brazil
William F. Colburn
Don L. Cristilaw
James A. Clinton, Jr.
William F. Day
Don L. Dumas
Frank H. Fuller
Morris P. Hals
Robert J. Kelly
George E. Ketchum
Edward L. Kreamer
Raymond E. L. Lanirath
George T. Loop
William O. Martin
John W. Marchant

H'quarters Company contd.

Privates

Earl E. Michael
Ira E. Noitzel
Norman E. Noitzel
Leonard A. Petersen
Odlan A. Petersen

Privates

William V. Porter
Louis A. Riggio
Melvin W. Slyter
LeRoy R. Templeman

Privates

Robert C. Thornburg
Peter F. Verone
John W. Vye
James E. Wendt

Captain

Lawrence J. Nelson

1st Sergeant

Leland M. Hebblethwaite

Sergeants

Thomas J. Bastrom

James V. Fox

Joe Notaro

Earle R. Sieber

Robert M. Terrill

Franklin K. Thomas

Kenneth R. Whitney

John R. Winslow

Corporals

Earl L. Breen

Robert D. Chorlton

Harold A. Fisher

Vernon L. Frykholm

Houltan L. Hall

Arnold B. Jacobson

Charles E. Mayrand

Joseph P. Rawlings

William C. Steiner

Philip B. Sulkowsky

Kenneth S. Wickstrom

A Company

Privates 1st Class

Wesley M. Beham

Kenneth H. Blanchfield

Merle W. Bray

Oren T. Eikum

James R. Fehey

Harvey G. Johnson

Carl J. Nosko

Henry A. Peterson

Richard H. Usher

John F. Veitenheimer

William J. Wilkinson

William H. Barber

Elmer H. Bartlett

Charles O. Braman

Privates

Edwin E. Brenner

Walter H. Brock

Arno R. Brosze

John L. Brosze

John K. Clark

Walter H. Cotter

Chester E. Dadisman

Robert W. Davis

Loren M. Dewey

Arthur W. Erickson

George E. Erickson

Eugene E. Edwin

Donald D. Hatch

Earl W. Hendricks

Charles M. Hilton

Emil A. Hilton

Leonard Jackson

Ernest E. Jensen

Myrle R. Johnson

Privates

William H. Johnson

Herbert P. Latshaw

Arnold R. Malde

Alton P. McAllister

Paul H. McHugh

Jack W. McClain

Melvin Moe

Harvey D. Muir

Arthur E. Oen

Wilber A. Oyen

Perry K. Pearson

Frederick W. Peele

Miles K. Pond

Melvin H. Sage

Paul H. Schoeler

Julius Smeland

Stephen Strittmatter

Leo E. Svoboda

Rudolph O. Thorsen

Ellsworth W. Taylor

Frank T. Tratnik

John M. Van Antwerp

Henry E. Veitenheimer

Leonard T. Wallin

Arthur I. Watt

Eugene O. Wilson

Raymond E. Otis

	Company B	
Captain	Corporals, Cont'd.	Privates
Jesse L. Haire	Gene H. Seaburg	Leonard Bachman
1st Sergeant	John P. Steele	Fred H. Braithwaite
Orville R. Johns	David E. Swanson	Lloyd M. Carpenter
Sergeants	Albert A. Zehnder	Leonard Caskin
Erwin W. Gust	Privates 1st Class	James A. Clifftop
James R. Hays	Arley M. Baker	Theodore W. Hendon
Russell B. Hendricks	Donald C. Carroll	Verdon L. Hollis
Spencer M. Pitts	Harley L. Day	George Kohut
Charles R. Rosengren	Clifford C. Floberg	Paul Kohut
Edward W. Steele	Addison S. Hall	Robert W. Kugel
Frank R. Strout	William C. Hawson	John B. Leaard
Laurence E. Yeager	Fred D. Hollis	Sidney L. Malen
Robert C. Youngberg	Melvin L. Johnson	Ernest E. McKenzie
Corporals	Orrin R. Larson	Donald W. Metzker
Frank A. Benedict	Claude McGlade	Blois E. Prentice
Ralph J. Cowan	Donald L. Moak	Elmer W. Rossback
William D. Cowan	Clare J. Normile	Clyde E. Scharpf
Joseph Lech	Edward L. Preston	Anthony C. Seinkowich
Ted A. Marker	Robert T. Reeves	Vernon L. Smith
Arthur C. Morgan	Reay D. Richmond	Walter H. Stephens
Robert R. Read		Walter Sucholas
Edwin F. Rohrbach		Anthony Talik
Francis J. Rosengren		Ralph R. Thomas
		Lowell Warren
		Joseph White
		Leon E. Wolf
		Herbert A. Young

