

MEDICAL DETACHMENT
612th Tank Destroyer
Battalion

APO 403, New York, N.Y.
20 September 1945

SUBJECT : Period Report, Medical Department Activities.
TO : The Surgeon General, Washington, D. C.
THRU : Technical Channels.



1. EARLY HISTORY, MEDICAL DETACHMENT, 612TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

The Medical Detachment was activated with 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion on 25 June 1942 at Camp Swift, Texas. The personnel strength of the Detachment at time of activation consisted of two (2) officers and seven (7) enlisted men. Detachment was under command of Captain John J. Rouse, M. C.

On 4 December 1942 the Battalion was assigned to Tank Destroyer Center, Camp Hood, Texas and on that date moved to Camp Bowie, Texas and attached to Basic Unit Training Center. Here the Detachment drew personnel fillers from induction centers and entered into basic training in Medical First Aid in the Field. Personnel strength of the Detachment at this time consisted of three (3) officers and thirty-two (32) enlisted men. Constituting the officer personnel were two (2) Medical Officers and one (1) Dental Officer.

During basic training at Camp Bowie, Texas the Medical Detachment personnel were given schoolroom classes on First Aid by Medical Officers, and during phases of field training were assigned as company aid men to companies of the battalion for training in the field. During this period one enlisted man was placed on detached service at Brooke General Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas and enrolled in Medical Department Service School for schooling as Medical Technician.

Upon completion of basic training, the Battalion moved on 3 March 1943 to Camp Hood, Texas and was attached to Advanced Unit Training Center. While here the Medical Detachment continued their classes in First Aid and received further training in the field. Four (4) enlisted men placed on detached service at Brooke General Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas and enrolled in Medical Department Service School for schooling as Medical and Surgical Technicians.



During this period Captain John J. Rouse, M. C., commanding officer of the Medical Detachment was hospitalized due to attacks with heart, and was later dropped from assignment. Lt. John F. Brennan, M. C. was assigned duties as commanding officer of the Medical Detachment.

Advanced training was completed on 12 June 1943 and on 14 June 1943 the battalion moved to Camp Swift, Texas. During this period from 14 June 1943 to 13 September 1943 the battalion reviewed basic and advanced training. Two (2) Medical Detachment enlisted personnel were placed on detached service at Fitzsimons General Hospital, Denver, Colorado for training as Surgical Technicians. One (1) enlisted man placed on detached service at Army and Navy General Hospital, Hot Springs, Arkansas for training as Medical Technician. One (1) enlisted man placed on detached service at Lawson General Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia for training as Dental Technician.

On 13 September 1943 the battalion moved to Third Army Maneuver Area in Louisiana, where it participated in Third Army Maneuvers until 15 November 1943, at which time it returned to Camp Swift, Texas.

On 20 December 1943 the battalion was reorganized from Self-propelled to a Towed Battalion and went into training with towed weapons.

During the period from 20 December 1943 to 26 March 1944 the battalion was being processed under requirements of POM. Examinations were given by Battalion Surgeon to determine fitness for overseas service. All spectacles were brought up to date and required immunization were given.

On 26 March 1944 the battalion moved by train from Camp Swift, Texas to staging area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and assigned to New York Port of Embarkation, arriving on 29 March 1944. Here the men were further processed and received typhus immunizations.

On 4 April 1944 the battalion was alerted for overseas movement and on 5 April 1944 moved to New York Port of Embarkation and embarked on His Majesty's Troop Transport " Ile de France ", dropping anchor at Greenock, Scotland on 15 April 1944.

On 16 April 1944 the battalion moved by rail to Failand Tented Summer Camp, Failand, England and was assigned to First Army and attached to V Corps.

On 15 April 1944 the battalion was alerted and began drawing equipment and supplies and by 26 May 1944 was fully equipped. Concurrently with the drawing of supplies for the organization, intensive training in meeting POM requirements (SSV) was undergone.

On 27 May 1944 the battalion moved to Camp 'G', Barton Stacey, England and on 11 June 1944 moved to marshalling area at Brockenhurst, England. Here final preparations were made for transfer of the battalion across the English Channel.

2. COMBAT HISTORY, MEDICAL DETACHMENT, 612TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

The Battalion Aid Station Group, consisting of one (1) Medical Officer, one (1) Dental Officer and five (5) enlisted men, disembarked from LST on Omaha Beach, on the coast of France on 16 June 1944 and moved inland to Transit Area # 2. Here the waterproofing was removed from vehicles before moving on to bivouac area for the night. The following day, 17 June 1944 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to Foret de Cerisy and set up Battalion Aid Station in area with Battalion Command Post, coordinates 643707.



Upon arrival in France the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Second Infantry Division for anti-mechanized defense.



