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Since the activities of the 30th Infantry Division has been cleared for publication up to the 23 October 1944, the campaigns in which this Battalion has participated may now be mentioned and its many successful actions may now be related.

The 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was one of the first Battalions to land in Normandy and immediately went into action in support of the 30th Division, going into our secondary role as artillery. In the vicinity of Isigny on D-plus 18, we fired our first round with our destroyers into German held territory. June 26th we were relieved from the 30th Division and attached to the 29th Division giving close support in the drive for Villers Fossard. We rejoined the 30th Division on July 3rd and prepared for the crossing of the Vire River. Activity was, roughly speaking, in the Carentan-Isigny sector with mostly local hedgerow fighting until July 7th when we made the now famous crossing of the Vire et Taute Canal, that had been no-mans land for about two weeks. In the counter-attacks that followed this crossing our men earned Combat Infantry Badges. Two days later B Company captured our first German prisoner, and the First Reconnaissance Platoon knocked out our first German Tank. During successive days we supported attacks and helped repulse counter-attacks on small but important villages that saw some of the bitterest fighting in the Normandy Campaign, such as St. Jean de Daye, Hts Vents, Pont Herbert. Here the Germans made their strongest attempt since D-Day to push us back to the sea. The following day saw the Battalion in action in support of the operations that led to the capture of St. Lo the main anchor of the German Normandy position.

On the 25th July the St. Lo break-thru commenced. The heaviest air bombardment of the war followed by a furious artillery barrage, followed up by an Infantry attack, that opened the gap which General Patton's armor poured through for the historic sweep across Brittany. We moved on through St. Giles, St. Romphaire up against Tessy sur Vire. At this time the Luftwaffe started doing the honors each night--bed check Charlie made his schedule call around 2245. He was always on time and followed by bombers--everybody learned in record time to fix good covered foxholes. Once during this period, when Jerry planes had dropped flares and were groaning overhead, one of our A Company men was overheard saying this prayer "Dear Lord if you are going to do anything, do it now and do it on the double, but don't come down here, cause you'll give away my position".

On August 6th we moved to positions around St. Barthelmy and Mortain after a forty-five mile road march from our old location. Things begin popping soon after--the Germans had a do or die order from Adolf Hitler to make a break-thru to the sea near Avranches which would have cut the United States Forces in two, isolating the Third Army in Brittany and leaving the First Army cut-off in Normandy. The enemy decided to use his four best Panzer Divisions to make his main effort in our sector at Mortain and St. Barthelmy, but this turned out to be poor judgement for the German General Staff for the Division hung on tooth and nail.



One of our Infantry Battalions, including men of our unit, was lost--cut off and surrounded on an important hill for five days, but they never gave up. After some of the busiest days we had ever seen, we reaped the reward of a job well done, received commendations from higher Headquarters and the confidence and respect of the doughboy, whose life had been saved time and time again by our accurate fire on enemy tanks and Infantry. This battle will never be forgotten by this Battalion. We stayed right with the doughboys, and never gave a foot of ground, fought off savage SS German Infantry with machine guns, rifles and hand grenades who had penetrated within a few feet of our destroyers. We blocked the two main roads leading the Avranches and allowed no German armor to get through. We are proud of our work in this battle, here we set a new Army record for enemy tanks destroyed in one day, and also for the number of enemy vehicles destroyed in one day. After the German withdrew, this French Battlefield was beautifully cluttered with German junk including tanks, self-propelled guns, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, anti-tank guns, and super-men. Another road march brought us to Domfront where again resistances was encountered, the Germans trying fiercely to prevent the closing of the Falaise Gap. Finally though, contact was made with adjacent friendly troops and the 30th was whisked 172 miles to Prezailles, via Alencon and Mortagne. From then on the advance was fairly rapid and any enemy attempt to stop our troops was quickly taken care of by our well ballanced task force. Verneuil, Nonacourt, Evereux, Pacey, Louviers, and Misery were names well remembered from the next operation. The Command Post Group will well remember the little town of Misery. We thought the town had been liberated but it required a two hour fight with help from the First Recon Platoon and elements of B Company to make it safe for a Headquarters, Cooks, Clerks, mechanics, and everybody captured prisoners and our own grand total of super-men amounted to sixty-five plus ten killed. On August 27th the Battalion crossed the Seine River near Mantes going into position around Limay and other places in the Seine River Valley. Then northeast to Pontoise, and so we missed going through Paris, we were close enough to see the Eiffel Tower and some parts of the City. After a short stay the Battalion started on its swift race to the Belgium border passing through Roye, Peronne, Cambrai, Valenciennes, and St. Amand. Elements of our unit were among the first allied soldiers to cross the border into Belgium and the enthusiastic welcome of the population lining the roads and streets will never be forgotten by anyone who participated in this trip, when we out-blitzed the Nazi Blitzkrieg covering 180 miles in 72 hours.

Our first day in Belgium was another one of excitement for the Command Post Group. Two of our staff officers were sent out to find a place for our Headquarters. They found a very nice Chateau around St. Paul with adjoining woods for vehicles, but the woods happened to be filled with Germans who also wanted it for an assembly area. With the help of a nearby artillery battery the woods were finally cleaned out and the final count was 91 prisoners including one officer, 16 wounded, and a dozen more including one officer killed. We had a very enjoyable stay here and will never forget the fine hospitality to us by the Belgians.



From Tournai and St. Maur we continued our march through Belgium passing the old famous battlefield of Waterloo and by the 10th of September we were near Tongres in sight of the mighty fortress Eben Emael, that fell to us three days later. This operation brought us to where the three land corners Belgium, Holland, and France meet. On September 13th we crossed the Meuse River and Albert Canal into Holland and soon after fired our first rounds into Germany. On September 17th troops of the 2nd Recon and B Company were the first members of this organization as a unit, to cross the German border. On October 12th the Battalion entered the Siegfried Line near Rimbarg where we destroyed many pillboxes and helped beat back savage enemy armor counter-attacks knocking out 20 tanks in two days. So far this unit has destroyed over half a hundred tanks, many armored cars, anti-tank guns, and other enemy vehicles, and has captured over 3/4 of its strength in German prisoners. In the days that followed, the 30th Division closed the Aachen Gap from the north joining the First Division coming up from the south, equaling the fine performance the 30th made in the last war, when it pierced the Hindenberg Line.

Since that date the Battalion has played a most active role, in supporting the famous 30th, in its drive to the Roer River and famous towns and villages, which were once the pride of the German inhabitants, are now nothing but charred ruins and yesterday's memories of hard bitter fighting. Hongen, Langendorf, Pattern, and many other villages, will long be remembered as mile-stones to the very heart of Germany.

It can always be said that as a supporting TD unit to a famous Infantry Division, we all, as individuals, are proud to have taken such an active part in the crushing defeat of the Third Reich.