

COMBAT HISTORY OF 2nd PLATOON Co. "C",

On 7 September, 1944, the platoon was committed to action roadblocking Parey St. Cesaire, France, several miles southwest of Nancy. The next day the platoon received its first enemy artillery fire and took the first German prisoner captured by the battalion. Then the platoon roadblocked XII Corp. at Fong, and took part in the drive from Toul to Nancy, which fell 15 September. The platoon moved north with the Company, for three days as a reserve for the 35th Infantry Division, then returned to Nancy and roadblocked XII for two weeks.

Commencing 1 October, the platoon spent 31 days dug into defense positions, just west of Hill 265 from which the Germans had superior observation. The German constantly shelled the gun positions and the platoon suffered 25% casualties. At dawn one morning the platoon engaged a Mark VI tank at 800 yards with all four guns obtaining nine hits out of nine rds, fired in 30 seconds.

It was the first tank destroyed by the battalion. The platoon went into indirect fire positions for nine days participating in the preparation for the 26th Infantry Division, drive commencing 8 Nov. 1944.

From 10 Nov. to Dec. 6th supported 26th Division drive going into direct fire positions at Moyenvic, Hamport, Conthill, Rodable, Vittersbourg, and Saar Union. Much artillery and small arms fire was received

Joined 6th Armored Division in defensive positions south of Forbach which the enemy held. The platoon spent a week in reserve then went into direct fire positions over looking Folking for five days receiving some artillery fire.

Shifted east along French German border and on 21 Dec. moved up to Walsheim, Germany with 87th Infantry Division. Received much artillery fire. Commenced withdrawing two days later setting up at Ober-gailback, France and Gros Rederching. Pulled out Christmas eve and marched southwest to vicinity of Dietze where the battalion was assembled Christmas night moved back to vicinity of Rheims where three days were spent resting and doing maintenance. Commencing 29 Dec. marched all night to vicinity of Libramont, Belgium. On 31 Dec. went into direct fire positions at Leviscourt protecting 87th Div., artillery. Night of 2 Jan. 45 moved east to Maissin roadblocking it and protecting the divisions left flank.

On 6 Jan. moved to Gerimont into direct fire positions joining north and covering Tillet 1000 yds down in the valley. Received intense artillery and direct high velocity fire. Fired guns and machine guns frequently, killing at least 30 Germans and possibly disabling 2 tanks. On 12 Jan. to 14 Jan. supported an Infantry Bn. advance to Roumont where contact was made with the British as the "Battle of the Bulge", was collapsing. About destroyed a British motorized patrol.

The battalion then moved to the Echternach, Luxemburg area and the platoon went into indirect fire positions at Herborn, for a week. Then spent a week in direct fire positions between Osweiler and Dickweiler. The platoon then moved back to Herborn into indirect fire positions and stayed for two weeks, during which time the platoon leader Lt. Cushing, left the platoon to become battalion S-4 and Lt. Nelson became the platoon leader. Then moved up to indirect fire positions between Osweiler and Dickweiler for a week and received fire from enemy artillery. From there moved to direct fire positions covering east and south of Dickweiler,



the second section overlooking the Sauer River. The second section was shelled by a 120 mm mortar but could not return the fire. Arrangements were made and the second section observed fire from the artillery knocking out the mortar, killing at least a dozen Germans, and two oxen besides considerably impairing the enemy withdrawal. The platoon had remained in these positions for a week leaving 2 March.

The battalion shifted south and east joining the 65th Infantry, Division. On 5 Mar. the platoon went into an all around defense with fire positions at F. Geisbergerhof, a strategic crossroads between Saarlauten and Wadgassen. Some artillery and small arms fire was received.

On 20 Mar. moved across Saar River, and on to Neunkirchen the next day. Rested and did maintenance for several days, then moved up near the Rhine river, joining 261st Inf. attached to 6th Armored Division, and crossed Rhine at Mainz late in the 29 Mar. Drove haltingly along the autobahn north and east past Frankfurt and Giessen stopping just short of Kassel. Left autobahn and moved east to Eschwege by 3 April. Had seldom gone into position, but had suffered many air attacks.

The Germans offered little opposition and the 6th Armored point dealt with that.

An infantry battalion went on ahead of the armor from Eschwege to Wanfried, which it took at dark, 3 April. The platoon joined the infantry there two hours later and was given the mission of going over a ridge to set up a roadblock at Hildebrandshausen to protect the south flank of the by passing armor the following day. No one had seen the route assigned, it was pitch dark, and only an inaccurate small scale map was available. Two rifle squads and a mine and bazooka squad were attached to the platoon. After considerable halts for reconnaissance the platoon made its way up the hill but the roads became impossible and it was forced to turn back and roadblock protecting Wanfried set up.

