

UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

Special Studies

THE EMPLOYMENT OF NEGRO TROOPS

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CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY UNITED STATES ARMY WASHINGTON, D.
C., 2000 Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 66-60003 First Printed 1966-CMH
Pub 11-4

*Portion of text from
Chapter XXI Artillery and Armored Units in the ETO
Tanks and Tank Destroyers pages 660 to 687*

Armored units, by virtue of their use in task forces and the attachment of their companies and platoons to infantry, had closer continuing contacts with the main stream of battle than most other small supporting Negro units. De-

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spite the fact that some were attached to a number of units, seldom staying long enough with any one unit to become fully acclimatized, the employment of these units was generally normal for organizations of their types.

The 761st Tank Battalion, the first of the Negro armored units to be committed to combat, landed at OMAHA Beach on 10 October 1944 after a brief stay in England. The unit then had 6 white and 30 Negro officers and 676 enlisted men. The battalion entered France with greater confidence than most Negro units could muster upon entry into a theater of operations. It had gained assurance during the training period at Camp Hood, Texas, where it had been told by higher commanders, including the Second Army's Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, that it had a superior record and that much was expected of it. The 761st firmly believed that it owed its existence and survival and, therefore, a top performance, to Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, now dead on the battlefield. Its belief in its future and its sense of responsibility were renewed when it joined the 26th Division of XII Corps, Third Army. The division commander, Maj. Gen. Willard S. Paul, in welcoming the battalion on 31 October, told the tankers and their officers: "I am damned glad to have you with us. We have been expecting you for a long time, and I am sure you are going to give a good account of yourselves. I've got a big hill up there that I want you to take, and I believe that you are going to do a great job of it." Two days later, General Patton visited the battalion and, standing on the same half-track used by General Paul, challenged the unit in characteristic Patton manner: "Men, you're the first Negro tankers to ever fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don't care what color you are, so long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sonsabitches. Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all, your race is looking forward to you. Don't let them

down, don't let me down!" [42](#) The 761st, convinced that it was needed and wanted, that its first job was already laid out for it, and that the most highly regarded of armored commanders as well as the 26th Division's commander expected only the best from it, had now only to enter battle to justify its own hopes and those of men who, it felt, wished it well.

From the time that it was committed to combat on 7 November 1944 the 76 1st Battalion spent 183 days in action, its only pauses accounted for by the time needed to move from one task to another. In the Third Army it was attached to the 26th, 1st, and 87th Divisions, the 17th Airborne Division, and the 17th Armored Group; in the Ninth Army to the 95th and 79th Divisions and the XVI Corps; and in the Seventh Army to the 103d and 104th Divisions. With these larger units it fought in France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria.

For its entry into combat on 8 Novem-

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ber at Athainville east of Nancy, parts of the battalion, as was normal for separate armored units, were attached to elements of the 26th Division and placed in special task forces. The 26th Division was then preparing for XII Corps' November offensive.[43](#) Company A of the 761st was attached to the 104th Infantry with one platoon attached to the 101st Infantry. Company C was attached to the 328th Infantry. Provisional Task Force A contained Company K of the 101st Infantry, engineers, the 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion (-), and the remainder of the 761st Tank Battalion (excepting its mortar, assault gun, and reconnaissance platoons, in reserve) , all under the command of Lt. Col. Peter J. Kopcsak, commander of the 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion.[44](#)

On the first day, Company A's two platoons supported the 104th Infantry's attack and capture of Vic-sur-Seine; the remaining platoon of Company A supported infantry in taking Moyenvic. Company C, attached to the 328th Infantry, used its twelve tanks in the assault on Bezange-la-Petite and a hill to the southeast.[45](#) On 9 November, in the season's first snowstorm, the two platoons of Company A supported the 104th Infantry, which attacked and took Chateau-Salins after four hours of fighting. Company A then turned east toward Morville-les-Vic. The remainder of the battalion in Task Force

A, with infantry mounted on its tanks, was then approaching Morville. Two platoons of Company D, with two companies of the 3d Battalion, 101st Infantry, took positions south of Salival, a small town from which enemy machine gun fire enfiladed the western slope of Hill 310 (Cote St. Jean) , the 26th Division's main objective for the day. Company D shelled the town and set it afire. Infantry, at dusk, entered Salival and passed through the woods beyond.

At Morville-les-Vic, where heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire was encountered, tanks of Company B shelled the town. When they attempted to pass through, roadblocks and bazooka fire stopped the tanks. The lead tank, knocked out, blocked the narrow main road, halting the tank column. Infantry cleared the town in house-to-house fighting. In the

meantime, Company C seized high ground to the northwest of Morville and held until infantry took over, while Company D, moving to the left flank from Salival to screen the attack, broke up a German counterattack. Company C, moving down from its high ground toward Morville, ran into a tank trap running from woods at the edge of the high ground to a road leading through Morville. Beyond the tank ditch were camouflaged pill boxes, by now further concealed by new-fallen snow. Company C lost nine enlisted men and one officer killed and seven tanks-four recoverable-in the action along the tank trap. Despite low visibility caused by the weather, the battalion's assault gun platoon, aided by the observations of artillery liaison planes, completed its firing missions, securing direct hits on an enemy armored vehicle and four trucks. Task Force A, finally

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getting seven tanks through Morville, went on toward Hampont, the tanks assisting the infantry in gaining a foothold in the Bois de Geline to the northeast.[46](#)

In its entry into battle the 761st had three experiences which, in a unit with less confidence and will to achieve, might have proved disastrous. On the evening of 7 November the 761st tank column approached a crossroads at Arracourt, France, on the way to its line of departure for the next day's attack. A French farmer, possibly a collaborationist, drove a herd of cattle into the crossroads with the result that tanks, tank destroyers, and trucks loaded with infantrymen piled up into a confused traffic jam. The 761st's commander, Lt. Col. Paul L. Bates, leading his tank column, arrested the Frenchman and got traffic moving. Just as the crossroads cleared, heavy enemy artillery fire fell, disabling one of the tanks, and an enemy patrol, infiltrating the position, opened fire with automatic weapons, seriously wounding Colonel Bates, who was evacuated for hospitalization that was to last until mid-February. The loss of its commander just before its first battle alone might have unnerved the unit, but this mishap was followed by a more unusual event, more mysterious than unnerving. Its first five tankers killed, the first American Negro tankers to die in any war [47](#) were all members of the same tank crew. Their tank showed no sign of having been hit by shell, shell fragment, or bullet, yet the men within were all dead, sitting upright in their normal crew positions, apparently untouched, and with only a look of surprise on their faces. The next day, the 761st's executive officer, acting as battalion commander, was evacuated for battle fatigue. Lt. Col. Hopis E. Hunt came forward from the 17th Armored Group to assist the battalion's acting commander. Shortly after his arrival, both Colonel Hunt and Colonel Kopcsak, commander of Task Force A, were wounded by shell fire. After Colonel Kopcsak was evacuated, Hunt, though wounded, took over command of the task force. With the evacuation of the 761st's acting commander, Colonel Hunt took over command of the tank battalion as well, a command which he retained until the end of November.

But the unit's first day's work had compensations. If the men of the 761st had brooded on what death buttoned up in a tank was like, they gave no outward sign; if they had wondered what they would do without their accustomed leaders and how well they would stand up under heavy fire, they now knew. The demonstration of leadership afforded by Colonel Hunt became an admired standard of conduct for the 761st. Around the tank companies and platoons of the 761st, the infantrymen of the units of the 26th Division

were performing deeds of heroism on 8 and 9 November, one resulting in a Medal of Honor for an aidman with the 328th Infantry who, though wounded himself during the fight near Bezange-la-Petite, worked his way under fire to dress the wounds of others, giving instructions to infantrymen until his own wounds made

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it impossible for him to speak.⁴⁸ These deeds were emulated by members of the 761st who before the unit's career was over, had won eleven Silver Stars and sixty-nine Bronze Stars, four of the latter with clusters, and nearly all for heroism under fire.⁴⁹

On those first two days the 761st discovered as well in the crucial places-within its companies and platoons-good and trustworthy leadership to match that of its temporary commander. The platoons of Company A attached to the 104th Regiment were commanded by the one remaining white company commander in the battalion, Capt. David Williams II, a Yale graduate about whose point of view toward service with them the men of the 761st had not always been too sure. Just before the start of the offensive, Williams, "talking it up" with a Harlem twist, called to his men: "Now look here, ya cats, we gotta hit it down the main drag, and hip some of them unhepped cats on the other side. So let's roll right on down ole Seventh Avenue, and knock 'em, Jack!" This eased tension before the first tank rolled out. The unit's own enlisted historian commented candidly:

And that guy surprised us, too, for we had our doubts about him, back in the US, but he came through, and proved that you can be wrong, and we found out that we were wrong, for Dave Williams was alright (sic). We found that out on the battlefield, when the ferries were sending everything our way. In fact, we felt that Dave Williams actually liked killing up there, and it became a sort of secondary `sport' after the primary one, which of course, was 'keeping from getting killed.'⁵⁰

