WELL DONE 705

WELL DONE
705

WAS WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY

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FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISTRIBUTION
TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
705TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
AND IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

FIVE BRONZE BATTLE CAMPAIGN STARS

WERE AWARDED

THE MEN OF THE 705TH T. D. BATTALION

FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION

IN THE FOLLOWING CAMPAIGNS

☆ NORMANDY

☆ NORTHERN FRANCE

☆ RHINELAND

☆ ARDENNES

☆ CENTRAL EUROPE

THE 705TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

SERVED ON FOREIGN SOIL IN THE

FOLLOWING COUNTRIES

SCOTLAND AUSTRIA

ENGLAND GERMANY

FRANCE HOLLAND

LUXEMBOURG BELGIUM

which I do not thoroughly relish, but my men will not suffer or die, due to my neglect."

This I will confirm with an incident that happened at Bastogne during the cold, bitter days that the 705 continued on the line after the breakthrough was made by the 4th Armored Division. It was snowing, with temperatures ranging around zero, and relief was to be made, so the Battalion could pull out of the lines for much needed and deserved rest, but the relief never came.

The Old Man reached for the phone and called Corps — not G-3 — but the Chief of Staff, and said, "I'm getting damned sick and tired of the way you folks are pushing my men around, they are freezing, they have colds and frozen feet, and need medical attention. Cut out the damned red tape and send us the promised relief!"

The relief came shortly thereafter and his men pulled back and received the medical attention which was so badly needed.

The Colonel was indeed proud of his boys and for the record and history they made in combat and he would have said, as he has said many times: "Well done, 705!" I sincerely believe that every man under his command was proud of the Old Man, for on March 1st when the Colonel's life was quickly taken from us and the news spread that the "Old Man" was gone, every officer and man of the 705 was dumbfounded and couldn't believe it and wondered what would come next, for a truly great leader was taken from our midst. It wasn't necessary to proclaim a period of silence in honor and reverence for the Colonel, for every man sat with bowed heads in memory and prayer to the man they had all grown to trust and admire and to him, Lt. Col. CLIFFORD TEMPLETON, the following pages are dedicated.

PAUL A YEOMANS
Sergeant Major
705th T D Battalion

THE 705 Tank Destroyer Battalion was organized at Fort Knox, Kentucky, on December 15, 1941. 8 Officers and 108 enlisted men from Battery "D", 58th Armored FA Battalion, started the ball rolling. The battalion, whose birth went unnoticed by a world at war, was destined to grow in strength and power in a long and stormy career — a career that reached its climax at Bastogne, Belgium, where hard-hitting destroyers blazed death and defiance at encircling enemy forces.

On February 17, 1942 the battalion moved to Camp Cooke, California, where they were joined by men from Ft. Custer, Michigan, Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, Ft. Logan, Colorado, Camp Perry, Ohio, Ft. Ord, California, and many other places.

The outfit set to work in earnest at Camp Cooke, Little groups of men marched doggedly back and forth in the California sand and sun, while the Corporal or Pfc in charge shouted, "By the right flank, march", and "By the left flank, march." A rather ignomious beginning for a battalion that was destined to become the thorn in Von Rundstedt's side. And yet, out of these small groups of wheeling, sweating recruits grew the smart and classical styled battalion that marched with gleaming precision through Camp Hood, Camp Adair, Ft. Lewis and Camp Shanks. The men were learning coordination, and the finished product was the perfect machine — more than 600 men moving through the streets of America, every hat at the same angle, every face the same expression, every arm swing not an inch too far to the front or rear. Lt. Col. Clifford Templeton who assumed command of the Battalion on the 25th of June was satisfied with nothing short of perfection.

While the men tackled strange and difficult tasks and learned to live a new and unfamiliar life they were becoming acquainted with one another and beneath the surface growing proud of their outfit. Should a stranger venture into the 705 PX and cast any aspersions on the battalion, he found himself quickly engulf-

ed in a melee of swinging arms and fists. The 705th fast gained a reputation for being the hardest working, the hardest drinking, the hardest fighting bunch on the west coast.

Numerous motor marches, many under blackout conditions, and night occupation of bivouacs, took a large portion of the training time at Camp Cooke. Many of these operations were in conjunction with the Fifth Armored Division, to which the Battalion had been attached at Ft. Knox, and with whom they remained until the end of maneuvers in October.

During the alert which blanketed the west coast for nearly thirty days, the battalion maintained a permanent watch on Purissima Point with two 75 mm guns, and selected personnel were standing by at all hours to man the several 50 cal. machine gun AA positions.

On August 14, 1942 the battalion marched by motor to the Mojave Desert to participate in desert maneuvers with the 5th Armored Division. The men found themselves driving into a blazing, glaring furnace, where midday temperature ranged from 105 degrees to 138 degrees, where a canteen cup or mess kit became a piece of unbearably hot metal even in the shade, where tobacco crumbled and rolled out of the end of cigarettes from excessive dryness, where to carry a heavy weight for more than 50 yards brought faintness and dizzy spells. Everything that grew was full of thorns and everything that lived was poisonous. There were desert storms that swept down out of ominously red skies, bringing a sea of driving, blinding, cutting sand, carrying away equipment, cutting visibility to three or four feet, forcing men to put on gas masks in order to breathe. And although personnel were physically affected by the extreme heat at first, and found difficulty in assimilating the salt tablets which were necessary to maintain one's vitality, yet within two weeks the men were working the whole day through, including the heat of midday. The general health of the men was excellent and the Battalion had a much better sick report than when normally in garrison.

The maneuver area was composed of many types of terrain, ranging from extremely rocky areas with deep gulches to deep sand and dry salt marshes. Mountain ranges criss-crossed the entire area. The self-propelled on the M3 chassis, with which the battalion was equipped, was able to negotiate without difficulty all the terrain, if operated at a very slow speed. When operated at the rates necessary in the course of action there were numerous cases of overheating, broken front springs, punctured boots, and bent front axles. Motorcycles after exhaustive experiments were found to be less than useless in desert operations.

The battalion participated in a total of ten exercises, at times making overnight marches of 60 to 80 miles. In a letter dated September 13, 1942 Major General J. W. Heard commended the battalion for its versatility and for its unusual performance in negotiating the McKey pass and the capture of Needles.

Desert maneuvers ended 1900 October 14th and the Battalion moved the following day to the vicinity of Needles, California. From Needles, the battalion moved to Camp Hood, Texas, on November 1st. Training at Camp Hood, Texas, consisted of TD tactics and field exercises, firing of all weapons, review of basic subjects and a rigorous program of military courtesy and discipline.

Firing of weapons at Camp Hood was extensive. In a letter dated 1 December 1942, Brigadier General Richard G. Tindall commended the Battalion for their outstanding record on the 1000" machine gun range. In a letter dated 9 December 1942 Major General A. D. Bruce commended the battalion on the records set during their course of instruction with the caliber .30 machine gun. In a letter dated 14 December 1942 General Tindall congratulated the battalion on its record on the tank destroyer gun ranges, and its performance in the proficiency tests which set new records for speed and accuracy. In a letter dated 28 January 1943 General Tindall commended the battalion for

their excellent performance in the demonstrations of 3 inch and 75 mm firing in platoon proficiency tests.

A demonstration by Tank Destroyer Center, giving a full cross-section of the training of TD personnel was broadcast on the Army hour from coast to coast. The 705th TD Battalion participated in the demonstration with its destroyers and the "705th Scottish Bagpipe Band" organized by Major Waldo F. Walker and S/Sgt Paul A. Yeomans.

The Battalion received another commendation in a letter dated 25 February 1943 from Major Frank M. Kearney for establishing the best record of preventive motor maintenance ever attained by an organization at Camp Hood. In a letter dated 2 March 1943 addressed to the CG, IX Corps, Major General A. D. Bruce in a report of training of the 705th TD Bn stated that he considered it to be the finest battalion that had passed through Tank Destroyer Center.

The 705 moved to Camp Adair, Oregon, on 8 March 1943. At Camp Adair, the 75 mm self-propelled guns were replaced by M10s. Training at Camp Adair consisted of a rigorous schedule of physical training, firing of small arms and a considerable amount of dismounted drill. Training films were used extensively. The battalion constructed at Camp Adair for the 96th Infantry Division a Nazi village and obstacle course for the purpose of training men in street fighting and house-to-house combat.

