

HEADQUARTERS PLATOON, COMPANY "A"

The history of this platoon is composed of the episodes of the individual group which makes up this platoon. We landed as a unit on 30 August 1944, and moved at once to a local camp, which was set up for the purpose of assembling the units before being sent to the front lines. When we arrived at this camp there was immediately a flare of activity as the men spread out to do their duties. The mechanics started checking vehicles making sure there was a good supply of gasoline and oil, and the cooks started cooking the noon meal. Meanwhile the balance of our supplies were catching up with us, so the supply sergeant was keeping the rest of the men busy.

The following day there was a call from battalion for a billeting party. Everybody knew it wouldn't be long before we would be up front. The men began to load their vehicles and the following day started to move East. Our first days journey was completed with the loss of only one vehicle, which was an M-20 command car. The mechanics dropped out of the column, but soon found they were unable to make any emergency repairs, so called upon the battalion maintenance to remove it. We spent our first night sleeping besides our vehicles, which were parked along the woods. By noon the following day we refueled and moved in the direction of the front.

We arrived at Thuilly late in the afternoon, and as it began to get dark we moved west of the town and bedded down for the night. The next day the wire crew composed of Cpl McShan and Pvt Held proceeded to lay a line to battalion. With the usual American confidence they left their weapons by one of the trees, while Cpl McShan climbed upon Pvt Held's shoulders to tie a wire high up into another tree. It was at this stage of the game that a sniper decided to take a "potshot" at the men. They were not sure what it was that was buzzing past their ears, but were astounded a few minutes later to see two doughboys coming out of the woods with a German sniper. They completed the line without any more trouble.

That afternoon we were alerted and waited orders to move out. We received our orders to proceed to an assembly area in the vicinity of Toul. The night was black and the drive was to be made in blackout, in fact it was so black that when the convoy moved out they left most of the company behind. This platoon plus two destroyers were the only vehicles that moved. They had been traveling for some time when they realized that they were on the wrong road. After checking the map a side road was found which would bring them back to their original route.

It was on this road that we had our first experience with mines. The convoy took a left fork and proceeded about a hundred yards when there was a loud report, and the gun on the vehicle in front of the commanders car was flipped high into the air. There was a lot of confusion for the next few minutes as they did not know but what they had been fired upon. After the surprise of the explosion had passed the men began to look around and soon found places where other mines were planted. They also found that the vehicles were well into the mine field. The next two hours were spent manuevering the vehicles back out of the field. When the column was again on the road, they moved northward and arrived in the vicinity of Toul at 0430. We then started looking for a CP and finally set up in an old apple orchard. By the time the rest of the convoy arrived the men had eaten breakfast, and were ready to catch up on their work. We remained in this position near Toul for the next four days.

On the 14 September we received orders that we would begin a drive for the town of Nancy the next morning. The enemy evidently had withdrawn during the night, because we drove all the way into Nancy with only occasional stops for snipers and to clear mines out of the road. We entered Nancy about 1700 then withdrew one mile west of the town to refuel. While the vehicles were being refueled, we received orders to move north to support the 80th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Dieulouard. We arrived southwest of the town about 2300 and proceeded to assemble the battalion for the night, where we refueled the vehicles in preparation for a move on line the following morning.

The following morning we moved across the swift Moselle River and headed southeast of the town of Beaumont. We set up our CP about one mile from town. The platoons moved into position to the north of Beaumont and the men started the supplies moving up to the platoons. It was here that we had our first alert of enemy foot troops moving in our direction. We had only one platoon near us so we had them direct their guns onto an open plain which lay to the south of our CP. We also set out all the machine guns in the platoon to cover the same area, then spent the night waiting for an attack which never came.

On the 18th we received orders to move to the vicinity of Luneville, so we loaded and moved out about 1500. We arrived at our destination, two miles west of Luneville, the following day. The CP was set up and the men began to ready the vehicles for the next engagement. The following day we received orders to attack to the east and occupy the town of Luneville. We formed in a column and moved eastward toward Luneville. We were within one mile of the town when we received a heavy artillery barrage, which caused a disruption in the column. We soon reorganized and received orders to move into a defense of the area. We set up our CP just off the road, but later decided to move back into our old area, because the artillery was laid in on the road. The following morning we went back and looked at the area where we had intended to set up our CP, and found that they had scored about six hits in the area. The next day we received orders to move into a defensive position around the town of Maxé. We remained here for the next three days, when we received orders to move to another defensive position in the vicinity of Arracourt. Here the platoon was split up, the command group moved one mile NE of the town of Rechicourt and set up beside the CP of the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion. The following day the rest of the platoon moved to the town of Athienville. They remained here until the 5th of October, when they moved into the same area where the command group had been set up. On the 20th of October, we moved into Rechicourt despite the fact they were shelling it three or four times a day.

We moved from Rechicourt into the town of Arracourt on the 28th. Here the platoons were set up for indirect firing. This gave the mechanics a chance to make a complete check of all vehicles. They completed their check and we moved into the town of Juvrecourt on the first of November. It was here that we had our first experience with enemy troops behind our lines. We had an attack by a patrol of about 20 to 30 men in the vicinity of our CP. We were alerted and posted around the building, covering all the windows and doors. The night was very dark, but if any thing had moved on the street we would have been able to have seen it, as it would have been silhouetted against the white surface of the buildings.

On the 13th of November the 26th Infantry Division pushed off in the vicinity of Moyevic. On the 15th we moved into town and set up our CP. We remained here for one day, moving into the town of Obreck the following day. After three days we departed from Obreck and arrived at the town of Wisse, where we spent the night leaving the next day for Koecking. This town turned out to be just a small court yard and three houses. The yard was covered with about four inches of mud. We left Koecking and moved into the town of Bassing in the afternoon of the 21st.

