



In the beginning

How to stop enemy armor?

That was the important question back in 1940 and 1941 when the German War Machine was running over the face of the map.

There were two schools of thought at the time. The General Patton School thought that the only possible way to stop a tank was with another tank. The other school favored heavy guns much like the Field Artillery but designed primarily to shoot a high muzzle velocity, low trajectory projectile.

But neither seemed to be the right answer and finally it was decided to combine the best features of the two. Why couldn't specially designed guns be mounted on specially designed tanks?

They could — and from this idea was born the modern Tank Destroyer.

It was amid this confusion and indecision concerning Tank Destroyers that this battalion was activated on 15 December 1941 at Camp Blanding, Florida, under the Command of Lt. Col. W. L. Mattox. And the history of this battalion is the story of the development and training of all Tank Destroyers.

A Tank Destroyer Battalion is affectionately known to the Army as a "bastard outfit". But not because its paternity is unknown. In the case of this unit, commissioned and enlisted personnel of "G" and "H" batteries of the 179th and 172nd Field Artillery Regiments formed its cadre, which prior to the activation as the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was known as the 74th Provisional Anti-Tank Battalion. As such, the unit participated in the maneuver of 1941.

Along came that historic Sunday — 7 December 1941. Now the question of how to stop enemy armor was no longer an academic one. America had definitely committed herself and consequently all provisional plans had to be junked and replaced by plans more definite in shape and design. No longer was there need for provisional anti-tank battalions so the 74th was scrapped. The result of the shuffle was the birth of this unit, the 774th, one of the very first Tank Destroyer Battalions in the Army to be activated.

Upon activation the battalion was assigned as GHQ reserve and attached to the 74th Field Artillery Brigade for training and administration. Personnel commenced pouring in from civilian ranks as the Selective Service slowly ground into high gear. Among the thousands who recieved their "greetings" at this time, 108 subsequently joined this battalion. The period from 15 December 1941 to 27 May 1942 was spent in showing these men that a "dress right, dress" did not mean putting on a clean uniform.

Camp Blanding was a beautiful spot. There was swimming in the lake, plenty of beer to drink not to mention "Boom Town" just outside the gate. Except for the fact that the bugler woke you up in the morning, you wouldn't know that you were in the Army.

Departing from Camp Blanding on the 27th of May 1942, the battalion moved by rail and motor to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Here it was relieved from existing assignment and attachment and was assigned to the First Army Corps where the first of the many long months of training was to start. At this time the battalion received the 75 mm gun mounted on a M 3 half track; the first of many types of destroyers to follow.

Lt. Col. Mattox was relieved of his command of the battalion on 21 June 1942 and assigned as G-3 to the new Tank Destroyer Center which was just being completed at Camp Hood, Texas. A little more than a fort-

night later, on 8 July 1942, Lt. Col. Conrad B. Sturges joined and assumed command and took the battalion to its first Tennessee maneuvers. During these maneuvers the battalion was attached to, and fought with, the Fourth Armored Division.

When Col. Mattox left the outfit, he said in effect that he'd be seeing us very soon. And correct he was for immediately after the maneuvers, the battalion entrained for Camp Hood, Texas, the land where men are men because if they weren't they certainly couldn't survive the hot, dry, dust-laden air of the summers and the biting cold of the winters.

There at Camp Hood over 400 rookies were recieved—mainly boys from the New York City metropolitan area who considered the army a lark. But that was soon knocked out of them. Sitting about the open-air PX in tent city the very first few nights after they had arrived, they were told tale after tale of the high casualty rates in the TDs; that they were in a suicide outfit; that they would ship overseas as soon as basic was completed. It was ironic though, that even the "old timers" started believing the stories because at the time the TDs weren't doing too well in Africa.

So with a hugh collective gulp training began in earnest — Advanced Unit Training Center saw to that. As soon as the fundamentals of army routine had been mastered by the recruits, the battalion began undergoing platoon Combat Efficiency Tests and Tank Destroyer Battalion Tactical Proficiency Tests with ratings as low as 74.8 % and as high as 89.4 %. Then there were night problems, firing tests, forced marches and the Tank Hunting Course.

The Tank Hunting Course — one week of what was then considered absolute hell: the march out to the area under full pack; the bivouac, where you cursed the cold nights and marvelled at the beauty cast by a single fire silhouetted against a star covered night; the infiltration course, where you had to crawl on your belly over 50 yards of explosive-ladden, dusty ground and under the fire of three machine guns; "puke hill"; the obstacle course where they threw quarter pound sticks of TNT at you to make you move faster through the barbed wire entanglements; the demolitions class; the attack of a fortified village; and the forced five mile "hike" back to camp.