Next morning the first section plus the security section and one of the rifle squads circled the ridge by better roads and approached Hildebrandshausen. 18 paratroopers ambushed our force. The first section deployed in foot to help the rifle squad. Three Germans were killed and fifteen captured. The town was cleared out the rest of the platoon and attachments came up. By telephone and patrol arrangements was made for the Germans in the next town Lengsfeld, to surrender, the platoon moved to Lengsfeld and freed 400 British officers and 50 enlisted men. The prisoners bag swelled to 98 including, a major, a captain, and 3 Lts. A heavy machine gun section and a mortar section without their mortars were attached to help hold the precious finger on which the platoon found itself. The second platoon now had 66 infantry men attached, also a dozen British officers helped us sentries as well guarding the prisoners. Roadblocks were set up covering all directions. By the next morning the prisoners totaled 109. The British and the prisoners were evacuated during the day. Two infantry companies were brought up and attached. Geismar the town to the west of Lengsfeld. Number one gun knocked out an OP in support of the attack which was driven back. The attacking force of infantry left Lengsfeld and went back except for two rifle platoons. The "C" Co. Commander, Captain Morton was put in command of Lengsfeld for the night.

The next afternoon 6 April, the platoon moved west back to Eschwege in support of the 76th Inf. Div. attacking north toward Allendorf. The half tracks were so heavy they almost sank the light pontoon bridge across the Werra river. The guns were pulled across behind a bantam. When this pocket was erased the platoon went east again to Illeben then Dollstadt, and on to Kubnhausen taking up position covering toward Erfurt.

On 11 April the platoon moved west to Lancensalza and the company was converted to self propelled the following morning and moved out in the afternoon to the east joining the 76th Division just north of Zeitz. The platoon went in support of an infantry battalion that went up through the first army sector following the 6th Armored division. Orders were changed and on the way back to Zeitz 14 April, the Number 2 destroyer which was neutralized allowing the disengagement of our infantry. Moved on to Zeitz. Next morning the platoon supported the infantry battalion in attacking and taking Altenburg. Moved out that night and reached Wiederan in the morning, 16 April. Rested part of day then moved up to bridge a mile south of Mittweida on Zschopau river.

On 19 April platoon moved across Zschopau at Mittweida and went south to Schonborn-Dreiwunden the most easterly point of the 76th. It was a thinly held bridgehead and was in the process of being made against superior numbers of German infantry which were counter attacking. During the five days the bridgehead was held the second section did considerable direct firing. The platoon received much direct and indirect fire. On evening of 24 April the platoon covered the withdrawal of all forces from the bridgehead area back to the Mulda river line. Then the platoon moved into reserve at Wernsdorf and the Thierbach.

Morning of 8 May moved up to Robrsdorf just west of Chemist and relieved 2nd Platoon of Co. "A" 691st T. D. Bn.

THIRD PLATOON

On D plus 80, 3rd Platoon of Co. "C" rolled off the LCT boats and onto Utah Beach and thence inland to a bivouac area not far from the coast. After preparations had been completed we set out to join the combat elements of the third U. S. Army. Our route carried us thru St. Lo, Carentan, Gramville, Orleans, Troyes, Sens. Our first combat positions were taken in the Toul area. After several days here we were made a part of the task force that was to take Nancy. This was a 35th Div. assignment. The main roads and side arteries of this area were saturated with mines, which made movement extremely hazardous. The engineers "Fire in the hole", cry was heard many times that day as they blew mine after mine to clear the way. However on a side road near Nancy which our guns were to cover we lost a half track to a mine but none of the occupants was hurt. After Nancy was taken we could not move in immediately as the bridge on our side of it had been blown. We remained in bivouac several days after which we entered Nancy and set up positions covering the main approach of Maxeville and Malzeville, Nancy suburbs.

On Oct. 1, 1944 the platoon went to the blazing sector of Aaracourt, and onto Hill 265 just outside of Reichacourt. Before the guns and men were dug in the Krauts opened up with artillery and mortars and saturated the area with a heavy concentration of fire. For 33 days we took all that they sent our way which included much direct fire and all types Heavy machine gun, and light artillery and mortars, screaming meemies, phosphorus, burp guns, light and heavy machine guns. At first we had very little infantry protection, the only outpost being the one made of our own security. We received excellent artillery support from the 4th Armored to whom we were attached for part of the time. The 4th Armored was relieved by the 26th Yankee Div. and to both we gave very satisfactory supporting fire. The fighting on the hill was a see-saw affair and our supporting direct fire helped the doughs no little we helped repulse a counter attack by knocking out a tank and another occasion we got a half track mounted screaming meemie. Suspected enemy OP's machine gun nests, mortar positions and snipers came in for attention from our hard hitting 76's. One gun lost.