We remained here for the next four days, departing for the town of Munster on the 25th. We left Munster and moved southeast to the town of Diedendorf, here we set up our CP over looking the Sarre river. The platoon remained here for three days before leaving for the town of Pistorf, where we spent one day then moved on into the city of Sarre Union. At Sarre Union we received orders to assemble in the vicinity of Albestroff. The vehicles were all refueled and the next day moved north to support the 6th Armored Div. We moved into the town of Nousseviller and set up our CP. We spent eleven days here then were ordered to assemble at Woursviller to move south and east to the town of Etting, where we refueled before going into position north of Bliesbruck. Here it looked like we would spend our Christmas as it was the 21st of December, but on the 24th we received orders to withdraw to the town of Weisviller. Late in the afternoon of the twenty-fifth we were ordered to assemble in the town of Dieuse. Here the vehicles were all refueled in preparation for the long move north to the Bulge.

We moved into the town of Nawoy, it was a ghost town not a thing there, which was located about seven miles east of Reims, France. Here we ate our Christmas turkey mid the falling snow and pine trees. We remained here for two days, then moved into the country of Belgium and set up our CP near the town of Assisnes. We refueled the vehicles and moved the next day to the town of Recogne, where we set up our CP. The platoons went into position to the north of Recogne. We moved the CP two days later into the town of Seviscourt, where we spent the next five days. From Seviscourt we moved to the town of Bras. A direct telephone line was laid to the 87th Division, which kept the switch board busy forwarding messages. The men from the platoons were kept busy ducking the enemy artillery and picking up shell fragments to be turned in with their shell reports. On Jan. 12th we moved into the town of Jenneville, where we set up our CP in the house of a priest. By now the Bulge had begun to shrink considerably, so we soon received orders to assemble and move into a new area.

We received orders on the 15th of Jan. that we were to assemble in the town of Libramont in preparation for a long move to the town of Contern, Luxembourg. The areas that we were to occupy were reconnoitered, and everything was made ready for the movement into a defensive position before the city of Luxembourg.

After 36 hours at Oberammergau, we were ordered to move to the town of Portz. Here we would order to move further south, so moved into the town of Bettgrün and set up our CP to await further orders.

On March 7th we received orders to move into position near the city of Sarralautern. We moved our CP to the out-skirts of Pikard where we overlooked Sarralautern and the enemy held territory. Here the wire crew had an exceptionally hard time maintaining communication as the enemy's artillery and mortar fire was continually breaking the telephone lines. One afternoon there was a deafening explosion in the valley just to the south of the CP. A few of the men went to investigate as to what it was, and soon called for help. Several of the men ran forward to assist and found they were working in a minefield. A jeep containing three men had been crossing the field when it struck the mine, while working around the vehicle one of the men stepped on to an anti-personnel mine injuring two of the men. Three of the men received a "Silver Star" award for their fine work and prompt action in helping to take care of the injured.

On the morning of the twentieth the unit to which we were attached moved through Sarralautern and headed east. We set up the CP that night in the town of Hutzweiler, and the next morning started a race for the city of Neunkirchen. We set up our CP in Neunkirchen, but late in the afternoon moved west and set up the CP in Quierschied. Two days later we moved back into Neunkirchen and assembled the whole battalion. It was here that we received our new destroyers. This kept the maintenance and radio crews busy checking the vehicles and installing new equipment. We departed from here on the 27th and moved into the town of Teichenmoschel where we completed our test firing.

We left Teichenmoschel on the 29th and headed east in a series of one night stops through Saulbeia, Ivankysfurt, Wattersfeld, Ramrod, Muthbach, and Sterkelsbau arriving in Sontra on the 3rd April. The company was assembled here and the next five days spent on maintenance before taking off on another race. On the 8th of April we were off again, racing through the towns of Wendelhausen, Diendorf, Kleiststed, Badernstedt, Heberseim, Buttstadt, Osterfeld, Zeitz, Meuselwitz and Müllweida. Here we remained for two days before moving on to Wittgensdorf, where we set up our CP and remained for the next seven days. We were then ordered to move our CP into the town of Hartmannsdorf, because we were within an area which was under Russian artillery fire. We remained in Hartmannsdorf until the war ended then assembled the company in the town of Limbach.

Sgt Arthur Bignall, had some...
FIRST PLATOON COMPANY

On July 12, 1944 the first platoon along with the rest of the Battalion closed all training manuals and began cleaning house. Army officials had come to the conclusion that we were thoroughly trained for the mission which lay in the future for us. No more "dry runs" or maneuvers, this was to be the start of the "real McCoy". Most of us had already had our furloughs a few days previous so parting was not so bad. We left Camp Livingston that day loaded with G.I. issues and boarded the train headed for Camp Miles Standish.

In most opinions this was a long and gruesome ride because it took three nights and four days to reach our destination. It was hard on some of the boys passing within sight of their old back yards and favorite meeting places, but to others not having seen the Eastern States it broadened their knowledge as to how the rest of our states lived.

We finally reached Miles Standish where we were greeted by music coming through the loud speaker systems. Our stay here was short but not too short to prevent some of the boys who lived near by to come more see their Mom, Wife or Sweethearts. Here we saw and participated in what was at the time thought was the

longest chow line anywhere in the Army. Little did we know how long the chow line was to be aboard the troopship, the Wakefield, formerly the U. S. S. Manhattan, luxury liner reconverted for the transportation of military personnel.

During the early morning hours of July 25, 1944 we again slung packs, this time with duffle bags in our hands, or rather dragging behind us. One more train ride took us in a short time to Boston Harbor. Every step from here on made us feel more and more important figures waiting eagerly to prove our title "The Fighting First", having boarded ship under cover of darkness we quietly slipped out to sea. So quiet was our departure that some of us upon awakening in the morning were very much surprised to see nothing but water and more water. Life at sea was not bad at all, our ship had already proven its worth on previous Atlantic crossings. Unescorted we made the entire voyage from Boston Harbor to Liverpool England in seven days. The only complaint on the trip was the long and seemingly endless chow lines. Orchestra music was part of the entertainment provided for us. A great majority of the boys occupied their time by playing cards and reading. In the evenings practically everyone spent their time on deck looking out to sea, each with his own individual thoughts. One day word spread that a submarine was in the vicinity but it turned out to be just a rumor. All in all the entire crossing was a great adventure for everyone.