The Battalion moved to IV Corps Artillery Firing Center, Yakima, Washington, on 1 June 1943. Training time at the Artillery Firing Center was devoted to the firing of all weapons, the battalion constructing all their own firing ranges, including moving target range, pistol, rifle and machine gun ranges and direct and indirect fire range for the 3" gun.

The Battalion returned to Camp Adair on 9 July 1943 and on 4 August 1943 moved to the Oregon maneuver area to participate in nearly three months of Central Oregon maneuvers.

The 104th Division "D" Series maneuvers commenced August 15, 1943 and ended September 1, 1943. These consisted of a

series of brief exercises, each lasting from two to three days. They were conducted to the south and west of Bend, Oregon.

The South Central Oregon maneuvers began 13 September 1943 and lasted until the 17th of October. These maneuvers were on a larger scale, encompassing a far greater area and envolving several armored units.

Oregon maneuvers differed greatly from the California desert maneuvers. For one thing, climatic conditions were more favorable. It was the battalion's first opportunity to work with an infantry division. The men had an opportunity to get acquainted with the M10.

The 705 engaged in all of the maneuver problems with the exception of the last one. On 18 October the battalion moved to a temporary camp in the heart of the maneuver area to engage in indirect fire practice.

On the 14th of November, the battalion moved to Ft. Lewis, Washington. This station became the staging area for the battalion and a great portion of the time was consumed in preparation for overseas movement.

The Battalion returned a second time to the Yakima Firing Center for the month of February for indirect fire practice and the firing of small arms.

While the battalion was stationed at Yakima, Fred Waring dedicated one of his broadcasts over a coast-to-coast hookup to the 705, introducing the TD song, "Seek, Strike, Destroy".

The Battalion returned to Ft. Lewis, and then, on April 6, 1944 travelled to Camp Shanks, New York, and from there boarded the Queen Elizabeth on April 18th.

As regiment after regiment marched aboard this largest ship in the world, the entire 705th TD Battalion was placed on KP duty. It took every available man in the outfit to handle the vast amount of kitchen details required aboard the giant ocean liner, and the men accepted this rather novel arrangement with high good humor, and the familiar words, coming over the ships

public address system, "Calling all Chow Line MP's and Table Waiters, Report to your Post."

The Queen Elizabeth left New York harbor April 20th, arrived Garoch, Scotland, April 27th. The movement overseas was without incident.

The Battalion moved by rail from Garoch to Tilshead, England, spending the month of May on the Salsbury plains, then moved to Trowbridge the 1st of June.

☆ ☆ THE BRITTANY CAMPAIGN ☆ ☆

On the 13th of July, 1944, the 705th left Trowbridge for the English Channel. The channel crossing was made during excellent weather, and the two LSTs carrying the Battalion across dropped anchor on the 17th of July off the coast of France. On the following day, when the tide went down, the Battalion drove off the LSTs onto Utah beach and moved to bivouac area five miles SW of Bricquebec, remaining there until alerted for combat.

The Battalion was alerted on the 31st of July, moved out of bivouac at 1230 the following day, travelled 60 miles south and entered an assembly area south of Coutances, vicinity of Equilly. The Battalion was attached to Task Force "A" under the command of General Earnest. Mission of Task Force "A" to sweep west across the Brittany peninsula and seize and hold critical bridges on the road to Brest.

At 0100 August 3rd the battalion moved out with Task Force "A", travelled all night, swept south through Avranches, turned and headed west across the Brittany peninsula. At 0900 contacted enemy at Dol. Infantry given mission of taking the city while Task Force "A" raced southwest toward Lanhelin, bypassing Dol. Passed through Lanhelin, contacted enemy SE of Miniac at 1445, receiving light sniper and 88 fire. The battalion remained in place that night one mile north of Lanhelin.

On the 4th of August, Task Force "A" swung NW toward St. Malo. Strong enemy resistance encountered at Chateauneuf. A heavily manned road block on the edge of the city stubbornly resisted repeated attacks. Heavy mortar and small arms fire caused several casualties. Twelve inch coastal defense guns with 360 degree traverse continued to harass our troops all that day and the next despite repeated bombing attacks from our planes.

Headquarters Company, 705 TD Bn, was thrown into the battle of Chateauneuf as foot infantry. Two attempts by the engineers to blow the road block failed. A tank destroyer was brought up to within several yards of the strong point and fired point blank, to no avail. It was at 1500 August 5th when an 81 mm mortar mounted on the TD Battalion's wrecker finally destroyed the stubbornly defended road block. A path was cleared and the cavalry and TDs swept through Chateauneuf.

Further resistance was encountered by Company C north of Chateauneuf. At 1750 that day, Battalion was called back as Task Force "A" prepared to resume its march toward Brest. Battalion reassembled and bivouaced vicinity Lanhelin. Company B left the Battalion at this time, advancing into the long and bloody battle of St. Malo.

At 0820 August 6th Battalion resumed its march toward Brest. Heavy enemy resistance was not encountered until approaching Guincamp, at 1745 August 7th. The TDs working in conjunction with the cavalry and infantry cleared the town by 2115 and the task force moved on.

Light enemy resistance was encountered at 1630 the next day in the vicinity of Morlaix, but the city was cleared by 2020, and the armored column moved through.

At 1115 August 9th, Company C with one Reconnaissance platoon turned and raced back to Morlaix to assist Cavalry trains reported under attack. At 1125 security section Company A moved south to investigate reports by civilians of an enemy bivouac. At 1130 two Reconnaissance platoons patrolled east

to investigate civilan reports of Germans in that direction. At 1545 the battalion reassembled and resumed march to the west with Task Force "A". Camped at 1915 south of Lesnevens. From the south could now be heard the thunder of guns as the curtain rose on the battle for Brest.

At 2100 report received of German infantry to the rear. Reconnaissance Company moved north to meet the enemy, throwing out a protective screen, keeping in close radio communication with the battalion command post. Although the greater portion of the enemy infantry bypassed the task force and worked their way south to Brest, Reconnaissance Company took a great number of prisoners.

All across Brittany the battalion was greeted by the liberated French with unsurpassed joy, who showered the men with flowers and kisses, offering champagne and cognac, writing "Viva la France", and "Viva la Amerique" on the destroyers — old men weeping and young girls dancing — everywhere singing the Marseilles and crowding around the grinning, friendly Americans.

At 2200 August 9th the Battalion received new mission of swinging east and north and securing the beaches in the vicinity of Ploumilliau.

At 0045 August 11th Task Force "A" moved out and travelled all night toward their new destination. At 1630 the Battalion arrived at Ploumilliau, entered assembly position in that vicinity and established outguards and several patrols.

A report was received of a great number of enemy paratroopers between Morlaix and Guincamp. Task Force "A" was assigned the mission of clearing that area, and on August 13th moved out on the new assignment. At 2030, battalion closed in bivouac vicinity Callac, no enemy contact.

At 0805 August 14th moved out, travelled NE to area SW of Begard, no enemy contact. At 0905 Company C advanced north to LaRoche, taking up indirect fire positions north of the town in preparation for firing in vicinity of Lezardrieux where a large

concentration of Germans were reported. At 1200 Co. A moved to indirect fire positions to the east of Co. C. At 1500 both companies shifted their firing positions upon order from Brigade to new area north of Pleudaniel. At 1600 Co. A and C fired 306 rounds direct fire into Lezardrieux, the barrage lasting 15 minutes, all rounds falling into the town.

At 1615, upon cessation of the TDs fire, the cavalry moved into Lezardrieux, taking a large number of prisoners.

At 1900 battalion assembled and camped in the vicinity of Treguier. At 0730 August 16th the TDs working in conjunction with the cavalry and engineers formed two groups, and worked north according to prearranged plan, advancing up the two peninsulas north of Treguier and Lezardrieux, governed by phase lines and controlled by radio communication. Having reconnoitered to the coast, reassembled, and at 1930 crossed bridge at Lezardrieux, encountered resistance vicinity Paimpol and Plounez. Battalion assembled and bivouaced vicinity Paimpol.

At 0730 August 17th the TDs rolled through Paimpol. A heavy concentration of Germans on the northern extremity of Paimpol peninsula was placed under fire by both TDs and mortars, resulting in the surrender of the entire garrison.