On its first day, the lead tank in Company A ran into a roadblock obstructing the tank column. A sergeant dismounted under small arms fire, attached a cable to the roadblock, and moved it off the road. His action permitted the infantry-tank team to proceed and open the way to the successful assault and capture of Vic-sur-Seille.⁵¹ When the lead tank of Company B was set afire in the streets of Morville, one man within was severely wounded and the tank commander, emerging, was machine gunned and killed. The other members of the crew, realizing that until their fire mission was completed, infantry could not proceed-a dozen or more infantry of Company K, 101st Infantry, were already dead or wounded in the street around the tank-climbed out through the turret and escape hatch, bringing their weapons with them. They sprayed submachine gun fire on enemy foot troops and on fire positions in the upper stories of houses. A corporal climbed back into the disabled tank through the bottom escape hatch, manned his machine gun, and silenced several enemy machine gun positions and a bazooka team firing from an upstairs window. The tank was hit twice again, but the crew remained under it, firing individual weapons. In the Company D action along the edge of the Bois de Geline, one tank gunner personally accounted for twenty of the enemy with his machine gun. A tank crew,

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after its tank had been hit and taken by the Germans, dismounted and recaptured the tank. In the heaviest action of the two days, that of Company C at the tank trap near Morville, 1st Sgt. Samuel C. Turley and 2d Lt. Kenneth W. Coleman, tank platoon leaders, organized crews from their disabled tanks into a dismounted combat group. This group successfully held off the enemy attack while crews from other trapped tanks escaped along the tank ditch. During the action, Coleman and Turley were both killed by enemy fire.⁵²

During the two days there were, as well, men who re-entered tanks to pull out trapped comrades, tank commanders who strapped wounded men to their vehicles and successfully evacuated them, and men who, in exposed positions, pulled their heavy machine guns from their disabled tanks and returned German fire on foot. One tank driver, seeing seriously injured white infantrymen lying in the open, dismounted from his tank, moved across open terrain under heavy artillery and small arms fire, evacuated the men to the shelter of a disabled tank and administered first aid, and thereby saved the lives of three of the wounded. White infantrymen of Company K similarly but unsuccessfully tried to remove the body of the 761st's tank commander from his burning tank in Morville. A number lost their lives or were wounded in the attempt.⁵³ At the close of the second day, the 761st felt that it had won the right to its motto, "Come Out Fighting."

For the remainder of November and into December, the 761st Tank Battalion continued to support the 26th Division in its movement through the Forêt de Bride et de Koecking to Dieuze and Benestroff and toward the Sarre, where the division attacked and took Sarre Union and fought through the Maginot Line to Obergailbach on the German border. Fighting in the snow and mud against the stubborn resistance of the Germans in Lorraine was hard all the way. On 12 November two platoons of Company A repulsed an enemy counterattack at Wuisse, destroying two enemy tanks. The next day, one platoon, attached to the 2d Battalion, 104th Infantry, counterattacked on its own initiative, took Wuisse in the afternoon, and defended the town through the night.⁵⁴ On 18 November, at Guebling, when the engineers completed a bridge hastily constructed under artillery and small arms fire, 761st tanks crossed into the town to give additional support to the infantry, found heavy mine fields, and then took a "terrific beating" which prevented continuation of support on that day.⁵⁵ The crew of one tank escaped and returned for a replacement tank, and then rejoined the company at Guebling. Of the five tanks in Guebling, three were lost to antitank fire and one to mines, leaving but one tank operational in the town.⁵⁶

Casualties in men and tanks were heavy during November-22 killed in action, 2 dead of wounds, 81 wounded, 44 nonbattle casualties, and 14 tanks

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lost and 20 damaged.⁵⁷ But tanks could be recovered and repaired, or replaced. On the other hand the 761st, like most other active Negro combat units, had difficulty replacing men. During its first month no replacements arrived at all and the unit ended the month with a shortage of 113 men.⁵⁸ On 4 December the first of the 761st's replacements

arrived. But these were not armored force replacements-there were none-and the unit had to retrain them on the job.

The unit received numerous requests for transfer from men in the theater's service units. A number of these had to be refused because of low test scores or court-martial records. At times the unit received master and first sergeants from service units in grade, but many of these men could not be used despite their high test scores and grades. On 19 December the unit transferred 58 of its unsuitable replacements and the next day it sent 17 to other units.⁵⁹ By February it had accumulated 16 noncommissioned officers of the first four grades who had to be transferred out; at the same time it requested that 27 more replacements who had "shown no aptitude for armored training" be transferred.⁶⁰ Though it gained some excellent men both from replacements and volunteer transfer, the battalion, like other armored and artillery units, remained short of personnel much of the time. In March it was short to Negro officers and 89 enlisted men. Since all of its wounded officers and a fifth of its hospitalized enlisted men returned to duty with the unit the 761st was generally able to perform its duties despite deficiencies and shortages in replacements.⁶¹

The 761st's work with the 26th Division in November elicited special commendation from the corps commander, in addition to commendation that went to all units of the 26th Division and XII Corps:⁶²

1. I consider the 761st Tank Battalion to have entered combat with such conspicuous courage and success as to warrant special commendation.
2. The speed with which they adapted themselves to the front line under most adverse weather conditions, the gallantry with which they faced some of Germany's finest troops, and the confident spirit with which they emerged from their recent engagements in the vicinity of Dieuze, Morville les Vic, and Guebling entitle them surely to consider themselves of the veteran 761st.⁶³

To this General Paul added: "It is with extreme gratification that the Corps Commander's commendation is forwarded to you. Your battalion has supported this division with great bravery under the most adverse weather and terrain conditions. You have my sincere

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wish that success may continue to follow your endeavors."⁶⁴

When the 26th Division was relieved for a rest, beginning 9 December, the 761st Battalion was attached to the incoming 87th Division, officially committed to battle for the first time on 13 December. On 14 December the first of the 761st's tanks crossed the border into Germany. By 15 December the battalion had lost a majority of its tanks from enemy action and from mechanical failure caused by continuous commitment of all available tanks for extended periods of time. When the battalion returned to Sarre Union for four days of maintenance, only three tanks were operational. On the march from the Sarre region to Neufchateau, Belgium, southwest of Bastogne, beginning on 24

December and ending on 30 December, again in attachment to the 87th Division, ten medium tanks dropped from the column because of maintenance failures.[65](#)

Beginning on 31 December, when the battalion and the 345th Infantry of the 87th Division took Rondu and Nimbermont from an enemy still fighting around Bastogne, through January the 761st engaged in successful actions at Bonnerue, Recogne, Remagne, Tillet, and Pironpie in Belgium; at Steinbach in Luxembourg, and, working with the 17th Airborne Division, at Gouvy, Hautbillan, and Watermall. Steep and icy hills and snow-covered swampy ground in the Ardennes caused wear and tear on power trains and engines and caused tanks to bog down.[66](#) When at times trucks could not reach elements of the unit, the light tanks of the 761st's Company D towed ammunition trailers to supply medium tanks from dumps placed as far forward as possible.[67](#)

At the beginning of February the battalion moved 140 miles to Jabeek, Holland, near the German border, where it was attached briefly to the 95th Division in XVI Corps, then holding a defensive position along the Maas while waiting for Ninth Army's drive to the Rhine to begin. Supporting the 79th Division in this offensive, which began on 23 February, elements of the 761st participated in the capture of End, Holland, cut the Roermond-Julich Railway at Milich, and moved on to Erkling where they crossed the border into Germany on 3 March. The battalion then moved on to Schwannenberg, mopping up bypassed pockets of resistance and capturing prisoners left behind by the advance of the 2d Armored Division. On 7-8 March it set out to join the Seventh Army where, on 12 March, each of its medium tank companies was attached to one of the 103d Division's regiments.[68](#)

When the 761st arrived, the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed), another Negro unit, was already attached to the 103d Division. The 614th, like the 761st, had five white officers; the remainder of its staff was Negro and all of its company officers were Negroes. The 614th had been with the 103d Division since 7 December. It was committed to action on 28 November when it began to relieve the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP), then supporting the 3d Cavalry Group (Mechanized). In the

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3d Cavalry, one company of the 614th's towed three-inch guns was attached to each of the group's squadrons with the remainder of the battalion in reserve. At the time, the 9d Cavalry Group was protecting the north flank of XX Corps from the Moselle River to the vicinity of Ober Tunsdorf in Germany, where it maintained contact with the Both Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron of the 10th Armored Division, then operating in a zone between the Moselle and Saar Rivers. Before it lay the dragons' teeth, antitank ditches, and pillboxes of the Siegfried Line. On 1 December, its first day in the line, the 614th's Company A scored three direct hits on enemy-held pillboxes north of Borg. The Germans raised a white flag, but when a cavalry patrol approached they opened fire. The tank destroyers then resumed firing and the enemy retreated out of his pillboxes. The company on its first day also accounted for one German 88-mm. gun, "displaying accuracy in destroying this weapon with three rounds in the vicinity of Borg," the 3d Cavalry Group commented.[69](#) Late that night the 614th was relieved from the 3d Cavalry Group for

movement to Luneville, France, where on Seventh Army orders, it was attached to VI Corps and, on 5 December to the 103d Division, effective upon arrival at Kuttolsheim, France.⁷⁰ There its Company A was attached to Task Force Forest, made up of the 103d Reconnaissance Troop, a company of the 756th Tank Battalion and a company of the 409th Infantry.⁷¹ Company C was attached to the 411th Infantry.