Our landing at Liverpool, England was another important occasion to us for this country was one of our Allies. Here we were to see, hear and together participate in a fight for world freedom. Hearing our first Englishman speak sounded somewhat funny to us but it was not long before we acquired the same accent. The people were all very friendly at Creek Howell. Our stay here was approximately three weeks. During our stay here most of our time was spent in drawing the worlds best combat equipment, a few inspections and other minor but important details. From here we convoyed to the docks of Southampton arriving there on the 27th of August, eighty-two days after the invasion of France, a date known to the world as "D" Day. At Southampton we boarded ship to cross the English Channel, a distance of approximately 85 miles of somewhat rougher waters than the previous ocean crossing. Each man aboard ship was given his quota of emergency rations. Needless to mention most everyone had eaten theirs before reaching the sandy and blood stained beaches of Normandy. Our landing took place at Utah Beach. A mighty sad picture greeted us here. Boats of all kind could still be seen half submerged in the black water. Black sands from shell explosions stared at us. The area had already been policed up to a certain degree, but the destruction to the farms and buildings still were plain to the eye. To most of us it gave us a strange feeling at first. As we rode on and the more we saw it made us want to get in the thick of it and avenge those brothers of ours who had gallantly fallen before the foe in the high hopes of establishing an everlasting peace. It was not long before we had this chance. A week had hardly passed since our landing and we were already out of the Normandy area steadily gaining on the 3rd Army front. This was our secret destination. Next came a date which we will long remember, September 10th 1944, this was the day our Battalion was committed to action. Several days previous to this we had done all the taking, now it was our turn to give.

Nothing worth recording happened until September 14th when we were given our first mission, up until now we were in reserve eagerly awaiting some kind of a task to perform. We were to secure the lateral roads and routes into the forest Du Hays leading to Nancy. Our actions proved successful for together with the aid of Company 1 of the 319 Inf. our Battalion on the following day was the first Americans to enter the large city of Nancy. The only loss here was one half track belonging to Company C. This was due to an enemy land mine.

The following day the companies took a change in position where we were defending the northern exits of the Forest Du Vitrimont. On September 22nd in action we added another accomplishment to our list, here we knocked out an enemy O. P. which was reported to us by the 42nd Cav., then at a Rochelle Farm in Bonnaviller. Our direct and indirect firing improving more and more each time we fired. These defense positions were held for several days until September 25th when we entered Einville at 0300. We found the town clear of enemy but filled with booby traps. In this area we received a much valued replacement for we had been short a man since England. On September 27th we moved in East of the French town of Arracourt in direct support of the 10th Armored Infantry. Here we had a taste of what war really was like. Our Company that day suffered the loss of 2 dead and 8 wounded. One of the dead was PFC Hall. Pvt Beanblossom was one of the wounded men. They both were from the first Platoon.

However, before the day was over we had more than evened the score, thanks to the accuracy of the gunners. Our Platoon inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy in their attempt to penetrate our lines. We fired both direct and indirect fire here. We withstood many days of the enemys continous day by day sporadic artillery and mortar fire upon our then holding positions. On September 29th we received new replacements to take the place of our recently wounded. The next day we lost one half track and one three inch gun due to the continuing artillery. On October 1st we lost our ammunition trailer which was loaded with 3" ammo and Lt. Carnines extra 100 pair of socks. Pvt Ogden was wounded and evacuated on October 2nd. During the night of October 4 and 5 an enemy patrol attacked our position. Daylight proved it had been a costly night

for a certain patrol. We lost another gun on October 7th. At 1545 on October 12th the Platoon was visited by the Battalion CO and at 1630 we were all stunned to hear he had been killed by an enemy land mine. The next few days were spent dodging the usual daily artillery shells. On October 25th we decided it was our turn to throw a little steel around, so our gunners brought their gun sights on the church steeples at Bazange la Petit and Moncourt. The enemy used these high points for O. P.'s. until we put an end to it. More direct and indirect fire took place here. The following day we assumed indirect firing positions in the vicinity of Aracourt where we helped reinforce fire of the 263 F. A. Bn. Again no changes occurred for the following three days then on November 1st we replaced the first and second platoons of Company C in the vicinity of Bazange la Petite where we once more took direct fire positions. Between November 1st and 9th we changed from direct to indirect fire several times. On this day we moved to Moyenvic and once more occupied direct fire positions.

On November 18th we were ordered to move to positions formerly occupied by an anti-tank platoon. While on a reconnaissance of these positions we received direct fire from a large caliber gun. With darkness closing in it was necessary to hold the platoon, which had already started to move, on the road until daylight. At dawn the platoon moved to Guebling where it took positions which proved to be very worthy. Our Infantry was being held up by enemy machine gun nests in a small woods. Our 3" H. E. shells set at quick and delay opened the road and the Infantry went on a drive of twelve miles. We were credited with one O. P. and three machine gun nests having been knocked out. Our next move proved thrilling and exemplified the aggressiveness of our small task force. When it became necessary to get across a blown railroad bridge the boys turned Engineers for a short time and built a crossing. They put halve tracks across and several days later trained Engineers doubted that it would carry a Peep. They would hardly believe it when they were told the story.

We remained attached to the 101st Infantry Regiment for several days. On November 30th we moved to the town of Burbach. The following day we moved to the town of Deidendorf to support the 101st F. A. Bn. and occupied indirect fire positions. We fired throughout the day here. The 3rd of December found us in Rimsdorf. The 5th of this same month brought our Company C. P. to the half taken town of Saar Union.

