

The 803RD TANK DESTROYER Battalion

JOINING THE FIFTH Infantry Division on Christmas Day, 1944, when the division was committed to the Battle of the Bulge, the EIGHT HUNDRED THIRD Tank Destroyer Battalion supported the division, giving valuable, and much needed aid to the Red Diamond warriors, until hostilities ceased.

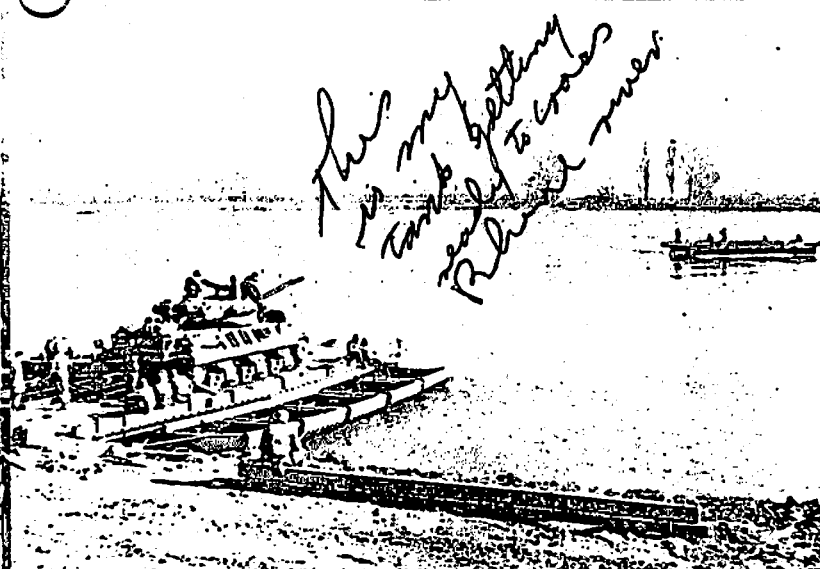
Activated September 30, 1940, as the ONE HUNDRED THIRD Anti-tank Battalion, the composing elements were Headquarters Troop B, Washington National Guard, and the FORTY-FIRST Tank Company, Centralia, Washington. Troop B was the oldest National Guard unit in the State of Washington and was the guard of honor for the state's governor. Inducted into federal service February 10, 1941, the unit spent several months in training and field maneuvers and was redesignated the EIGHT HUNDRED THIRD Tank Destroyer Battalion on December 12.

Training operations then took the battalion from Fort Lewis, Washington, to Camp Hood, Texas; Camp Dix, New Jersey; and finally to Pine Camp, New York. During this time all efforts were made to reach combat efficiency in training with the newest weapons of war. Sailing for England on the "Queen Mary" June 24, 1943, the battalion was stationed at Chilsendon, Wilts, and Barnstable, Devon, England, where intensive training in assault landings was carried out.

One June 13, 1944, the battalion hit the Normandy Beach. Few tank destroyer battalions were then available and attachments and assignments were numerous, the unit being in turn with the SECOND Infantry Division, THIRD Armored Division, THIRTIETH Infantry Division, TWENTY-NINTH Infantry Division, and the EIGHTY-SECOND Airborne. Following the St. Lo breakthrough, the battalion followed these units through France, Belgium, and Holland and finally into the Hertgen Forest with the FOURTH Infantry Division.

So long a campaign demanded a much-needed rest so the EIGHT HUNDRED THIRD was moved to the FOURTH Infantry Division's quiet Luxembourg Sector where the battle-weary FOURTH held a thin defensive line. But the sector was not to remain quiet for long, for it was here that the German General Von Rundstedt made his initial probes that finally resulted in the Ardennes breakthrough to create the Belgium Bulge.

It was at the Bulge that the battalion presented itself as a Christmas present to the FIFTH Division, and followed them to the end of the war.



This is my getting tank getting ready to load B. D. M. M. M.

1. Eight Hundred and Third Tank Destroyer moves across Mosel river at Munden, Germany.

2. Tank destroyer rides a ferry across the Rhine river at Oppenheim.