The 103d Division was in process of relieving the 45th and 79th Divisions in a sector on the west bank of the flooded Zintzel du Nord River. Beginning 8 December, as elements of the 109d Division moved into line, the companies of the 614th began to fire, Company C knocking out an observation post in a church steeple, destroying a machine gun emplacement, and delivering harassing fire on enemy troops.⁷²

The 103d Division's attack began before dawn on 9 December, with a crossing of the Zintzel to seize Uttenhofen and Mertzwiller on the opposite bank. The attack progressed through Griesbach and Fortsheim. In both towns observation posts in church steeples were knocked out by the 614th's guns.⁷³ When the attack reached the Maginot Line, German defensive positions grew, stronger. In the rugged hills and woods of the Lembach-Climbach area, the 411th Infantry met particularly strong resistance. The regiment organized a task force under its executive officer to break the German hold on Climbach, a town in an open valley with high, well-defended ridges guarding its approaches. The task force contained a platoon of combat engineers, a platoon of tanks, a company of infantry, and a platoon of the 614th's towed tank destroyer guns. The force had the mission of pushing to the town of Climbach

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and holding it, cutting the line of communications to Lembach.⁷⁴

The task force left Prueschdorf at 1020 on the foggy, cold morning of 14 December. Visibility was less than 300 yards. The force, with Lt. Charles L. Thomas, commander of the 614th's Company C, in the lead armored scout car, proceeded through enemy territory, slowly ascending the steep, winding road toward Climbach. Heavy enemy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and artillery fire fell along the route. When within a thousand yards of Climbach, Thomas' M20 was knocked out by a shell and mine. Thomas, though wounded, dismounted from his wrecked car and helped his crew, including another wounded man, to dismount. Infantry and tanks deployed to both sides of the road. The task force commander directed the tank destroyer platoon to proceed up the road and go into firing positions. There they would place fire on the enemy in and around Climbach and act as a base of fire while the rest of the force flanked the German positions. Leaving the protection of his wrecked vehicle, Thomas ordered and directed the dispersion and displacement of two of his tank destroyers. These destroyers were soon returning the fire of the now alerted enemy, who were directing the fire of all of their ridge-top weapons upon the task force. Thomas, despite multiple wounds in his chest, legs, and left arm, continued to direct his men. Only when he was certain that his platoon commander was in full control of the situation did Thomas permit himself to be evacuated.⁷⁵

On their exposed hillside, the ten-man tank destroyer crews went into action, loading, aiming, firing and then scooting back to their half-tracks to fire their .50-caliber machine guns at the enemy in the woods. The gun crews dwindled in size in a few minutes. One tank destroyer crew, although in the open, had better luck than the others. Its half-track bogged down in the open field but in a slight draw. The enemy poured small arms and tank fire into the position without being able to destroy it. Gun crews reduced to as few as two men went on firing, while the tank destroyers continued in action for four hours. Tanks were bogged down in the mud too far to the rear to be of any help. Three BAR men of the Pith's platoon volunteered to give flank security. The tank destroyer gunners and drivers flattened out alongside their guns and poured M t and carbine fire into the enemy. Technician 5 Robert W. Harris, knowing that the last gun was running out of ammunition, drove his truck to the rear over fire-swept roads for a new supply. When the truck was fully loaded, he started back up the Climbach hill. About half way up, he was stopped by the task force commander, who told him that he could not go farther because enemy fire was too heavy. Disregarding the warning, Harris drove to within twenty-five yards of his gun positions, unloaded the truck, uncrated the ammunition, and began to carry it forward. The remaining men of the platoon made trip after trip under fire to carry the 54 pound ammunition boxes to the one gun still functioning. Infantrymen of the 411th infiltrated from the flanks while the tank destroyers engaged the defend-

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ing enemy. By the time darkness came, the enemy was offering only small arms fire from Climbach itself.

This "outstanding performance of mass heroism on the part of the officers and men of Company C, 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion," the 103d Division reported, "precluded a near catastrophic reverse for the task force." Their action before Climbach, in which the platoon had more than 50 percent casualties, lost three guns, two half-tracks, and an armored car, enabled the task force to capture the town and forced the enemy to retreat from Climbach and retire to his Siegfried Line. Two infantry-tank counterattacks against the town during the night were beaten off. For its action at Climbach, the 3d Platoon, Company C, 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, received the Distinguished Unit Citation, the first unit assigned or attached to the 103d Division and the first Negro unit to do so. In this action, in addition to a Distinguished Service Cross for Lieutenant Thomas, the platoon earned four Silver Stars, two of them awarded posthumously, and nine Bronze Stars.⁷⁶ When Maj. Gen. Charles C. Haffner, Jr., commanding the 103d Division, personally pinned their decorations on two officers and nine enlisted men at a ceremony on 28 December, the unit declared it "a great morale factor in our troops."⁷⁷

Through the winter of 1944-45 the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion remained attached to the 103d Division. It participated in the division's holding operations and limited offensives on the left flank of the Seventh Army and along the Moder River line. It fired star shells for patrols and indirect fire missions in attachment to the 828th Field Artillery Battalion, thereby relieving a critical shortage of howitzer ammunition. Its men engaged in raids and patrols with elements of the 103d Division.⁷⁸ On New Year's Day, 1945, an enemy patrol attacked a thirteen-man outpost of Company A. The outpost was isolated

for about an hour while heavy small arms fire was exchanged. When the action was over, the outpost had killed nine and captured two of the enemy without suffering losses itself. On 12 January the 1st Section, 1st Platoon, Company C, directed to destroy an enemy observation post at Forbach, fired 143 rounds in forty minutes and scored 139 direct hits.

On 20 January, when the battalion joined in a planned withdrawal of the 103d Division to new defensive lines west of Hagenau, Companies A and C remained in position in order to make their withdrawal under cover of darkness. The two companies met with unusual difficulties in their withdrawal over roads covered with snow and ice. For several hours, commanders of both companies remained behind the infan-

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try force covering the withdrawal in an effort to salvage all possible materiel. One company commander and eighteen of his enlisted men arrived within friendly lines sixteen hours after the infantry covering force had withdrawn. One platoon towed one of its guns out with an ammunition vehicle. The infantry covering force, when it reached another platoon's position, insisted that the men leave and abandon their gun, but the men refused to do so. Their attempts to halt a wrecker or a tank moving to the rear failed, for withdrawing tanks had already been lost along the slippery roads and no tank driver wished to risk pulling a half-track out. Finally, the men determined to pull their gun as far as possible with their one jeep. Five hours later, fourteen cold, wet, tired soldiers, their platoon leader, and their gun, towed by a jeep, reached the new lines of the 109d Division. Despite the efforts of the men of the two companies, three guns, six half-tracks, and miscellaneous equipment had to be destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy who, though disengaged, was expected to move rapidly into the area given up by the 103d Division. The battalion took up positions in the security and antitank defenses of the division along the south bank of the Rothbach and Moder Rivers.

During the weeks of enemy pressure and attacks against Seventh Army, coinciding with but less successful than the counterattack to the north in the Ardennes, the outposts of the 614th became as accustomed to fighting off patrols and raiding parties as did infantrymen. Typically laconic was the report of one platoon: "Last night a 6 man German patrol tried to infiltrate our out post line. But they all were killed. Otherwise it was very quiet in this sector."⁷⁹

In the days before the March offensive, the battalion continued patrolling and training. A carefully trained party, consisting of two officers and thirty enlisted men from the reconnaissance platoons, raided an old mill between Bischoltz and Mulhausen on February, achieving perfect co-ordination and complete surprise. Each officer and enlisted man had been fully instructed not only in his own job but also in the jobs of the other men. Maps and recent air photos were carefully checked and the raid was rehearsed for three days. At 2000 the raiding party, assembling at a previously designated point, moved through the main line of resistance without drawing enemy fire. Two teams of raiders, consisting of six men each, entered the mill, while a section of machine gunners, setting up on either side of the building, covered roads outside. Eight of the enemy were killed and six prisoners captured; the raiding party itself suffered not a single casualty.⁸⁰

In describing this raid, the 103d Division's enlisted historians now termed the battalion "the crack negro 614th." [81](#)

With the attachment of the 761st Tank Battalion to the 103d Division on 12 March, each regiment of the 103d had one of the Negro tank and one of the

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Negro tank destroyer companies attached in preparation for Seventh Army's spring offensive. When the Seventh Army's attack opened on the morning of 15 March, all elements of the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion were used in the 103d's sector. Company A laid direct fire on Kindwiller, then formed a force under its commander, along with thirty enlisted men from the company headquarters platoon, to attack and capture the town. The dismounted task force entered the town under fire; when Capt. Beauregard King, leading his men, fell, seriously wounded, the platoon sergeant, Charles E. Parks, ran to him. King ordered him on with "Don't stop for me-finish the job!" Parks took command of the force, took the town by 1,000, and captured nine prisoners in the process.[82](#) The 1st and 2d Reconnaissance Platoons, under the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Frank S. Pritchard, with a platoon of Company B supporting, raided Bischoltz at 1590 and took forty-one prisoners. Companies B and C supported the regiments to which they were attached with direct fire.[83](#) The advance continued for the next three days against little resistance until the 103d Division and its supporting troops reached Siegfried Line towns. There, on 20 March, a platoon of Company C of the 761st, supporting the 411th Infantry in its assault on Nieder Schlettenbach, neutralized 13 pillboxes and 12 machine gun positions, captured one 75-mm. antitank gun intact, and accounted for 35 enemy dead. Another platoon of Company C, supporting the 409th Infantry before Riesdorf, reduced 6 pillboxes, killed 8 Germans, and took 40 prisoners. Riesdorf, well defended by pillboxes and dugouts, was a key point to the division's advance through the Siegfried Line.

