

HEADQUARTERS
 COMPANY "A" 645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 45 U S Army
 10 June 1945

SUBJECT: History of Company

TO : S-3, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion

May 11 - 13: Days of false starts.

Rumors had it we were scheduled to parade in Munich so the destroyers were cleaned, however paint was not on hand so they could'nt be painted; but by using up the districts water supply, we scoured the destroyers with hoses and had them glistening in their cleanliness - then the parade was called off for us and "B" Company sent one platoon to represent the Battalion.

Another rumor had it that we were going to receive citations in a formal dress parade formation. So far two hours each day we drilled and practiced our eyes right and left turns - clothes were cleaned, pressed and garrison caps dug out, chevrons sewed on and colorful T.D. patches distributed. A practice review was held and showed that although the company had'nt seen formal parades for two years, we could still strut like U.S.O. commando's.

All for nothing - Our parade was changed to another dirty, dusty trip to a new area.

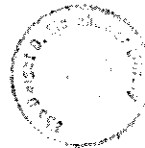
May 14 - And so we packed our things and lined up in the morning. Then, waiting for B and C Company to move out ahead of us, we had a leisurely eaten lunch and started. Not five minutes later, the trouble started.

Sgt Remsburg lost more hair when his T.D. had a punctured gas tank and he had to drop out to repair it.

Then going through Munich, Sylvester (two gun) McKay got wild, threw two tracks, went through a local shade tree and gently came to a stop in front of a boarding house by pushing its foundation over about a foot. "Two Gun" in doing so hurt his leg so that Porky (the medic) had some first aid practice. And although the rest of the crew was startled by the tree lying over the turret and the shower of brick, no one was seriously awed at "two gun's" ability to throw two tracks and start a short cut through Munich at the same time.

Then after collecting at a point north of Munich with the rest of the Battalion so that straggling traffic would be cleared up, and after seeing briefly our B and C Co rear echelon friends we moved into our new area. Yet in going here we lost three more tanks (three more tracks). Each of the crews could'nt help but 'thank their lucky stars' that the trouble was coming now - after combat.

The C.P. set up in Tandern, the 1st platoon in Klengen, the 2nd platoon in Kuleach and the 3rd platoon in Wielach.





The evening was spent in hustling rooms, setting up house-keeping and looking over the towns.

May 15-18: The cooks were split up and some sent to each platoon. Check points for traffic control were set up and roving patrols established to guard against local disturbances in the Company area.

Permission was sent from the Battalion allowing each platoon to have two acquired civilian cars to run patrol with, to save Army vehicles. And so the race started. Each platoon tried to outdo the others for the best, fastest and most modern car. The third platoon dug up a '38 Ford but the classiest of all was in the 2nd platoon's hands.

A German S.S. command car complete with spot light, fog light, quarter inch armor and seats that let down to form a bed. Edwards and Finklestein found it and stayed up all night adjusting the spark, regulating the brakes and cleaning the motor. The next day there stood the car, spotless, gleaming in the sunlight, a masterpiece of man's ingenuity. Edwards stepped on the starter the motor started and purred like a kitten. Then he shifted and let up on the clutch; the car started up, traveled all of 20 feet, and stopped - the clutch had burned out. And so even today, as a memory of the 2nd platoon, the model of man's hard work, the car can be found in Kelisch with a burned out clutch.

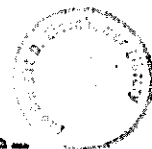
Lt (Judge) Morgan set up a CP in a regal style that would have put any of King Arthur's courts to shame. For behind a desk elevated on a teachers platform, he would have all comers brought to him. A telephone next to his elbow kept him in constant touch with the check point and its troubles. Here he would hear the unfortunate one's plea and give his final decision with a bang of his potatoe masher gavel. If the unfortunate one had'nt yet fainted, he would be escorted and thankful for his life much less the liberality of Judge Morgan's judgment.

The orders for check points were changed every day. At first everyone passing was stopped for identification - And sometimes this lead to much trouble. The 2nd platoon, one morning, had over 100 persons in single file waiting to have papers checked merely to go to the next town for bread. One girl without papers, who wished to go home to the next town even offered to give a little time and body for the privilege of going home - her offer was not accepted. The third platoon sent one family back 18 kilometers because of insufficient papers. Then when new orders came down the next day, the same family came through unhindered.

