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MEDICAL DETACHMENT  
605th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
APO 758, U S Army



Reg. No. WD-84

PERIOD REPORT, MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

The 605th Tank Destroyer Battalion Medical Detachment was activated 16 December 1941 at Fort Custer, Michigan. The original cadre consisted of seven enlisted men and no officer. The first medical officer to act as Battalion Surgeon and assume command was Captain Bernard B. Neuchiller who joined the detachment during March 1942. He remained as Detachment Commander even after Captain A. James was added to our roster as Battalion Surgeon in May 1942.

From December 1941 to May 1942 the detachment participated in individual medical training and during the months of June and July took part in parade formations in various mid-western cities.

First Lieutenant Stanley M. Pearson joined the detachment and replaced Captain James as battalion surgeon during July 1942.

The detachment moved by rail to Camp Hood, Texas during the latter part of July 1942 and became school troops with the Tank Destroyer Training Brigade until July 1943. During this period the detachment pulled problems for Tank Destroyer Officer Candidate School classes. It became attached to the 16th Tank Destroyer Group for Unit Training Center training during the month of August 1943.

First Lieutenant Henry S. Pressman, D.C., joined the detachment as Battalion Dental Surgeon in September 1942. Capt. Neuchiller was transferred from the detachment in December 1942 and Lieutenant Pearson was promoted to Captain and assumed command of the detachment during the same month. Between the 23rd and 25th of December 1942, 15 recruits joined the detachment and were given basic training until February 1943. From then until July 1943 the detachment received medical training with TM 8-220 being the basic training manual used. Various members of the detachment attended Medical Department Service Schools for periods of two months.

Lieutenant Pressman was promoted to Captain in July 1943. Captain Pearson attended Tropical Diseases School at Washington, D.C. from August 1943 until October 1943. During his absence Captain Pressman assumed command.

The detachment departed from Camp Hood, Texas via rail for Fort Jackson, South Carolina on 9 September 1943 and arrived there on 12 September 1943.

The chief activity during September and October 1943 was

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Preparation for Tennessee Maneuver No. 4 which was to begin on 21 November 1943. The detachment left Fort Jackson on 9 November 1943 via rail and motor convoy and arrived at the maneuver area in the vicinity of Murfreesboro, Tennessee on 11 November 1943. It, then, participated in the maneuvers which ended on 16 January 1944, and departed the maneuver area arriving at Fort Jackson on 19 January 1944.

Captain Pressman left the detachment during March 1944 and joined the 13th Tank Destroyer Group at Camp Gordon, Georgia. In July Captain Pearson was transferred to the 130th Evacuation Hospital at Fort Jackson, and was replaced by First Lieutenant Edward H. Kennerdell.

The Medical Detachment personnel received medical training during Spring and Summer of 1944. The training aids used were film strips and TM's 8-45, 8-50 and 8-220.

On 12 September 1944 the Medical Detachment departed from Fort Jackson via rail and motor convoy for Camp Rucker, Alabama. Arriving there on 14 September 1944 it joined elements of the 66th Infantry Division in maneuver exercises. The detachment left Camp Rucker on 8 October and arrived once again at Fort Jackson on 9 October 1944. During the month of November the detachment completed preparations for overseas movement.

On 1 December 1944 the detachment left Fort Jackson via rail convoy and arrived at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, staging area for New York Port of Embarkation on 2 December 1944. When immunisations and last minute administration had been completed, the detachment departed for the New York Port of Embarkation by train and ferry and boarded the Queen Mary on 8 December 1944.

The ship sailed on the 10th of December 1944 and arrived at Firth of Glive, Scotland on 16 December 1944. The detachment debarked on 19 December at Greenock, Scotland and boarded a train which brought it to Camp Blackshaw Moor, Leek, Staffordshire, England in the early morning of 20 December 1944. From then until the 22nd of January 1945 the detachment was busy taking part in individual training and drawing organizational equipment.

The detachment left Camp Blackshaw Moor by motor convoy on 23 January 1945 and arrived at the marshalling area in Portland England on 24 January, and then moved across the English Channel in two groups. The first group, accompanied by the Medical Officer, crossed the channel with the detachment vehicles on an LST. The second group crossed in LCI's.

After it landed at Le Havre, France, on 26 January, the first group departed from that port via motor convoy and arrived at a chateau near Yvetot, France on the same date. The second group joined the main body on 27 January 1945. The detachment remained in France until 13 February 1945 when it departed for the combat zone.