Moved to new area west of St. Servais August 18th. Co. B having fought their way into St. Malo with the infantry in a long and violent conflict, returned to the battalion. On 19th of August moved to new area vicinity Plouedern.

The remainder of August was spent mainly in indirect fire on targets on the Daoulas peninsula. On August 23rd Company B left the Battalion again to join the 2nd Infantry Division in the battle of Brest.

The next campaign in which the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion participated was the Crozon operation. This peninsula was heavily fortified and stubbornly defended by the enemy. Task Force "A" succeeded in driving the enemy back past Menez Hom mountain, down the peninsula, but found their strength inadequate, once the enemy made a determined stand on high

ground stretching across the peninsula, to rout the enemy from their well supplied and well fortified positions. The task force then served more as a holding force, after making several costly attempts to break through the German lines, until reinforcements arrived from the Brest area. The first part of September was spent by the TD companies in indirect fire on targets on the Crozon peninsula. Frequent heavy counter-battery fire was received and one destroyer struck a mine resulting in casualties. An attack in force began against the enemy on the 17th of September, after intense artillery preparation, Co. A working forward with the cavalry as planned, rendering close direct fire support.

The push forward continued along the peninsula on the 18th of September. Enemy forces retreated rapidly. At the time of the collapse of the German forces on the southwestern tip of the peninsula, 2nd platoon Co. A and Co. C were firing direct on enemy installations vicinity Kerrous. Upon the collapse of enemy forces on Crozon peninsula, TD mission completed.

Battalion moved to assembly area vicinity Plonevez-Porzay, rejoined by Company B returning from the battle of Brest.

Orders received at 1800 September 19th for Task Force "A" to launch an attack on Douarnenez where a large number of Germans were concentrated vicinity Audierne.

Battalion moved out at 0645 with Task Force "A" the following day, 1st and 2nd Platoons Co. A in direct support of 15th and 17th Cavalry respectively. At 0830 companies closed in assembly area NE of Audierne and reconnaissance parties were dispatched to locate direct fire positions. At 1100 one platoon Co. C occupied close direct fire positions, but were forced to withdraw 15 minutes later to clear bomb line. At 1245 Company C and one platoon Company B displaced forward rendering direct fire on right flank, another B Co. platoon moving up on the left flank. At 1418 cease fire order was given as enemy forces surrendered. At 1710 Battalion returned to bivouac area vicinity Plonevez-Porzay.

On 21 September 1944, Task Force "A" was dissolved. In a letter dated 24 September, Brigadier General Herbert L. Earnest commended the battalion for the creditable and efficient manner in which they had discharged their duties in the Brittany campaign.

★ ★ MOSELLE CROSSING ★ ★

On the 22nd of September the Battalion moved to vicinity Bodilis, and on the 24th moved to Camp de Coetquidan, 3 miles NW of Guer, vicinity of Rennes, 16 days were spent in this location, in which the Battalion's replacements received thorough individual training.

On the 11th of October, the 705 left Camp de Coetquidan and marched across France, through the outskirts of Paris, to the Moselle battle front.

On October 20, 1944, the Battalion received orders to effect the relief of the 818th TD Bn. on the Pagny bridgehead across the Moselle river. On the 21st of October the battalion infiltrated onto the bridgehead across the smoke-screened Moselle bridge, and by night had effected relief of the 818th.

The 705th TD Bn provided anti-tank defense in the zone of the 95th Infantry Division and reinforced the fires of Division Artillery. By the end of October, the battalion had fired a total of 255 indirect fire missions — targets including enemy mortar and MG installations, enemy CPs, enemy entrenchments, and installations in town of Cheminot.

At 0720 November 3rd, 705th withdrew from the Pagny bridgehead across the Vandieres bridge, being relieved by the 818th TD Bn.

The next major operation in which the Battalion engaged was the crossing of the Moselle a second time north of Thionville and advancing northeast into Germany.

On the 16th of November, the battalion infiltrated across the Cattenom bridge and advanced to Rettel. During the succeeding days, the Battalion worked forward from town to town, through

the bomb-wrecked and shell-torn villages. On the 18th of November, Co. B 1st platoon first broke across the border of Germany, occupying high ground north of Merschweiler and firing on enemy motorized column moving toward Eft, knocking out a command car and truck and destroying numerous enemy troops.

During the Battalion's occupation of this locality, a number of alerts were received warning of enemy tanks advancing from the north and east, and continual shifts in positions among the TDs were effected to meet the threatened attacks, none of which ever materialized.

On the 30th of November, the 614th TD Bn (T) affected relief of the 705. The Battalion assembled in Sierck, and on December 1st moved north to the 9th US Army sector. On the 2nd of December the battalion moved into the town of Kohlscheid, Germany, north of Aachen, remaining in Kohlscheid until December 18th, the TD platoons taking up indirect fire positions to the east and firing on enemy installations in the town of Julich and nearby points.

★ ★ BASTOGNE ★ ★

On the 18th of December at 1800 the Battalion received orders from Headquarters 9th US Army to report to the Commanding General VIII Corps at Bastogne. The Battalion moved out in compliance with these orders at 2240.

For two days Von Runstedt's forces had been driving deeper into the American lines in an all-out armored offensive, fanning out, striking toward Liege and Luxembourg. Here was the Nazi Blitzkrieg in its full power and fury, and before the onrush of armor, the thinly defended American lines were forced to waver and give way.

Behind the lines hasty plans were being formulated, all reserves were being called up, every available man and machine was being hurled into the battle to stop at all costs Von Rundstedt and his armored avalanche.

When the battalion was alerted, they were ready to move in a matter of hours. Rumbling out of Kohlscheid, the 705 picked up speed, raced south through Aachen, turned and headed toward Liege. The sky became ablaze with flares dropped by circling planes endeavoring to spot any allied activity. On to Liege plunged the armored column, every man by now having a premonition that the battle to come would require every ounce of strength and resourcefullness at their command.

As the column neared Liege robot bombs meteored overhead, and the air was rocked again and again as they fell in the city and about the column.

When morning dawned it found the battalion racing south toward Houffalize.

When the advance guard reached crossroads N15 and N28 its commander was advised by an MP that Highway N15 between Houffalize and Bastogne was in enemy hands and that all traffic for Bastogne was to route through LaRoche and Neufchateau. In LaRoche could be seen the great amount of confusion brought about by Von Rundstedt's advancing forces. Traffic filled the roads, making travel difficult. Every type and description of vehicle lined up two or three columns deep. Rumors were flying about, telling of the crushing power of the approaching enemy. Over the whole scene of confusion hung a curtain of ominous silence. Not a shot was heard, not the single crash of an artillery shell, nor the familiar cough of a mortar. The silence was more deadly than the noise of conflict with which every soldier was so familiar. Within a matter of miles was an enemy that was rolling divisions back before its irresitable power, like a great tidal wave, and yet a grave-yard silence hung over the countryside. The Battalion Commander placed a gun platoon with the pioneer platoon Reconnaissance Company attached to organize a defensive block at LaRoche and hold that city until further orders. The Battalion was placed in a general defensive position in the vicinity of Vecmont pending orders from the Corps Commander. Battalion was attached, by CG VIII Corps, to the

101st Airborne Division and simultaneously orders were sent to the Battalion to proceed to Bastogne via La Roche—Ortho—Bertogne—Longchamps road. Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division directed that the Battalion be ordered forward as soon as possible.

The Battalion Commander then proceeded to return to the battalion along the above mentioned route and encountered a small German armored and infantry force in vicinity Bertogne. In the face of rather heavy small arms and tank fire the party was able to withdraw with small loss. The Battalion Commander ordered the Executive Officer to change the route, for the Battalion to protect itself against similiar small hostile task forces and if necessary fight its way through to Bastogne. Co. A placed a block at Ortheuville to protect passage of the Battalion and its combat trains. Plans had been prepared for the employment of the Battalion and within two hours after its arrival all elements were occupying defensive positions on the existing front lines. On the 20th of December the Germans attacked early in the morning taking advantage of extremely foggy conditions. The fighting during the course of the day being generally from southeast to due north of the city. The fog did not clear until mid morning and most of the action tock place within a relatively few yards. Very heavy infantry attacks were experienced in vicinity Neffe about 1930 and the machine guns of the Tank Destroyers barked until they were white hot and smoking, materially assisting in the repulsing of these attacks. Shells screamed into Bastogne, as the city became blanketed in thunderous bombardment. Shrapnel screamed into the windows of the Battalion CP. The cloak of silence was lifted at last and the din of battle rolled across the valley.