We had taken all that AUTC could throw at us satisfactorily. We had been properly "house-broken" and were now ready to be let out. Con-

sequently, the battalion left Camp Hood on 11 March 1943 and went to Fort Benning, Georgia, where it was relieved from assignment to Tank Destroyer Center and attached to the 10th Armored Division.

By this time, the science of destroying enemy tanks had reached the point of the then new M-10, a 3 inch rifle mounted on an open turreted, Sherman chassis. It was supposed to be murder to enemy armor and we were shortly given the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with them. Numerous field problems followed, usually with and against the 738th Tank Battalion.

On 26 May 1943 the battalion was alerted for overseas shipment — a status that was to become quite familiar to us in the months to follow — and was relieved of assignment to the 10th Armored. June 15th found the battalion assigned to the Second Army and attached to the 4th Detachment, Special Troops.

Meanwhile intensive training went on and on. During the summer, "Sand Hill" is normally one step removed from a furnace. And in that sweltering heat, forced march after forced march was made in preparation for the AGF required 25 mile hike which, when made, saw many of the battalion fall from heat exhaustion. In addition, the major portion of familiarization and qualification firing with all the weapons of the battalion was completed.

This went on until the end of August when the battalion entrained for Camp Forrest, Tennessee, for participation in the Second Army fall maneuvers. It was decided to put into practice all that had been learned. For maneuver purposes, the battalion was detached from the 8th Tank Destroyer Group, its then current boss, and assigned to the 13th Tank Destroyer Group. That the lessons had been more than mastered was subsequently demonstrated when, during the course of the maneuver, the battalion established a yet to be broken record of destroying and eliminating 102 tanks and 56 other vehicles. It is only fair to mention, however, that in doing so, practically the entire battalion ended up in the dead vehicle motor pool, the result of accurate "blue" counter-battery.

With the exception of perhaps one "Charlie" McCarthy, the maneuver stamped the seal of "well-trained" on every man. Here was learned, the hard way, of what it was like over there. The mud was the same, the ground as hard to sleep on, the rain as wet, and the cold, as

biting, and week-end passes to Nashville as exciting and stimulating as a Paris or Liege pass.

After completion of the maneuvers, the battalion departed for Camp Gordon, Georgia, and right smack back into the "salute the sky" 10th Armored Division. The major portion of the training was completed and we started marking time. But the well know fly in the soup entered the scene: the battalion had its M-10s taken away and was issued the 3 inch towed gun in its place. So, training had to start all over again. "Cannoneers Hop" was the familiar sight of those days and many were the lame backs after a session of switching the heavy trails.

Yet everything ran smoothly. Furlough fever was in the air and besides Augusta, Georgia, not to mention Atlanta, were nice places to spend those long week-ends.

About the middle of February 1944 the rumor mill started to grind at high speed. This was it! The battalion, never having been taken off the alert list, had finally received its march orders. But like most rumors, this one was laughed off. Nevertheless, it persisted, and as more and more activity was noticed at headquarters, the men gradually assumed it to be a fact. Now the only question was: when?

The answer was soon forthcoming. On 17 March 1944, a detachment of men and officers left for places unknown and it was officially announced that the battalion was to prepare to ship out. There were still some die hards who "knew" that we were only going to move to another station but they too fell in line when it was learned that the men who had already left, were the advance billeting party for some overseas address. The married men were told to send their wives home. Those not married were told to do the same. Insurance and allotment records were straightened out. Shots were given by the medics. Last good byes were said.

The battalion was restricted to its area shortly afterward, and on 10 April 1944 entrained for some unknown Port of Embarkation. Speculation as to where the battalion would embark from kept everyone occupied during the train ride. The New Yorkers would settle for nothing other than New York, while the boys from New England kept their fingers crossed that it would be Boston.

The New Yorkers won all bets, for a day later the puffing train pulled into Camp Shanks, New York and processing started. Equipment had

to be thoroughly checked, physicals had to be taken, personal belongings had to be "show downed", orientation classes attended, gas chambers visited and you had to learn how to climb down a net in case your ship was sunk while crossing the ocean. About the only thing neglected, was advice on how to combat sea sickness.

Naturally, since the battalion was at New York, everyone managed to get into the big town as often as possible and do and see as much as was possible on the twelve hour passes issued. Those lucky enough to live in the City said their goodbyes to their folks and those who lived elsewhere, their goodbyes to their money as the days we stayed at Shanks gradually lengthened into weeks. What was wrong now? After all the training we had gone through, after all the fuss and bother were we not now to stop playing around and get into the real thing? No one knew. The normal length of stay at a POE is from three to five days and here it was weeks that we were there. The answer was unknown.