3 The detachment first entered the combat zone on 15 Febru-

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MAY 1945 when it arrived at Teveran, Germany. At that time it was assigned to the Ninth U.S. Army, the XIII Corps, and subsequently to the 102nd U.S. Infantry Division for operational control. Our actual combat experiences didn't begin until the 23rd of February with the push across the Roer River. From then until the Rhine River was reached, it was constantly in combat, most of the time with the 102nd Division, but toward the end of the drive, we became attached to the 84th U.S. Inf. Division. Fortunately, our casualties were very light during this push, and since we had a Corps ambulance attached to us, evacuation was carried out without difficulty. Our final destination in this operation was the little town of Rott, on the road between Uerdingen and Krefeld, and we arrived there on 11 March 1945. Throughout this whole phase, we received the best cooperation possible from our higher units.

On 18 March 1945 the entire battalion was moved back to Belgium to a small town called Uikhoven. We had been placed temporarily under the British Second Army and were to remain with them for the Rhine crossing. Since the town was too small to hold all the men, the battalion was split and billeted in two different towns. Because of this, the Detachment set up two complete dispensaries and the Medical Officer held sick call at each one. In this way, it was found, medical care could be had most efficiently and quickly and the system worked very well.

Our stay in Belgium proved fairly brief for we were shortly taken to the Rhine River which we crossed in support of the 17th U.S. Airborne Division on 27 March 1945. We drove east with them up to and including the capture of Munster and then turned back with them to the Ruhr Valley to assist in cleaning out the Ruhr Pocket. Once more, fortunately, throughout this operation, our casualties were light.

With the completion of our duties along the Ruhr, the detachment moved eastward with the battalion to the little town of Brambauer. Here, for awhile, we learned military government functions under the 79th U.S. Infantry Division. After only a few days there, however, the call came for the battalion to join the 82nd U.S. Airborne Division in the XVIII Airborne Corps, and to support them during the crossing of the Elbe, so we moved eastward to Schwemnitz, a small village just north and east of Uelzen. We crossed the river on 1 May 1945 and pushed eastward until the cessation of hostilities. V-E Day found us in Redefin, just west of Ludwigslust. In this, our last operation, we had no casualties.

Throughout combat, the battalion had been split into its various companies which were sometimes separated by a good many miles. Because of this, the Detachment was divided and two aid men, equipped with a 1/4 Ton truck, were attached to each company. Evacuation from the companies was then carried out to the nearest aid station. For this purpose, the 1/4 Ton truck equipped with litter racks has proven indispensable.

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Sanitation, on the whole, was excellent because the men of the battalion have been well trained. Straddle trenches and sump holes were dug at all time when civilian facilities were not available. Water, for the most part, was obtained from U.S. Army Water Points, but when this was not feasible, water was gotten from civilian water supply systems and treated with Halazone tablets. The Lister bag was seldom used. A few mild outbreaks of diarrhea occurred, but these were usually traced to improper washing of mess gear or the eating of too many of Type "C" rations which had been improperly prepared.

Although our time in combat has been comparatively short, two deficiencies have been noted by this command. The first is in the matter of equipment. While our T/E calls for plenty of materials to treat wounds and medical emergencies, no provision has been made to carry those things which are necessary for the ordinary every-day practice of medicine. We are referring to such medicines as cough syrup, liniments, Athlete's Foot solutions, eye washing material and the like. We overcame this by constructing a box containing flat-sided bottles which packed very well and which we carried in our travels without breaking a single bottle. It proved to be one of the most important things we carried.

The second deficiency for a separate battalion like ours is the lack of adequate dental facilities. When the Tank Destroyers were organized, the separate battalions were to operate under a group which has two dentists. However, in combat, we were never under a group, but always attached to a division or straight to Corps. Under such a situation, we could manage to get the dental emergencies taken care of, but that was all because the dentists had enough to do taking care of their own men. We believe that if a battalion of this size is to be placed out on its own, it should have a dentist permanently attached to it.



After V-E Day, the battalion moved back across the Elbe River to the town of Luechow where we acted as the military government of the area. At that time we functioned under the 472nd Field Artillery Group. The Detachment was kept busy there in inspecting two large displaced persons camps and in providing medical supplies for the civilian hospitals. We remained in that locality from 15 May to 3 June 1945 when we left to go to Ketsch, Germany.

At Ketsch, Lieutenant Kannerdell was promoted to Captain. The Detachment departed from Ketsch, Germany on 14 June 1945 and arrived at Pfungstadt, Germany the same date. At present the battalion is attached to the 101st Cavalry Group and has been placed in Category IV awaiting disbandment.

*E.H. Kannerdell*  
 E.H. KANNERDELL  
 Captain, M.C.  
 Commanding.

3