A few soldiers were questioned and taken to AMG Hq for identification.

But soon the Bn moved in the same town with the 2nd platoon and after an afternoon of very frequent interruptions by people the platoon had sent over, new orders came out eliminating many check point duties. But the patrols often had troubles.

One of their duties were to check the number of D.Ps in each town. One burgomeister told the 2d platoon that his town was Anti-Nazi and would'nt accept the slaves offered by the Nazi.



He said, however, he thought there was one and would inquire - the proud, anti-nazi, anti-slavery village proved to have 27 Russians and Polish "volunteer" workers in its population.

Several fights were squelched. One riot occurred when German families refused to sell shoes and clothing to Polish workers. The workers armed with pitch forks started to rebel. To the scene came the first platoon who sent the Poles to bed with new clothing and shoes and the Germans to their kitchens with empty pocketbooks.

Three suspicious characters were picked up one evening who appeared and claimed to be young farmers boys. Yet with a little persuasion their lost, but suddenly found, identification papers proved them to be veteran soldier boys who were not legally discharged from a nearby PW camp - they were escorted back by the 2nd platoon detectives of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers - Rosen and Lemke.

But needless to say, the stay in these towns was not spent entirely in work.

A brewery in the 2nd platoon area proved to be in good service as a club and day room. It is rumored that the factory was changed somewhat and that the beer produced somehow became a little stronger than the usual German colored water or American 3.2. Proof can be found in Sammy Poblano's pants. Ever night he could go home, he walked on his knees.

The 3rd platoon had a favorite swimming hole - the water was a little cold tho. It was 'nt bad when Jim Curry had to be white-washed after he came out blue but when McGarity's Georgian hot blood cools down to where he says "no" to a girl - then it's bad.

And the food shortage was relieved in the 3rd platoon by its fishing enthusiasts. Sartin, Smitty and Allen went out one morning at 4:00 AM and fished until noon - their prize catch was a Gin Perch and 3 big suckers - Butler went out in the morning too - His new type fly rod was more successful - with 2 grenades he got enough fish to feed the platoon.

Near Wielock on a hill overlooking most of the surrounding country stands a quaint church. Sometimes about 800 AD there was a great battle on the plains near Wielock - After the battle the dead were collected and buried in this little hill. An altar in their memory was erected. Later a chapel was built around it. This was burnt down about 1650 by the Swedish invaders. And then the present church was built - The name of the church translated means "Church of Mary, built on the hill of bones". The small church, although plain on the outside, houses a gilt alter - a large statue of Christ on Calvary and a modern organ. All the walls are decorated with pictures given through the ages for worship. And finding the priest of the church spoke some English, many of the 3d platoon visited and worshipped in this beautiful, aged memorial of the dead and living.



May 19 - Late in the afternoon, the 3d platoon moved to Altomunster in preparation of another movement on the 20th. Although they didn't reach the town till evening, the hustlers, Lamhut, Deacon and Reynolds "hooked up" the local photograph shop and during the night they worked the proprietor till he had developed their films and printed most of the negatives.

May 20 - The company CP, 3d platoon and the 1st platoon moved to Unter Weikertshofen in the morning - the 2nd platoon moved to nearby Sutzenbach.

In the afternoon the 3d platoon set up the first checkpoint on the highway and the platoon patrol routes were mapped out and went over.

The CP and 3d platoon moved into a spacious home which belonged to Countess Von Hundts. This home, which is older than most American towns was built in 1659 after the original home was burnt in the Swedish war about 1650. It is filled with antiques, paintings and furniture of the past generation. The company soon changed it to a busy CP filled with noise, bustle and mixed up maniacs.

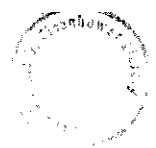
Lt Morgan and McGarity spent hours trying to get something to eat and drink on the trip to Paris - They could'nt find anything to eat.