On December 16th orders came down that 5% of our men would be transferred to the Infantry. Every body was sweating it out. The unfortunate ones went to the 26th Inf. Also, on this same day T/4 Warren and PFC Jugla received the Bronze Star.

When the Battalion was detached from the 44th In. Div. and attached to the 87th Inf. Div. on December 24th we were pulled back from the line Christmas Eve, with all its cold and beauty found us on the road back to Dieuze. Everyone had a good idea what was up. Christmas Day was spent in Dieuze and we had a grand dinner with a menu similar to that of Thanksgiving. Late in the afternoon and just before dark the platoon along with the rest of the battalion departed for an assembly area east of Reims, arriving there at 1500 December 26th. The next couple of days were spent in this area. It was an old battle field with the trenches and entanglements still plain to view. Our biggest work was maintenance of vehicle and ammunition. The evening of the 29th found us on another move. This time into Belgium. The Battalion was located at Bertrix. Company "A" was in the vicinity of Recongne and did not arrive until 0200 on the morning of December 31st. At 0400 we were ordered out to give direct support to an attack by 1st Bn. 346 Infantry. This took us to Bras Hout where we bumped into some resistance.

Two of our guns set up and fired direct APC and HE for the next few days that followed. One gun was set for firing illumination shells which aided our patrols. Inspection later showed much damage by the fire. When fighting quieted down in this sector our platoon became attached to Company "C" for support of the Infantry in the vicinity of Tillet. About this time the Belgium Bulge was pinched off and fighting in this vicinity was quite.

The Battalion now moved down into Luxembourg and stopped just short of Germany. Here we went into an indirect firing position for two days, and then pulled out into a defensive position. This lasted nearly a month and was almost like a vacation. The men did enjoy a few passes to Paris and Luxembourg while here. Those who visited Paris reported it as wonderful.

At last the Battalion was pulled into an assembly area on March 3rd, supposedly one of those ten day rests. It lasted one night and we moved south. We were relieved from the 2nd Cav Group and attached to the 94th Inf. Div. Then relieved from the 94th and attached to the 65th Inf. Div. Four days later we moved into Saar Lautern, which turned out to be another stay of not much action. Except for being caught out once in a while when Jerry decided to shell the place, it was very quiet. We tried to hoist a gun up on the roof of the highest building in Saar Lautern to fire into the enemy positions. We were able to direct fire for one of our other platoons from our O. P. It was fun to watch for a German to start down the road and see if you could catch him before he got back in.

And now came the beginning of that last long drive, that sent the Jerries back on their heels and crushed them. We left out of Saar Lautern and made a fast drive to Neunkirchen. We were held up here while we

were converted from towed 3" to S.P., or the M-36. The M-36 came in on the morning of the 27th and we took off that afternoon. With the drive going as fast as it was it was difficult to get up where the fighting was. On the 28th we test fired our new weapons. We moved out again the following day and on March 30th at 00.45 we crossed the noted Rhine River. The war was moving too fast now for the Infantry to walk and keep up, so with the slogan, "always room for one more", we loaded them on our TD. Those with good seats enjoyed the ride. Others said they would rather be back in the Infantry walking. We were having fun now. None of this laying around doing nothing. On April 5th, with the Infantry hanging onto our destroyers, we rolled down the highway in the direction of Langensatz. Working along with a platoon of medium tanks, we stopped outside of the town and the Doughboys dismounted. The Tanks and TD took up echelon formation and pushed on into town.



Here is where the fun really started. Our platoon took up the left flank of the town. Machine guns and rifles started firing at us. Just as soon as concentrations of enemy troopers or machine gun nests could be spotted the 90's would start firing. We were pretty busy, but not too busy to know that our buddies in the other parts of the town were busy too. The sound of their guns told the story. About the time it got hot on the ground the sky started to warm up too. The Germans still had a few planes in operation, and some of them came over to see what we looked like. They must have liked us because they started showering the place with heavy "confetti". We liked it too because we threw some right back at them.

Night found hundreds of Jerries in columns waiting for transportation to a P. O. W. enclosure. Many of them were sleeping soundly on the ground. Due to the large number of PW we were taking it held us up and kept us from advancing as fast as we could have. However, the next day things were on the move again, and we were pulled out now and attached to the 76th Inf. Div. again. We moved down to Zeitz and had quite a scrap there. We had more opposition from enemy planes here than we had been having. It was not long though before our planes came and drove them from the sky.

Our last action was in Auers Walde and did not amount to very much, because we were doing all of the giving with nothing coming our way. This was about May 1st. It was about this time that we went into holding positions. Seven days later we knew that the end was here, and then on the 9th it was officially announced that the war was over.

Sgt Rollin Zilke.

SECOND PLATOON, COMPANY "A"

"Get your men on the boat", was the command given by the C. O. as we finished eating our coffee and doughnuts on the pier at the Boston Harbor.

The roster was checked, as we passed the checking officer, he kept saying, "Watch your step", this one phrase is one which we kept in our mind, "Watch your step".

Altho the Quarters on the ship were crowded, we all enjoyed our trip immensely. After looking across the blue ocean for over a week, we finally sighted the shores of Liverpool, England. A wonderful sight after endless days of nothing but ocean.

After spending numerous hours waiting for the troops to disembark, we were finally given orders to shoulder our pack and handle our ever so heavy duffle bags and equipment. That we never thought could mean so much to our comfort in days ahead to come.

Once again we are off, this time by train to our first area, on our first trip on foreign soil, England, certainly was a beautiful and picturesque. Our train ride soon came to an end. As soon as it ended, off again. This time by the famous L. S. T. We were all told to be especially careful for seasickness, as we crowded men and equipment aboard for our trip to France.