Elements of "A" Company at the block in Ortheuville were busy. Two contacts with the enemy — first with a small force of enemy armor and infantry resulting in the hostile loss of a Mark III and several half tracks and unknown number of infantry killed. The enemy, composed of a sizeable task force of

all arms, again attacked after artillery preparation with great vigor, forcing elements of Company A to withdraw and rejoin the Battalion at Bastogne. The Battalion Supply Officer had been instructed to send forward all possible supplies and sent forward three small convoys, the last one arriving approximately at 1900. German panzer, infantry and parachute divisions swelled around Bastogne like a tidal wave, slashing the last remaining road leading into the city, completely surrounded the "Besieged Bastards of the Bastion of Bastogne." That night when Corps called by radio telephone to ask the situation, the 101st Airborne Division G-3 replied: "Visualize the hole in the doughnut, that's us." Everyone was excited about the American hole in the doughnut-everyone except the forces encircled there. The typical feeling of the men in Bastogne upon learning that they were encircled was clearly expressed by one of the fellows who said, "The poor bastards, the've got us surrounded."

That night Lt. Col. Clifford Templeton lay in his bedroll, smoking his pipe, his steel helmet clamped on his head as a protection against falling plaster, listening to the shells whistling in and exploding. He turned to the Battalion Supply Sergeant and looked at him thoughtfully. "Sergeant Byrum," he said, "You need a haircut." Roy K. Byrum, who had been with the Battalion ever since it had been formed, grinned, and asked: "What do you intend to do, Colonel? Gig me?" The Colonel frowned. "Sergeant," he said grimly, "you are hereby restricted to the area for one week."

On the 21st of December the enemy continued to develop the situation and to envelope the defensive positions making several attacks. Gun positions and attachments were changed whenever necessary to meet hostile buildups for an attack.

If the fog got too thick, or if it grew too dark for the boys in the destroyers to see the enemy, the paratroopers of the 101st would fire tracer bullets at the sound of the enemy tanks, and the ricocheting shells would mark its location, and then the destroyers would open up.

Early in the morning of the 23rd, the fighting shifted to the west and Reconnaissance elements fighting with the 327 Glider Infantry had sharp action in Flamierge. There appeared a build up of hostile armor on the west side of the perimeter and preparations were made for the anticipated large scale attack. By this time the infantry and Tank Destroyer small unit commanders on the ground were generally in full agreement on action in event of enemy attack.

The conflict at Bastogne was growing rougher day by day. Surrounded by two SS Panzer divisions, under constant artillery fire and attack by some six other crack German divisions, the tank destroyers succeeded in stopping every armored thrust by the determined enemy.

The men of the 101st and the men of the 705 worked together in unexcelled cooporation. The infantry would let the tanks through their lines, successfully stopping the enemy foot troops that followed the armor, and — then the destroyer would open up. Tank after tank went down under the fire of the destroyers. Destroyer guns were in almost all instances grouped by platoons with one section in or within a very few yards of the infantry MLR and the second section perhaps 100 to 200 yards distant to the rear.

By this time the enemy was hurling everything at the besieged garrison. Screaming meemies, constant artillery shelling, mortar, infantry attacks and tank attacks, panzerfaust — and through it all the destroyers lashed back with their 76 mm guns, and .50 calibers swept the bloody plains with tongues of fire.

German artillery concentrated on trying to rid Bastogne of the "Besieged Bastards," but to no avail. A new technique was employed the following day. Under cover of a white flag, two German officers entered Allied lines and offered a "Surrender or be annihilated in two hours," ultimatum. General McAuliffe, Commanding General of the 101st AB Division and all troops encircled in Bastogne, wasted neither time nor words. He sent

back the famous answer with which every soldier was in accord: "Nuts!"

The German officer receiving the reply was confused — "I do not understand Nuts." The Colonel who handed him the General's reply, quickly explained . . . "It means to go to Hell!"

Refusal to surrender meant the enemy might carry out its threat to throw in every available artillery piece. As the General said: "They can't have much more than they have already thrown at us. Let it come."

It came. But the Besieged Bastards stuck. Bastogne held firm.

Nazis threw both book and bookcase at Bastogne: armor, infantry, parachutists, Luftwaffe. Night after night bombers searched out friendly troops. Hospitals and command posts were hit. Low flying dive bombers and heavy artillery were unpleasant and damaging but not unbearable. The besieged Bastards stayed on.

Food, ammunition, and supplies became scarce. The forces sought clear skies — flying weather not only for re-supply but for planes to keep the Luftwaffe down.

Evacuation of the wounded became a pressing problem, but they had to wait, for there was no way out of the doughnut. Reports circled daily that the 4th Armored Division was on its way to open a road.

It was cold — freezing cold. Blankets were draped about the wounded. Somewhere, somehow, medicine was found to ease their pain. Hospitals were jammed, floors covered with casualties. During the first confused hours the Medical Company and attached surgical teams were captured west of Bastogne by German armor. Loss of these units was a severe blow to the garrison and the seperate medical officers and personnel of the various Regiments of the 101st Airborne and the 705th TD were carrying the full load of caring for the sick and wounded, working day and night, until utter exhaustion finally overcame them and they would lie down on the overcrowded floor for a few

winks to arise shortly thereafter to care for another critically wounded soldier just brought in from the lines.

Then the weather began to clear. Resupply was coming by air. Never before was it so appreciated as on Saturday, December 23rd, when the first group of C47s, fuselages jam-packed with supplies dipped low and roared in.

Supply bundles floating to the ground were the prettiest sight the Besieged Bastards had seen in many days. As planes droned overhead, shouts and cheers went up from the men below. Trucks, jeeps, trailers and men crowded the fields. Every man knew that the arrival of these first planes had broken the German back.

Christmas Eve, General McAuliffe sent the following message to the fighting men of Besieged Bastogne:

"What's Merry about all this, you ask! We're fighting — It's cold — we aren't home. All true but what has the proud Eagle Division accomplished with its worty comrades of the 10th Armored Division, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion and all the rest? Just this: We have stopped cold every-thing that has been thrown at us from the North, East, South and West. We have identifications from four German Panzer Divisions, two German Infantry Divisions and one German Parachute Division. These units, spearheading the last desperate German lunge, were headed straight west for key points when the Eagle Division was hurriedly ordered to stem the advance. Now effectively this was done will be written in history: not alone in our Division's glorious history but in World history. The Germans actually did surround us, their radios blared our doom. Their Commander demanded our surrender in the following impudent arrogance!

December 22nd 1944

"To the U.S.A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne.

The fortune of war is changing. This time the U.S.A. forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German

armored units. More German armored units have crossed the river Ourthe near Ortheuville, have taken Marche and reached St. Hubert by passing through Hompres—Sibret—Tillet. Libramont is in German hands.
There is only one possibility to save the encircled U.S.A. Troops from total annihilation; that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.
If this proposal should be rejected one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A. A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S.A. Troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hour's term.
All the serious civilian losses caused by this Artillery fire would not correspond with the well known American humanity.

The German Commander."

The German Commander received the following reply:

22 December 1944.

"To the German Commander:

NUTS!

The American Commander."

Allied Troops are counterattacking in force. We continue to hold Bastogne. By holding Bastogne we assure the success of the Allied Armies. We know that our Division Commander, General Taylor, will say: "Well Done!"
We are giving our country and our loved ones at home a worthy Christmas present and being privileged to take part in this gallant feat of arms are truly making for ourselves a Merry Christmas.

/s/ McAULIFFE
/s/ McAULIFFE

Throughout the early morning hours of the 25th of December, Christmas day, there were marked indications of an enemy armored bouild up in the northwest and western sections of the

perimeter. About 0400 in the morning, after some preparation of mortar fire the enemy attacked in great forces, their armor proceeding Infantry by about 200 yards. In some instances the destroyers permitted the tanks to actually pass them, and then placed effective fire on their flanks and rear. The .50 Calibers on the destroyers effectively assisted the friendly infantry. The high degree of coordination between the infantry and tank destroyer commanders was largely responsible for the succes enjoyed on this day.