May 21-31: After all getting settled, a routine was set up for the company. The guard was set within the battalion, with A Company being on duty every 3d day. On the interim days, a schedule was planned to keep the company in trim. Physical training, drill and I and E discussions were included in this. The 2d platoon had a little excitement on their first day of guard. An infantry man broke into one of their assigned houses and borrowed a radio. The doughboy was slightly inebriated and when he tried to get back on his motorcycle to ride away, he could'nt stay on the street. The platoon held him overnight and although the dough could'nt remember his outfit, he started off to find it in the morning. Two days later he reached the next town and had lost his motor bike, the radio and his way. When the platoon found him, they took him to Dachau where he thought his outfit was and left him - He was last seen going toward Munich.

The point system was checked and Sgt Davis and Tec Sgt Hunker left for home. And as many others had the points required to go home, new men were assigned to train in their places. Every day six men went into Bn Hq for special instructions.

In the new daily schedule, a daily volley ball game between Hq platoon and 3d platoon became necessary. Almost evenly matched, the 3d platoon edged Hq platoon. The 3d now is supplied with a keg of beer donated by the losers.

Twice a week, a show truck left for Battalion. Several times it turned out to be merely a sightseeing trip. The projector broke down so often - the group would go only for the silence and darkness to sleep in. Once Neely took many in to see a stage



show that promised to have five girls in the cast. All a matter of opinion; many claimed they had to be alive to screech as they did. Going home the truck got stuck in the mud twice. And only after everyone got in the deep mud and pushed the truck to the main road, was Sgt Bailey satisfied that A company had any men worth speaking to - even then he would'nt talk, he just steamed.

Those who were on pass to the Riviera and Paris came back and others went. Stories of France and its people still can be heard in the company's many bull sessions.

One day the routine was broken when a girl's voice broke in at chow time and yelled "come and get it". A red cross girl from Augsburg brought us each doughnuts and a vision of what we're fighting for. She stayed, ate and parried puns with the Company for several hours. Glenn Reynolds was sustained by her Southern honey coated drawl and pug nose and for days Porkey, our medic was worried and kept him under observation.

Several orientation programs brought good discussions. The S.F. conference talk turned to the possibility of the world to have eternal peace. Fascism turned to "why Facism is better than Democracy", and everyone has been waiting for a talk on non-fiction items. Clubs have been whittled out of fence posts, the 2nd platoon has a pill box set up and a battle royal is promised - if anyone can be found to defend the policy.

The day guard proved fruitful. Glenn Reynolds stopped a young man who claimed to be going to help his father who was a farmer. A homemade blackjack was found in his luggage - The guy only used it to control the Polish and Russian workers on the farm.

A riot was stopped by the 3d platoon, but only after one Polish man had a pitchfork stuck in his arm and one German was slightly beat up. The burgomeister was warned and the town put under probation.

Lt Morgan was transferred to the 824 T.D.Bn., but he did'nt leave before the 3d platoon held an all night farewell party for him. The reminiscing of the night led to a bond pledged by all members of the platoon to meet after discharge papers had been procured by all. Lt Morgan left but never will the memory of him and his friendly help leave those who fought with him.

The 2nd platoon moved from Settenback to Unter Weikertshofen with the rest of the company. They moved into a large family home which offered all the modern implements of home - and more. In the middle of the first night there was quite some commotion in the platoon homestead. McKay woke everyone up with a scream "They're carrying me away". Sammy and Ackerina were sitting up in bed - One was bending over the others head searching and picking through his hair. Several were on the floor jumping up and down shaking bed clothes and soon the whole town was awakened by the platoon's antics. For their new home was so large a nation of lice also decided to share it with them. Fumigating and de-liceing lasted two days.

The day before Memorial Day we had a special service in Memoriam. The service was outdoors and nature's beauty we turned back our minds to those close friends we had lost in the course of the last few years. The words given by the Chaplain were



simple and short but the feeling was high and deep. The service ended in silence. Many were still in silent prayer, many in deep thought, all in thoughtful reverence.

And as June 1st came all platoons had a set training schedule; the road patrols and check points operating every third day. With the vehicles cleaned and battle scarred, with days of fighting over but not forgotten, with hopes leaning to the future, the company ended another month overseas.