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MEDICAL DETACHMENT  
607TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 403, U.S. ARMY

30 June 1945

SUBJECT: Period Report, Medical Department Activities, Medical Detachment,  
607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 1 January 1945 to 30 June 1945.

TO : The Surgeon General, Washington, D.C.  
(Through Channels)

In compliance with Par 6, AR 40-1005 and Par 1, Circular 58, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, dated 14 May 1945, the following Period Report, Medical Department Activities is submitted:

(1) Early History:

The 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion Medical Detachment was activated at Sunnyvale, California on 1 January 1942. The initial cadre of five enlisted men came from medical detachments of the 7th Infantry Division's Field Artillery Battalions

Under command of Captain Harry D. Silsby, MC, the detachment accompanied the battalion to its 1942 training and maneuver areas. These were successively Jolon, Antelope Valley, and Mojave Desert. The high temperatures in these areas presented numerous medical problems, such as heat prostration, rashes, and severe epidermiphytoses.

A few days after returning to Camp San Luis Obispo, the battalion entrained for Camp Hood, Texas. The winter of 1942-43 was spent at this camp. On 23 December 1942, Captain, then 1st Lt, Ralph D. Weible, MC, succeeded Captain Silsby as Battalion Surgeon, to remain in this position until the present time. 1st Lieutenant Morton W. Mitteldorf, DC, was assigned to the detachment in January 1943. He served as Dental Surgeon until January 1945, and has not been replaced because of a T/O change.

From May until October 1943 the battalion trained at Camp Ibis, California in the Mojave Desert. In June-July it maneuvered for three consecutive weeks. The troops were fed a modified B ration, except for maneuver time, during which K rations were issued. The rations were not palatable at high temperatures, and, as a result of selective eating, instances occurred of gastric disturbances and vitamin deficiencies. The wisdom of vitamin supplements for troops long on this diet was forcefully illustrated.

From the desert, the battalion moved to Camp Cooke, California, to enter its final phase of training. Great care was exercised at this time to conserve men by selecting jobs in accord with handicaps. The performance during combat of men with physical defects has been very satisfactory.

The detachment left with the battalion 1 April 1944 for Camp Miles Standish. After a few days stay at this camp, the unit was sent aboard the U.S.S. Wakefield. The responsibility of operating an army dispensary was given to the detachment. The after battle dressing station was made into an aid station, and medical supplies were drawn from the ship's storeroom. With the aid of medical officers and enlisted men from other detachments, the work of caring for many seasick and distraught soldiers was carried through successfully. Penicillin was administered to 17 soldiers infected with gonorrhea during the voyage. These cases had all been resistant to sulfonamide therapy given before embarkation. There were two cases of failure in this treatment.

During the period 22 April to 21 May 1944, the battalion was stationed in Macclesfield, England. The detachment operated an aid station in the armory.

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There was just time to draw equipment and condition it for combat before the battalion moved to Barton-Stacy. At this final staging area two important changes were made in the medical transportation. A 1½ ton truck and 1 ton trailer were secured in lieu of the T/E 3/4 ton weapons carrier with a ½ ton trailer. In addition to the T/E, three 3/4 ton vehicles, the detachment was able to secure a fourth 1/4 ton truck. This additional vehicle enabled the Surgeon to visit the companies and proved necessary in evacuation of the wounded and in supply.

(2) Combat.

The combat history of the 607th TD Bn is integrally bound with the infantry divisions to which it was attached. Particularly is this true in the evacuation of the wounded, where speed is essential. Usually one Tank Destroyer company was used to support each regiment; thus, if all three regiments were in the line, the battalion line was as wide as a division front. To channel wounded men from this battalion through their own aid station would have imposed too much delay, and at times was not possible. The majority of wounded men were evacuated through infantry battalion aid stations. Lightly wounded and sick men were brought to this aid station whenever possible. Those needing only a few days for recovery were placed with the dental surgeon in Hq rear. By this procedure, many specially trained men were conserved for the battalion at a time when they were critically needed. The aid station was customarily located near the Bn CP and Hq forward.

