

AT EASE



*ENGLAND*FRANCE*LUXEMBOURG*BELGIUM*GERMANY*

Congressional Medal of Honor Awarded Sgt. Arthur O. Beyer

In Name Only

Listed on War Department Records as a Category IV Unit the 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion is probably the only unit in Europe that is slated to be discharged, as a unit, without having any enlisted personnel whose scores are over the newly announced critical score of 85.

In a series of lightning transfers, the Battalion now consists of personnel whose diversified scores range from 14 points to a just below the critical, 84. By a previous transfer with the 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion the bulk of the 603rd was composed entirely of those point scores between 80 and 120. According to the well informed sources emanating from the War Department it was a generally accepted fact that when the critical score was announced those between 80 and 84 points would also fall in the eligible for discharge class. However, such was not the case and the bulk of the remaining enlisted personnel are those disappointed by the surprising announcement of the Secretary of War.

On the 4th of August the last remaining high point of the 603rd were transferred to the 14th Armored Division. Temporarily billeted with the 48th Tank Battalion and the 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion the transferred personnel are expecting to leave for the United States around the end of September or the beginning of October depending on the available shipping space. The 14th Armored Division, although a comparatively new unit in this theatre is slated for total deactivation. All of its low point men have been transferred to various units as being their scores and is now composed entirely of combat veterans.

The 603rd, with 300 enlisted men remaining has been reorganized into two companies of 150 men each. A Headquarters company to attend to the administration needs of the men and C Company to house the excess personnel. In all probabilities the remaining personnel will be disseminated throughout Germany. In the near future, as explained to the South Pacific, this is the case.

Of the original personnel that arrived on the continent as members of the 603rd less than fifty remain and it is an accepted fact that 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion remains: In Name Only!

"At Ease" Suspends Publication

Less than three months after its birth the publication of "AT EASE" is forced to suspend operations. The extreme difficulty in obtaining printable material and the unsettled conditions of the redeployment plan force the editors of this paper to cease publication.

In so doing, however, we wish to thank the following persons for making this newspaper possible.

Lt. Col. Clarence D. McCurry, for the initial idea of a unit newspaper.

Lt. Colonel David DeG. Smith, for maintaining a policy of an uncensored and unfettered press.

Captain Richard J. Healy, through whose cooperation the necessary materials and aids were placed at the disposal of the staff.

Switzerland Opens Door to Tourist Trade

Switzerland, the home of fine watches and yodeling guides has opened her doors to American Tourist trade in the form of Army conducted tours. By so doing the Swiss authorities have broken a long standing precedent allowing no uniformed soldiers of a belligerent nation within her confined area. At the present time a very small quota for entry prevails but it is expected to rise as soon as the Swiss Government determines the effect the tourists will

Statistically Speaking:

Perhaps one of the most highly decorated Tank Destroyer Battalions in the European Theatre of Operations the 603rd lays claim to the following list of awards that have been presented and a few that are forthcoming:

- 1 Congressional Medal of Honor
- Awarded to Sgt. Arthur O. Beyer
- 1 Distinguished Service Cross
- Awarded to Sgt. Robert W. Hanson
- 91 Silver Stars
- 3 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Silver Star
- 354 Bronze Stars
- 19 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Bronze Star.

Yet to come:

- 1 Congressional Medal of Honor
- For Lt. Kent C. Rogers Seriously wounded in action.
- 1 Distinguished Service Cross
- For Lt. Walter R. Rick, Killed in Action
- 3 Legion of Merit
- For Captain Leslie W. Kincaid
- Captain John W. Dorrier
- Lt. Clayton M. Taylor
- 2 Silver Stars
- 10 Bronze Stars.

Wedding Chimes

William Croft Guthrie is a brave man. He wears five bronze stars on his ETO ribbon. He wears a Silver Star, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. William Croft Guthrie is now entitled to wear the 6th bronze star and whatever decorations he receives for bravery or wounds will be determined in the very near future. William Croft Guthrie is getting married.