Time passed quickly and soon we found ourselves waiting on the shores of Utah Beach, France. While waiting for the tide to come in we watched with flaring eyes, at the remains of things left behind from the big day (D-Day). Gun emplacements, numerous bunkers and endless rows of barbed wire fences set up by the Germans for defense. None, I am sure could even begin to imagine the Hell that took place on that famous "Invasion Day".

After racing madly across the Liberated parts of France, places where we were cheered and given gift from the people of France. We finally reached the sector of the Third Army. The Army that will long be remembered by all as "Blood & Guts". The Army of Gen. Patton also to be well remembered by all, the phrase "Watch Your Step" of which this story tells and of the steps we watched.

We didn't have long to wait until our first mission. We were ordered to move at night to take up defensive positions in Toul, France. Some vehicles passed through a road junction which had been mined by the Germans. Suddenly without warning one vehicle hit a mine, with that we were the first to lose a vehicle and gun, also the misfortune to lose a buddy P. F. C. Poynter who was wounded enough that he had to be taken to the hospital.

The push on the Moselle was on and we found ourselves, with the rest of the battalion, just to the east of the city of Nancy. Here the enemy held the 4th Armored Div. and we were given the mission of supporting the gallant Div. with direct fire with our 3 inch guns.

In the town of Reichcourt, France we really got our "Baptism of Fire", one day of all to be remembered. We were given the left section of this town to defend while the 1st platoon was given the right sector to defend. We moved into town just before day break. All of the men were tired from the all night drive and mostly all the men were asleep. All of a sudden Hell broke loose. The Krauts had decided to counter-attack. Being half asleep and off guard the Krauts started coming over the hill and by this time the 88's were really coming in fast and close for all of us. The Krauts had everything ready that day, and it seems as though they were just waiting for us, as they had all of their 88's and mortars zeroed in on the town. The first platoon already engaging the enemy, kept them pretty well pinned down while we tried to put our guns into position. We got our guns into position under terrific enemy shelling and a lot of men were wounded doing it.

T/5 Verbal, Pfc Montgomery, Pfc Jones & Pfc Stevens made a good account of themselves that day by delivering direct supporting machine gun fire, and when the battles was over there were several dead Krauts to prove that they used the machine gun to the best of its advantage. That day a couple of other men made a name for themselves while under direct enemy fire Sgt. John Steger and Pfc Losionowski moved a wounded man to a near by foxhole and gave him first aid, and if it wasn't for those two men another man would have died of wounds. T/5 Sordillo also did quite a bit that day he made several trips back to the aid station with wounded men and he did all of this under direct fire. Sgt. Sobel of the 2nd Plt. and Sgt. Bainbridge of the 1st Plt. delivered direct fire with their 3 inch guns upon the on coming determined Krauts, but those 3 inch guns sort of changed the Krauts mind. The task of repelling the counter-attack was costly and Pfc. Koons was the first to die for his country. Many men were wounded that day and they are Sgt's. Slavin, Szabo, Pfc's Montgomery, Watts, Wright, Thrope and T/5 Davis. As night came on other orders came in and they were to move up to supplementary positions in sort of a valley, which we later called the "Rose Bowl". Moving up to these positions meant moving in right up to the enemy's front door. Here under bad weather conditions rain, mud, and the Hell o War, we lived for 27 days under constant enemy fire, which included everything from a mortar to their largest towed gun which is known as the Railroad gun. Everytime they stopped firing we sweated out a counter-attack. During that time the 26 Inf. Division, just over from the states came to relieve the 4 Armored Division. The 26th was green, but it only took a couple of 88's to learn what combat was like and they learned fast.

On the 28th day we were ordered back to act as artillery with our 3 inch guns. The eagerness to reimburse the Krauts for the Hellish days they made us spend in our slit-trenches was written on every man's face as a shell went over their way. The men knowing that they were giving back to the Krauts with they received



will long be remembered as our day. The day came when the Third Army began to reach out towards Germany to destroy the source of the Nazi Doctrines. We moved out with the 26th Div. as one of the many fighting Divisions to bring a quickend to the war.

Day after day we liberated town after town with the Olive Drabed Doughboys slogging by our guns. Hamport which was about 20 miles from Reichcourt was taken. With the hurt and scars still in our mind of that first day. We drove through Bedrstroff, Munfler, Givery Court, Saar Werden and on to the out skirts of Saar Union. Our platoon followed the charging Doughboys as they began to filter their way from the out-skirts of Saar Werden to the enemy held Saar Union.

German tanks and artillery fire was making our progress difficult as we prepared our defensive positions between the two towns. Direct enemy anti-tank fire greeted us, but with the eager and searching eyes of our gunners and men we were set up and ready. Later we were moved into the town, where the greatest threat of enemy counter attacks was in progress. It was dusk as the men implaced their guns along the route of approach in the heart of the town, waiting patiently, eagerly watching for the German to make an attempt to retake what they had lost. As night grew on our artillery shattered and destroyed what chances the enemy had left to fight with and they seemed content in leaving well enough alone.

Several days later, under Battalion orders, we were moved back to Wolfsering to undergo the change from towed guns to self propelled Tank Destroyers.

Then men were very much enthused over this change as we were self propelled in the states. With the wine and cognac gathered in Saar Union the men were in high spirits and we moved with the "Dry run" orders of changing to self propelled. We moved on to Cadenbon with our towed guns and became attached to the Sixth Armoured Div. There we set up defensive positions and fired star shells, which later proved to be a great assistance to our infantry night patrols out on information missions. We were on constant watch for enemy patrols out to destroy our three inch guns. We set up our first mine field in enemy territory for protection against possible enemy counter attacks and night patrols.