<u>DIVISIONS</u>	<u>PERIOD OF ATTACHMENT</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
9th Inf Div	17 - 19 June 1944	Co "A" and Hq forward
82nd A/B Div	19 June - 4 July 1944	Co "A" only
90th Inf Div	23 June - 2 Nov 1944	Bn.
95th Inf Div	2 Nov - 2 Feb 1945	Bn.
94th Inf Div	7 Jan - 25 Jan 1945	Co "B", Co "A"
87th Inf Div	2 Feb - 15 June 1945	Bn.

(3) Task Force

Following the crossing of the Rhine River at Boppard, Task Force Sundt was formed. This fast moving armored unit contained the 607th TD Bn less "A" and "C" companies, plus "A" Co of the 735th Tank Bn, 87th Rcn Tr, "K" Co of the 346th Inf Regt, and the 2nd platoon of "C" Co, 312th Engr Bn.

The Task Force was organized into three composite companies composed of infantry, tank destroyers, and tanks. Medical support was given by means of three 1/4 ton vehicles with litter, one for each company. The Tank Company furnished one 1/4 ton vehicle with three aid men. The 1½ ton truck and trailer travelled with the rear elements of the task force. Sufficient medical supplies were carried to support the task force for one week, should it be cut off from the rest of the division.

In the first movement of the task force from Boppard to Butzbach, few casualties were incurred. The second phase of Task Force Sundt, which led the division 109 miles in 9 days, encountered more difficulties. Six miles from the jump-off town of Arnstadt, the task force encountered heavy enemy fire in Trassdorf. Eleven casualties were handled in the next hour at the aid station. In this particular instance the station was opened beside the road in a patch of woods located just outside Trassdorf. The number 2 chest, plasma, and litters were unloaded, and the station was ready to operate. If other items of equipment, such as splints, were required, these were unloaded while changing or reinforcing

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dressings. To open or close the station required only 5 minutes time by 4 men. This rapidity was desirable because of the rapid changes in speed and direction utilized by the task force as it probed its way into the heart of Germany.

During the ensuing 8 days, 61 more casualties were handled. German wounded were delivered to German hospitals when located nearby. As movement was not feasible after dark, it was necessary to retain overnight some wounded men. In such cases civilian houses were used, and the injured made as comfortable as possible.

Several times difficulty was experienced in evacuation which would not have occurred had an ambulance been part of the organic transportation. One ambulance is now authorized.

One of the big problems in the medical support of a rapidly moving small task force is maintaining contact. For the most part the aid station was aware of the situation through the use of radio, maps and code signals. Contact was broken at one phase, however, and only recovered by following the American tread-marks on the roads and fields. Where such a situation is likely to develop, and a vehicle is available, it should be used to act as liaison until contact between the aid station and the rest of the task force has been firmly re-established.

On 20 April 1945, the task force came to a halt in the vicinity of Plauen. Soon the detachment was bent on the more peaceful tasks of profiling and classifying men for redeployment.

(4) 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion Medical Detachment Personnel:

Aid Station		Transportation
Capt Ralph D. Weible, MC	0-1700932	1 1/2 ton truck
S/Sgt Dorance R. Biter	38040696	
Tec 4 Arnold A. Blattel	37055235	
Cpl James R. Ball	35618158	1/4 ton truck
Tec 5 John J. Buzgard	33163485	
Hq Co, Rear		
Tec 3 Leroy E. Schurwanz	36018227	
"A" Co.		
Tec 5 William J. Wyburn	39389768	
Tec 5 Ralph H. Briggs	35644005	1/4 ton truck
Pfc Wesley Hilliard	39377835	
"B" Co.		
Tec 5 Roger E. Craig	35677386	
Pfc Porter D. Crawford	35677381	1/4 ton truck
Pfc Luther H. Bell	6588730	
"C" Co.		
Tec 4 Gerald W. Thomas	35574533 *	
Pfc Oswald W. Laitinen	39389763	1/4 ton truck
Pfc James H. McIntosh	35676905	

Rcn Co - No medical personnel as a platoon was usually attached to each company.

\* Holder of Bronze Star for Meritorious Service.

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*Ralph D. Weible*  
 RALPH D. WEIBLE  
 Captain, MC  
 Surgeon