At 0930 on the 9 August 1945: 1st Lt. W.C. Guthrie and 1st Lt. Agatha Schiller ANC were joined in holy matrimony. Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie came to England over 12 months ago and have courted through 3 countries and five major campaigns culminating their friendship in a Catholic Church in Heidelberg. Captain John O. Wagner and Lt. Henry Buchan accompanied the groom and were among the thirty officers and nurses who attended the function. A singer rendered the strains of Ave Maria during the ceremony after which the bride and groom were again married in the office of the local Burgo-master of Heidelberg. The Lt. and his lovely bride set a new trend in wedding fashions when they appeared before the Chaplain in their traditional Army Uniform. A seven day honeymoon in Berchtesgaden is all the time the Army will allow the happy couple, after which they will return to their respective units to become victims of the Redeployment Plan.

The two second best accompanying officers upon their return to the 603rd found some choice tidbits awaiting them.

Lt. Buchan was made cognizant of the fact that he and his platoon were awarded a Presidential Citation.

Capt. Wagner was ordered to report to Marseilles Port of Embarkation prior to the 14th of August.

P. S. Prior to the wedding 1st Lt. (Male) Guthrie ranked 1st Lt. (Female) Guthrie.

First CMH for Staff - Home Station 2017 Ball Team by the Won by Sgt. in Attached TD Unit.

Abensberg, Germany - 31 July 1945. - Hello, swissboard, this is the Adjutant, get the C Company, please. "C Company? Put Sgt. Beyer on the phone."

"Sgt. Beyer? This is Captain Clinton at Battalion. I called to tell you that a telegram from the Third Army states that you have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, what I would like to know is whether you would like to have the medal presented here or in Washington?"

"Good! Now Sgt. would you like to go by plane or boat?"

"Plane, one more question, do you want to remain in the Army or would you like -- --"

A Discharge... the reward presented each soldier who desires it for risking life and limb above and beyond the call of duty.

Born on the 20th of May, christened Arthur Otto Beyer, the recipient of his Country's highest award had the normal 8 years grammar school after which he occupied his time in the various jobs offered in the town of St. Ansgar, Iowa. Deciding his ability ran to mechanical tendencies, he spent the twelve years of his life, prior to induction, working in the Ford



Left to Right: Lt. Col. David DeG. Smith, Major Robert J. Peterson, Lt. Arthur B. Corino and Sgt. Arthur O. Beyer Pictured above as the Adjutant reads the citation for the CMH at a formal Retreat Parade.

garage in his home town. He was inducted into the Army of the United States on the 20 February 1941 and released to the Enlisted Reserve Corps on November 8th of the same year. Recalled to active duty in February 1942, Sgt. Beyer has been doing business at the same old stand for 3-years-nine months.

On the 16th of January 1945 Cpl Beyer was the gunner on an M-18 Tank Destroyer participating in the attack on Arioncourt, Belgium. Supporting the Infantry Tank Force, Cpl Beyer's Tank Destroyer was given the mission of protecting the exposed left flank. In the way of the advancing Tank Force lay a Machine Gun nest that had to be disposed of. As is natural in cases like this the Tank Destroyer was ordered to blast the position. Cpl. Beyer, at that time gunner, placed three rounds in the position and then left the vehicle to examine his handwork. Then began a chain of events that led to the destruction of two other Machine Gun nests, two bazooka teams and 18 enemy rifleman dead or wounded.

Upon arriving at the first position another machine gun opened up on the gunner from a ridge fifty yards away. In cases such as these one never knows the motivating force behind the succeeding actions but armed with a carbine and half a dozen grenades, Cpl Beyer proceeded toward the firing gun. After disposing of this second position in his own manner he kept

going from digout to dugout cleaning up whatever presented itself in his route of march. Unsupported and subjected to constant small arms and mortar fire, the gunner never wavered in his self appointed task and after determining that all of the enemy had been disposed of made the return trip to his Tank Destroyer unharmed. The task force, which had been pinned down by this flanking fire, was then able to take its objective with little or no casualties.