On 21 March, Task Force Rhine was formed from the 761st Tank Battalion (less Company C) ; the 2d Battalion, 409th Infantry; the 2d Reconnaissance Platoon of the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion; and an engineer detachment. It was to be prepared to exploit any breakthrough in the Siegfried Line and to move on to the Rhine upon order. Company C of the 761st, still supporting the 411th and 409th Regiments, neutralized 7 pillboxes and 10 machine gun positions between Nieder Schlettenbach and Erlenbach, taking 64 prisoners and counting 20 enemy dead. It then attacked pillboxes covering the approaches to Riesdorf, capturing 64 prisoners and killing 12 of the enemy at this point. The next day, Company C and infantry entered the town.

Task Force Rhine assembled at the edge of Riesdorf on the morning of 22 March. With Colonel Bates in command and the reconnaissance platoon of the 614th and the light tanks of the 761st as its point, the task force moved through Riesdorf at 1600, attacked pillboxes northeast of the town, and then split into two columns, one going north toward Birkenhordt and the other going toward Bollenborn. In the column advancing toward Birkenhordt, soldiers of Company G, 409th, rode the lead tanks, firing at everything that moved. Reaching Birkenhordt, the column advanced against small arms fire and

moved through the town until halted by two antitank guns. Corps artillery concentrations- the task force remained in constant touch by radio-were called for and the column proceeded through the town, firing at all positions that might conceal an antitank gun. The other column, attempting to enter Bollenborn, was stopped by such heavy antitank fire that it withdrew and rejoined the first column at Birkenhordt. At 1800, the 103d Division directed the task force to proceed north and east to meet the 10th Armored Division, reported to be moving toward Silz. The task force set out into the night. A crater in the road beyond Birkenhordt stopped the advance, but repairs were made in about an hour by the accompanying engineer detachment and the task force moved on, using reconnaissance by fire throughout the column to resist effectively several attempts by groups of German soldiers to halt it.

On approaching Silz, the swiftly moving column found the enemy rather than the 10th Armored Division in possession. Turning east, the column fought its way through Silz. Firing into one house, the force's guns hit an ammunition dump. The house exploded, blocking the road. Silz burned brightly, providing illumination as the task force sped through the night over strange and unmarked roads. Shortly after midnight Task Force Rhine reached Munchweiler where its machine gun fire drove enemy crews away from defending antitank guns.

Just outside Munchweiler, on the way to Klingenmunster, toward which the 36th Division was reported to be advancing-a report which, like that on the 10th Armored, proved later to be in error-Task Force Rhine overran a retreating German horse-drawn vehicle column. The task force blazed through this column, killing and wounding many of the enemy and leaving the road blocked with the wreckage of vehicles and the bodies of dead horses.

Klingenmunster itself was guarded by permanent installations. As Task Force Rhine approached the town at 0150, it was met by heavy fire, but the combined weapons of the task force were turned on the enemy, many of whom surrendered. They presented another problem. Prisoners taken earlier had been sent to the rear, but the enemy had now closed in behind the task force. Prisoners were loaded on gas and ammunition trucks and every other place where they could possibly ride as the task force moved on into Klingenmunster. One tank platoon with infantry support attempted to enter the town at about 0400 but was driven out by a combination of antitank and small arms fire and darkness. With another platoon it took up firing positions at the edge of Klingenmunster, fired all available weapons into the town, and set fire to several buildings. Task Force Rhine, seeing no sign of the expected 36th Division nor of the motorized friendly infantry which was to follow its advance, entered Klingenmunster and consolidated its positions. It now learned that the 14th Armored Division would pass through it and move on to the Rhine. By the time the contact party of the 14th Armored Division arrived, Task Force Rhine had penetrated 14 kilometers through defended enemy territory. It had destroyed 150 vehicles, 31 pillboxes, 49 machine gun nests, and 29 antitank and 4 self-propelled guns.

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At least 170 of the enemy lay dead and hundreds of horses were killed or left to graze by the roadside. Twelve hundred prisoners were taken. The fire strength of the task force was such that the 761st Tank Battalion alone used slightly more than fifty tons of ammunition before it halted.⁸⁴ The 409th's infantrymen paid their tribute to the lead tank of the 761st with: "That tank commander in the first tank was wonderful! He overcame a helluva lot of obstacles even before the second tank saw them." ⁸⁵

The 103d Division reached the Rhine with the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion still attached. It went into an interim period of occupation and mopping up in the area cleared of organized resistance. The 614th's elements aided in setting up military government for the occupied towns and in rounding up enemy stragglers and bypassed pockets. The 761st Tank Battalion, relieved from the 103d, was attached to the 71st Division, in Third Army, on 28 March, joining it at Langensfeld, Germany, on 1 April after a 132-mile march. Companies A, B, and C were attached, respectively, to the 5th, 14th, and 66th Infantry. In the Third Army's drive across Germany to Austria, the 761st supported the division, acting at times as the sole armored spearhead for the 71st's advance toward the Danube. Tanks of the 761st entered Steyr, Austria, on 5 May, and the next day met the Russians of the 1st Ukrainian Front at the Enns River. Ten of the 761st's Tanks were part of the honor guard at the 71st Division's command post when General Lothar von Runddick signed the surrender of his German forces in Austria.⁸⁶

When the 103d Division resumed its pursuit of the enemy on 21 April, the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, with its companies attached to the division's infantry regiments, moved south toward Austria, destroying and neutralizing enemy positions and taking prisoners along the way. The battalion had its last casualties on 2 May, on the outskirts of Scharnitz, Austria, in an engagement in which one officer and six enlisted men were killed while spearheading a task force toward Innsbruck. On 3 May, one platoon from Company C joined the 411th Regimental Combat Team in a dash from Mittenwald toward the Brenner Pass where, on 4 May, they seized the pass without opposition and went beyond to meet elements of the Fifth Army's 88th Division, approaching from Italy.⁸⁷

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The 784th Tank Battalion, last of the three Negro tank units to be activated, had landed on the Continent on Christmas Day, 1944, and was committed to action on 1 January 1945. It was assigned to the Ninth Army on 27 November 1944 and remained so assigned until the end of the war. The 784th, trained and led throughout its career by the same commander, Lt. Col. George C. Dalia, was attached to the 104th, the 35th, and the 84th Divisions, with individual companies attached to the 8th Infantry and 17th Airborne Divisions for brief periods.

Except for an initial incident, the 784th began its active career more quietly than other Negro armored units. On 26 December 1944, while marching to join the 104th Division, the 784th, nearing Soissons, France, heard a bomb blast followed a half hour later by a

series of explosions, increasing in intensity and rapidity, coming from an ammunition train probably hit by enemy bombs. At the request of an officer from an ammunition company, the 784th furnished four tanks and three recovery vehicles, with crews, to pull the untouched cars from the train. The crews of the 784th worked all afternoon, while heavy caliber ammunition exploded,⁸⁸ and managed to save 160 carloads out of about 300.

The battalion closed into bivouac near Eschweiler, Germany, on 31 December and joined the 104th Division, which was then actively defending along the Roer River in the Duren and Merken areas.⁸⁹ Elements of the 784th, with the exception of Company C, which was initially attached to XIX Corps as a part of corps reserve, were attached to units of the 104th; a platoon of Company D's light tanks to the 104th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop; the 81-mm. mortar platoon to the 414th Infantry; Company A (-) and Company B (-) to the 415th Infantry; Provisional Company "X," made up of one platoon of Company A and one of Company B, to the 413th Infantry until Company C joined on 25 January. The battalion's guns were used primarily to reinforce artillery fires until 3 February, when it was released from the 104th Division for attachment to the 35th Division. During the period, the battalion "ably supported the Division in defense" ⁹⁰

When the 784th joined the 35th Division at Geilenkirchen, Germany, on 8 February 1944, the 35th had just relieved the British 52d Infantry Division in the Ninth Army's line along the Roer. The tank companies trained with the infantry regiments of the 35th Division, preparing for an offensive to begin at the end of the month. Company A, on 26 February, assisted the 134th Infantry in the capture of Hilfarth, Germany, across the Roer. The following day, a motorized attack force consisting of Company 1, 137th Infantry, Company A, 784th Tank Battalion, and a platoon of tank destroyers attacked Wassenburg and took it. On the same day one platoon of Company B, attached to the 137th Infantry, participated in a successful attack on Goldrath. Task Force Byrne was organized on 28 February with the mission of liberating

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Venlo, Holland. It contained the 320th Infantry; motorized, the 784th Tank Battalion (less Company A), the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, two field artillery battalions, and attached engineer and medical units, all under the command of Col. Bernard A. Byrne, the infantry regiment's commander. On 1 March, led by the medium and light tanks of the 784th carrying a company of infantrymen, the task force attacked from Widenrath along the main road to Venlo. Bypassing resistance, except in towns and villages along the road, the task force moved so swiftly that the enemy, surprised, had no time to destroy bridges. With close co-operation between infantry and tanks, resistance met was quickly wiped out. The task force gained twenty-five miles and captured a total of twenty towns and villages. It entered Venlo by 1800. Following the task force column came the 137th and 134th Regimental Combat Teams. Company A, 784th, remained with the 134th Infantry.⁹¹

While the two regimental combat teams were closing into assembly areas near Venlo, mopping up scattered enemy forces bypassed by Task Force Byrne, the task force set out

again at 1000 on 2 March with the mission of seizing, successively, Straelin, Nieukerk, Sevelen, Linfort, and Rhineberg. Except for scattered resistance and a few blown bridges, the task force had little trouble as it forged ahead. One tank was destroyed by panzerfaust fire in Straelin, but the task force was not delayed. Beyond Nieukerk, the infantry was held up by a fourteen-foot antitank ditch blown in the road after the tanks had passed. Guns shelled the road, preventing its repair, until Sgt. Walter Hall, exposed to enemy mortar fire, managed to maneuver his bulldozer tank so as to fill the tank ditch and enable the task force to continue its mission. He then destroyed an enemy antitank gun that was harassing the column.⁹² Task Force Byrne captured fifteen towns and villages during the day.