It was with mixed emotions that we left Camp Shanks on the 6th of May for Fort Dix, New Jersey, for what we were then told was to be an extended stay. Some of us were glad of the delay particularly those who lived in New York but others began chaffing at the halter. To ease the nervous strain 50 % of the personnel were once again granted furloughs.

The merry-go-round soon broke down and on the 30th of May the battalion left Fort Dix for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, another camp servicing the Port of New York. This time everyone knew that the time had come and settled down to the business at hand. The same processing procedure was gone through again and two days later on the 1st of June the battalion left Camp Kilmer and proceeded directly to the boat. That particular night is one very few of us will soon forget. It was a muggy night which would normally make one very uncomfortable but that night carrying on your back what would usually be a good load for a GMC made you feel only that much worse. It was a dishevelled lot, then, which finally reached the dock but at that stage one cared little for "spit and polish". It was with unintentional sighs of relief that everyone settled down in his appointed spot on the boat to sleep a sleep broken with dreams of what lay ahead.

It was only a lucky few who were awake the next morning and who were able to wave to Miss Liberty as the "Nieuw Amsterdam" slipped slowly down the bay and into the ocean. The great adventure had begun. The battalion was finally on its way overseas.


By the time the Amsterdam had logged off one day on the ocean even the most enthusiastic started grumbling. The sea was rough and the stomachs weak; the food was there but try to eat it; you had a place to sleep but try to reach it. Relaxation, when possible, was the order of the day. Card games and Craps flourished and thousands of dollars were wagered and won or lost at the turn of a card or the throw of the dice.

The trip was progressing as smoothly as a rough ocean would allow when suddenly over the loud speaker one foggy morning came those memorable words: "Enemy Attack! Enemy Attack!" The deck guns started booming and the ack-ack hammering and your knees knocking as everyone tried to remember what to do in case of submarine attack. Some ran for the deck with full T/E equipment, others just ran; but soon after the momentary confusion and panic everyone reached his appointed station on the life-boat deck and order was attained. It was only then that it was learned that, what everyone could have sworn was an honest to goodness submarine attack, was only a boat drill.

The morning of 6 June 1944 came and went as had the rest of them. The routine of living on the boat went on as usual. About noon that day over the loud speaker came the electrifying news that the invasion of Fortress Europe had begun — Allied troops had swarmed ashore on the Normandy beaches. It was an historic moment and from then on routine was forgotten in the excitement of speculation as to what would be the disposition of the battalion. We were to land directly on the beaches. We were not. We were to invade southern France. We were not. The simple fact was that we were to proceed as originally planned. We were to land somewhere in England.

The "Nieuw Amsterdam" steamed into the Firth of Clyde at Gourock, Scotland, on the 12th of June and the battalion prepared to disembark. Lt. Col. Sturges was the first to set foot on foreign soil and the first enlisted man was Sgt Paul T. Thompson of Company "A".

Met at the dock by English Red Cross girls, we soon had a taste of what passed for coffee in England, and the equivalent of "hiya kid". But whatever the differences it was still good to be on a surface which didn't rock and roll. As soon as practicable the battalion loaded on to trains and proceeded to central England, Arbury Park in the vicinity of Nuneaton, where billets were waiting.



Pages could probably be written of the month we stayed at Nuneaton but is it not the purpose of this book to delve into the depths of British-American relationships. What happened there is a personal story and not the history of the battalion. We did, however, busy ourselves preparing and servicing all the equipment and readying ourselves for the next and most important sea journey the battalion was to make — the one across the English Channel.



Under four stars

*The combat diary of the battalion
from 4 August 1944 to V-E Day*

The big show

To better understand the role played by this battalion during its long, bitter months of combat in this war which was waged on so vast a scale and with out precedence in manner, it is necessary to first better understand the background of the entire struggle. Consequently, we have attempted on the next few pages to present as concisely as possible the overall picture of the war in Europe.

As a result of Allied air superiority and the paralyzing blows it had inflicted on German fortifications, communications and supply points along the invasion coast, the Allies were able, in the early morning of 6 June 1944, to successfully establish a beachhead on the Normandy peninsula which ultimately, with the cooperation of the Red Army in the East, led to the total destruction of the Reich.

The battle plan was simple. The actual landings were preceded by an airborne spearhead which successfully prevented the Germans from bringing up reinforcements to repel the landings. Then beachheads were seized which were within reach of air support and shipping range from England. Next the original separate landings were joined and deepened into one solid front which was followed by a drive across the peninsula that completely sealed off the great supply port of Cherbourg.

At the time of the landings, the enemy had four armies in France. The Seventh was in Normandy; the Nineteenth south of the Loire River; the First east of Paris and in position to aid the Seventh as was the Fifteenth army north of the Seine.