As proof of Sgt Beyer's exceptional ability to find trouble, he was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic action on the 8 April 1945.

3 Campaign stars, 1 Bronze Star, 1 CMH, 42 months service 13 months overseas add up to a total of 90 points... for which he now has very little use.

An interesting sidelight is the fact that Sgt Beyer was originally recommended for the Bronze Star by his acting Platoon Leader, S/Sgt George W. Neveis. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Battalion Commander endorsed it over to the Sixth Armored Division for a Silver Star presentation. The recommendation immediately returned from the Division examining board with a note ordering the Battalion to reapply, only this time it would be for the Distinguished Service Cross. Complying with this latest change the papers were forwarded to

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At Ease

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Printed matter has been approved by press Censors and this publication or any part thereof can be mailed.

It Seems to US . . .

At the Southern extremities of South America lies the cattle raising rich Republic of Argentina from which, these days, emanates nothing but . . . a smell.

From the period between November 7th 1941 until the 27th of March 1945 the Argentine government pursued a middle of the road policy in regard to the all embroiling world conflict. On the 27th of March the American Armies were safely across the Rhine on their way to the heart of Germany, Berlin was in its last throes. Superiorities were raising death and

destruction on the Japanese home islands. ARGENTINA DECLARED WAR ON GERMANY.

General Edelmito Farrell's government by its about face policy (in the face of complete German disaster) then became eligible for admission to the United Nations Security Conference at San Francisco. Her sister Republics were ready to go to bat for Argentina in order to maintain an appearance of hemisphere solidarity although they knew that this policy would certainly alienate the Russian representatives. However the combined votes of the South American states and a certain amount of prestige from the United States insured her a permanent seat in the League of United Nations.

The charter compiled at Frisco emphatically supports Freedom of Human Rights.

Argentine delegates signed the Charter while the Argentine Government in Buenos Aires denied its own people that which they had pledged their government to support.

A story smuggled out of Argentina by Arnaldo Cortesi, New York Times Correspondent, discloses the strong arm tactics now being employed by the Army. It is fact, not fiction, that Sergeant Colonel Juan Peron controls the government by his control over the army. Pro-democratic student speakers are arrested, the use of machine guns in the hands of traffic policemen is not an uncommon sight, press censorship, both foreign and domestic, has been imposed and Col. Peron has issued a challenge to the unarmed opposition to plunge the country into civil war in case they were prepared to overthrow his government.

We do not have to drag out the ancient history texts to find a parallel situation. A few dated newspapers will tell of Franco and Spain, Hitler and Germany, of the war now half over.

Argentina has not as yet ratified the San Francisco Charter and American Newspapers are fleeing to the consulate for protection.

Argentina has not yet ratified the Charter and its people are being subjugated to a Gestapo-like existence.

Argentina has not yet ratified the Charter and is in the process of becoming the Naziland of South America.

We do not believe that Argentina has lived up to the basic requirements necessary for a nation to have a voice in world rule.

We believe that Argentina has succeeded in duping the other 53 nations by her feeble Declaration of War.

We believe that Argentina will become another testing ground for Fascist Rule, Persecutions and Hitler-like tactics.

Perhaps it is too early for a test of the San Francisco Charter?

Perhaps it is necessary to wait until two thirds of the nations ratify this charter?

But . . . It seems to us that . . .

Whatever is delaying the machinery is of no accord but when it is put into effective operation what better task could it start on . . .

Than cleaning Argentina of . . . The Smell!

Where Goest They ?

Captain John O. Wagner, Lt. Estill Lawless and Lt. Robert C. Snell are outward bound. Answering a call from the 6th Infantry Division the three officers are headed for St. Martin De Grau in France, unfortunately close to the great port of Marseille. These three officers were chosen from the whole battalion simply because they all are endowed with a like characteristic. That of having between 85 and 99 points. It is too early to foretell their destination but Marseille is slowly building a reputation as being a port of call on the Pacific route.