Then came the move we were looking forward to, our chance to fight on German soil. The Second Platoon was the first platoon to set up guns in Germany. We set up our defensive positions a few yards behind the infantry outpost which was under constant mortar shelling. We waited anxiously for the chance to make a bit with the German Panzers reported just over the ridge from us. Nothing ever came, they must have known something was there because all we got was mortars which were big and plentiful. Then one night the infantry outpost of the Eighty Seventh Div. which we were attached to started to move out, leaving us on the hill alone, nothing but us, sitting like ducks, calling our platoon leader by phone trying to find out the reason for the sudden movement. We waited patiently, suddenly the answer came, "prepare to move back". We were the last platoon to move back across the bridge before the engineers blew the bridge. Wondering why the sudden move back, we started north. Then the news was revealed of Von Rundstedt's counter attack in Belgium. The Battalion moved to a little town in Belgium where once again we set up our defensive positions with the three inch guns, this time under more favorable conditions. We had our Platoon C. P. in a modern hunting lodge where there was good living quarters for the men. Always under constant watch for the Germans to come through our sector of fire, but while we were there we met no opposition.

After most of the threat of the big German counter attack was over, we moved on through Libin setting up there for a few days. March order came and off this time to Bras Hut. We again took up defensive positions and we were again attached to the 87th. We fired upon several German outposts and machine gun nests, which kept us pretty busy. The German then decided to use Tanks on us, but our luck was against us. Although we couldn't spot their tank, the boys made it pretty warm for them and the German Tanks moved out. After several days of waiting for an attack the infantry sent out patrols to get information. They came back with news that the Germans had moved back leaving a few troops behind to cover their retreat. Along with the Eighty seventh Division infantry we moved through St. Hubert to the out skirts of the town cleaning out these troops. As usual we set up our defensive positions waiting for the Germans to return. After several days of waiting, to no avail, we moved toward Luxemburg. This was the fourth country we were in.

Setting up our guns in the town of Mompach, Luxemburg a few hundred yards behind the Siegfried line, with not much doing, we waited. We served as sound and flash observers, later to find out that the Second Platoon's shell reports had aided in the knocking out of several enemy field pieces.

While at Mompach we fired star shells greatly aiding the Seventy-sixth Div. infantry, of which we were attached, in completing night patrol missions to observe enemy installations on the other side of the Our river. With information known, we gave support in the big push made by the Seventy-sixth infantry, in putting a hole in the famous Siegfried fortifications.

Moving on south this time, we headed the second time for German soil, Saar Lautern was the name of the town. On entering the city we received direct enemy fire from the well known "88s". Even under

these conditions the Second Platoon set up their guns and delivered direct fire on enemy pill boxes, neutralizing them and aiding the driving elements on their push. The city of Saar Lautern was finally in our control so we pushed on.

Moving to the captured city of New Kirchen we received our self propelled "M-36" Tank Destroyers. Leaving there we headed for the city of Mainz. Going on through the city of Homberg with little or no resistance we crossed the last hope of the German Army, the Rhine river. Pushing on from there we aided in the mopping up process of the following towns, Alsfeld, Hersfeld and Sontra.

While going through the town of Mibla we received strafing from enemy planes, but regardless we carried out our mission and aided, with our fifty cal. machine guns, friendly units in bringing down one enemy plane.

Langensalza was our next mission. We traveled thru the town of Oberdoc. Reaching the edge of town things looked easy. Deployed in Battle formation the tanks and infantry closed in on the town. A few blasts of warning fire convinced the Germans it would be better for them to surrender "or else". White flags started to appear, then suddenly, sniper fire. It was a trap, we had been fooled, but not for long. The combined fire of the three platoons of A Company changed things over to our favor, with the only head ache being the Luftwaffe bombing and strafing us. When all was quiet again a check showed we had knocked out several flak guns, a tank, and killing many of the enemy. There were three hundred prisoners taken and the Germans waved their flags higher than ever. There was no more sniper fire.

Taking our spoils of battle, cognac, wine and champagne, and along with the Seventy-sixth Div. we aided in the clearing of the following towns, GeBese, BadTennstedt, and Bad Salza.

Coming through the City of Zeitz we met opposition, this was one of the many towns where pockets were left to be cleaned out. There was a German Garrison on the out skirts of town, which a German Colonel was in charge, and who refused to surrender. After a concentration of 90 M. M. shells the Colonel changed his mind. We killed over 50 and captured about 250 German Soldiers, also a lot of German equipment. While the men were collecting their precious P-38's and Lugers a shot rang out from a wooden shack. Plt. Leader Lt. Zielinski and a handful of men took out after the Kraut. They threw hand-grenades in the shack and also fired their small arms into the shack, this of course gave the sniper quite a bad time, so the sniper made a break and got out of the building, but after a 10 minute chase he was caught, this making our mission complete to the last enemy soldier.

Taking off again, still attached to the 76th Division we went on cleaning out towns and closing up, pockets and meeting little resistance. Some of the towns we cleaned out were: Altenburg, Mubulu, and ending up in the town of Rorhsdorf. From the out skirts of this town we fired upon enemy machine gun nests, destroyed several enemy O. P.'s and fired into the town of Chemnitz. Then came the first rumors that the war was over, but every time we went to fire upon enemy positions we had to dodge shells, so we were convinced different. Later as time went on the order came down to cease firing and a day later the war was over. With our reserved supply of Cognac we celebrated and all were in high spirits that night.

In closing we pay tribute to our fellow men who gave their lives so gallantly on the "Field of Battle" may they have not died in vain.

THIRD PLATOON, COMPANY "A"

On July 11, 1944 the third platoon had completed their training and were prepared for the great adventure which lay in front of them.

Having confidence in the Bn. as a whole officers and men, and knowing our training was thorough we were eager for action. We were issued new clothing and we boarded the train that day and said our last goodby to Camp Livingston, La.

Our destination, which we didn't know at the time, proved to be Camp Myles Standish Mass. Our trip there was a tiresome one and there were many thoughts running thru our minds. When we reached our destination we were greeted by a band and were informed that our stay would be of short duration. Camp Myles Standish was the scene of many telephone calls from the 3rd Pl. boys. We stood in line for hours waiting to

talk to our loved ones from home and when we heard their voices we knew our wait was insignificant. We ate in the largest mess hall we had ever seen and the chow line was the longest we had yet encountered.