The 26th of December was a repetition of the previous day although enemy attacks were not nearly as intense as those of the 25th. They again employed the same tactics and were handled in precisely the same manner. On this day, the enemy armor was not permitted to make any deep penetration into the perimeter.

On the 28th Co. A which had covered the march of the Battalion and had later been prevented by heavy enemy strength surrounding Bastogne from marching into Bastogne, rejoined the Battalion along route cleared by the 4th Armored Division, whose heroic drive reopened the supply lines to the Besieged Garrison.

At Ceremonies in Bastogne's bomb and artillery battered town square General Troy H. Middleton, CG VIII Corps, signed the following memorandum, receipt presented to him by the 101st Airborne Division.

MEMORANDUM RECEIPT
VIII CORPS

Date 18 Jan. 45

Received from the 101st Airborne Division the town of Bastogne, Luxembourg Province, Belgium. Condition: Used but serviceable. Kraut disinfected.

Signed Troy H. Middleton
TROY H. MIDDLETON
Major General USA
Commanding

From the period 19 to 26 December, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion destroyed a total of 39 tanks, 3 halftracks, 3 trucks, 1 armored car, 3 AT guns, 4 vehicles, type unknown, and an unknown number of enemy infantry. The Battalion was on the front lines around Bastogne until the 17th and 18th of January when the companies were relieved of attachment to the 101st Airborne and moved to Houmont and Brule, Belgium. Remainder of the month, the Battalion non-operational, VIII Corps reserve.

In a letter of commendation, dated 3 January 1945, Major General Maxwell D. Taylor of the 101st Airborne Division expressed gratification at the support rendered by the battalion in the defense of Bastogne. The battalion was awarded the presidential unit citation for their valient defense of Bastogne, Belgium.

☆ ☆ RHINELAND ☆ ☆

The month of February 1945 was spent at Hoffelt, Luxembourg. On the 1st day of March 1945, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion returned to combat. The Battalion was attached to the 11th Armored Division.

On March 1st, the Battalion moved to vicinity Sellerich, and it was here, three kilometers from the front lines, following a quiet afternoon, that one shell screamed down out of the murky skies, striking the Battalion CP and instantly killing the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Clifford Templeton.

On March 2nd Major John Dibble, Jr., West Pointer and ETO veteran assumed command of the Battalion. Under his competant and efficient leadership, during the next few months, the 705 drove across Germany to final victory.

The following narrative, "Lightning on the Autobahn", was written by T/4 Glen E. Sire, Hq. Co., 705th T. D. Bn.

THICK drizzle had been falling all night. It had deepened the somber hue of the housefronts so that the houses themselves seemed weary with war and had turned the pavement into a glistening line of mirrored light twisting tenuously through the hills, spiraling around mountains, losing itself in dark valleys. This roadway was Adolph Hitler's renouned super highway, the Autobahn-road of Blitzkrieg, Panzer and Aryan destiny. A proud road. But now it was a dismal path beneath the low hanging clouds on this morning March 6, 1945, for it was the road back for countless legions of the once mighty Wehrmacht. After five dreary years of war the Furher's road lead, not outward to lebensraum, but inward and to a total consumption of the Fatherland.

On this road today Blitzkrieg was coming home to Germany with the terrible lightning thrust of Combat Command "B" of the American Eleventh Armored Division, one of the many spearheads punching to the Rhine. The names of the men who spearheaded this spectular dash from the Kyll to the Rhine river will not be recorded in history, but what they did and how terribly fast they did it will never be forgotten by the Germans who defended the Autobahn for those two days.

They were the common every-day run of American men who had never thought of themselves as ever being sensational, but they rolled their tanks and scout cars toward the Rhine with the skill of men who had driven Fords and Chryslers over similar American speedways since they had been boys of sixteen. Theirs was a war without boundaries, without lines, without siege — a vicious slashing jab into the vitals of the very organized system of German defenses. And so suddenly and so swiftly did they strike that not even they themselves realized the extent of the chaos they wrought. Neither had they known nor taken time to flush what had lain on their flanks as they moved through town after town. Only to keep moving, never to halt. Speed was the thing.

"More speed!" was the cry of the Commander of Combat Command "B", Colonel Yale, a cry that resounded on the radios of the lead vehicles to whom was assigned one of the most dangerous and delicate tasks of the command. In these lead vehicles were the men of Reconnaissance Company of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, men who had the know-all of armored thrusts through their bitter stand at Bastogne, men who were out to make a personal "bulge" of their own. Their job was precarious, for to travel at the required rate of advance they had to expose themselves inadvertently to the enemy by rushing headlong into his defenses at speeds ranging between thirty and forty miles an hour. It was delicate because they had to locate quickly and efficiently his anti-tank and machine gun positions and point them out to their big brothers, the tanks of the 22nd Tank Battalion which moved up to the head of the column and with amazing accuracy eliminated the lethal nests. To fail in this phase of the spearheading could mean disaster for the entire column. In short the Reconnaissance was to the column what a fine edge is to a razor, and the tanks were the tremendous punch that drove the thing home, while the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion gave a stability that only infantry can provide, though it mopped up but briefly and moved on with the rest of the column. Each of these elements bore an equal burden, but the dynamic action of the column was at the tip with lightning death and the quick undaunted charges of Recon and their covering tanks into the very muzzles of German cannons.

So on this grey morning in the Reich, the tires of Whitey Nelson's point peep, the first vehicle in the column, whirred an angry little chant on the wet pavement of the Autobahn, going into the unknow — going to the Rhine. Nelson is young and as hard as cold steel. That is the kind of man the C. O. of Recon, Captain Bergen, wanted up there. Nineteen years old, a shock of tousled white hair, freckles spattered on an angry little boy's face grown suddenly old; this was the American soldier whom

the so-sure Germans had thought was just another crazy Yank on the wrong road. Then they had died quickly on the other end of the Tommy gun which he held expertly at stomach level, the cold blue of his eyes mirroring the work of his bullets. Perhaps one might think of Nelson as cruel, but he remembered with an awful clarity the murder of his comrades at Bastogne, and compassion was left at home now with the other gentle things of democratic youth.

Unexpectedly, like a thunderbolt, Recon came rapidly down upon an entire column of towed guns, motor lorries and horse-drawn mess—the complete paraphernalia of German aggression going in reverse, fleeing to the Rhine. The speed left the Germans confounded. To them, the master planners, such phenomena were neither possible nor credible. They glanced back, a line of white faces, continued moving; then again they looked as one man, but too late, for already a big handsome kid from Recon, Samuel Fuhrman, worked grimly behind the blue gunpowder smoke of his fifty caliber machine gun, and in the sights of his gun he saw men fall in halves before the sharp blade of his bullets. The deep throated pump-chug of his gun was lost quickly in the tumult of Recon's full firepower. Then the tanks came up, fired into the mass of flesh, and horses were split open, vehicles crumpled like paper, men disintegrated. Soon the sides of the road were piled with the German dead. The grass was wet red and clotted beside them. Far down off the edge of the road there was a semblance of organization. A German gun crew was loading a one hundred fifty milimeter to fire point blank at the charging Americans, but somehow the sharp eyes of an old Recon man spotted it. When June Shultz's taunt fingers let up on the butterfly trigger of the fifty caliber there was still a crew of Germans behind that big gun, very quiet, very inactive, large holes punctuating the last frantic episode of their Nazi careers. The tanks ground on over men, horses and vehicles, firing point blank at the enemy. Then resistance stopped suddenly, and the horrified Germans came streaming out of the

woods shouting "Kameradl" while on the roadsides ashen-faced others sighed and died. Fifteen minutes and the livid slaughter of war lay stark upon the green of this mountainside. Quiet returned, but the landscape still bore the vicious veneer of man's battling. It was unbelievable that so many lives could have been destroyed in so little time. Perhaps that is why a German soldier stood sobbing on the roadside. Perhaps that is why even the hardened soldiers of Combat Command "B" looked in awed silence at the havoc they had wrought in life and steel, feeling a vague fear of the power they had never realized until this day.

The commander of Combat Command "B" glanced nervously at his watch. 'Fifteen minutes for this. That was too much. Too damned long to stay in one spot!' The order came over the radio again, "Move out, move out, let's have some more speed! We'll never get by this way!"