On 25 June 1944 the rear echelon of the battalion with attached Medical Detachment Personnel arrived to bring the Detachment to full strength of one (1) Medical Officer, one (1) Dental Officer and twenty (20) enlisted men. Detachment was under command of Captain John F. Brennan, M. C.

Transportation facilities of the Medical Detachment at this time consisted of one (1) $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton cargo truck with 1 ton trailer and three (3) $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trucks. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton cargo truck with 1 ton trailer was used to transport the Battalion Aid Station and Medical Supplies.

By the use of scrap iron, improvised litter racks were constructed on the three one-quarter ton trucks for the transportation of casualties. With this improvised rack it was possible to transport three litter patients at once.

Due to tactical deployment of the tank destroyer companies with infantry regiments, any resulting casualties would be evacuated through infantry aid stations in the immediate vicinity of the troops in preference to transporting them to the Battalion Aid Station set up with the Battalion Command Post. Therefore it was deemed advisable by the Battalion Surgeon to redeploy the Medical Detachment Personnel. One (1) Aid Man was assigned to each platoon of tank destroyer guns and one (1) Aid Man with "Litter Rack" one-quarter ton truck was assigned to each gun-company command post, where he established a Company Aid Station. Under this arrangement the Battalion Aid Station Group consisted of one (1) Medical Officer, one (1) Dental Officer and six (6) enlisted men.

Due to enemy artillery barrages in the immediate area of the Battalion Aid Station, during the period from 17 June 1944 to 6 July 1944, it was deemed necessary by the Battalion Surgeon to construct a dugout in which to set up the Battalion Aid Station for protection of casualties during barrages of enemy artillery fire. This was accomplished by digging a

hole approximately twelve (12) feet long, eight (8) feet wide, and six (6) feet deep. The earth evacuated from the hole was utilized in sand bags which were placed around the top edge of the hole to a height of approximately three (3) feet. The hole was roofed by means of logs cut in the area and sheet metal obtained from destructed houses in the area. After the logs and sheet metal had been placed over the hole approximately two (2) feet of sand bags and earth were added. Then the hole was camouflaged. In digging the hole a shelf of earth was left on each side approximately eight (8) feet long, three (3) feet wide and four (4) feet high. These shelves were used to accommodate two litters. Medical Department Chests numbers one and two were set up in each end of the dugout. Light was furnished by means of a sealed beam headlight from vehicle. Upon departure from the area the sheet metal was salvaged from the roof of the dugout and transported on the one and one-half ton truck to be used for future dugouts.

On 6 July 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new location approximately two and one-half miles southwest of Cerisy La Foret, France. Due to nature of the terrain and relation of location to the front it wasn't deemed necessary to dig the Aid Station in at this point.

On 24 July 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position one-half mile northwest of St. George d'Elle, France. Here the Battalion Aid Station was again dug in. One enlisted man of the Medical Detachment evacuated to hospital as a result of exhaustion, and was later dropped from assignment. This decreased the Detachment strength to two (2) officers and nineteen (19) enlisted men.

On 1 August 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position one and one-half miles southeast of Torigny, France remaining in overnight bivouac and moving the following day, 2 August 1944, to position one-half mile west of La Cabotiere, France. Here it remained for one night bivouac, moving on 3 August 1944 to new position one-half mile west of Souderal, France. Here the Battalion Aid Station was again set up in dugout.

On 6 August 1944 the Battalion was relieved from the line for forty-eight hours. This time was used by the Medical Detachment personnel for the cleaning of equipment and replenishing of supplies.

On 11 August 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position one mile southwest of Coulances, France where the aid station was again dug into the ground for the protection of casualties.

On 13 August 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position two miles west of Vire, France. Here the aid station was set up in command post tent.

On 16 August 1944 five enlisted men of the Medical Detachment were awarded Bronze Star Medals for meritorious service and one enlisted man awarded Bronze Star Medal for gallantry in action. One enlisted man awarded first Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star Medal for gallantry in action.



On 19 August 1944 the Battalion Aid Station departed from position two miles west of Vire enroute to Ploudaniel, France arriving 20 August 1944. Battalion moved into direct and indirect fire positions to begin the siege on the city of Brest, France.

On 22 August 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position one mile north of Kersaint-Plabennec, France. Two casualties resulting from shell fragments were treated and evacuated through Battalion Aid Station.

Three enlisted men of the Medical Detachment transferred to companies of the Battalion. This decreased the strength to two (2) Officers and sixteen (16) enlisted men.

On 18 September 1944, after the fall of Brest, the Battalion Aid Station moved into assembly area with the Battalion, one and one-half miles west of landerneau, France. Here vehicles and equipment were made ready for motor convoy through France enroute to the front. Shows were obtained for the entertainment of the troops. Lectures on Venereal Disease were given to Battalion formation by the Battalion Surgeon and Division Chaplin.