On July 25, 1944 we picked up our duffle bags (we didn't know they could be that heavy) and walked to the train which took us to Boston Harbor. The Red Cross girls met us at the harbor and their hot coffee and do-nuts were very welcome indeed.

We then boarded ship and found the name of our vessel was the Wakefield.

It was formerly the U. S. S. Manbattan, luxury liner which had been converted to a troop transport. Our trip across the ocean was uneventful and we had good weather most of the way. We had abandon ship drill on board and we again realized the close teamwork of the American soldier. Everything necessary for abandoning ship was accomplished quickly and with little or no confusion. We had nothing but admiration for our ship, it was fast and therefore unescorted. From time to time we spotted one of our airplanes and they seemed to add to our ever increasing confidence. Our chow line on ship was even longer than the one at Camp Standish. To us it seemed never to end. On the sixth day out we sighted northern Ireland and the following evening we docked at Liverpool.

We disembarked the second day after docking and immediately boarded a train for South Wales. Everyones was very much impressed at Englands beautiful scenery, and the short trip was thoroughly enjoyed. We then entered our camp, which was situated in the mountains near Creek Howell, Wales, and proceeded to clean up after our long voyage. There we drew our equipment and readied it for our use in the near future. In drawing some of our equipment some of the boys were fortunate enough to see London and some surrounding towns.

Once we were fully equiped we headed for Weymouth England, from which we embarked for France. Our total stay in England and Wales was twenty-three days.

We boarded an L. S. T. and were conveyed to a beach in Normandy which was named "Utah Beach" by the Americans. Here, we saw countless numbers of ships and we thought, how futile the Germans struggle was against our overwhelming and mighty strength. The direlifts which lay in the water were also noted, and it brought thoughts of our heroic forces which landed here on June, 6, known throughout the world as "D-Day". Before we could drive our vehicles off the boat we had to wait for the tide to go out. When all our vehicles had come ashore, we drove to an area where the Battalion colleted. There we spent the next two days waiting and wondering where we were going next. On our third day in France we received orders to move out. No one knew exactly where we were going, but it was generally believed that we would end up with "Blood and Guts" Patton who at the time was somewhere south of Paris. At this particular time gasoline was at a premium, and when our gas ran out we had to wait for three days for some to reach us. At this point some of the boys found out that for a chocolate bar, or a bar of soap they could get a diversion from "K" or "C" rations. There we sampled some French bread which we found to be black and also the French wine we had heard so much about.

On Sept. 11, we were committed to action near Nancy. It didn't seem as thrilling as we thought it would be but we later had our fill of "close calls" and so called thrills. For about a week we had the important job of guarding roads and approaches where the Germans, that were cut off by General Pattons thrusts, might attempt a break-through. Our mission accomplished, we received orders to go to Toul and secure that town from enemy counter-attacks. Early one morning we got our first view of enemy airplanes when two ME-109's came up the street with all uns blazing. It all happened so quickly we didn't have time to be scared. We then noticed one was smoking and in a few minutes the AAA boys had another enemy plane to their credit.

On Sept. 15, 1944 we made our first attack accompanied by tanks and Infantry. Our reconnaissance had a lot of mines to remove but no one was hurt. We forced the Germans to withdraw beyond Nancy and Rourcon. was the first American unit in Nancy. We encountered some snipers which were quickly eliminated. The next morning we crossed the Moselle river on a pontoon bridge. The evidence of battle was all around us, there were also many dead cows and horses in the fields. We had no sooner bivouaced when the third platoon received orders to support the 318 Infantry in the attack. We moved up the road in total darkness and saw our obellive burning in the distance. As we moved into town we were subjected to our first artillery barrage Being under an artillery barrage is something that cannot be described, but which our boys will never forget.



A counter-attack was expelled in the morning and we prepared ourselves by digging in. The rain made things very miserable and it was almost impossible to find shelter because everything was burning or destroyed. In the morning we moved to another position on a hill, just in time to be greeted by a mortar barrage. We entered the little town of St. Genevieve, which no man in the third platoon will ever forget. There were hundreds of dead Germans and Americans laying in the streets and barns and the town smelled with a stench of rotting bodies. The mud was so bad we were unable to move our three inch guns into position. A portion of our platoon with bazookas and machine guns went to aid the Infantry in its attack. Our attack was repulsed due to heavy losses, and for a time our boys were pinned down with artillery and heavy mortar fire. Sgt. Beckers section fired some high-explosive ammunition at the suspected source of the enemys artillery and made it pretty hot for the Jerries around there. The actions and experiences at St. Genevieve speedily turned us into hardy veterans.

We were soon relieved from the 80th Div. and attached to CCB of the 4th Armored Div.

We were placed in reserve and it was at this time that we received our first mail-call in France. That bolstered our morale as nothing else could.

Soon after we moved on towards Limeville where we were subjected to an intense artillery barrage. We set up positions in the Foret de Vitrimont, and artillery Observation Post was located there which was soon destroyed by our three inch guns. We received artillery barrages from the town of Einville but there were no casualties.