Life is Dull in Abensberg

Bavaria in August is probably the coldest climate of the temperate zone. But Bavaria in August is much colder when the inhabitants live in Pyramidal tents. In an open field on the edge of Abensberg two rows of such tents housed the remaining 603rd men. Living parallel life on Louisiana maneuvers except for the fact that



The mess kit wash line is where rumors are born when there are no lairines.

coats have been provided for sleeping purposes instead of the bare ground. Each morning at reveille time the occupants of the tent make for the water can 'at the door' to get their

washing done before the water is gone. If some inconsiderate individual has used the last drop the night before, no one washes . . . until one brave lad makes the trip to the kitchen tent and carries the 5 gallon forty pound can back.

Meals are consumed in the open air mess hall while four foreign KP's take care of the pot washing detail. At the present time the daily charge of quarters counts the number of men coming thru the chow line. (One was explanation of this is that the KP's aren't getting enough to eat and they are searching for chow line parasites).

Duty call begins and ends with guard duty. Hardly does one come off his post when he is confronted with the problem of writing a few letters before he goes back on . . . or let it go for another three days. At various times one may find himself on guard before he is relieved from his last post. A very unlikely state of affairs.

Evenings, for those who don't make the trip to Regensburg, are spent drinking watered beer and recounting tales of combat. Numerous radios are found in the area and are all serviced by one electricity generator. The current problem is to find the individual who shuts the generator off at nine PM so that he is able to get some sleep.

It is generally concluded that life in Abensberg is very dull!

Prisoners of War Ordered Repatriated

Lt. Wilmer S. Barlow and T/S Charles Niehouse were at one time or another prisoners of the German Army. Whether or not he relished the idea at the time of internment is unknown, but for that period of their war experiences they are thankful. In accordance with some War Department directive or another they are returning home as repatriated prisoners of war. Lt. Barlow last remark as he prepared for the trip to the Munich Airstrip was (incredible of Confucius, "I never did like the German Soldier's, and I still don't, but I sure would like to shake hands with those who captured me!").

As he stepped into the jeep in a blinding rainstorm the Lt. from Utah assured this reporter "that the furniture business was never his."

Contrary to all the controversy appearing in Stars and Stripes the United States Army is giving compassionate furloughs. Sgt. Raymond Ramirez, upon his return from the River, found his furlough papers waiting for him. Although the papers took quite some time to reach General Eisenhower's Headquarters an return the happy Sgt. is on his way home to straighten out his personal affairs.

Two Dances Scheduled for Enlisted Men

On Thursday, August 16 the first of two enlisted men's dances will take place. A committee is searching for a location to hold the dance and making the other necessary arrangements. The first affair will be for the Personnel of Headquarters Company with C Company men having a like celebration the following evening.

In conjunction with the dance the enlisted men will receive their first liquor ration issued by the government. Instead of adhering to the practice of splitting the entire ration between Officers and EM the Officers will receive their entire ration next month while Non-Coms make merry in August.

Although a considerable amount of dancing partners have been invited it is permissible to bring your own. In fact the committee urges you to do just that in order to insure a good time by all. Refreshments other than alcoholia have been provided for which should afford an enticement for the local gentry.

Battalion Commended for Fighting Ability by Commanding General

SUBJECT : Commendation.
THROUGH: Commanding General, Twelfth Army Group, APO 653, US Army.
TO : Commanding Officer, 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

1. The 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion has fought with the 6th Armored Division from the hedgerows of Normandy, through the mud of the Saline and the Saw Valley, the bridges of the Ardennes to the Mulde River in the heart of Germany. Their record has been an enviable one.

2. During the period 27 July 1944 to 8 May 1945, enemy equipment destroyed, totaled 62 tanks, 53 self-propelled assault guns, 56 anti-tank guns and artillery pieces, an estimated 500 general purpose vehicles and two fighter planes. Casualties inflicted on the enemy are estimated at 5000.

3. Contrasted to these figures, the 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion suffered only 58 officers and enlisted men killed in action. Only eight tank destroyers were lost.