Being relieved by Co. "A" 265th we went to a position near Aaracourt for indirect fire. Our guns helped to deliver that terrific barrage that opened the big Nov. offensive by the 3rd Army.

We then joined in the drive that carried thru Viv-sur-Seille, Hainport Reich to Bendorf. We were held up considerable before going into Bendorf by a blown bridge and here again the area was heavily mined. The engineers made good time repairing a passage over the bridge and clearing the dangerous mines. Enemy artillery was active at Bendorf.

We then proceeded thru the Maginot Fort to the Hassinger area and into position very close to the enemy. This sector was fairly active, during which we worked with 80th Div. Recon. and 654th T. D. Bn.

Saar Union was the next objective and here again, enemy artillery shelled heavily. Our position on the commanding high ground gave us every advantage on any contemplated enemy tank attack.

We pulled back into Bendorf again for a physical check and then set out for Kochern, where we covered the main approaches to this town. Here the Jerry artillery was anything but quiet and several rounds, came close to our guns. We were attached to the 44th armored Inf. of the 6th Armored Div. at Kochern.

Morbach was the next point of call where we worked with a Cav. Recon squad. Here the enemy shelled heavily and several casualties resulted. The main street of the town was a bowling alley for the enemy 88s.

Then the platoon left to join the 87th Div. and after one of the worst black out marches in the platoon history we joined at Gersheim, Germany being among the first units to penetrate the Reich, in the direction, the town of Walsheim, where one section held, came in for a terrific pounding by Kraut artillery. Mortars were very active, at Gersheim. On orders to withdraw from this area, the platoon left approximately 30 minutes after the infantry and waited to pick up the engineers who blew the bridges behind us.

We then went to the Army assembly area at Rheims, France, where after a few days, orders were received to go to Belgium. At the Assembly point there we remained in reserve for 2 days after which the platoon took up positions at Bras. Then to Jehouville for defense against a reported possible German paratroop

attack. Bonnie Rue was the next objective and which had been a barrier to doughs trying to break through. Enemy tanks were at an important cross road and after other units refused the assignment to neutralize this enemy strongpoint old faithful was called on. We moved onto high ground commanding the crossroad and immediately drew fire from enemy armor below. One halftrack was knocked out and several casualties occurred there and at one gun which was the target of a concentrated barrage from the Krauts guns. In fighting off a counter attack platoon guns knocked out one tiger, one mark 4, and a S. P. gun. One of the most terrific barrages ever experienced by us was laid down by the retreating Germans after our doughs moved in to take the cross roads and surrounding areas.

Platoons left cross roads position and proceeded to Bn assembly at Libramount. Left Libramount, Belgium Jan. 15, and arrived at Coutern Luxembourg same day. Left Coutern, Jan. 16 went into position same day at Dickweiler, near Siegfried line. German patrols were reported active in this area, coming across Sauer River at night. Platoon underwent several shellings here. One dud found in the CP was wither \overline{w} 8" or a 240 mm.

Joined the 76th Div. at Dickweiler, left for Company CP Feb. 5th. On the 6th we went into position near Sauer river and facing Siegfried fortifications. Mission was to fire on billboxes and support infantry operations in general. Platoon was constantly harassed by tree bursts and suffered several casualties. Area seemed to be under enemy observation for any movement of men or vehicles along a certain road of ingress drew enemy fire. Patrols were active here and many foot mines were reported in the vicinity. Muddy roads and paths made movement very difficult. One section went to Echternack, taking a position on high ground covering the Stein area. Care had to be exercised here and shifting crews had to be done under cover of darkness. From Echternack the platoon went to a rear area for a check and cleaning of equipment. However sooner than expected the platoon left with Bn for Saarburg. Just before reaching destination a change of orders was received and the platoon left to join the 65th Div. which was down at Altforweiler. There we went into indirect fire positions and considerable firing was done day and night. We proceeded to a position near Saarlauten and our indirect fire brought compliments from 65th Officers. Then proceeded thru Saarlauten area on to Neunkirchen.