We withdrew to our secondary positions in some hedgerows and we spent four bitter days there in the rain. We could only move around at night as we were under direct enemy observation. From there under cover of darkness we moved to Arracourt where we again set up direct firing positions. On the same evening we moved to direct firing positions North of Richicourt. We were then within 150 to 200 yds. of the enemy and for the next 30 days we were under constant mortar, artillery and machine gun fire. On our fourth day here Pte. Buch and Pvt. Wilson were killed by mortar fire. Our stay here was made worse by continuous rainfall and we were always digging or redigging our fox holes. When we first arrived there we saw a herd of cattle wantonly grazing, but as the days went by the cattle slowly diminished, due to the intense artillery fire from the enemy. As soon as a cow was hit by artillery fire some men would retrieve some of the meat and it sure improved our menu. In one enemy barrage Cpl. T. Gasiorek was seriously wounded and under the continuing barrage Sgt. C. Becker went to his aid. As there wasn't much he could do himself he picked the wounded man up and carried him out of the area. For this heroic action Sgt. Becker later received the Bronze Star. In this action Pts. Vasquez, Smiley, Legg, and Moriarity were also wounded. Our stay at Reichcourt was another of our experiences that will be long remembered by all who took part in this action. Even long after we left Richicourt the memories of knocked out German tanks, the shellpocked area and thoughts of our comrades departed lingered long in our minds.

From here we moved to Arracourt again and took up indirect firing positions in preparation for the forthcoming attack.

On Nov. 9 we completed our firing and immediately attacked. We entered the town of Moyencic which we had been shelling earlier in the morning. Our artillery had done a thorough job on this town and we had a great deal of trouble finding any kind of shelter at all. We were situated near a bridge and this proved to be the main target of the Germans, and they fired direct and indirectly in a futile attempt to destroy the bridge. Pvt. John Kapushinsky was killed in this action.

Later our platoon advanced approximately 500 yds and it was here that the enemy launched several counterattacks which were easily repulsed.

On Nov. 16 we moved to direct firing positions near Weisse, and on Nov. 17 Pts. Wirt, Smith, Padgett, and Porter were wounded. Later we received word that Pvt. Padgett had died. Our Pl. leader Lt. Forsyth was also wounded in this action and was later evacuated to the States. He was replaced by Lt. Calan. Two days later we received orders to set up positions guarding the approaches to Bassing. Here, we ate our Thanksgiving dinner which included Turkey. Some French wine was found and that further improved our dinner. Our next move took us to Torchville where Pvt. Stevenson was wounded by an enemy booby-trap. This area proved to be heavily mined and booby-trapped and it was obviously designated to slow our attack. During the night we moved to the vicinity of Viberswiller where we waited until morning to go to our designated positions at Altwiller. An unfortunate event happened to us at Altwiller. An enemy patrol attacked during the night and captured nine of our men and with demolitions destroyed one three inch gun.

After our experiences at Altwiller we moved to Eywiller where we contacted the Fourth Armored Division, and also the Forty-fourth Div. of the Seventh Army. The following day we moved back to Dieudendorf where we set up indirect firing positions. For two days we supported units that were taking Sarre-Union, and we later set up positions in that city ourselves. At this time we heard rumors that we were going to change over to self-propelled M-36's, and that we might fall back to reorganize. We left Sarre-Union

and started for an unknown destination. We found to our surprise that we were sent to the Sixth Armo div. and we entered the little town of Bushbank. We encountered quite a bit of enemy patrol action here. We were shelled intermittently here but no one was killed or wounded. Here we found two German machine guns in the Church directly across from our kitchen, but we captured them in time. For two weeks we remained here and then proceeded to Gersheim Germany, Our troops here were the most eastern most troops of the front line. We were attached to the 87th Div. while we were here. Our platoon had good quarters here but we were almost constantly shelled. The people had all left town and were living in a large cave, but they didn't cause us much trouble. On Dec. 24th we left Gersheim and headed for Dieuze, where our Bn. assembled. We spent Christmas day here and the following day we started for Reims, France. We joined the 17th Airborne for a short time and then we were sent with the 87th Div. to Recogne, Belgium, to take part in halting the Germans winter offensive known as the "Battle of the Bulge". We moved from town to town in Belgium and stayed for a week at Bras. Some of the boys went in front of our lines and shot some deer and we sure enjoyed it. From there we went to Jenneville and here we saw much evidence of the great battles that had taken place. The Germans had been pushed back so far that they had been pinched out of our sector, so we went to Luxembourg. We received a new mission here and our Platoon took up positions near Lellig, where we could see the Sauer River in front of us. We stayed there for about two months until the big push that cracked the Siegfried line. Here at Lellig we encountered a large factory which was filled with Champagne and as we were under Enemy observation we had to wait until it got dark to sneak down and fill our arms with it. When we left there wasn't any Champagne left. We left here and went to a town named Bort where we performed much needed maintenance. We also got in some fishing here and we found that by dropping a land mine in the water we could get all the fish we wanted. From here we went to Sarrelautern and set up positions near the town. We did quite a bit of firing here and we were later commended for it. A shell from an enemy railroad gun demolished the house next door to our Platoon CP and it was the largest we had ever had thrown at us. We later found out it was of 380 mm. We then moved into town and we were amazed at the destruction wrought there. It compared closely with St. Lo. which was thoroughly destroyed. There just wasn't a whole building in town. Shortly afterwards we changed over to self-propelled M-36's. We did this at Neunkirchen. We didn't spend much time on them, we test fired them and immediately took off after the Germans. We were attached to the 65th div. and we spent several days carrying infantry on our tanks. We crossed the Rhine on March 30 and then there just wasn't any stopping us. Resistance was of a minor nature and we didn't hesitate for long. We were attacked by hostile aircraft several times, but we escaped casualties. Our first severe resistance was encountered at Langensalza and though the town waved white flags we, had to fight severely for the town. Our hottest moment there was when some enemy planes came over and bombed and strafed us. We thought we would really be in for it but all of a sudden our famous P-47's came and though they were fewer in number they succeeded in driving off the Germans and we proceeded to mop up the town. We captured several hundred Germans. together with our Company. Many Germans were left lying there dead. After Langensalza we continued our drive and we reached Hartsmandorf where we waited for the Russians to meet us. We fired on a small town near here where there was still some resistance. From there we took our tanks to Ordnance for a check-up and it was here that we heard that the war had ended. We then proceeded to Kaimberg where we were to patrol the area and maintain order.