A night attack was planned for Sevelen. Here enemy paratroop resistance stiffened and slowed down the advance. Out of the task force, one light tank company, one medium tank platoon, an assault gun platoon, and a company of infantry were chosen to attack the town. This force left Nieukerk at 2200 on 2 March and entered Sevelen at about midnight, meeting little resistance until it reached the center of the town. The enemy then blew a bridge over a deep railroad cut at the south entrance to the town, trapping the force in the town and cutting it off from reinforcements and resupply. Nevertheless, at dawn, the troops resumed their attack and the town was cleared of resistance by 1100, just as reinforcements entered Sevelen by another route from the north. In addition to seizing huge stores of food and ammunition, the Sevelen force killed 53 and captured 207 of the enemy.⁹³

Company A, with the 1st Battalion, 134th, and tank destroyers, drove against
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slight resistance to a road junction west of Geldern where they made contact with the 12th Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps, of the British 8th Armored Division.⁹⁴ Company A was then released from attachment to the 134th Infantry. Upon its release, the regimental commander wrote to the division commander:

1. I desire to commend Company A, 74th Tank Battalion, for the splendid performance of that unit while attached to this organization for the period 25 February to 9 March 1845.
2. The Company Commander, .Capt. Robert L. Groglode, 01017224, and his entire company proved indispensable to the 134th Infantry Regiment in the assaulting of Hilfarth and the Roer River and the dash to Wassenburg, Bergenlen, and Geldern.
3. Their high morale, aggressiveness, and willingness to fight deserves commendation.⁹⁵

Within Task Force Byrne, Company B of the 784th was now attached to the 1st Battalion, 320th Infantry, and Company C to the 2d Battalion. Company A, 784th, was attached to the 137th Infantry. As troops approached the Rhine, resistance became stronger. On 4 March the 1st Battalion, 320th Infantry, and Company B, 784th, attacked Kamperbruch, Germany. The tank platoon leader believed friendly infantry to be in the eastern portion of the town when, in fact, they had been forced to withdraw by a strong German counterattack. The 784th's tanks ran into antitank guns, and lost three tanks in the action. One tank commander, Sgt. Douglas F. Kelly, kept his crew in his vehicle

when his tank was hit and immobilized, and continued to direct fire against the enemy until his ammunition began to explode. He then dismounted, made his way to an artillery command post under mortar and small arms fire and, by accurate directions, enabled the artillery to destroy four German antitank guns. Technician 5 Dave H. Adams, observing three wounded infantrymen in a burning building, left his tank, which was then pinned down by antitank fire, made his way to the burning building under heavy fire, and evacuated the wounded soldiers.⁹⁶ Kamperbruch was taken the next day.⁹⁷

The units of the 784th continued to push toward the Rhine with the 35th Division. Company A, on 5 March, became a part of Task Force Murray, along with the 137th Regimental Combat Team, Combat Command C of the 8th Armored Division, a company of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 692d Field Artillery Battalion. Under the command of Col. William Murray of the 137th Infantry, this force had the mission of seizing Wesel and the Rhine bridge still intact at that point. Task Force Byrne moved ahead, with resistance stiffening toward the late afternoon of 6 March. For the next four days the two task forces fought their way ahead, meeting tenacious resistance in Ossenberg, Huck, and Milligen. On 10 March, with the 134th Regimental Combat Team relieving it, Task Force Byrne

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was dissolved. Task Force Murray cleared Ossenberg and went on to Wallach on the same day, completing its mission. Company A, 784th, was relieved from attachment to the 137th Infantry and, with the rest of the 784th, moved to Tegelen, Holland, where, from 12 to 25 March, the battalion was refitted, performed maintenance, and trained replacements.⁹⁸

As part of the plan to exploit the XVI Corps Rhine bridgehead, the 35th Division was ordered on 25 March to move one combat team across the Rhine. Company A, 784th Tank Battalion, again attached to the 134th Infantry as part of Task Force Miltonberger, controlled by the 78th Division, crossed the river at 0800, 26 March, and assisted in the attack upon a wooded area beyond Dinslaken. In the meantime the remainder of the battalion, attached to the 137th Infantry, crossed the Rhine and began to attack toward Neukoln. Resistance, consisting mainly of rifle and panzerfaust fire, was slight, but the advance through the wooded area was slow. Infantry-tank co-operation was close, with tanks as well as infantry sending out patrols to uncover sources of self-propelled gun fire. In Company A's zone of advance along the autobahn north of the Rhine-Herne Canal, the enemy offered only spasmodic resistance. In Company B and C's zone south of the autobahn, resistance was heavier, but the Germans were becoming disorganized and were withdrawing steadily through the Ruhr towns instead of offering their former stiff resistance. Both infantry and tankmen took hundreds of surrendering prisoners.

Continuing the offensive from the Rhine to the Ruhr pocket, the 784th's companies attacked toward and across the Rhine-Herne Canal, supporting the infantry regiments in their attacks on Herne and Gelsenkirchen. As resistance wilted, the units continued south, with Companies B and C attached to the 17th Airborne Division on 10 April for that division's attack on Oberhausen and Mulheim. From 13 April, the battalion remained in

division reserve, patrolling the wooded area around Blatz on the west bank of the Elbe, and picking up enemy soldiers and materiel left in that area during the German retreat. On occasion companies were attached to infantry for specific missions. Company D went with the 134th Infantry to clear a wooded pocket west of the Elbe on 15 April; one platoon of Company C was attached to the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion for a security patrol mission on 16 April; one platoon of medium tanks was attached to XIII Corps to secure a truck column in the Miueste area on 18 April. The battalion moved to Immensen on 26 April, where it set up occupational governing teams for Immensen and surrounding towns. Smaller towns were governed by teams of one officer and six enlisted men each. A constant guard and patrol system was maintained during this period, which lasted until 26 May. For most of June the 784th occupied and governed Kelberg and the vicinity. During its combat career the battalion had 140 battle casualties from all causes, including 24 killed in action.⁹⁹

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The tank and tank destroyer units so far discussed, including the two battalions attached to the 92d Division in Italy, were all marked by one thing in common—the belief that they could carry out assigned missions. This will and confidence was shared by officers and men alike and, after initial demonstration, became stronger. The units differed in their training, their leadership, the caliber of their enlisted men, and, as outlined, in the nature of their employment, but so long as they were busy as supporting units they performed their duties, sometimes spectacularly but more usually as average units of their types. One other unit provided an exception to any generalization that might be made about them or about smaller units. At the same time, it provided within itself dramatic evidence that the rule of motivation combined with effective leadership was still the best guarantee of usefulness in units regardless of the efficiency of their general training or the presumed abilities of men as measured by test scores.

The 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion moved to Europe in November 1944 after its scheduled shipment to the Pacific in the spring of that year had been cancelled because of training deficiencies. Other Negro tank destroyer battalions had been converted to service troops by the spring of 1944. Some of these were considered by the 827th to have been better units than itself. The battalion executive officer, newly assigned to the unit just like the commanding officer, just before its departure for Europe, was of the opinion that the 827th had been "railroaded through the training tests." The S-3, an officer of longer service with the unit, shared this opinion. The commander, a field artillery Reserve officer generally assigned to staff duties before coming to the 827th, was convinced upon receiving his assignment and checking into the training history and qualifications of the battalion that he had been given a mission that would lead to the conversion or inactivation of his unit.

The battalion, whose training career had been analyzed and found wanting by previous commanders, had had about two and a half years of training in the United States, but under unusual circumstances. By the time it moved overseas, it had had eight different commanders, more than one of whom had recommended that the battalion be made a service unit. It had been organized and reorganized under four different tables of

organization and equipment. It was re-equipped with primary weapons four times. Starting its career with towed 75-mm. tank destroyers, it changed successively to self-propelled M-10's, then to towed 3-inch destroyers, and finally to self-propelled M18's. These changes, normal as tank destroyer theories and weapons changed and improved, involved the disbandment and reconstitution of the battalion reconnaissance company, a unit which, in its final form, was looked upon by the battalion's officers as especially inefficient. With 78 to 83 percent of its personnel in AGCT Classes IV and V, the battalion had been hardly adaptable enough to weather the changes in equipment and organization to which it was subjected. Never able to create a strong group of noncommissioned officers from among its substandard men, the 827th was no luckier with its commissioned officers. It went through the exper-

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fence of having its original white junior officers replaced by Negro officers who, upon the arrival of one of the unit's commanders, were blamed for most of the battalion's difficulties. The Negro officers were later removed and replaced by a new staff of white junior officers, many of whom came from other inactivated Negro tank destroyer units and who were therefore already predisposed to a jaundiced view of their new unit's future. The new white officers were no more successful, whereupon it was determined that the enlisted men; with their extremely low AGCT scores, and not their officers, were primarily at fault.¹⁰⁰

By August 1944 the 827th had already failed five Army Ground Forces battalion tests. It never did complete its training. Training in indirect fire, one of the chief requirements for certain of the secondary missions of tank destroyer battalions, was waived entirely. During a round of training tests and retests in August 1944, the new battalion commander and most of his officers became firmly convinced that the unit's enlisted men could not and would not learn to maintain communications, read maps, or perform first and second echelon maintenance on their vehicles. Officers generally were convinced that their noncommissioned officers were incompetent and that no better noncommissioned officer material existed within the unit.