The brunt of the fighting fell to the US First Army while to the British and Canadians fell the job of clearing out Caen, the hinge of the whole enemy line blocking the American advance. This was done and with the drive on St Lo by the First successful, a definite breakthrough in the German lines had been achieved.

From here the First Army was by-passed by the new Third Army commanded by General Patton which by 8 August 1944, the day this Battalion first stepped ashore on Utah Beach, had succeeded in drawing a huge half-circle around the German forces to the north.

With the Third outflanking them from the south and the British and Canadians pushing down from the north, the Germans decided to hold at any cost. This took shape in the form of numerous armor supported infantry attacks at Falaise designed to split the Third and First Armies. But the lines held, and before the Germans could regroup, American, British and Canadian troops counter-attacked and pocketed the greater part of the German Seventh Army by cutting off all escape routes. Total German casualties at this point alone were estimated to be over 400,000 men.

At the same time another wing of the Third Army, the XXth Corps, to which we were attached, swung east to take Chartres, Orleans and Drieux and to establish a bridgehead over the Seine River which, by 23 August 1944, was crossed by the bulk of the US forces. By the end of the month they had crossed the Marne, and the Aisne and had reached Soissons and Rheims.

This was the beginning of the rat-race of France with the Germans selling space for time. The Germans had been so completely mauled and beaten in the initial phases of the battle that they passed up positions they normally would have used for defense so their retreating troops could get into chosen positions in the Siegfried Line. Between 31 August and 3 September the Allies pushed from Rheims to the Metz area and during the month of August the XX Corps made one of the fastest sustained marches in history, traveling over 600 miles across France.

The Battle for France was over. All that remained was to straighten out the lines, consolidate our positions and build up a backwash of supplies. Luxemburg was liberated on 10 September 1944; the Third and the Seventh Army which had come up from the South of France linked up on the twelfth; and the fifth of November saw all the Germans driven from Belgium. The Canadians and the British were on the left flank driving the German into Holland; the US Ninth took up positions between the British and the First; and the Third and Seventh together with the French First completed the line-up southward.

During this time, the First and the Ninth Armies started pushing on the Roer River; the British attempted to turn the flank of the German defenses in Holland; Metz, the mighty fortress of Central Europe, fell by direct assault for the first time in over 1000 years to the Third Army which started to clean up the Moselle; and the US Seventh and French First broke through to seize Strasbourg.

These attacks were putting a serious strain on Germany's manpower. In the face of this situation, they decided to stage one last desperate counter-attack which they did on the sixteenth of December at the weakest part of the Allied line: south of Liege and north and east of Bastogne. What developed was the Battle of the Ardennes which saw the Germans penetrate almost to the French Border before General Eisenhower could regroup his forces sufficiently enough to stop the drive. Two weeks after the offensive opened the Germans were forced to withdraw into their Siegfried line positions. Only by the fact of exceptionally bad December weather did they escape another Falaise pocket disaster.

By mid-January all the lost territory had been regained and Allied Units were again punching all along the line. But the German counter-attack had been abortive for them for they had committed all their remaining strategic reserves. The time had come for the Allies to destroy every German west of the Rhine. And once again the plan of attack was simple. Allied forces in the North were to break through to the Rhine, exposing the enemy's flank. Other Allied Armies were then to turn south against the exposed flank and press the Germans to the river line. With the Canadians and the British attacking on the north, the Germans threw in all their available armor to stop this threat. This left the Ninth's sector wide open and by the sixth of March they were able to reach the Rhine on their entire front except in the extreme north. Meanwhile, the First Army started its push which reached the Rhine on the eighth at Remagen. There they found the bridge that, it is said, was worth its weight in gold for it enabled them to establish a fair sized bridgehead ACROSS the Rhine.

In the meantime the second and third phase of the operation had begun. The Third began the reduction of the Eiffel front while the Seventh and the French First launched an attack on the Siegfried line in the Colmar District.

With the bridgehead over the Rhine at Remagen, the Germans expected Patton to strike there. Instead on the fourth of March he turned south, crossed the Moselle west of the Rhine and proceeded to liquidate all German opposition in the Saar-Moselle-Rhine triangle.