From Neunkirchen we proceeded to the Rhine river which we crossed at Mainz about midnight. We continued to travel all night and reached the Reichsautobahn. On the autobahn we were bombed and strafed. No damage or casualties were inflicted. We were placed in a combat team and proceeded to take Wanfried. Two Jeeps preceded us in the town. The infantry followed on foot and we had a brief, sharp fight. We captured much enemy equipment. From Wanfried we proceeded to Eschwege where we set up direct fire position and on enemy strong points. We again delivered direct fire in support of the infantry in the adjoining town from Eschwege. From there we supported a infantry drive which was supposed to and took five towns that day. We then traveled back to the town adjoining Eschwege where we rested overnight. The next day we proceeded to join the 385th infantry passing through Mulhouson on the way. We joined 385th and supported them by direct fire. We fired on the enemy which had positions on a hill. After the hill was taken we proceeded to the op where we fired direct into a town. The enemy were driven out and we occupied the town overnight. The next morning as part of the combat team whose objective was to take as many towns as daylight hours would permit. The first town was approached through open fields and our platoon was dismounted as infantry. Little resistance was encountered as was the case of all our objectives that day. However in the taking of Slotteinbien Sgt. Davis section knocked out a Mark 4 tank. During these last few days of action our platoon accounted for quite a number of enemy personnel. In the course of the day we were strafed by approximately fifteen enemy airplanes causing no damage or casualties. Next day, platoon left for Langensalza where it was made self-propelled with the 304th Inf. Reg. we penetrated to our eastern most point which was Chemist, just outside of Chemist. After leaving this point, our objective was a small nearby town that housed an SS school. An immense supply of equipment was left behind by the retreating Krauts. We were then ordered to Burglady and were in position there at the wars end.

HEADQUARTERS PLATOON

COMPANY "C" 691st TANK DESTROYER Bn.

After training in Texas and Louisiana we took the train to Camp Miles Standish and then embarked on the U. S. S. Wakefield for the E. T. O.

We landed in Liverpool in August of 1944 and went by train to Llangotock Park in Wales. About three weeks were spent then in drawn vehicles, guns, ammunition, and other equipment.

Early in September we encountered our first enemy action just West of Nancy, France. As part of Task Force Seabree we successfully entered this town after a march that was marked by many explosives of land mines but fortunately few casualties.

After a brief attachment to the 80th Division we received a hurry call to protect XIIIth Corp. Headquarters in Nancy. This mission lasted for two weeks and turned out to be a very pleasant vacation.

On the first day of October we moved from Nancy to the vicinity of Hill 265 and Reichcourt. Moving into position in broad daylight we received our worst beating from enemy artillery, mortars, and small arms. For thirty days we sat in the open and took everything the Jerres had to throw at us. Our CP at first was a group of holes in a clump of brush a few hundred yards behind the guns. When they filled up with water we moved back six hundred yards to holes in the side of a hill and continued to take it. During this period the wire crew worked day and night under the most trying conditions. The whole crew, Bechaver Leary, Minogue, Persinger, Fountain, and Newsom spent most of the time out in the rain and shrapnel keeping the telephones in working order.

On November 8, 1944, we began the drive across France with the 26th Infantry Division which took us to Sarr Union. Next we went with the 6th Armored Division just short of Saarrbrucken, Germany.

Our next attachment was to the 87th Infantry Division, east of Saar Union where we made our first trip into Germany. At this point the Germans counter attack hit in Belgium and we were withdrawn from Germany and made the long, cold march to Belgium.

In Belgium we met plenty of tanks and had many anxious moments before we awoke one morning to see British armored cars across the river and knew the "Battle of the Bulge", was over.

From Belgium we moved to Herborn, Luxemburg. There we stayed for about a month in a defensive position with the 76th Infantry Division. At the end of the month we supported the 76th in its bloody push to Echternach across the Saar River and through the Siegfried line pillboxes on this side of the Rhine.

Next we moved to Alt-Foweiler, near Saarlauten, with the 65th Infantry Division. There we again crossed the Saar River and again went through the Siegfried Line and began pursuing the Germans to the Rhine.

We crossed the Rhine with the 6th Armored Division at Mainz, and traveled the Autobahn blackout and at top speed the vicinity of Giessen. From there we moved to Eschwege where we again were attacked to the 76th Division.

Our next stop was near Laugencalza where we changed over from towed to self-propelled. The conversion left us considerably behind the front, but after several days trip we caught up just west of Zeitz.

We then moved forward wondering when we would contact the Russians. The CP moved east across the Mulda River as far as Claussnitz. Then we moved back behind the Russian bombline and were sitting in Thierback a little village right on the Mulda, on V-E day.

After the cessation of hostilities the CP moved to Linda in Landkrie Gera to take over the job of occupying nine nearby towns. On June 15 we moved to Ronneburg and turned our occupation duties over to the Tankers.