Captain Bergen, driving to the head of the column to his point peep, lead Recon past the ruins of the German equipment and once into the clear, accelerated to forty miles per hour. The column again gained momentum, snaked around the hills, dipped into ravines, passed minor objectives and fired machine gun bursts into enemy machine gun nests without stopping. Each vehicle in its turn fired a burst as it passed such positions until the Germans, if they were not already dead, dispaired at such a stream of American might and came dull-faced from their meager lines of resistance. The hunters had tasted blood. Battle flush was high in their cheeks. Prey lay ahead, and suddenly they were before it — a German roadblock and the tail of another German column disappearing behind it into the town of Hannebach. Sergeant Francis Walsh of Recon sighted with ice-water nerves on the tail of the column, fired with veteran accuracy and the enemy fled from their artillery pieces, subsequently losing their only hope for strong resistance. Going into action again, the tanks of the 22nd Tank Battalion moved into position to fire into the center of the town, whose narrow European alley-

ways were congested with panic-stricken Germans. One enemy crew manned its gun, but fired wildly in desperation until Staff Sergeant Hill, with the uncanny sense of a pointer, turned his thirty caliber machine gun on them; and his firey tracers hosed a pointing finger of death for the "big boys" who came rumbling up at the request of Captain Bergen. The raucous booming of the tankers' cannons moved thunderously through the village. It was as if a madness had come into Hannebach, Germany, this day. The clank of inexorable steel, the angry roar of gunning tank engines, the great talk-talk of the fifty caliber machine guns, the stinging sputter of the thirty calibers all merged into one cataclysmic sound of the irresistible tide of steel and lead and American daring from which the terrified men in grey-green fled like frightened animals. Crouched and shaking, they hid, while like a river of death, the column flowed through their bastion for an hour.

The first village on the Autobahn had been taken in a matter of minutes. At the head of the column the Reconnaissance Company of the 705th raced on in response to the goading cries of Colonel Yale. "Keep it moving fast. I want speed! This column isn't worth a damn if you don't give me speed!"

And coming out of the village in droves, white faced, wide eyed, hands on the back of their heads, the surrendering Germans stumbled dazedly down the road to be taken prisoner and escape this holocaust which had struck their quiet village. As the rumble of tank treads faded into the distant hills, as the last American halftrack on the end of the column cleared the town, it was peaceful again with only a few alterations: some scattered corpses lay relaxed on the clean cobblestones of the village, smoke puffed gently from the shell torn corners of three quaint German houses, and out further on the road on the other side of the town lay a German with the top of his head torn off by fifty caliber. His coat was thrown open, and his silver belt buckle glistened in the wan morning light, a meaningless specter, for

on the buckle was inscribed the old German phrase. "God is with us".

The column advanced all day through light resistance, moving through villages draped with improvised white flags of table-cloths and bedsheets. Somehow the civilians had learned of the American's coming and wanted no part of the war. Cautiously they crept from their cellars to watch sadly the American Panzers come into their land. The faces of the Americans they saw bore little sympathy and the guns they manned could have been for all Germans had there not been that thin line of demarcation between civilized soldiers and the barbarians of old. Women stood with red-rimmed eyes, the men stared blankly, hopelessly — everything was lost now. A woman's sobs echoed after the last halftrack, and daylight receded into the evening mists as if the sun it self dared not venture into so bleak a land.

With night more Germans came wandering in through the darkness in groups of threes and fours to be taken prisoner. With night came an increasing tension for the men of the Armored column, for darkness hid things, inspired imagination that behind each hillock might lie the quick little belch of a burp gun or the gaping bore of an eighty-eight, and in spearhead territory such things could more easily be realities than myths.

They didn't sleep that night but stayed hunched over their guns straining bloodshot windburned eyes into a blackness that could mean an utter annihilation. Each man to himself realized this grim fact but said nothing, only swore intermittently at the cold penetrating rain and the mud that clutched at his vehicle.

Motion, however little, was still necessary. That meant double danger for Recon men who had time for neither drink nor food in the furious rush of each tempestuous hour; they were doing a job. That was all. Captain Bergen had said to his men, "Good work, boys!" and it had meant a lot to them. It was one of those magic phrases that come from a man's heart and gives strength to those about him when everywhere there is a tiredness. Battles

have been won and lost with just words from men who see clearly and with a simplicity what must be done and have the courage to follow through. A stout hearted man and ten thousand more. The captain switched lead platoons, giving his quick thinking platoon leader of the day, Lt. Joe Gladden and the men of his platoon a chance to relax while Lt. Frank Jenkins and his men took over the precarious night work, a job that a Texan like Jenkins would handle well. Slowly the column inched in amongst the sinister shadows of another German village. Behind Recon smouldering fires of destroyed German motor lorries radiated halos into the Rhineland mists, dotted the horizon like erie beacons and silhouetted one by one the scout cars as they passed over a rise into the draw and disappeared again into the darkness. Deep into the village there was a roadblock of German artillery pieces, and the column was forced to stop there until morning. All night long the Germans surged around the vehicles in the town, bewildered and soon taken prisoners.

Then dawn, and the bearded Americans were beginning to feel the sustained drain on their nervous energy. Eyelids were heavy with a sleep that would not be denied and remained open only with constrained effort, a continual opening of leaded eyelids. Muscles responded slowly, but in the haggard eyes of each man was poured the will of undaunted soldiers disciplined to go on despite the clutch of weary bodies. Benzedrene tablets were administered by Captain Bergen along with the medicine of his remarks as he personally addressed each man. The army had thought of the tablets, but the captain knew how to administer them.

Morning found the column moving swiftly through other objectives until it was stopped momentarily by a massive roadblock guarding the approaches to a big industrial town. It was covered by intense sniper and machine gun fire from both sides of a ravine. Big shells began to crump in from heavy caliber anti-tank guns.

"So these guys want to fight!" were the words of big bemustached Sergeant Chernak as he commenced work behind the machine gun in his M-8 scout car. Soon the fifty calibers were roaring all up and down the ravine. German sniper slugs thuded dully or armor plate, sang over head. Machine gun bursts kicked up little flurries of dust at the feet of the Americans who tore violently at the roadblock. High velocity armor-piercing shells clanged metallically off the armor of the tanks which turned turrets and fired back at their tormentors with a vengeance born of survival. Soon fires were raging all along the slopes of the ravine. Captain Bergen, always at the front snapping sharp commands, felt the rush of a big shell as it ricocheted off a tank. Fragments of steel tore the coat of Staff Sergeant Hill standing beside him. The shell itself sang over a peep driver's steering wheel, knocking the driver's hands to his sides. But little thought was given such an occurence, for while such things could be fatal, they were common in the height of battle and were accepted as such. A kid named Robert Wellington blasted two of the big Jerry cannons from the mountainside with the thirty-seven milimeter cannon in his scout car. Then the tankers of the 22nd got mad and started a private war of their own as Recon pushed on, ignoring what was left, leaving it for the tanks husky with armor who fought on like a herd of angry, trumpeting elephants.

So even while a battle raged in one part of the column, its sharp point jabbed on into the vitals of the startled beast called Wehrmacht. The Reconnaissance Company of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion reached Ndr. Lutzingen, the focal point of the spearhead, while the roar of the tanks still resounded in the distance, and captured the town and a German general and his staff who thought by the distant sounds of battle that the Americans were still far away.

Then over the radios came an order by the familiar voice of the Colonel. It had a distinctly American flavor of swashbuckle —

"Now, boys, try not to shoot up too much of this burg. We're sleeping here tonight."

These, then, are the men who make spearheads click, giving substance to the generals' strategy; and this is how they did it. They drank German beer that night, but cracked American jokes and in their exhaustion spoke of American women whom they loved, and became vaguely conscious of American security as they slept in the shell-pocked homes of a crumbling nation following fast in the footsteps of ancient Carthage.

Three kilometers outside Ndr. Lutzingen rolled the Rhine, Adolph Hitler could look well to his Autobahn above which hung the grey thunderheads of a coming doom, and on which advanced the sequel to "Mein Kampf".

★ ★ CENTRAL EUROPE ★ ★

Following the drive on the Rhine, the battalion assembled in Bell, Germany.