Preparations for overseas movement and further training in September were disrupted by two general courts-martials, one involving a meat-ax murder and the other a shooting. Both required not only considerable paper work on the part of a headquarters already swamped but also demanded the presence of the many men of the battalion concerned in the cases as witnesses. Both cases were indicative of the general state of discipline within the unit, where neither officers nor noncommissioned officers were able to control their men.

The battalion finally left Camp Hood in October 1944, and sailed from New York directly to Marseille, where it bivouacked in Delta Base Section for a month. Moving from the dock to the staging area, the battalion's vehicles became involved in several accidents, most of them attributable to carelessness. The five-day battalion march from Marseille to the Vosges to join the Seventh Army, undertaken over icy roads in December, was a nerve-destroying approach to combat for both officers and enlisted

men. Accidents, speeding cases, column breaking and doubling, breakdowns from lack of lubrication, slow starts, and late arrivals marked the route. When the battalion arrived at Sarrebourg, its vehicles went to shops for immediate repairs. Seldom had a unit approached commitment to combat with less confidence or more internal disorganization.

At the time Seventh Army was adjusting its lines to cover the gap left by Third Army, which was speeding north to the Bulge. The 827th was attached to the 12th Armored Division, a SHAEF reserve unit, on 20 December 1944. The battalion sent one company into

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the line on 21 December, where it supported the 714th Tank Battalion. The towed 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion was operating in the same area at the time and tried to help orient the 827th. The 827th remained in its assignment for three days, seeing no action but experiencing difficulties with discipline among its gun crews, many of whom, despite previous instructions, left their guns unguarded while they gathered firewood and built fires in violation of front-line discipline. Men leaving their vehicles was to be a continuing problem in the 827th Battalion during its short combat assignment.[101](#)

Seventh Army expected a German counterattack to begin at any time after 1 January.[102](#) The army established alternate lines for possible withdrawals and alerted its reserve units for use in case of a heavy enemy attack. On 1 January, the 12th Armored Division attached one of the 827th's companies to the 92d Reconnaissance Squadron, then maintaining a counter-reconnaissance screen west of the Saar River and south of the Maginot Line. The company remained on this mission until 6 January. The 12th Armored Division requested XV Corps' permission to use other parts of the 827th in an indirect fire mission planned to increase the fire power of one of the division's artillery battalions, but XV Corps G-3 denied the request since it would involve clearance from Seventh Army and since there was a greater need to hold the battalion for use in its primary mission.[103](#) Fortunate circumstances thus prevented the 827th from getting an initial assignment for which it was completely untrained.

On 6 January, Seventh Army relieved the battalion from XV Corps and attached it to VI Corps.[104](#) With Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, it moved on verbal orders to join Task Force Wahl of the 79th Division, then defending the northern part of that division's lines. Before the 827th could move out, a company officer and an enlisted man shot each other when the company officer attempted to quell a disturbance among soldiers. A disgruntled soldier attacked a first sergeant in another company. The sergeant, shooting at his attacker, hit another enlisted man, an innocent bystander. The company nominated for initial commitment could not move out on time: the company commander reported that approximately 75 percent of his men were missing from their bivouac area and that many of those present were drunk.[105](#) Another company had to substitute and lead the battalion's march to its first combat assignment.

Task Force Wahl, under Brig. Gen. George D. Wahl, 79th Division Artillery commander, consisted of the 3d Battalion, 313th Infantry; the 315th Infantry (-) ; the 222d Infantry (-)

of the 42d Division; Combat Command A of the 14th Armored Division; the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-); and the 827th

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Tank Destroyer Battalion.¹⁰⁶ The 242d Infantry of the 42d Division, the 79th Division Artillery, and the 79th Reconnaissance Troop were added later. Elements of the 827th were attached to units of Task Force Wahl at 0300 on 8 January. Twelve days of combat followed in which units of the 827th, in Rittershoffen and Hatten especially, were engaged in fierce and often confused fighting-both German and American forces fought in the streets of Hatten for several days, with American forces cut off from their lines much of the time. The attachments themselves caused some confusion within the newly committed unit. On 9 January, the 827th was attached to the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion, or at least the 813th so believed, although the attachment orders were never confirmed. The 827th thought, on the other hand, that it had been directed to "coordinate" with the 813th. In some cases, the two types of destroyers were expected to be "mixed in together." At the same time, the infantry commanders with whom elements of the 827th were operating expected to control the movements, select positions, and assign targets to tank destroyer guns and crews. Company officers within the 827th felt that the infantry commanders too often confused tank destroyers with tanks and assigned missions which destroyers could not-or were not supposed to-carry out, a tendency which the 819th, a veteran of North Africa, Italy, and Normandy with thirty months overseas, was still finding objectionable. The 827th itself expected orders to be given through its own officers, in fact, had so encouraged this that its crews were directed to fire only on the order of an officer, preferably an 827th officer. The procedure was enormously complicated by poor communications within the 827th. As a result, platoon officers of the 827th shuttled back and forth between their sections, trying to be everywhere at once, and 827th crews fired neither on their own initiative nor on the orders of officers strange to them. The upshot of this arrangement was that infantry commanders concluded that the 827th's crews fired only on those targets which they decided were good ones, and ignored or backed away from all others.¹⁰⁷

Between 8 and 20 January the platoons and companies of the 827th had varied experiences and gave varying performances-some extraordinarily good in light of the unit's background and some extraordinarily poor by any standards. By 14 January, there existed a tangle of fact and opinion from which the unit was never to extricate itself.

One company, starting out for Oberroedorn on 9 January to fill the request of the hard pressed 3d Battalion, 313th Infantry, for more tank destroyers-this battalion had lost all but two of those attached to it-arrived with only two of the twelve guns with which it had started. The company commander sent searching parties to find the remainder of his column, and then went himself into an infantry pillbox where he remained for three and a half hours during a German attack. When he emerged, he went back to pick up his M-18's, and found that seven of his destroyers were already in position though there was utter con-

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fusion about their locations and missions. Two of the destroyers had gone into a ditch along the icy roads, one had been hit, and two others were still unaccounted for. Infantry commanders' requests for fire on particular targets often went unacknowledged while men looked for a confirming 827th officer or argued about the appropriateness of the targets. Men were found in cellars and houses instead of at their guns. On one occasion the destroyer crew refused to fire on a German tank stuck along a roadside; the infantry battalion commander ordered his company officers to shoot the entire crew if it did not fire on the tank, but by this time the Germans had recovered their tank and disappeared. A series of similar incidents, wherein men were not on their guns when needed, where gun commanders executed missions slowly or argued about positions and targets, came to a climax on 14 January when a tank destroyer parked in a barn where antitank mines were stored caught fire. The crew, when ordered by their sergeant to drive the burning destroyer out before the mines caught and exploded, refused to enter the barn. Under orders of the infantry battalion commander, an infantry lieutenant fired five times at the crew, missing each time. Another tank destroyer was brought up to tow the burning destroyer out, but by that time the fire had gone too far. In the meantime, infantrymen had carried the mines from the barn.

The infantry battalion commander, already annoyed with dilatory tactics and inefficiency within the 827th, asked for white crews to replace the Negro crews. He had been promised four white crews and, knowing that there were over 200 white replacements in his division, he had considered requesting that some of them be given him for antitank work. Crews of the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which had lost during the month nineteen out of their thirty-one M-10 destroyers, including four captured with the entire 2d Battalion, 314th Infantry, were already manning some of the 827th's M18's.¹⁰⁸ Continuing difficulties with elements of the 827th brought the VI Corps inspector general for an investigation of training and discipline within the unit.

The investigation disclosed an amazing state of affairs. Certain of the units of the 827th attached to other infantry elements of Task Force Wahl had acquitted themselves well, especially in light of their officers' estimates that their units were at best barely satisfactory, and in view of the facts that they were green and partially trained, and that the entire action took place under strafing by jet planes, against flame-throwing tanks, and in support of troops who were themselves disorganized and confused. On 9 January, for example, Company B of the 827th, then attached to the 68th Armored Infantry in Souzous-Forets, was dispatched to the area north of Hatten at 1325 to help halt an enemy attack. Sixteen enemy tanks were headed for Rittershoffen and fifteen more approached Hatten. The tanks approaching Rittershoffen (like Hatten, a village on an open plain) were fired on by the 827th's men, resulting in the destruction of eleven tanks and one full-tracked vehicle. Upon meeting this fire the remaining tanks with-

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drew.¹⁰⁹ A joint team of the 827th and 813th destroyed nine tanks at Hatten. On 10 January, 827th destroyers in Rittershoffen knocked out four more enemy tanks.¹¹⁰ Thereafter in Hatten, isolated by day and subject to resupply over the open snow-covered plain only at night, one section of a Company B, 827th, platoon continued to engage in

close fighting, accounting for several enemy tanks and vehicles. Another section, under more strenuous urging from its commander, reportedly under armed threats at times, performed well-or` well enough for the 315th's infantrymen to report that they had received excellent support from the 827th. Nevertheless, in the investigation, every officer of the 827th expressed some doubts that his men, characterized as untrainable, slow in their reactions, or stricken by fear, would ever be dependable on tank destroyers, although some officers explained that a majority of their men could be counted upon and that they had always believed that if adequate replacements could be obtained for the remainder theirs would be excellent units.¹¹¹ Replacements had not been available in the past and, with the shortage of Negro enlisted replacements then current, hope for enough new men to make an appreciable change in the unit was practically nonexistent.