On 27 September 1944 the Battalion Aid Station moved from Landerneau, France by motor convoy with Battalion enroute to new position one mile northwest of Steinbruck, Belgium arriving on 30 September. The Battalion Aid Station was set up in Command Post Tent in the edge of a woods.

On 4 October 1944 the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from the Second Infantry Division, with the exception of one company. Company B was attached to the 23rd Combat Team. Task Force X was constituted, consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company A, 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion; Company K and Cannon Company, 9th Infantry; Company D, 741st Tank Battalion. The Battalion Aid Station was assigned the duties of Medical Care for Task Force X and on 4 October 1944 moved into new position in Manderfeld, Belgium where Aid Station was established in building. Thirty-two (32) men forming a provisional Collecting Company were attached to the Battalion Aid Station for the evacuation of wounded.

On 5 October 1944 three casualties resulting from shell fragments were treated and evacuated through the Battalion Aid Station.

On 9 October 1944 the Provisional Collecting Company was detached from the Battalion Aid Station and transferred to another sector, leaving three (3) ambulances and six (6) enlisted men attached to the Battalion Aid Station for the evacuation of wounded.

On 22 October the Battalion Aid Station was relieved of it's duties with Task Force X and moved to new position at Eimerscheid, Belgium. Here the Battalion Aid Station was again set up in buildings. This period was idle with the exception of dental patients being taken care of by the Dental Officer. This idle time was utilized by the Battalion Aid Station Group in the cleaning of equipment and supplies.



On 12 December 1944 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Sourbroudt, Belgium where the Battalion Aid Station was again established in buildings.

On 15 December 1944 the Battalion Aid Station Group were divided into two groups in order to best utilize medical personnel to best advantage in face of the German Counter Offensive. The Dental Officer and two enlisted men moved the forward Aid Station to Wertsfeld, Belgium and set up in vicinity of Battalion Forward Command Post. The Battalion Surgeon and two enlisted men were left to operate the Battalion Aid Station.

On 17 December 1944 three (3) enlisted men of the Medical Detachment were reported missing in action and one (1) litter rack one-quarter ton truck lost due to enemy action.

On 19 December 1944 thirteen (13) casualties were treated at Battalion Aid Station. One enlisted man of the Medical Detachment evacuated to hospital with head wounds resulting from shell fragments. This decreased the strength of the Medical Detachment to two (2) Officers and twelve (12) enlisted men.

On 29 December 1944 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to vicinity of Verviers, Belgium. The Battalion was in process of reorganizing from a Towed Battalion to a Self-Propelled Battalion. While here the troops of the battalion were brought up to date on immunizations.

On 21 January 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Sourbroudt, Belgium where the Aid Station was established in buildings. One enlisted man of the Medical Detachment returned to Battalion Aid Station, from duties as company Aid Man, with combat exhaustion and on 23 January 1945 was transferred to Headquarters Company. This further decreased the Detachment strength to two (2) officers and eleven (11) enlisted men.



On 4 February 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Camp Elsenborn, Belgium remaining for one night stay, then moving on to establish Battalion Aid Station at Rocherath, Belgium.

On 7 February 1945 two (2) reinforcements were received by the Medical Detachment. Under new Table of Organization resulting from reorganization of Battalion the Medical Detachment was not allotted a Dental Officer. Consequently the Dental Officer was transferred from the Detachment. At this time the strength of the Detachment was one (1) Officer and thirteen (13) enlisted men.

On 21 February 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Hofen, Germany. While at this location the Detachment received one reinforcement which increased the strength of the Medical Detachment to one (1) Officer and fourteen (14) enlisted men.

On 6 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Valatten, Germany remaining for one night then moving on 7 March 1945 to new position at Merchernich, Germany.

On 8 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Eicherscheid, Germany remaining for one night then moving to new position at Bruck, Germany. During these daily moves the Medical Chest were so arranged in the one and one-half ton truck so as to form a mobile Aid Station.

On 10 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Schalkenback, Germany and Battalion Aid Station was established in buildings.

On 21 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station group moved to new position at Linz-on-Rhein, Germany and Battalion Aid Station was again established in buildings.



On 25 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Niederbieber, Germany remaining for two days then moving on 27 March 1945 to new position at Grenzhausen, Germany.

On 29 March 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Nieder Hadamar, Germany remaining for one night then moving to new position at Homberg, Germany. After one night moving on to new position at Sachsenhausen, Germany. Here the Battalion Aid Station was established in buildings.

On 6 April 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Grebenstein, Germany establishing Battalion Aid Station in buildings.

On 9 April 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Rittmarshausen, Germany remaining for two days then moving on 11 April 1945 to Sollstedt, Germany.