4. The 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion was largely responsible for the light loss of tanks in the 6th Armored Division. The battalion also, through efficient utilization of their destroyers, closely supported infantry, reduced pillboxes and fortified towns, and conducted indirect firing missions thereby affording tanks of the Division great maneuverability and the Division increased fire power.

5. I commend the officers and enlisted men of the 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion on a job well done. Their skill, fearlessness, sound judgment, morale, and thorough knowledge of their duty, whether it was destroying enemy tanks or repairing damaged tank destroyers, has been outstanding. They have won the confidence and admiration of all fighting men in the 6th Armored Division.

R. W. Grow
R. W. GROW
Major General, USA
Commanding.

First Platoon of A Company Receives Presidential Citation

1. Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular number 333, War Department, Troop "D", 86th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, Reinforced by 1st Platoon, A Company, 603rd TD Bn is cited for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance in action against the enemy.

2. Troop D (reads the citation) and the 1st Platoon of A Co. distinguished itself in action against an enemy of the United States in Germany during the period 23 March to 30 March 1945, climaxing these three days of continuous battle action with the seizure of the bridge over the Eder River, between Zennern and Obr-Mollrich, Germany. Although warned of heavy enemy resistance in the vicinity of Zennern and being ordered to withdraw if necessary, the troop, despite overwhelming superiority of personnel and firepower of the enemy, moved boldly into Zennern. The troop then forced its way through the town and continued its advance to the Eder River. The bridge between Zennern and Obr-Mollrich was the only one remaining in the area its seizure was necessary for an attack against the important city of

Kassel. Reconnaissance showed the bridge to be prepared for demolition and heavily defended on all sides by superior force of enemy troops. Every man in the unit realized the possible suicide nature of the mission for the enemy had concentrated a murderous fire on the bridge ahead of them and was standing by ready to blow it. Without hesitating every available automatic weapon in the troop opened up and the entire column charged across the bridge straight into the enemy's position into the main street of Obr-Mollrich. Through a hail of artillery and direct anti-aircraft fire, advancing so rapidly that the leading vehicles ran down enemy soldiers in the street. For four hours this unit then repulsed enemy attempts to destroy the bridge and reduce the bridgehead until finally the enemy was driven from the town and the explosive charges removed. Only through the extraordinary heroism, the display of gallantry and the superior "esprit" de corps on the part of every member of the group was this vital bridgehead so quickly established against overwhelming odds — enabling elements of three Divisions to continue the attack upon Kassel.



"Dammit, Harbath, When I make a motion, drop it!

...and Moan

A POINT FOR THE POINTLESS! WHY NOT PATTON?

Dear Editor:

"Why can't points be transferrable?" were asked by a low pointer. We know he isn't serious and we also know that any such plan would not work out. But it's a shame that people like Lt. Col. Royal Baker of McKinley, Texas, who elects to remain in the Army can't divvy up some of his points with some of the pointy shy men who do want to get out. Having spent 47 months in the service with 23 months overseas, the colonel has amassed 312 of the coveted points, helped along by one child, combat and decorations. He claims to be one of the top ranking point collectors if not the top. — but still he wants in.

There are thousands who would give everything for just a few of those unwanted points if it would give assurance that their soldiering days would be over. There is no such assurance. We know of a man who has been in the Army 40 months, 30 of which were spent in Africa, Sicily, France, Belgium and Germany and claims 110 points. His cry is "When am I going home?" I see where men in the States are being discharged with 85 points. What's the story? What's holding this thing up?"

Another man we know has not the required 85. He takes on a more facetious outlook. He says, "I don't even come close to the critical score, what I needed was a wife and triplets." And another remarks that it's a hell of a note when a soldier can make more points at home than in battle.

And this brings up the question of the adjusted service rating which was accepted at first by everyone as fair and just. Now that the men have had a chance to think it over it appears that the service men are not unanimous in its praise.

Just how many service men were polled before the plan? That question is open for debate as indicated by the storm of protest shown in Stars and Stripes. The claim is now that the vote of approval did not represent an accurate cross section of the armed service.