During the investigation, the elements of the 827th in Rittershoffen and Hatten continued street fighting. The force in Rittershoffen used its guns to shell buildings and drive the enemy from them; those in Hatten knocked out two tanks at a range of 1,400 yards, and lost one destroyer, hit by enemy fire, and its full crew.¹¹²

After taking testimony for four days, the inspector recommended that the 827th be withdrawn, given additional technical training, and recommitted to combat; that the men refusing to operate their guns be tried; that the unit commander be replaced with a more forceful officer; and that the noncommissioned officers be improved by making each one perform his normal duties. The Commanding General, VI Corps, recommended instead that the unit be disbanded and that its enlisted men, excepting those who had proved themselves "to be worthy," be distributed to appropriate service units.¹¹³ The Commanding General, Seventh Army, approved, recommending that the battalion be inactivated and that a substitute tank destroyer battalion composed of white personnel be activated within the Seventh Army. White truck, medical ambulance, car, and smoke generator companies could be converted to Negro, both to provide white soldiers for the new battalion and service unit vacancies for the Negroes. If higher headquarters decided that a white combat unit had to be converted to Negro to preserve a racial balance between service and combat troops, Seventh Army would convert a white engineer combat battalion instead.¹¹⁴

Now began a long administrative discussion of the disposition to be made of the 827th Battalion. The simplest procedure would have been to adopt the

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VI Corps and Seventh Army recommendation, but the investigation supporting this recommendation had not reached the same conclusion. Tank destroyer battalions had now returned to high priority and were in demand.¹¹⁵ The investigating officer had questioned only officers of the 827th Battalion and a few officers of units to which its elements were attached. These did not include officers of all units with elements of the 827th attached. Moreover, no enlisted men of the 827th were questioned during the investigation. On 14 February 6th Army Group therefore requested that additional testimony be taken from representative enlisted men of the unit.¹¹⁶

In the meantime, the 827th was relieved from Task Force Wahl, its last unit leaving on 23 January. The battalion returned to attachment to the 12th Armored Division, now engaged in the Colmar Pocket operation. One platoon was attached to each of the combat commands of the division on 2 February, participating with these units in the last few days of the Colmar operation.¹¹⁷ The remainder of the battalion was with the division's trains. Colmar itself fell to Allied troops on 2 February, but the next day the 12th Armored Division, then in XXI Corps, was committed to continue the attack to the south and east where resistance, though scattered, was intense at some points. Combat Command B, divided into three task forces, launched an attack south from Colmar to seize Sudhoffen, with two task forces attacking and a third in reserve. The attack progressed slowly. Task Force Boone, the reserve force consisting of a platoon of the 827th, a company of armored infantry, and a company of tanks, was committed on February. It overran enemy strongpoints, destroying antitank guns and continuing the attack.¹¹⁸ The other 827th platoons saw little action, for the 12th Armored Division met French forces on 6 February, sealing off the remaining Germans in the Vosges.

The uncommitted elements of the 827th, under their own commander in division trains, made up for the lack of action among the attached platoons engaged in the attack from Colmar. On the night of 5 February, the battalion commander called upon the 12th Armored Division for help. His enlisted men were becoming increasingly difficult for him to handle. They drew guns, molested civilians, and indulged in wild shootings. The division judge advocate general and inspector general went down to the 827th Battalion and conferred with the commander. As a result, 12th Armored Division asked to be relieved of the 827th Battalion.¹¹⁹ Ironically, VI Corps was, during this same period, inquiring if the 79th Division still intended to award Bronze Stars to one of the 827th's crews which had performed exceptionally well in Hatten.¹²⁰

On 12 February the 827th departed for Baccarat on verbal orders of the 12th Armored Division. There it was at-

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attached to the 68th Antiaircraft Artillery Group in XV Corps for operations.¹²¹ It spent the remainder of the month in guard duty as prescribed by the 68th Group.¹²²

The 6th Army Group's request for additional testimony concerning the performance of the 827th was complied with in March when a total of twelve enlisted men performing duties as platoon sergeants, gun commanders, gunners, drivers, and radio men were queried, primarily on their duties, training, and knowledge of map reading and first aid. The inspector concluded that the men interviewed had a satisfactory knowledge of their duties but an examination conducted after six weeks under rear area conditions could not indicate accurately the combat efficiency of an organization. Of the twelve men questioned only one gave the inspector the impression that he would prefer to return to combat rather than remain on guard duty; the others, who said that they would do as told or that they would like to return if in a tank or tank destroyer unit or if attached to a "good" division like the 79th, all hesitated "sufficiently long," in the inspector's opinion, to indicate that they did not really wish additional combat duty. The inspector

recommended this time that the enlisted personnel of the 827th be transferred to a Negro infantry division .[123](#)

Seventh Army in the meantime nominated the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion for use by 6th Army Group to provide housekeeping facilities and transportation for military and civilian specialists at 6th Army Group headquarters. Since these housekeeping requirements had to be met from some source and since either conversion or retraining would take considerable time- and conversion might prove embarrassing to the theater and the War Department the unit remained active, with its self-propelled destroyers returned to Seventh Army stocks for use by other destroyer units. To prevent its nomination for redeployment as a tank destroyer unit, the battalion was eventually named as one of those surplus to redeployment needs so that it could be returned to the United States after V-E Day for inactivation .[124](#)

Despite the misfortunes of the 827th -attributable largely to the state of training, discipline, and leadership within the unit as well as to the critical nature of its initial employment-the record of the smaller combat support units, including that of the armored and artillery units with the 92d Division in Italy, lent support to the older theories that Negro troops could be effectively employed in smaller units in combat support roles. Even within the 827th, smaller elements at times performed so as to lead to the belief that wiser management at one or more points in that battalion's career might have made it a useful unit.

A further type of employment for Negro troops was in the making just when the 827th was undergoing its

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greatest difficulties. This type of employment was to be doubly important, for the units here were to be smaller still and their roles were to require direct and close contact with the enemy the very area in which the larger Negro units of the same type were already having their major problems.

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42 Bn files, 761st Tank Bn; Trezzvant W. Anderson, *Come Out Fighting: The Epic Tale of the 761st Tank Battalion, 1942-1945* (Salzburger Druckerei and Verlag, 1945), pp. 15, 21. The account by Anderson, a newspaperman in civilian life who, as a noncommissioned aviation engineer, took a reduction in rank to transfer to the 761st, is one of the best of the few Negro unit histories to appear in print.

43 For an account of the 26th Division in this, its initial campaign, see Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign*, in this series, Chs. VII, X, XII.

44 Jnl 602d TD Bn, ETO I,1292, 26th Inf Div (38)

45 SAAR 761st Tank Bn, Nov 44, in L-292-26th Inf Div (39) ; Dyer, op. Cit., p. 250.

46 AAR 761st S-2, S-3, Nov 44. Anderson, Come Out Fighting, pp. 20-33; Cole, The Lorraine Campaign, P. 323.

47 The first member of this tank unit to lose his life was a medical aidman, Pvt. Clifford C. Adams, hit by an exploding shell while going to the aid of a wounded crewman.

48 Cpl. Alfred L. Wilson, who died refusing aid for himself. Cole, The Lorraine Campaign, p. 322n. See notes on pages 921-23 for other examples of heroism among infantrymen on these days.

49 As of 14 Nov 45. Ltr, CO 761st to CG 12th Army Gp, 10 Jul 45, 201.3, Bn Records; Bn Corresp Files; Anderson, Come Out Fighting, p, 151.

50 Anderson, Come Out Fighting, pp, 25, 27.

51 Silver Star, SSgt Ruben Rivers, Hq 26th Inf Div, GO 2 Dec 44.

52 Both received Silver Stars.

53 Commendations binder, 761st Tnk Bn Files; Anderson, Come Out Fighting, pp. 35, 102-12.

54 AAR 761st Tnk Bn S-2, S-3, Nov 44.

55 War Diary, CO foist Inf Opns Rpts, 26th Inf Div, Nov 44.

56 AAR 761st Tnk Bn S-2, S-9, Nov 44.

56 AAR 761st Tnk Bn S-2, S-9, Nov 44.

57 AAR 761st Tnk Bn Med Detachment, Nov 44 (dated 29 Nov 44); AAR 761st S-1 Nov 44 (dated 2 Dec 44); AAr Motor Office, 761st Tnk Bn, Nov 44 (dated 2 Dec 44).

58 Summaries of Gen Staff Sees, 26th Inf Div, G-1 Rpt, Nov 44.

59 AAR 761st S-1, Dec 44, and Bn Files.

60 Ltrs, 761st Tnk Bn to CG XVI Corps, 17 Feb 45

61 AAR's Per S-t Rpts, 761st; Press Release, S-2 761st Tnk Bn, 6 Aug 45.

62 Hq Third U.S. Army to CG XII Corps, 24 Nov 44, with rst Ind, Hq XII Corps to CO's All Units Attached or Assigned to XII Corps, 28 Nov 44. XII Corps, AG 200.6; Ltr, Hq 26th Inf Div to All Members 26th Inf Div, 26 Nov 44, copies in L-292-26th Inf Div

Supply Does and attached unit rpts.