What followed then made history. Swiftly, like an artist brushing a canvas, Allied might flowed across the Rhine in strength. The end was in sight and SHAEF was determined to exploit it to the utmost. Under

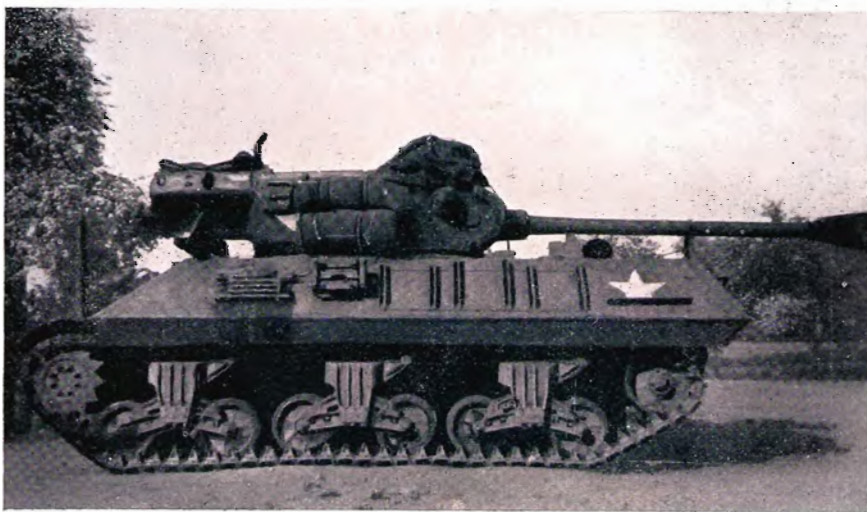
one of the most intensive artillery barrages ever sent down, the English and Canadians in the North stormed the Rhine while to the south, in direct contrast, the Third Army crossed the Rhine in complete silence counting on the elements of surprise to succeed. Both did, and soon Allied Armor was running riot all over the "Fatherland". During the course of this action the encirclement of the Ruhr was completed. It was later called the "largest double-envelopment in military history". Twenty-one German divisions were caught inside the trap and destroyed there. But more important was the fact that the Ruhr, Germany's industrial pride from whence came the majority of all her implements of warfare, was lost to the Wehrmacht.

Before the attack west of the Rhine had begun, General Eisenhower had predicted that the Allied Armies must meet the Russian Armies in the middle of Germany if they ever hoped to win. This prediction proved correct, because even after the Rhine was crossed, The Wehrmacht continued to fight desperately and fanatically.

The historic link-up came on 27 April at Torgau, on the Elbe River, when Red Army troops met a patrol of the First Army. The Americans had come 700 miles eastward from the bloody beaches of Normandy while the Reds had smashed 1400 miles westward from the ruins of Stalingrad.

On 2 May the collapse came. Approximately one million Germans in Italy and Austria surrendered unconditionally and Berlin, the symbol of Nazism to the world, fell. Two days later the Nazis quit in Holland and the Northern Reich and two more days later all the Germans facing the Third Army in the Czechoslovakian area surrendered.

The final curtain to this struggle rang down on 7 May 1945 with the unconditional surrender of all the remaining German troops facing the Allies.



Destroyer diary

The battle of Northern France

4—5 AUGUST 1944

We departed from our home station, Arbury Park, near Nuneaton, England, this morning at 0700, by motor convoy and arrived at our marshalling area in the vicinity of Dorchester, at 2300. The next day we spent in our marshalling area preparing for our trip across the channel.

6—8 AUGUST 1944

Leaving our marshalling area at 1115, we went to Nyke Regis and completed our loading aboard three L. S. T. boats by 1630. At 0600, we left England for an uneventful trip across the channel, arriving at Utah Beach at 0200. Completed our debarkation by 0900. We were



then rushed to Transit Area "B" where we got our first mission: to repulse attempted breakthrough by German Armor in the direction of Avranches. We then proceeded south under MP escort to the vicinity of Villedieu where we bivouacked for the night.

9 AUGUST 1944

Last night information was received that the armored breakthrough had been stopped. It also came down that we are attached to the XXth Corps, and further attached to the 4th Tank Destroyer Group located at Vergal. This morning we moved out to join them at their bivouac area and stayed there all day.



10—12 AUGUST 1944

Today we moved into XXth Corps Area with the Corps Artillery, near Vaiges. We furnished one "Recon" platoon as security for the Corps Artillery reconnaissance party in their reconnaissance and selection of positions. Having made no contacts, the platoon returned to us the following morning. On that afternoon, we moved up to a new location in the vicinity of Chassille, where we remained for the night. On the 12th, the Commanding Officer of the 4th TD Group received the following mission: to reconnoitre the ground between St. Suzanne and Le Mans with a view to meet any armored attack from the north or northwest. Prior to the completion of this mission, we were relieved from attachment to the 4th TD Group, and attached to the 317th Combat Team,

of the 80th Infantry Division. The mission of the 80th Division was to advance north and seize and secure high ground in the vicinity of Argentan. Immediately we moved to the assembly area of the 317th Combat Team at Evron.



