

D I A R Y
701ST TANK DESTROYER BN.

- Dec. 15, 1941 - Order activated at 50% strength. Lt. Col. Bensen commanding.
- Jan. 1, 1942 - Received first model of 37 SP Ford swamp buggy. Tested and fired over a period of two months.
- Jan. 10, 1942 - Received 160 replacements from AFRTC, Ft. Knox, Ky.
- Jan. 12, 1942 - First Range practice at OP 6. Temp. 10 deg. below zero.
- Jan. 20, 1942 - Moved from initial area (new barracks adjoining the 5th Division area-- (known as tent city)) to old 69th AR area west of tracks, Ft. Knox, Ky.
- Jan. 21, 1942 - Reconnaissance Company activated. Lt. Walker commanding.
- Feb. 1, 1942 - Received 250 replacements from Camp Wheeler, Ga.
- Feb. 20, 1942 - Received next model of 37SP mounted on Dodge 3/4 T truck. Original armament: 4-37's, 8-75's towed M-3 82's.
- Mar. 1, 1942 - New 75SP's received. Old 75's, both towed and SP turned in.
- Mar. 10, 1942 - First problem participated in by battalion was OP# in field at Ft. Knox.
- Apr. 2, 1942 - Fire in Hq. Co. and Rcn Co. motor shed. Several tracks damaged and personal equipment of four men destroyed.
- Apr. 2, 1942 - About 5 SCR 510's received.
- Apr. 6, 1942 - Wheeled vehicles overland on four day trip to Dix. Weather: Cold and rain. Morale: Good.
- Apr. 9, 1942 - Track vehicles to Ft. Dix, N. J. by rail. Strength upon leaving Knox was 34 Officers, including Chaplain Warnouth, and 760 enlisted men.
- May 15, 1942 - First real 75SP range practice at Ft. Dix, N.J. All crews get started successfully.
- May 30, 1942 - Battalion entrained at Ft. Dix, detrained at Jersey City, Pier 7 to U.S. S. Thomas H. Berry enroute to Belfast via Halifax. All vehicles and impedimenta previously prepared for shipment on cargo vessels to Ireland.
- June 12, 1942 - Disembarked at Belfast, N.I. Entrained to stations as follows:
Hq. Co., "C" Co. and detachment of Medics to Camp Ballykinler, Co. Down, "A" Co. to Newcastle, Co. Down, "B" Co. to Downpatrick, Co. Down, and Rcn Co and detachment of Medics to Crossgar.
- June 18, 1942 - Major Harrison King assumed command of battalion.
- June 25, 1942 - Fired demonstration for King and Queen of England, along with other units of 1 AD. Corp. Stema, later killed in action in N. Africa, gunner. Very impressive.
- Aug. 6-8, 1942.- Participated in problem DEFIANCE as a battalion, along with 3rd Bn., 13th AR. Attached to British 61st Inf. Division under Brigadier Hawkins. Maneuvered from Ballymore and Ballyclaire north. Highly successful.
- Oct. 3, 1943 - "B", "C" cos and 1 platoon of Rcn Co under Lt. Smith plus a detachment of Medical Detachment moved out from respective stations in N. Ireland for destination unknown via Macclesfield, Eng. (See separate diary)

RECORD OF EVENTS OF "B" CO., "C" CO., AND DETACHMENTS WILL BE FOUND IN SUCCEEDING PAGES TAKEN FROM DIARY SUBMITTED BY RESPECTIVE UNITS.

- Oct. 20, 1942 - Hq. Co., "A" Co., Rcn Co. - Lt. Smith's platoon and Medical Detachment entrained at Tullymurry, Co. Down, N.I. under cover of darkness for Belfast. Embarked at Belfast, disembarked and entrained at Stranrear, Scotland, detrained at Stoke-on-Trent, Eng. Traveled by convey to Tytherington Hall, Macclesfield, Cheshire, England. Wheeled vehicles crossed Irish Sea via Larne to Stranrear via convey to Macclesfield. Track vehicles moved via train from Newcastle, N.I. to Larne to Stranrear via cargo vessel to Stoke-on-Trent via train, to Macclesfield via convey