On the 16th the battalion was again alerted for movement and the following day moved out of Bell, swinging south and, with the 11th Armored Division, crossed the Moselle for the third time, driving through Hahn, through Dorrmoschel, and on to Guntersblum on the Rhine. Practically all the territory west of the Rhine was now cleared.

On March 29th the drive east continued, as the Battalion crossed the Rhine at the Oppenheim bridge.

From then on it was a blur of names as the 705 swept through town after town, moving rapidly east and southeast toward Austria and final victory.

Speilberg to Bad Soden, where two hospitals containing 50 American and British PWs and 300 French PWs were liberated. Ruckers, Bettinghausen, Eichenberg, Oberschonau, Themar, Juchsen, Gestungshausen.

Fire fights enthused at many points, but the outcome was always the same. The defeated Germans were killed, captured, driven back. Mainleus, and then on to Bayreuth, Vorbach, Grafenwöhr. Town after town in quick succession, as the 11th Armored became the Eastern most division in the combined allied drive. Schnaittenbach, Stamsried, Patersdorf. The Battalion was now paralleling the Czech border and racing southeast for Austria. Schonberg, Freyung, Sonnen, Wegscheid, Rohrbach. Snow covered the ground as 705 armor swept across the Austrian border. Neufelden, Ob.-Neukirchen, Kirchschlag.

And it was while the Battalion was waiting for further orders in Kirchschlag that VE day dawned, and a short time later contact was made with the Russians to the East.

The Battalion's work was almost done. The first part of June the 705 moved to Urfahr, Austria, now engaged in occupational problems and the handling of displaced persons and prisoners of war. From Urfahr the Battalion moved to Mondsee, continuing their work on the numerous occupational problems, now under Command of Lt. Col. Moorhead who assumed Command of the Battalion 5 July 1945.

The history of the Battalion ended in July 1945, when, due to the Army redeployment program, personnel were shipped to various other units and the battalion was inactivated.

THE BESIEGED BASTARDS OF BASTOGNE

The 705th TD Battalion, with self-propelled guns,
Quick as a Hell-Cat when seeking the Huns;
Rugged men of high spirits, but not anxious to be—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

A week before Christmas we're ordered to Bastogne,
From a nice place in Germany, not far from Cologne;
Fought our way in, and remained there to be—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Joined an Airborne Division, the 101st,
A blood-thirsty outfit, the Germans had cursed;
Tenth Armored came in, and we all were to be—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Surrounded we were, that's putting it mild,
The Jerries were coming, and shouting like wild;
Bound to annihilate us, but otherwise thought we—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Stopped dead in their tracks, just a few miles from town,
Piled up like cordwood, and still going down;
Unable to take us, though outnumbered were we—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Holding our own with supplies running low,
Fighting and shooting, was a heck of a show;
Planes dropped supplies, needed badly by all—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Medics kept busy, both day and night,
Caring for wounded, that were hurt in the fight;
Evacuation impossible, sick and wounded stayed with—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Ten long, weary days we lived through this Hell,
Of terriffic shelling, bombing, and things I can't tell;
Take it we must, for what else could we do—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Christmas with snow, but no turkey this year,
K rations instead, as that's all there were here;
Eat them and like it, ordinary soldiers were we—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Relief finally came when the 4th Armored broke through,
A day to remember, for we could now start anew;
The Germans had failed, attribute some credit to—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

Perhaps you may wonder how we acquired such a name,
Was from a German broadcast, engulfing us in shame;
Announcing us as dead, and referring to us as—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

They say it is history, yes, it may be to some,
A Gettysburg of '44, to be studied in years to come;
But I'm glad it is over, and so are they all—
The Besieged Bastards of Bastogne . . .

By: Sgt Edward S. Olsen,
Met Det, 705 TD Bn,
APO 403, US Army

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMORED DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General

September 13, 1942

Subject: Commendation.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

The battalion is herewith commended for its versatility and for its unusual performance in negotiating the McKey pass and the capture of Needles. The holding of its position on Highway 66 was the key to the defeat of the hostile forces by the Fifth Armored Division. The 705th has proved to be an invaluable member of the Victory Division team.

/S/ Jack W. Heard
/T/ JACK W. HEARD
Major General, U.S. Army.

HEADQUARTERS ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

December 1, 1942

Subject: Commendation.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

1. The outstanding record on the 1000" Machine Gun range made by your battalion has been noted with pleasure. Your officers and men are to be commended for splendid organization of instruction and careful execution.
2. This should be a source of gratification to your entire battalion.

/S/ Richard G. Tindall
/T/ RICHARD G. TINDALL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

1st Ind. HCL/t

HEADQUARTERS, EIGHTH TANK DESTROYER GROUP,
Camp Hood, Texas

December 2, 1942

To: The Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

1. The above commendation is forwarded with the distinct feeling of pride and appreciation for the successful efforts of your entire command.

/S/ Harry C. Larter, Jr.
/T/ HARRY C. LARTER, JR.
Lt. Colonel, F. A.,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

December 14, 1942

Subject: Commendation.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

1. The 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion is to be congratulated on its splendid record on the tank destroyer gun ranges. Its performance in the proficiency tests set new records for speed and accuracy at Camp Hood.

2. This is attributed to hard work and careful adherence to sound principles and to interest and enthusiasm by everyone in the battalion.

/S/ Richard G. Tindall
/T/ RICHARD G. TINDALL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, EIGHTH TANK DESTROYER GROUP,
Camp Hood, Texas

December 16, 1942

To: Commanding Officer, 705th TD Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

1. The Group Commander notes with pleasure the above commendation.

2. The record set by 705th TD Battalion on the platoon proficiency test is the culmination of superior work on all ranges and is an indication of the skill and attention to duty of the personnel of the battalion.

3. It is desired that this commendation be brought to the attention of all personnel of the battalion.

/S/ Harry C. Larter, Jr.
/T/ HARRY C. LARTER, JR.
Lt. Colonel, F. A.,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

353.01/9-GNTDO
(12-9-42)

December 9, 1942

Subject: Commendation.

Through: Commanding General, Advanced Unit Training Center.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

1. The Commanding General notes with pleasure the superior record made by the members of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion during their recent course of instruction with the calibre .30 machine gun, and commends most highly the officers and men of the battalion for this splendid achievement.

2. The results obtained, 725 men averaging a score of 114 of a possible 128, should be a source of great pride to all who participated, and will serve as a standard for other units to emulate.

/S/ A. D. Bruce
/T/ A. D. BRUCE
Major General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

353.01/-GNTDO
(12-9-42) 1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

December 14, 1942

To: Commanding Officer, 705th T DBattalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

(Thru: 8th TD Group.)

The Commanding General, Advanced Unit Training Center, is pleased to forward this commendation.

By command of Brigadier General TINDALL:

/S/ J. W. Gibbs
/T/ J. W. GIBBS
Major, F. A.,
Adjutant

2nd Ind. JPG/gmce

HEADQUARTERS EIGHT TANK DESTROYER GROUP
Camp Hood, Texas

December 15, 1942

To: Commanding Officer, 705th DT Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

1. Attention is again invited to the basic communication and 1st Ind.

2. This is further evidence of the high soldierly qualities of the men and officers of the 705th TD Bn.

3. This commendation is forwarded with pride and gratification.

For the Commanding Officer:

/S/ John P. Gustafson
/T/ JOHN P. GUSTAFSON
Major, Infantry,
Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

January 28, 1943

Subject: Commendation for excellence in Firing Demonstrations.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

This it to commend the excellent performance of the men of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion who participated in the demonstrations of 3-inch and 75-mm firing in platoon proficiency tests, both for Lt. General McNair and his party on January 21, 1943, and for the Special Observers' class on January 27, 1943. All of the officers who witnessed the demonstrations were greatly impressed with the accuracy of the firing and the rapid destruction of targets.

/S/ Richard G. Tindall
/T/ RICHARD G. TINDALL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

FHK/ftb

HEADQUARTERS, SECOND TRAINING GROUP
ADVANCED UNIT TRAINING CENTER
TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

February 25, 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation.

To: Commanding General, Advanced Unit Training Center, Camp Hood, Texas. (Thru Channels).

1. Attention is called to the 705th Battalion for establishing the best record of Preventive Motor Maintenance ever attained by an organization here at Camp Hood.

2. Upon arrival at this station four months ago their vehicles were in a run down condition as a result of desert operations. Consequently it is most commendable that they have achieved this record which could only be attained through the whole-hearted cooperation of all concerned.