13 AUGUST 1944

The 317th Combat Team moved out at 0700, on its assigned mission. The second "Recon" reconnoitred the routes east and west of the main body, advancing to their maximum limits. Company "A" was the advance guard of the march. The remainder of the battalion followed the 3rd Battalion in a main body. During the advance on Pre-en-Pail, "Recon" suffered two casualties and lost one M-8 due to enemy mines at Villeaines. Company "A" in the same vicinity took two prisoners. Near Pre-en-Pail, we bivouacked for the night. Here the first "recon" captured two, and killed one enemy snipers.

14—16 AUGUST 1944

We were relieved of attachment to the 317th Combat Team and again attached to the XXth Corps, the 4th TD Group, and ordered to proceed at once to an assembly point in the vicinity of La Ferte Bernard. Before leaving Pre-en-Pail that day, 120 German Infantrymen were reported to be approaching our bivouac area from the vicinity of Gennes. Company "C" and the second "Recon" were left as rear guards, and in the ensuing action, thirteen prisoners were taken, and one enemy killed. We bivouacked that night at Lemnay. In the morning, with the 4th TD

Group whose mission it was to furnish the 7th Armored Division with direct and indirect fire on call, we moved by leaps and bounds to the vicinity of La Loupe, where we bivouacked for that night. Next day we continued on our mission to the northwest and moved to Nogent le Roi. Enroute we were strafed by enemy aircraft, but received no casualties. During the day we took five prisoners. Late today we were attached to Combat Command "A" of the 7th Armored Division whose mission it was to encircle Chartres from the northwest. One section of the first "Recon", and one platoon from Company "B", was assigned a mission to protect the column from enemy tanks which had been reported north of Favorolles.

17—18 AUGUST 1944

We arrived at our new assembly area south of Epernon this morning. We remained here all day and were again strafed by enemy aircraft with no casualties suffered. In addition we captured 44 prisoners. Shortly after midnight tonight, an enemy patrol of eighteen men approaching our bivouac area were surprised by Company "A", resulting in one enemy killed and seventeen captured. On the following afternoon we moved



to Corps Reserve in the vicinity of Tremblay, having been relieved of attachment to Combat Command "A". While in Corps Reserve, and together with one battalion of infantry, we were designated as Corps Reserve Troops.

19—20 AUGUST 1944

At 0500, we received a mission from the 4th TD Group to reconnoitre and make plans for employment to protect a bridgehead held by the 7th Armored Division at Dreux. The next day we were relieved of mission as Corps reserve and moved with the 4th TD Group through Chartres



to Sours. During the night, another patrol attempted to pass through our bivouac area, resulting in two enemy killed and sixteen taken prisoner.

21—24 AUGUST 1944

This morning we moved south to an assembly area at Sainville where we received orders to attach Company "B" to the 43rd Cavalry Group with a mission to protect the north flank of the 7th Armored Division in its assault toward Melun. The rest of us were attached to Combat Command "B", 7th Armored Division and assigned the mission

of protecting combat command trains. We joined Combat Command "B" at Rambouillet and moved during the night, arriving at Bandoufle in the morning of the 23rd. We established a perimeter of defense around combat command trains, and remained in this position until



afternoon when we moved forward, continuing our mission to protect the trains, to Fontenay le Vicomte. We remained in this vicinity until about 2030 when we moved forward again with the trains to Auverneaux. One prisoner was taken during the night.

25—26 AUGUST 1944

At daybreak we were relieved of attachment to CCB and again attached to the 4th TD Group, in Corps reserve, moving into bivouac area in the Forest of Fontainebleau, where we stayed for the night. This morning we moved south and east to the vicinity of Diant. Here we were in support of the 10th Combat Team, 5th Infantry Division in its drive eastward along the southern bank of the Seine River. At this point Company "A" was attached to the 1139th Engineer Group to protect the building of a pontoon bridge across the Seine River south of Fontainebleau. The remainder of us moved during the day across the Yonna River to Misy and bivouacked for the night.

27—28 AUGUST 1944

We moved to the vicinity of Fontaine where we bivouacked for the night. The next day we moved to St. Loup and were joined enroute by

Company "A" who reported on their return the capture of one prisoner and no further enemy action. On arrival at St. Loup, "Recon" Platoons was given a mission to make a reconnaissance of the surrounding area, during which enemy resistance was encountered south of Gaye. As a result of this action, one half track and certain amounts of ammunition were destroyed and one of our own men was wounded. We then moved to Vertus where we bivouacked for the night.

29—31 AUGUST 1944

The two "Recon" platoons and one platoon of Company "C" were sent to reconnoitre the area south of Gaye and north of Anglure, where enemy in strength of from three to five hundred had been reported. During this mission, 26 Germans were taken prisoners and 3 American soldiers from the 5th Infantry Division were released from enemy captivity. No casualties were reported.