Captain
 Lewis A. Convis
 1st Sergeant
 George L. Swain
 Sergeants
 William M. Brunton
 Garth D. Clisbe
 Darrell M. Jenkins
 Francis J. Paulus
 Donald Peters
 Richard H. Pratt
 Victor A. Spurgeon
 Donald W. Stringfellow
 Victor R. Wyant
 Corporals
 Art B. Brock
 Bob W. Davis
 Russell B. Dean
 William L. Denend
 Arthur M. Godwin
 Richard D. Harrison
 Kenneth D. Hazelwood
 Alvin L. Kellogg
 Roy W. Misner
 Roy W. Percy
 Melvin D. Plumb
 Clarence H. Swedberg
 Privates 1st Class
 James K. Birk
 Charles E. Chapman
 Dennis D. Hogan
 Roy H. Horsley

Captain
 Mac B. Benjamin
 Tech Sergeant
 Richard F. LaPore

C. Company
 Privates 1st Class
 Dave R. Mathes
 Milton G. McAtee
 Alfred L. Morris
 Bud L. Nelson
 Keith L. Nordlund
 Andrew E. Olson
 Stanley R. Richardson
 Ward D. Schmidt
 William M. Springer
 Robert C. Stork
 Privates
 Albert L. Allen
 Frank M. Ashbrook
 Ernest R. Ayers
 Joe F. Baxter
 Albert E. Beebe
 Robert D. Buchanan
 Grant C. Buck
 Louis W. Duke
 Charles E. Ebby
 William W. Edwards
 Kenneth T. Gustin
 Jesse G. Howard
 Starling J. Jastrom
 Robert E. Johnson
 William R. Johnson
 Edward S. Johnstone
 Clayton E. Klassy
 Harold J. Knizek
 Karl K. Kenzen
 Harold R. Labsch

Medical Dept. Det.
 Sgt. Will E. Bergman
 Privates 1st Class
 John C. Gordon
 John C. Weibel

Privates
 Edward P. Lewis
 Floyd Mars
 Marvin E. McAtee
 Robert H. Miller
 Harold J. Misner
 Milton S. Mizer
 Vern T. Moravec
 Wilber F. Palmer
 Edgar E. Payne
 Ronald E. Peterson
 Calvin Powell
 James L. Pratt
 Oliver A. Reppeto
 Stanley A. Ryan
 Donald E. Senter
 Wilber R. Smith
 Clifford E. Spink
 Leroy A. Stacey
 Richard W. Stork
 Clarence Sutherland
 Clifford Sutherland
 Gene H. Swasey
 Jack P. Taylor
 Frances E. Watson
 Arthur L. Webster
 Rolland J. Wagner
 John A. Wilson
 Bob S. Winter
 John W. Wonderly
 Robert R. Zorn

Privates
 Ted A. Bachman
 Alvin S. Berg
 Kenneth W. Ingersoll
 Sydney M. Steele

The data below was furnished by a member of Recon Company
who allegedly obtained it from Battalion Headquarters.
(The accuracy of it may be questionable). ***

When	Where	Div.	[Equipment	Destroyed
June 13	Omaha Beach	2	[MK IV	1
July 1	La Haye Du Puits	82 AB	[MK IV	21
July 7	La Haye Du Puits	8	[MK VI	2
July 17	Breakthru St. Lo	29	[SP Guns	21
Aug. 1	Percy Falls	28	[Trucks	9
Aug. 14	Falaise Gap	9	[20 & 40	10
Sep. 9	Cross Seine, Bel.	79	[MM Guns	7
Oct. 7	2nd British Army		[45 MM Guns	7
Oct. 25	Battle of Aachen	30	[88's	1
Nov. 9	Hurtgen Forest	4	[ME 109	38
Dec. 16	Battle Luxembourg	4	[O.P.'s	17
Dec. 25	Confinement Bulge	5	[Pillboxes	54
Mar. 23	1st Armor across	5	[MG's	13
April 8	Rhine in 3rd Army	5	[Misc.	5979
May 9	Disbursement of	5	[PW's	2
	Ruhr Pocket		[Mortars	
	Czechoslovakia	5	[

*** (Column on right does not necessarily correspond to the column on the left).