

HEADQUARTERS, 3rd TANK DESTROYER GROUP
APO 230

6 October 1944

SUBJECT: History of the 3rd Tank Destroyer Group (Period 1 September to 30 September 1944)

TO : Commanding General, V Corps, APO 305, U. S. Army
Attention: Corps Historian, APO 305, U. S. Army



1. The 3rd Tank Destroyer Group remained in the vicinity of ST DENIS on the northern outskirts of PARIS (S-083514) until 1 September on which date the CP was moved to FONTAINE LES-CORPS*NUD (S-323761). The next day, a move was made to a forest in the vicinity of TAILLE FONTAINE, just southeast of the famous COMPIEGNE FOREST. This location had been used as an ammunition dump by the enemy and many of the huts which stored the ammunition were still filled to capacity. It was obvious that the "BOCHE" had moved out in great haste because the demolition attachments for each hut were still intact.

2. On 2 September, Major Fuller captured the first prisoner for the 3rd Tank Destroyer Group. No official credit was taken for the capture.

3. A message from G-3, V Corps to the Commanding Officer, 3rd Tank Destroyer Group on 3 September contained the following: "Halt further advance to north of any troops of your command. Remain in present locations and await instructions. Report locations".

4. The 3rd Tank Destroyer Group next moved east to ROZOY (R-406297) on the 4th of September. Captain Blackwell, and Lt Wheaton-Smith were instructed to contact the 4th Infantry and the 5th Armored Divisions respectively and remain with these units as Liaison Officers to maintain contact with the TD units in the Corps Sector during the rapidly moving situation.

5. CHARLEVILLE (O-819348) was selected for the next location of the CP on 6 September 1944.

6. On 9 September at 1234 hours the head of the 3rd Tank Destroyer Group column crossed the FRANCO-BELGIUM Border, proceeded east and established headquarters in PALISEUL, Belgium (P-731481).

7. Colonel Matthews was advised on the 10th of September that he was Corps Security Officer and would initiate the development of a Corps Provisional Military Government Police Battalion. Because of this new assignment our Liaison Officers with the 4th Infantry and 5th Armored Divisions were recalled. Lt Wheaton-Smith related the following account of his travels with the 5th Armored Division:

History cont.)

"At about 1430 hours on 7 September, I arrived at the CP of the 112th Infantry, 28th Infantry Division, at BLAGNY (P-163168) and found that they were forming a Task Force to advance that night with VIRTON (410105), as their objective. I obtained permission from the Group Commander to accompany this Task Force, commanded by Lt Colonel Hood. We set out at about 2000 hours with Colonel Hood riding in my vehicle.

After advancing about five miles we were held up for the night by German Covering Parties, defending bridges which had been blown along the stream at MARGUT (213125). Just before first light next morning, 8 September we continued our advance against slight resistance which was insufficient to check us until we reached THONELLE (286086) where we deployed in order to clear the enemy out of the village.

We crossed the Belgian Frontier at ECOUVIEZ (352058) at about 1500 hours where there was a certain amount of small arms and mortar fire. We stopped to send out a reconnaissance party which I accompanied to look for a party of Germans which was reported to be awaiting a chance to surrender, which we were unable to find. We continued to advance to our objective which we reached about 1700 hours after wiping out three (3) MG Nests located on bridges. We bivouaced in area (3909) and awaited the arrival of the 5th Armored Division who were to relieve the 28th Infantry Division.

At 0700 hours, 9 September, the leading elements of CCH, Task Force Burton, came through VIRTON. I joined the point section learning that the objective was LUXEMBOURG (8414). On the road from VIRTON to ATHUS (623090), only slight resistance was encountered, two German AT guns sited on the road east of VIRTON were shot up, and occasional German vehicles were destroyed, until we arrived at PETANGE, a couple of miles further on, at about 1030 hours. Here there was German Infantry in some strength in and west of the town and as we approached they formed amusing targets as they left the houses, crossed open fields in parties off from five to thirty, and made for the woods on the hills about 1000 yards on the other side of the town. I stopped to send a few rounds into a few of these parties and shortly after moved into the town and assisted in marching in some columns of P/W into the main street where they were marched off and put into the hands of the Belgian FI. We resumed our advance about 1300 hours. From here until we arrived at DIPPACH (735114) there were about forty (40) German Horse Drawn Wagons on the road which had just been shot up by the Air Corps or our leading tanks. At (778102), 7 kilometers from LUXEMBOURG, we were held up by AT fire, fire from enemy tanks, mortar, and small arms fire.

Along the ARLON road to our left, tanks and halftracks were moving into LUXEMBOURG about ten each hour, with occasional batches of troops on cycle.

The TF did not deploy, but stayed right on the road and finally around dusk decided to pull off and wait till next day. Prince Felix came up during the afternoon, but went away again. I went up towards the ARLON road and watched the traffic coming down it till someone saw me and sent me on my way with a couple of shots.

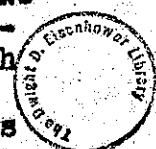
Next morning, 10 September, Sunday, the 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion who had done a good job the previous afternoon sent two platoons on into LUXEMBOURG at about 0900, the rest of us follow-



at about 0945 when the other TF of GCA Task Force Foot came on through, I joined them and we got into LUXEMBOURG after one slight check to clear mines off a railway bridge. We arrived at about 1020 and they appeared very pleased to see us. We went on through on the road to GRAVENMACHEN, but were held up on the edge of the city by Infantry and AT Guns. At 1300 hours I was ordered to return to Group Headquarters at FALISEUL.