The following day we loaded up and began the trip to France and Camp Washington where the job of sending home the 85 pointers and reorganizing for CBI began.

HISTORY OF 1st PLATOON, COMPANY "C"

After basic training in Camp Bowie, Texas, and Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, we became soldiers of the First Platoon, Co. "C" 69th T. D. Bn, on or about Feb. 1, 1943. Our platoon leader at that time was Lt. Miller soon to be replaced by Lt. McMannon.

It wasn't long before we prepared for maneuvers and moved to the woods of Louisiana on April 8, 1943. There we sweat out the heat, rain and snakes. During this period we learned a lot although living in those swamps wasn't very pleasant. At that time we were armed with the 37 mm and the 75 mm guns, the latter mounted on half tracks. After finishing maneuvers about June 13, 1943 we moved back to Clairborne, in a new area. At this time they outfitted us with M10s carrying the 3" gun. We all liked this weapon but didn't keep them long. We became a towed outfit.

Sweating out overseas shipment came next with rumors flying thick and fast. The day finally arrived and we shoved off for Camp Myles, Standish our P. O. E. and from there after a short period of orientations to England on the ship Wakefield. Arriving there on Aug. 2, 1944 we began sweating out our move to France. It came just one month later. Our Atlantic and Channel crossings were pleasant but some of the boys didn't think so.

We were now sweating out the real show none of us knowing what was coming next. We pushed off thru France, stoping for a short time in the city of Nancy. There the people greeted us with open arms.

We soon moved out and on to the town of Reichacourt where we really had rough going. The Jerries pounded us day and nite with artillery and mortar fire. In that position we stayed for twenty seven days with rain every one of those days. It was far from pleasant. None of us will ever forget Reichacourt and Hill 265.

From there we moved on to Morville. We stayed there two days and nites and on one occasion had to move dead Heinies out of their holes using them ourselves, when the Jerries poured in those hellish 88s.

On thru France and up to this time we had been very lucky, our casualties being very light. We moved to a position in the town of Morbach, which proved to be one of our hottest spots. There we lost Newman, Graham, and Wilson, all good men. Here we named the main street the bowling alley as the Jerries sure rolled a lot of 88s down that street. The Krauts were within a few hundred yards of us and many a nite we could hear them talking. We moved the C. P. to three different positions and everyone was hit by artillery. We moved out on Dec. 15, 1944.

The battalion assembled at this time and we moved into Germany. It was a nite march and colder than hell. We took up positions around Walschheim but didn't stay there long, moving out to Belgium when the Germans made their great counter attack. On the way there we stopped and spent Christmas day in the demolished town of St. Meddard. It was a dreary Christmas, the weather zero.

We then joined a task force and moved to positions near Tillet, Belgium. The weather was cold with plenty of snow but the fighting hot and furious. The Germans finally withdrew and we moved south of the bulge to the town of Osweiler in Luxemburg. Here we were greeted with much artillery fire but gave the Germans some of their own medicine in the form of 3" H. E. shells.

We pushed on thru the Siegfried line to the Rhine river crossing at nite on April 2, 1945. Here we hit Hitler's super highway. On this road we were attacked many times by the Luftwaffe. Everyone called this march the rat race and the roads were filled with German soldiers and refugees streaming to the rear.

Taking towns as we progressed we finally stoped in Dablstadt setting up road blocks. Here Sgt. Lugar while on guard one dark nite stoped a Jerry combat patrol, killing one Staff Sergeant. On the same Sgt. Ruffner's crew captured another Heinie armed with a loaded Burp gun.

At this point we dropped back and drew new M 36's with the 90 mm gun. Armed with these and feeling pretty cocky we pushed on to the outskirts of Zeitz where we helped capture (100) Germans, (30) Wacs, and eleven 12.8 c. m anti-air craft guns.

Pushing on we hit Altenburg with its demolished airfield and equipment. Thence to Mithweida where we were called on to help and infantry company who were being driven out of a small town to the North Here

Sgt. Nae and Sgt. Ruffner with their gun crews attacked the German flank knocking out two half tracks, one tank and blowing up an ammunition dump. Missions accomplished.

From there to Oltendorf which proved to be our last position, knocking out two German Rocket Guns.

We are a platoon of few medals but nevertheless feel we have done our utmost in bringing this war to a close, under the efficient and courageous leadership of our officers.

We are now undergoing a training program at what was once, one of Goering's greatest airfields. We are attached to the 76th Div. 2nd Bn. 304th Inf.

We are still sweating, sweating out what is going to happen next.