During the night another enemy patrol of 13 was surprised while attempting to pass through our bivouac area. Ten were taken prisoner and one killed. In the morning we moved to Prunay and then to St. Masme where we bivouacked for the night. The following day a "Recon" patrol captured an enemy officer. We were given the mission of providing anti-tank protection to the north flank of the 10th Team and moved immediately to Rouvroy.

1 SEPTEMBER 1944

We remained in the vicinity of Rouvroÿ until about 2000, when we moved, following the 10th Combat team, and bivouacked for the night at Varennes. En route, two prisoners were captured by Company "A". It was reported that an undetermined enemy element was located just east of Varennes. "Recon" was ordered to make a reconnaissance of this area and determine the strength and exact location of these elements. The mission revealed that there were no enemy elements between Varennes



and Montfalcon. They were then ordered to set up a road block east of Cheppy and southeast of Very, in order to block the northwest escape route of about 500 enemy troops reported at Avocourt. Under fire, this platoon took an enemy patrol attempting to escape via this route. Later Company "C" joined the road block and both remained in position for the night. Two prisoners were captured before dawn.

2—6 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 1315 we moved eastward, Company "C" and the first "Recon" re-joining en route, and crossed the Meuse River. We bivouacked about two miles northwest of Verdun. We remained here in this position until 6 September when we were released from attachment to the 10th Combat Team, and moved to the Corps Artillery concentration area at Moranville where we bivouacked for the night.

7—8 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 1900 we received information of an enemy armored column moving south toward Baziles, threatening the north flank of the 90th Infantry Division. The 607th TD Bn sent word to the Commanding Officer 4th TD Group that they needed additional support. So Company "C" and first "Recon" were sent to their aid. The rest of us remained in our location for the night. At 0600 Captain Rood, commanding Company "C", was given orders for the emplacement of his company. One platoon was placed at Mainville, one platoon at Norroy, and another with the first "Recon" at Landres. A little later he recommended that another company be sent into the area as a reserve. Company "A" was assigned this mission and arrived in a reserve position west of Norroy at 1100. The



second platoon at Mainville observed an enemy column about 0800, consisting of armored cars and Mark V Tanks. The platoon opened fire and destroyed two Mark Vs and two armored cars without damage to themselves. The third platoon captured a Mark V when the crew surrendered after two shots had been fired at it from one of the TDs. The first "Recon" and first platoon destroyed two Mark Vs and two halftracks north of Joudreville and captured fourteen prisoners.



Company "B" was assigned the mission of establishing road blocks along the approaches from Etain to Verdun in order to protect the Corps supply route from armored attack from the north.

The remainder of us moved about two miles west of Filville at 1230. Company "B" was then ordered to assemble here at 1430. We remained so disposed, and bivouacked there for the night.

9 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 1200, we received orders placing us in general support of the 90th Infantry Division, with the mission to protect both the north and rear flanks. We then moved, at 1600, to Norroy where the companies attached to the 607th TD Bn reverted to our control. Two platoons of Company "C" were ordered to protect the road blocks at Marcy-le-Haut and Marcy-le-Bas with the third platoon remaining in its present position. Company "A" was ordered to send one platoon to Avril and the remaining two platoons were ordered into position on the highground south of Andernay. Company "B" was ordered to place road blocks on avenues of approach in the rear of the Division sector. The first "Recon" remained attached to the first platoon of "C" Company and remained in their support of the road blocks.

10 SEPTEMBER 1944

Company "C" remained in position; Company "B" was assembled and with the remainder of the battalion moved to Trieux. Here the first "Recon" was recalled and placed in battalion reserve in the vicinity of

the CP. Prior to their return nine members of a crew of a flying fortress which had crash-landed north Marcy-le-Haut, were recovered and delivered to G-3, 90th Division.

Company "B" was ordered into support of the 7th Armored Division at 1700 and proceeded to Doncourt where they were assigned the mission of placing guns along the likely avenues of approach to the city.

11 SEPTEMBER 1944

Company "C" exchanged a few rounds of small arms fire with an enemy patrol in the vicinity of Marcy-le-Haut and forced the patrol, estimated at 30, to withdraw to the north. The second platoon of Company "C", at 2100, was ordered into position in the vicinity of Audon, to cover armor approaches from the north and the northeast. The rest of us remained as we were.

12 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 0800, Company "C" was ordered to defend engineer road blocks at Aumet, and crossroads in the vicinity of Tressange. While en route, verbal orders from the Commanding Officer of the 4th TD Group came down ordering us to assemble in the vicinity of the battalion CP. We were then informed that we were relieved of support to the 90th Infantry



Division and placed in general support of the XXth Corps, with the mission of defending armored avenues of approaches along the 7th Armored Division's front. We left at 1400 and moved one mile west of Doncourt. Immediately upon arrival there, Company Commanders were sent to reconnoiter for gun positions which would cover the engineer road blocks and minefields along the Division's front. Company Commanders then submitted overlays of the gun positions and immediately occupied them.