After watching the Germans withdrawing on the ARLON, LUXEMBOURG road, I had come to the conclusion that they were taking out everything they could, so I decided to go up the LUXEMBOURG, ARLON road and meet elements of the 28th Division whose objective had been ARLON the previous night. It was a distance of about 18 miles.

On leaving LUXEMBOURG for ARLON it was apparent that no allied soldier had been seen by the people along that road. No flags, no one standing about cheering, and anyone who saw us approaching wither rushed into their houses or jumped into the ditch till we had passed and then came out and cheered after us. This went on until we reached STEINFORT (682195), there the bridge was blown, and we were forced to stop, within 10 seconds about fifteen people had come out to have a look at us and within 1/2 minute about 100 appeared. Within a minute we appeared to be surrounded by most of the towns inhabitants. About fifty jumped on top of my M20 and could not be dislodged. They filled the vehicle with flowers, flags, one or two eggs, cake, and two or three bottles. They sang their national song and "Its a Long Long Ways to Tipperary", and made speeches at us and at themselves. After much endeavor they consented to show us a bypass then pulled us up on the other side of the blown bridge at the local hotel where there was a scratch committee of the Mayor and Town Councillers had met, with the town band, and a lot of flags. All the church bells were ringing and all the people of the town had reassembled outside. They were shouting and singing. There was a great deal of noise. I learned later that there were a few Germans just outside the town on the road we were about to take.



We reached ARLON to find TF "8" of 109th Infantry, 28th Infantry Division digging in on the outskirts of the town. I reported to the CO of the TF and told him I had just come up the road he was to advance along. He told me that they expected considerable resistance between ARLON and LUXEMBOURG. I pointed out that we had just liberated STEINFORT and apart from the few Germans on bicycles, I knew of nothing to hold them up, which confirmed my conclusions I had formed the previous evening while watching their withdrawal. As I left the CP they were preparing orders for a rapid advance."

8. A move to BASTOGNE (P-557583) was made on 11 September.

9. On 16 September at 1035 hours, the 3rd Tank Destroyer Group column crossed the BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG border, continued north and established a CP just across the northern LUXEMBOURG border in Belgium in the vicinity of MALSCHIED (P-798743).

10. Colonel Matthews received notification of his being promoted to full Colonel on the 18th of September with date of rank as of 1 September. On the same day Lt Wheaton-Smith received orders promoting him to the rank of Captain.

History cont.)

11. On the 20th of September, the S-2 and S-3 Sections consisting of Major Fuller, Captain Walsh, M/ Sgt Mansfield, T/Sgt Preston, T/5 Keepl, PFC Elliot, Pvt Stivalletti, and Pvt Darby moved to the V Corps CP near Corps Artillery to operate as the 3rd Tank Destroyer Group. The new location was also in the vicinity of MALSHED (P-789738)

12. Tank Destroyer Battalions operating in the V Corps Sector during the month of September and attachments were:

<u>TD UNITS</u>	<u>DATES OPERATIONAL WITH CORPS</u>	<u>ATTACHED TO</u>
3rd TD Group	1-30 Sept 44	V Corps
893rd TD Bn (SP)	1-30 Sept 44	4th Inf Div.
801st TD Bn (Towed)	1-30 Sept 44	4th Inf Div.
630th TD Bn (Towed)	1-30 Sept 44	28th Inf Div.
629th TD Bn (SP)	1-14 Sept 44	5th Armd Div.
	15-30 Sept 44	28th Inf Div.
628th TD Bn (SP)	1-30 Sept 44	5th Armd Div.



13. Special Service Activities for the month of September included:

- Sept 1 Movie for 3rd TD Gp. Magazines distributed.
- Sept 2-10 Furnished Stars And Stripes and Yank to 3rd TD Gp, 629th TD Bn, 893rd TD Bn and issued 2 boxes of mints to each unit.
- Sept 11 Movie for 629th TD Bn. Issued Lighter Flints, Magazines, and books.
- Sept 12 Movie for 893rd TD Bn. Clubmobile visited this unit. Issued 1 dozen decks of cards.
- Sept 13 Furnished Stars and Stripes and Yank to all units.
- Sept 14 Sent 31 piece V Corps Band to 629th TD Bn and 893rd TD Bn.
- Sept 15 Movie for 3rd TD Gp.
- Sept 16 Issued athletic equipment to 629th TD Bn
- Sept 17 Issued books and stationery to MGP Detachments.
- Sept 18 Serviced the following units with Red Cross Clubmobiles and movie: 629th TD Bn, 53rd Med Bn, 186th FA, 187th FA, 955th FA, 190th FA, 941st FA, 500th FA, 987th FA, 20th Eng, 1340th Eng, 112th Eng, 254th Eng, 893rd TD Bn, 741st Tank, 460th AAA, 461st AAA, 200th FA, 146th Eng MGP Detachments
- Sept 19 to 25 Distributed Stars and Stripes to each MGP unit.
- Sept 25 Serviced 187th FA, 1340th Eng MGP Detachment with movies.
- Sept 26 Serviced 741st Tank, 941st FA, 987th FA MGP Detachments with movies.
- Sept 27 Serviced 747th Tank, 146th Eng, 20th Eng, 629th TD, Detachments with movies.
- Sept 28 Serviced 254th Eng, 461st AAA, 112th Eng MGP Detachments with movies.
- Sept 29 Serviced Hqs MGP, 28th Div MP's, 190th FA MGP Detachment with movies.
- Sept 30 Issued books to all MGP Detachments

History cont.)

As of the 30th of September the strength of the unit was 15 officers and 61 enlisted men. To date no casualties have been sustained.

For the Group Commander:

John W. Walsh
JOHN W. WALSH
Captain, TD AUS
Group Historian