However there seems to be little chance of a change now that the system has been adopted and already functioning. It probably is as fair as any system that can be devised, and it is evident that no plan would meet the universal approval of 7,000,000 men. The plan may be all right and the administration faulty. The higher ups are doing all that's possible to iron out the wrinkles. But that still doesn't make it any easier for the "ETO happy" boys who either don't have enough points to get out or thinks he's entitled to them.

TENT No. 5 and its 6 occupants.

WE DIDN'T

Editor:

I don't know if the letter I wrote had anything to do with it but the show is getting better around here. I haven't had hash in weeks (I've got my fingers crossed) and last week, miracle of miracles, I had steak and chicken. The world has taken on a rosy hue for me and I'm even getting to where I can talk to a cook. If you had anything to do with it please accept my thanks.

"Well-Fed"

The Grass is Always Greener

Comes now a letter from one of the former conscripts of the editor and for reasons known to all it is necessary to withhold the identity of this person. Upon receipt of the letter the staff of this newspaper visited this camp and unfortunately found the situation to be precisely so. So to our former friends we express concern and sympathy and pray for their immediate deliverance. We also hope that we are not transferred to this unit.

Dear Editor,

One lovely July morning 80 members of Company C, 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion left their home to join the ————TD Bn. All the men had less than 80 points and were expecting redeployment to the Pacific via the United States.

Somehow or other the convoy got lost and ultimately wound up in this concentration camp. Upon our arrival at Stalag Number 2 one of the Gestapo Henchman (masquerading as an acting First Sergeant) laid down the law to us. We were assigned to our respective cells and issued prison numbers. I became prisoner "No. 2245". We were told that the 603rd had a reputation of being a tough outfit but it would be a fairland compared to this. (It is).

We begin each happy day by arling at 0545 each morning to stand reveille at which there is never an Officer present. Being that we brought our own cooks with us show is fairly

And Moan.

Now that General George Patton is back from his triumphal tour of the States and has resumed command I wonder why the War Department has ordered the hard hitting 3rd Army to sit on it's fanny and keep the Germans in check. Patton expressed the wish to fight the Japs and from his past record in pushing the Nazis around I am sure that, if only from a viewpoint of morale, the Nips would quiver in their boots if they knew that "Blood and Guts" was coming over to give them a dose of what he handed the Jeries.

Arm chair Generals would have it otherwise; They wouldn't have two tried armies, the fighting 3rd and the equally famous 7th Army, twiddling their thumbs in the ETO and send the untied 15th to the Pacific.

But the United States Army has made no serious mistakes yet, if we discount some of the Sunday Quarterback talk, and there must be a good sound reason behind the decision. The War Dept. is not in the habit of consulting us on it's moves and no doubt doesn't prefer to share many of it's confidences with us strategists as for instance the role the Russians will play in the Japanese War and about the reported peace feelers the Japs are putting out.

We can rest assured that the Army knows what it's doing. Maybe they don't need the 3rd and the 7th and maybe not even the 15th Armies to bring the Nips to unconditional surrender. Many think they're practically there. However most of those in the know agree that it will be a long, hard struggle ahead still I can't imagine anything of that sort without Patton following his way through it.

Patton Lover.

OVERCOATS WILL BE ISSUED!

Dear Editor:

I'm getting colder and colder. And when winter comes it will probably be worse. I know that you feel the same as I do about having to live in tents but there must be something we can do. Even with the prospects of war almost over I will still be here in December and every morning as I shiver into my clothes I dread the thought of December in a tent. There must be one little room somewhere that I can occupy. After having fought Heintler's over Europe I don't relish the idea of living under the same roof with them ... but it worst comes to worst ... I'll do it.

"Bloodless"

CMH

(Continued from Page 1)

Major General Robert W. Grow, commanding general of the 6th Armored who returned them with a short note saying that if the events that were written thereon were true the soldier was certainly deserving of his country's highest award.

As is customary in cases, such as these, Sgt Beyer will be awarded his medal from the hands of the President of the United States when he arrives in Washington.