On 12 April 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Bad Frankenhausen, Germany remaining for one night then moving on 13 April 1945 to new position at Gohrendorf, Germany.

On 17 April 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Bad Durrenberg, Germany remaining for two days then moving on 19 April 1945 to new position at Markranstadt, Germany.

On 21 April 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Bad Lausick, Germany. One enlisted man from Medical Detachment granted furlough to the United States, and was later dropped from assignment. This decreased the Detachment to one (1) Officer and thirteen (13) enlisted men.

On 2 May 1945 the Battalion Aid Station Group moved to new position at Nieder Murahh, Germany remaining for two days then moving on 4 May 1945 to new position at Grasserdorf, Germany.



On 6 May 1945 the Battalion Aid Station moved to new position at Horsozski-Tyn, Czechoslovakia remaining for one day, then moving on 7 May 1945 to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. The Detachment strength at the end of combat consisted of one (1) Officer and thirteen (13) enlisted men.

LATE HISTORY? MEDICAL DETACHMENT 612TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION:

During the period from 7 May 1945 to 7 June 1945 the battalion was given Physical examinations to determine Physical profiles in accordance with redeployment requirements.

On 27 June 1945 the unit moved to Nyrsko, Czechoslovakia. Here the Medical Detachment was assigned the duties of medical care for Displaced Person Camps in the vicinity.

During this period ten (10) enlisted were received into the Medical Detachment by transfer from other organizations. ~~Three (3)~~ enlisted men transferred from the Medical Detachment during this period bringing the strength of the Medical Detachment to one (1) officer and eighteen (18) enlisted men.

On 13 September 1945 the unit moved by rail from Nyrsko, Czechoslovakia arriving in assembly area at Camp Chicago, France on 17 September 1945 and began processing for transfer to Zone of Interior.



3. FIELD SANITATION:

During the first months, after the battalion was committed to combat, the troops lived in the field under combat conditions. Troops were housed in shelter tents and sheltered fox holes. Later it became possible to billet the troops in houses.

Water supply for the battalion was obtained from Engineer Water Points and was transported and stored in five gallon metal water cans. Monthly tests were made of water by the Battalion Surgeon to determine amount of residual chlorine. Samples were submitted once a month to Medical Laboratory for bacteriological analysis. Instructions were given by the Battalion Surgeon on the use of halazone tablets for the purification of water, if and when it became necessary to obtain water from any source other than engineer water points.

Food ration consisted of the Ten-in-one type ration, which was supplemented by extra rations of milk, sugar, coffee and bread, and the 'B' Type ration. The ten-in-one type ration was issued to groups of ten men and were prepared individually by the groups on one burner gasoline stoves. Later it became possible to have the food prepared by the unit kitchens which transported the food to the front by the means of marmite cans. All troops were served at least two hot meals a day, and in most cases three hot meals a day. Physical examinations by the Battalion Surgeon revealed no apparent malnutrition due to lack of proper food and no vitamin supplements were necessary. Garbage was disposed of by means of garbage pits.

In the field, human excreta was disposed of by means of deep pit latrines. Later when the troops were billeted in houses, human excreta was disposed of by means of permanent latrines at location of billets.



The troops were issued DDT powder with the instructions to apply every fourteen days to their axillac and pubic regions and in the seams of their underwear for the control of body lice.

4. VENEREAL DISEASE CONTROL

During the period lectures were given on venereal disease by the Battalion Surgeon, Company Commanding Officers and by Division Chaplins.

Prophylaxis kits were available to the men at all times in addition to regular dispensary phophylaxis stations.

When the tactical situation permitted, attempt was made to furnish recreational facilities to the troops, in the form of Movies, USO Shows, Ball Games and Dances.

Posters on venereal disease were posted on all bulletin boards in company areas.

When cases of venereal disease were confirmed by Army Hospital Units, the Venereal Disease Officer was notified and all possible effort was expended in an attempt to apprehend the contact, in which case the contact was turned over to US Army Military Affairs for examination and treatment.

ETOUSA Medical Department Form Number 302 was filled out on each case of venereal disease diagnosed.

During the latter part of the period an Enlisted Man's club was established, which provided entertainment for the troops with three weekly dances, and movies when available. In addition an Enlisted Men's Club Annex was established which provided recreational facilities for the troops. A Battalion Ball Field was obtained and Soft Ball Teams were organized for competition with other organizations.



5. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL SERVICES

1. Patients treated at Battalion Aid Station:

Military Personnel: 1,029
Civilians: 420

2. Patients evacuated from Battalion Aid Station:

Military Personnel: 264
Civilians: 19

3. This data obtained from file copies of Form 51, Sick and Wounded Report, Medical Department, US Army.



John F. Brennan
JOHN F. BRENNAN
Captain, M.C.,
Surgeon, 612th TD Bn.