The battle of the Rhineland

13—15 SEPTEMBER 1944

The companies remained in position. Two rounds of enemy artillery landed in Company "C" sector. Two prisoners were also captured by Company "C". Still in the same positions the next day, the forward elements of each company had to withdraw at 1300 because of heavy enemy artillery falling into their sectors.



16 SEPTEMBER 1944

We were relieved of attachment to the 4th TD Group, and ordered to replace the 818th TD Bn attached to the 5th Infantry Division. Since all companies were employed in the exchange, it was necessary to make a platoon for platoon exchange. After Company "B" had exchanged positions, we moved, minus Companies "C" and "A" to southwest of Garzein in the vicinity of Division Artillery CP. There we were told that there would be no further exchange until the 4th TD Group crossed the Moselle River. The first platoon of "B" Company was assigned the mission of delivering indirect, harassing fire on enemy territory around Metz. During the night they fired 551 rounds.

17 SEPTEMBER 1944

Company "A" reverted to our control this morning and was ordered to assemble and move across the Moselle River on South Engineer Bridge at 0900. Lt. Col. Sturges assumed command of Company "A" of this battalion and "B" and "C" Companies of the 818th TD Bn. The first "Recon" accompanied Company "A" across the river, both being assigned the mission of protecting the 5th Division's bridgehead south of Metz, paying particular attention to the approaches from the north and

northeast. The third platoon was put in direct support of the 11th Regt. No other change was made in the disposition of the rest of the battalion during the day.

Company "B" was ordered by the 5th Division Artillery to occupy the position just vacated by the 21st Field Artillery Group and to be prepared to fire 600 rounds of HE during the night. "Recon" revealed that the position assigned was not suitable. This was reported to S-3, Division Artillery, and they in turn notified us that "B" Company would not fire during the night.

18—19 SEPTEMBER 1944

Company "B" was ordered to make reconnaissance for positions near Prenny after darkness. The second platoon of "B" Company occupied the positions selected, and during the night fired 256 rounds indirect fire on targets in the vicinity of Metz.



The next day Company "C" vacated its positions at St. Marie-aux-Chenes, near Verville, and was ordered to be prepared to perform their secondary mission. "B" Company was ordered to occupy positions east of Doncourt to cover armor approaches from the east. Company "A" was



ordered to place one platoon in position and to be ready to deliver indirect fire on targets in Metz and vicinity.

20—24 SEPTEMBER 1944

We remained in positions as we were. Company "C" fired 195 rounds on targets, and Company "A", using one platoon, fired 403 rounds on targets in the vicinity of Metz. The following four days were about the same in combat activity.

25—26 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 0800 our battalion and the 818th TD Bn. reverted to the control of their respective commanders. We, less Company "B", were attached to the 5th Infantry Division and were given the mission to protect the north flank of the bridgehead both east and west of the Moselle River.

Company "C" was ordered to assemble in the vicinity of our battalion rear echelon and moved into position at 2100. The second platoon of Company "A" fired 555 rounds at targets in the Metz area.

Upon verbal orders of the Commanding General of Division Artillery, Company "C" was moved to the west bank of the Moselle River the next day with orders to protect the north flank of the bridgehead south of Metz. The first "Recon" was relieved by the second "Recon" in positions on the north flank of the bridgehead, east of the Moselle, south

of Metz. Company "A" fired 544 rounds, indirect, harassing fire on targets in the Metz area.

27—30 SEPTEMBER 1944

We remained disposed as we were. The second platoon of Company "A" fired 600 rounds of harassing fire on enemy positions south of Metz. The following day the first platoon of Company "A" fired the same amount of rounds on the same targets. Battalion forward CP and rear echelon moved west of the Moselle near Arnaville. The second and third platoons of Company "C" fired 600 rounds each on targets in Metz.



1 OCTOBER 1944

Today found us still protecting the 5th Division's bridgehead south of Metz. Company "B" was attached to the 4th TD Group and employed in general support of the 90th Infantry Division between St. Marcel and Rezonville. Company "A", in support of the 11th Combat Team, 5th Infantry, were in position as follows: first platoon, near Arry; second platoon, west of Arry; third platoon in the vicinity of Corny. Company "C" protected the north flank of the division west of the Moselle River.

The first "Recon" was assigned the mission of establishing an observation point north of Noveant, observing all possible approaches, and during the hours of darkness to patrol the river road as far north as Ancy-sur-Moselle. The second "Recon" had one section attached to Company