/S/ Frank M. Kearney
/T/ FRANK M. KEARNEY
Major, Infantry,
Motor Officer

1st Ind. JWC/ec

HEADQUARTERS, 2ND TRAINING GROUP, AUTC, TDC,
Camp Hood, Texas

February 26, 1943

To: Commanding General, AUTC, TDC, Camp Hood, Texas. The undersigned concurs with basic communication.

/S/ John W. Casey
/T/ JOHN W. CASEY
Lt. Colonel, F. A.,
Commanding

2nd Ind.

HQ. ADVANTED UNIT TRAINING CENTER, TDC
Camp Hood, Texas

February 27, 1943

To: The Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas. (Thru: 7th TD Group).

I take great pleasure in forwarding this commendation. Such a record could not have been attained without excellent leadership on the part of the officers and a conscientious and determined effort on the part of all enlisted men.

/S/ Richard G. Tindall
/T/ RICHARD G. TINDALL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

3rd Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, 7TH TD. GROUP
Camp Hood, Texas

February 27, 1943

To: Commanding Officer, 705th TD Battalion, Camp Hood, Texas.

Allow me to add my congratulations to you and your battalion on the receipt of this commendation.

/S/ Harrison Herman
/T/ HARRISON HERMAN
Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding

HEADQUARTER TANK DESTROYER CENTER
Camp Hood, Texas

353.01/92-GNTDO
(3-2-43)

March 2,1943

Subject: Report of Training of 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

To: Commanding General, IX Corps, Fort Lewis, Washington.

1. There is enclosed copy of report of training on the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, prepared by the Advanced Unit Training Center on the completion of the training of this battalion at Camp Hood.

2. I consider this is the finest battalion that has passed through the Tank Destroyer Center to date.

/S/ A. D. Bruce
/T/ A. D. BRUCE
Major General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

330.1 GNNGC 1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS IX O PS
Fort Lewis, Washington

March 9, 1943

To: The Commanding General, 96th Infantry Division, Camp Adair, Oregon.

This unit is being attached to your command. Paragraph 2, basic letter is noted with pleasure.

For the Commanding General:

/S/ S. F. Miller
/T/ S. F. MILLER
Col., A.G.D.,
Adjutant General

353. (AG) 2nd Ind.

HEADQUARTER 96TH INF. DIV.
Camp Adair, Ore.

11 March 1943

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Camp Adair, Ore.

1. Forwarded for your information.

2. It is a great honor to be rated the best battalion that has passed through the Tank Destroyer Center. You, your officers, and your men have good reason to be proud of your accomplishments.

3. It is with pleasure that I welcome the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion to the 96th Division. I am sure that you will maintain your present high standards and correct the few weaknesses shown.

4. The contents of this Indorsement will be made known to your command at the first opportunity.

/S/ J. L. Bradley
/T/ J. L. BRADLEY
Major General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 1ST TANK DESTROYER BRIGADE
Office of the Commanding General
APO 403, U.S. Army

24 September 1944

Subject: Commendation of 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, APO 339, United States Army.

1. As you know, Task Force "A", having creditably performed its mission, has been dissolved. The troops from which it was formed, and who fought so well together are moving on to other assigned tasks. It is my desire that each officer and enlisted man of your battalion know that you take with you the highest esteem and appreciation of myself and the other members of the Task Force.

2. Your unit has faced many unusal and difficult situations during our operations and in each instance you discharged your duties in a creditable and efficient manner. When there was a tough job to do your unit always tackled it with determination, and I could depend on you to do your utmost. The efforts of your organization aided materially in the success of Task Force "A's" operations, and I wish to extend to you the highest commendation for your services.

/S/ Herbert L. Earnest
/T/ HERBERT L. EARNEST
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION
Office of the Division Commander
APO 472, U.S. Army

3 January 1945

Subject: Commendation.

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Thru: Commanding General, VIII Corps, APO 308, U.S. Army.

The Officers and Men of the 101st Airborne Division wish to express to your command their appreciation of the gallant support rendered by the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion in the recent defense of Bastogne, Belgium. The success of this defense is attributable to the shoulder to shoulder cooperation of all units involved. This Division is proud to have shared the battlefield with your command. A recommendation for a unit citation of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion is being forwarded by this Headquarters.

/S/ Maxwell D. Taylor
/T/ MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
Major General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

Ltr, Hq 101 A/B Div, subject: Commendation, 3 Jan 45.

AG 330.13 (G-1) 1st Ind
(3 Jan 45)

HEADQUARTERS VIII CORPS
APO 308, U.S. Army

11 January 1945

To: Commanding Officer, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

1. It is with great pleasure and gratification that I forward this richly deserved and hard-won commendation.

2. Your contribution to the great success of our arms at Bastogne will take its place among the epic achievements of our Army.

3. I am pleased to add my commendation to that of the Commanding General 101st Airborne Division for a difficult task well done.

/S/ Troy H. Middleton
/T/ TROY H. MIDDLETON
Major General, U.S. Army,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 403

General orders
Number 31 7 February 1945

UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and in accordance with the authority contained in War Department cable W-24608, 21 January 1945, the following units are cited:

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

705th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

These units distinguished themselves in combat against powerful and aggressive enemy forces composed of elements of 8 German divisios during the period from 18 December to 27 December 1944, by extraordinary heroism and gallantry in defense of the key communications center of Bastogne, Belgium. Essential to a large scale exploitation of his break through into Belgium and northern Luxembourg, the enemy attempted to seize Bastogne by attacking constantly and savagely with the best of his armor and infantry. Without benefit of prepared defenses, facing almost overwhelming odds and with very limited and fast-dwindling supplies, these units maintained a high combat morale and an impenetrable defense, despite extremely heavy bombing, intense artillery fire, and constant attacks from infantry and armor on all sides of their completely cut off and encircled position. This masterful and grimly determined defense denied the enemy even momentary success in an operation for which he paid dearly in men, material, and eventually morale. The outstanding courage and resurcefulness and undaunted determination of this gallant force is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service.

By command of Lieutenant General PATTON:

Brigadier General, U.S. Army,
HOBART R. GAY
Chief of Staff

R. E. Cummings
Colonel, Adjutant General's Department,
Adjutant General

☆

705 TANK DESTROYER BATTALION GIVEN HIGHEST AWARD

☆

On July 3, 1945, beneath grey skies of the Austrian village of Mondsee the men and officers of the 705 Tank Destroyer Battalion were awarded a citation from the former President of the United States, Franklin Delanoe Roosevelt, for their valiant defense of Bastogne, Belgium, which was surrounded and besieged by ten divisions of German's most elite troops.

Undergoing bitter cold, outnumbered four to one, surrounded by two SS Panzer divisions, under constant artillery fire and attack by some six other crack German divisions, the tank destroyers succeeded in stopping every armored thrust made by a brave and determined enemy while the 101st Airborne division repelled an almost continous tide of German infantry attacks. This action took place between the dates 19, December and 17, January 1945 and will go down in the annals of military history as one of the most outstanding military feats of all time wherein one division of paratroopers with a battalion of tank destroyers sustained the full weight of ten divisions of the world's best troops.

The fact that Bastogne did not fall was one of the major reasons for the failure of Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt's last winter offensive in the Ardennes.

So for these reasons Lt. General Keyes of the 2nd Corps, 3rd U. S. Army presented the Blue of the Presidential Citation, the highest award a unit can win, to the 705 Tank Destroyer Battalion and stood in review of an outfit whose job had been well done. A fifteen gun salute rocked the mountains and vales like old familiar music to the tankers.

Another factor entered into the solimnity of the occasion this day, for each man realized alone and to himself that the battalion was breaking up under the Army reorganization system, and with this thought in mind Battalion Operations Officer, Captain Bergen, asked the men to make this a special parade for the officers and men who died and in dying gave the best of themselves to make their Battalion what it was.

So neither rain nor mud nor drenched uniforms took the snap from their marching that day, and had old Cliff been there to see his boys march he would have been proud, mighty proud, for he was then and now and forever Lt. Colonel Clifford Templeton, Commander of the 705 Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Also present at the ceremony were Major General Taylor of the 101st Airborne Division, and Major General Dager of the 11th Armored Division.

S D V
Salzburger Druckerei und Verlag