This award coming to a non organic battalio of any Division has established a unique precedent in Military annals.

decent but not good enough to overcome the other disadvantages we have. Our daily tasks include 6 to 10 mile hikes and the renovating of 9 derelict Tank Destroyers discarded by the ————TD's.

(Before I forget to mention it, it does no good to have ever studied 21-100 as they have a complete set of their own Army Regulations around here.)

Last Saturday morning we were awakened at 0330 for the job of searching every house in town. We also had to check every inhabitant to see if they were carrying the proper pass. Saturday night a few of us were told to go to one of the entrances of this walled city and walk around. This lasted all night and on Sunday morning we were to search the 18 surrounding towns in the same manner. After this was completed we were complemented on a job well done and as a reward for this fine work we were all restricted to the cells. 25 per cent were allowed to go to the show ... all others were to remain in the stockade.

It seems that the Allied Armies in their task of liberating all the American soldiers from concentration camps missed this, particular one. We are smuggling this letter out in the hope that some day a wandering task force finds this place and frees the most wretched soldiers in the army.

"Prisoner 2245" and 79 others

An Outline of History

(Continued from Last Week)

During the month of November the Sixth Armored Division saw its hardest fighting to date. The Division squeezed its way across the Seille River, the Nied Francaise, and up to the Saar River. Tanks, Anti-tank, guns, Minesfields, AT ditches, heavy artillery, large mortar concentrations, and the rainiest season in 29 years were used to maximum advantage in the enemy's strong delaying action.

The Division pushed off by jumping the Seille River at Pont-Sur-Seille and at Nomeny passing through the 80th Division's bridgehead. Advancing to the Nied Francaise River, Combat Command A with B Company attached, captured Luppy, Bechy, Secourd, Thimonville. Combat Command B with C Company attached captured Budy, and after three tries won a difficult bridgehead at Sanyr-Sur-Nied. CCA gained the very difficult bridgehead at Han-Sur-Nied and moved Northeast capturing Vainmont, Holo-court, Hery, Many and Thiocourt. Arraincourt and Boulange fell next followed by the capture of Landroff which was defended against vicious counterattacks. Elements of the Command moved on to capture Chemery, Adelange, Boustrouff and Eidevillie.

Combat Command B meanwhile, took Volm-haut and Vittoncourt and moved down to Bettingen. From there the advance continued through Gros-Tenquin and Hellimer. Shooting with front Heintmer elements drove strong opposition to pass through Leyviller and capture St. Jean-Rohrbach. At the end of this period the Division was holding a line before the Saar River extending north and south from Putelange.

Casualties for November list 2 Officers and 6 Enlisted Men killed in action and 6 Officers and 32 Enlisted men wounded in Action.

December finds the 603rd patrolling a sector of the VII Corps Zone between the 26th and 80th Infantry Divisions. On the 4th



Major General Robert W. Grow inspects Honor Guard of Tank Destroyers.

The Division was given the mission of taking the high ground NW of Sarreguemines. This objective was taken by the 6th of December, and the Division relieved the 80th and 2nd Cavalry Group holding the North flank of the XII Corps Zone as the attack continued East.

On the 16th the 6th joined the III Corps in the vicinity of Forbach and patrolled this sector until relieved by the 103rd Division after which it moved to Metz in XX Corps reserve. This assignment lasted one day, for on Christmas Day the move north to the Bastogne area began with an intermediate stay at Meresch.

Losses for the Month of December were exceedingly light in that only five enlisted men were wounded.

The opening of the New Year found the Division beginning its bitterest, most-costly battle to stem the on-rushing German forces in the Ardennes Salient. Striking through the howling blizzards of Bastogne the Battalion ran straight into the might of Germany's best troops.