63 Ltr, Hq XII Corps to CO 761st Tnk Bn, 9 Dec 44. AG 380.19 (G-1), Bn Files.

64 1st Ind, Hq 26th Inf Div (on Ltr cited n. 63) to CO 761st Tnk Bn, AG 201.22, Bn Files.

65 AAR 761st Motor Office, Dec 44.

66 Ibid., Jan 45.

67 AAR 761st Service Co, Jan 45

68 AAR 761st S-2, S-9, Mar 45.

69 AAR 3d Cav Gp (M) , Nov, Dec 44; Ltr, Hq 614th TD Bn to S-3 3d Cav Gp, 614th TD Bn AAR, Dec 44.

70 Jnl 614th TD Bn, Dec 44; Narrative Rpt, 614th TD Bn, Dec 44; Hq Seventh Army, 3 Dec 44, AG 370.5-C.

71 FO 3, 103d Inf Div, 7 Dec 44.

72 Ltr, Hq Co C to S-3 614th TD Bn, 8 Dec 44, 614th TD Bn S-3 Jnl, Dec 44.

73 Daily Rpt, Ex0 614th TD Bn to S-3, to Dec 44.

74 S-3 Rpt Go C 614th TD Bn, 13-14 Dec 44, S-3 Jnl 614th TD Bn, Dec 44.

75 Hq Seventh Army, GO 58, 20 Feb 45.

76 Narrative Rpt, 614th TD Bn, Dec 44; S-3 Rpt Company C 614th TD Bn, 19-14 Dec 44, Bn S-3 Jul; Opus Rpt (Narrative, an. r), road Inf Div, Dec 44, Apr 45; Personal Narrative, Sgt Dillard Booker, Third Platoon, C Company, 64th TD Bn, 614th TD 314.7. Ralph Mueller and Jerry Turk, Report After Action: The Story of the 103d Infantry Division (Hq, 103d Inf Div, Innsbruck, Austria, 1945) , PP. 48-50. Hq road Inf Div, GO 88, 27 Dec 44, and GO S9, 28 Dec 44; WD GO 37 45: Hq Seventh Army, GO 58, 20 Feb 45, and GO 141, 11 Apr 45.

77 Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn, Dec 44

78 Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn, Jan 45, XV Corps Daily TD Rpts, Dec-Jan 44; Armd Bulls (Summaries of Armd Activity) 1st Armd Gp, Jan 45.

79 2d Recon Plat Rpt of Enemy Activities, 26 Jan 45: Jul 614th TD Bn, Jan 45.

80 Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn, Feb 45; G-2 Periodic Rpt, 103d Inf Div, 6 Feb 45. The latter credits the party with only two Germans killed.

81 Mueller and Turk, 103d Infantry Division, p. 74. This account credits the raiders with nine prisoners and one dead German. These numbers appear to be those of a subsequent force's results.

82 Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn, Mar 45; Daily Rpt, Jnl 614th TD Bn, Mar 45; Mueller and Turk, road Infantry Division, p. 86.

83 Addition to Daily Rpt Co C, 15 Mar 45, Jul 614th TD Bn.

84 Jnl and AAR 761st Tk Bn, Mar 45; Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn; AAR 409th Inf Regt, Mar 45: Ltr, Hq 761st Tk Bn to CofS load Div, S May 45, Bn Files; Hist Data File, 108d Inf Div; Mueller and Turk, 103d Infantry Division, pp. 9"8; Anderson, Come Out Fighting, pp. 67-76.

85 Mueller and Turk, 103d Infantry Division, p. 96. The tank commander, Sgt. Ervin Lattimore, received a Silver .Star for his part in Task Force Rhine. Though wounded while leading the attack against the enemy column on the road from Munchweiler, Sergeant Lattimore refused to be evacuated, and commanded his tank on into Klingmunster. Colonel Bates, who kept walking up and down his columns during the many halts caused by roadblocks and fire fights, talking to and jerking tired men awake during the night and early morning hours of the twelve and-a-half-hour continuous drive, received a Silver Star as well. Bronze Stars went to a number of men and officers for their work in Task Force Rhine.

86 AAR 761st Tk Bn, Apr-May 45; AAR 71st Inf Div, Apr-May 45; Clinger, Johnston, and Masel, The History of the 71st Infantry Division (Augsburg, 1946), PP. 57-98.

87 Narrative Rpt 614th TD Bn, Apr-May 45: opus Rpt logd Inf Div, Apr-May 45.

88 Hist 784th Tk Bn, 1944.

89 AAR 104th Inf Div, Jan-Apr 45.

90 Leo A. Hoegh and Howard J. Doyle, Timberwolf Tracks (Washington: The Infantry Journal Press, 1946) , p. 222.

91 Opus Rpt 784th Tk Bn, Feb-Mar 45; AAR 35th Div, Feb-Mar 45.

92 Bronze Star, Hq 35th Inf Div GO 26, 12 Apr 45

93 An Associated Press dispatch described Sevelen as a "miniature 'Bastogne,' " with the 784th's troops "mauling German parachute units in savage street fighting while cut off for eighteen hours." ("Negro Tank Outfit Repeats Bastogne," New York Times, March 5,

1945.)

94 AAR 5th Div, Mar 45; Opns Rpt 884th Tk Bn, Mar 45.

95 Ltr, Hq 134th Inf Regt to CG 85th Inf Div, 5 Mar 45, and 1st Ind, Hq 35th Inf Div to CO 784th Tk Bn, Bn Files.

96 Bronze Stars, Hq 85th Inf Div, GO 26, 12 Apr 45

97 AAR 35th Div, Mar 45; Opns Rpt (Intel An.), 784th Tk Bn, Mar 45.

98 Ibid

99 Opns Rpts 784th Tk Bn, Apr-Jun 45; Ltr, CO 784th Tk Bn to CG 12th Army Gp, 2 Jul 45, copy in Bn Files.

100 Rpt of Investigation, 827th TD Bn, Bibisheim, France, 15-19 Jan 45, Incl to Ltr, IG VI Corps to CG VI Corps, 21 Jan 45, SHAFT G-3 O&F 322; 1st Ind, Hq ESFET (Main), 1 Oct 49, on Ltr, TAG to Comds, 23 May 49, AG 291.2 (23 May 45) OB-S ♦ WDSSP, in WDSSP 291.2 (ETO).

101 Rpt of Investigation, 827th TD Bn, AAR's 827th TD Bn.

102 Report of Operations: The Seventh Army in France and Germany, 1944-1949 (Heidelberg, 1946) , II, 560-61, 580-82.

103 Ibid., 566; XV Corps Daily TD Rpts, Dec 44 ♦ Jan 45; Hist 827th TD Bn, Jan 45; Opns Rpt 92d Cav Recon Sq, Jan 45; Opns Rpt 12th Armd Div Arty, Jan 45

104 Ltr, Hq Seventh Army, 6 Jan 45, copy in Hist 827th TD Bn.

105 Rpt of Investigation, 827th TD Bn, 15-19 Jan 45

106 79th Div G-5 Rpt, 7 Jan 45

107 Rpt of Investigation, 827th TD Bn; AAR 818th TD Bn, Jan 45.

108 AAR 813th TD Bn, Jan 45; Unit Jnl 3d Bn 313th Inf, Jan 49.

109 AAR 315th Inf 79th Div, Jan 45

110 AAR 813th TD Bn, Jan 45.

111 Rpt, of Investigation, 827th TD Bn.

112 Unit Hist 827th TD Bn, Jan 45

113 1st Ind to Rpt of Investigation, Hq VI Corps to CG Seventh Army, 26 Jan 45.

114 Ltr, Hq Seventh Army to CG 6th Army Gp, 31 Jan 45, AG 333.5-0, 6th Army GP 322-3 (Jan).

115 Msg, SHAEF Main to Hq ETOUSA, 13 Jan 45. OUT 1633, and Memo, Chief O&E to SHAEF G-3, 26 Jan 45. Both in SHAEF G-3 322.

116 1st Ind to Ltr cited n. 114, Hq 6th Army Gp to CG Seventh Army, 14 Feb 45, AG 322/3 SGS-O.

117 Unit Jnl 827th TD Bn, Feb 45.

118 12th Armd Div G-3 Opns Rpt, Feb 45

119 12th Armd Div G-1 Opns Rpt, Feb 45; 12th Armd Div IG Rpt, Feb 45.

120 VI Corps G-1 Jnl, 6 Feb 45.

121 AAR 827th TD Bn, Feb 45; Ltr, Hq Seventh Army to CG XV Corps, 12 Feb 45, AG 370.5-C.

122 Opns Rpts 68th AAA Gp, Feb-Mar 45, CAGP 68-0.9 (42144)

123 Ltr, Hq VI Corps, OTIG to CG VI Corps, 10 Mar 45, in Rpt of Investigation.

124 gth to 8th Inds, 27 Mar 45-19 Apr 45, to Ltr, Hq Seventh Army to CG 6th Army Gp, 31 Jan 45 and attached inteiof&ce slips, 6th Army GP X22-9 (Jan); Ltr, SHAEF G-3 Forwarded to SHAEF CofS, 19 Apr 45, GCT 322 (TK-TD) O&E.