Once again the companies were broken down in their respective combat commands and the first two days of the month found them securing the high ground around Warden and Midchamps. The attack toward Arrincourt was beaten off and our troops in Midchamps were driven out by strong counterattacks. The Division straightened its lines and withdrew to shorten its sector. For four days, 4-8, the Division held its lines against strong enemy opposition and on the 9th renewed its attack in conjunction with the 35th Infantry Division. The attack continued for five days clearing, Midchamps, Warden, Margaret and Benonchamps. The 14th thru the 17th saw elements advancing to the N and NE capturing Oubourcy, Arrincourt and the high ground SW of Longvilly. After regrouping the forces the attack continued through Koince, Crendail, Lullange, Hoffelt, Weller, Barbellain and on to secure the now famous "Sky-Line Drive". On the 27th the Sixth went into the Siegfried line just west of the Our River and through to the end of the month, held its positions and carried on a rehabilitation program to bring the fighting efficiency up to normal.

Casualties for January: Killed in Action:

1 Officer and 3 EM. Wounded in action: 1 Officer and 35 EM.

During the month of February the Sixth Armored crossed the Our River and assaulted the Siegfried Line penetrating deep into Germany. On the 6th the Division began the attempt to cross the raging Our and after a number of failures a bridgehead was established at Dahnen and at 0630 the morning of the 7th the first man of the 6th Armored crossed into Germany with the rest of the Division not far behind.

From then until the 20th the Division built up its strength, consolidated bridgeheads and positions, beat off numerous counterattacks carried on intensive Reconnaissance and in general prepared for the attack on the Siegfried line. While CCA feinted an assault across the river in its sector the main assault was made in the bridgehead area on the 20th. The town of Dahnen, the first German town to fall to the 6th, was taken on the first day and by the 24th the Division had cleared its sector of the Siegfried line, capturing some 30 towns and stabilized their positions west of the Prum River. On the 27th the Prum was crossed and the offensive to the east was renewed.

Casualties for February were light: 1 Officer and 3 EM wounded in Action.

The beginning of March finds the 6th Armored attempting a bridgehead on the Moselle River, this being accomplished on the 3rd day when contact was made with the 4th Infantry Division on the North.

The entire Division was then relieved for the first time in 221 consecutive days of fighting on March 14th and passed to SHAEF reserve. On the 8th they were reassigned to the 7th Army and moved to the vicinity of Chateau-Salins in France to help exploit the XV Corps breakthrough and secure the exits to the Rhine plain at Bad Dürkheim, Grundstadt and Dreisen. The Division was also: to seize the west bank of the Rhine and wherever practicable to secure a bridge across the Rhine.

CCA pushed through the XXI Corp's area while the rest of the Division went on through the 3rd and 45th Infantry Divisions on the 19th of March and by the 21st had reached the Rhine. Reverting to Third Army control the Division crossed the Rhine at Oppenheim and attacked to the Northeast. With the 4th Armored on the right and the 6th Armored on the left the Corps spearhead moved forward. By the end of the month the 6th had seized the bridgehead across the Main River into Frankfurt which finally fell to the 5th Infantry Division.

Losses for the month: 1 Officer and 6 EM killed in action and 4 Officers, 8 EM wounded. At the beginning of the April the Sixth Armored was given the mission of capturing Erfurt and Weimar. Across the Mulda river at Malsfeld the advance continued N and E to Groß-Budshila where a bridgehead across the Werra River was gained. Fanning out to the East, columns entered Mulhausen at 6 different points and after a short regrouping period pushed on toward the East. Gaining 60 miles on the 11th the Division overran the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp with its 21,000 political prisoners.

At the Weisse-Elster River and in the Zeitz area stubborn resistance from small arms and AAA fire was met on the 12th and 13th. On the 14th the division broke the Weisse-Elster defenses and pushed 25 miles to the Mulde River near Rodlitz. The advance continued east rapidly, across the Zachapan River at Matzdorf. At this point the Division reached its limiting line and ceased pushing. On the 25th of April the Division withdrew to the West side of the Mulde River and the war ended at that point for the 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Casualties for April were 1 Officer and 4 EM killed in action and 13 EM wounded.



Somewhere in Germany the American flag flies proudly for the 603rders who gave their lives in the Fight for Freedom.