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- Oct. 14 - 31, 1942 - Tytherington Hall, Macclesfield, England. Usual Garrison duties. Combat training. Preparation for movement of vehicles and personnel in two groups (II - Hq co., and III - "A" Co., Rcn Co.).
- Nov. 1-8, 1942 - Tytherington Hall, Macclesfield. - Same.
- Nov. 9, 1942 - Group II vehicles to Liverpool, England for shipment via cargo vessels to North Africa. S/Sgt Murray and T-4 Warner, Hq. Co. on DS with vehicles.
- Nov. 10-19, 1942 - Usual duties - combat training - preparation of Group III vehicles for shipment.
- Nov. 20, 1942 - Lt. Col. King with four officers and five Enlisted men to Liverpool, England as advance detail aboard HMT Otrante. Col. King assumed duties of OC Troops for Group II personnel movement.
- Nov. 22, 1942 - Group II personnel movement (16-0, 249-EM) entrained at Macclesfield, Eng. at 0830 hrs for Liverpool, Eng. Detained and boarded HMT Otrante, destination unknown. (Group II included two officers and 56 EM of Rcn Co)
- Nov. 23-26, 1942 - Group II aboard HMT Otrante lay anchored in River Mercy, Liverpool.
- Nov. 27, 1942 - HMT Otrante sailed from Liverpool for North Africa 1245 hours. Ship's Staff composed of officers and enlisted personnel of 1 AD with Col. King of 701st as OC Troops. Staff proved to be highly efficient and unusually successful with ship's administration throughout the voyage.
- Nov. 28-30, 1942 - At Sea aboard HMT Otrante. Sea: Generally calm. Some seasickness in forward part of ship one day but morale of all troops running high. (Further information regarding voyage available in L-15 file - Col. King).
- Nov 23-30, 1942 - Group III - Tytherington Hall - Usual duties. Group III vehicles in convey to Newport on Nov 24th for shipment to North Africa in cargo vessels.
- Dec. 1-4, 1942 - Group II - At sea aboard HMT Otrante enroute to N. Africa. Weather: Generally calm. Very little seasickness. Morale: Excellent.
- Dec. 5-8, 1942 - Group II - At anchor in harbor at Gibraltar. One alert: Two Italians rode into harbor on torpedo with intentions of fastening mine to ship, possibly the Otrante. Much activity but no damage suffered.
- Dec. 1-8, 1942 - Group III - Tytherington Hall - Usual duties and combat training.
- Dec. 9, 1942 - Group III ("A" Co. and bal. of Rcn Co not in Group II) left garrison at Tytherington Hall, Macclesfield, England at 0800 hrs enroute to Port of Embarkation at Liverpool, England. Boarded HMT Empress of Canada at 1200 hours.
- Dec. 9, 1942 - Group II - aboard HMT Otrante, sailed from Gibraltar for Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria, N.A. Weather: Calm and warm.
- Dec. 10, 1942 - Group II - Disembarked at Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria, N. Africa at 1400 hours. Entrucked and proceeded to Assi Ameur. Established camp and security.
- Dec. 10, 1942 - Group III - at anchor aboard HMT Empress of Canada in River Mercy, Liverpool, England.
- Dec. 11-13, 1942 - Group III - Left Liverpool Dec. 11, 1942 at 1145 hours enroute to North Africa. Weather: light fog and rain through Dec 13, 1942.
- Dec. 14, 1942 - Group II - Moved to Salies d'Arzeu, left Assi Ameur 0900 hours, arrived 1000 hours. Established camp and security.
- Dec. 14-17, 1942 - Group III - Aboard HMT Empress of Canada. Weather: Stormy. Sea: Very rough - excessive amount of sea-sickness among troops. Morale: Excellent.
- Dec. 18-20, 1942 - Group III - Aboard HMT Empress of Canada. Weather: Warm and clear. Sea: Calm. Morale: Excellent.
- Dec. 21, 1942 - Group III - Disembarked HMT Empress of Canada at Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria, N. Africa at 1700 hours. Rejoined Group II at battalion bivouac area at Salies d'Arzeu - 5 miles east of St. Louis and approximately 30 miles SE of Oran. Weather: Heavy rains causing excessive muddy conditions in and around bivouac area. Morale: Excellent.
- Dec. 21-31, 1942 - Salies d'Arzeu. Field duties. General alert ordered 1830 hours Dec. 24th. Admiral Darlan assassinated.
- Jan. 1 - 8, 1943 - In bivouac at Salies d'Arzeu (nicknamed Camp Mud) Field duties.
- Jan. 8, 1943 - Track vehicles from Salies d'Arzeu to Mers-el-Kebir, loaded aboard cargo vessel for shipment to Phillipville (personnel went with vehicles), landed at Phillipville Jan. 11, 1943, proceeded via convoy to Battalion bivouac area in Oued Seguin area.

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- Jan. 9, 1943 - Wheeled vehicles (and personnel) left ~~Sadies~~ d'Arzeu bivouac area on four day movement enroute to Oued Seguin area. Bivouaced that night at Orleansville. Traveled by day.
 - Jan. 10, 1943 - Left Orleansville in blackout, traveled by day, bivouaced that night at l'Arba, Algeria.
 - Jan. 11, 1943 - Left l'Arba in blackout, bivouaced that night on road approximately 20 miles west of Setif, Algeria.
 - Jan. 12, 1943 - Left bivouac area at dawn for Division assembly area in Oued Seguin area. Established camp and security in bivouac at Oued Seguin area 1400 hrs.
 - Jan. 13, 1943 - Pioneer platoon, Rcn Co. under Lt. Parker (30 EM) preceded to Ain Beida area to establish Gas and Oil dump for 1 AD and for purpose of guarding dump.
 - Jan. 18, 1943 - Hq. Co., "A" Co., Rcn Co (- Lt. Smith and Lt. Parker's platoons,) and Med. Det. in two day march moved to Bou Chelha area (Division assembly area) in preparation for movement into battle. Bivouaced first night in Ain Beida area. March was made in blackout during hours of darkness.
 - Jan. 25, 1943 - Lt. Parker (pioneer Platoon, Rcn Co) and 30 EM relieved from guard duty of Division Gas and Oil dump at Ain Beida and rejoined Battalion in Bou Chelha Area.
 - Jan. 23, 1943 - "A" Co. moved out of Battalion bivouac area, Bou Chelha area, attached CC "A", 1 AD, to Sbeitla. Reported strafed enroute.
 - Jan. 24, 1943- "C" Co. - Lt. Romani's platoon (on guard duty at Division ACP) and Lt. Lewis' platoon (attached to CC"B" doing MP duty) rejoined battalion in Bou Chelha Area
 - Jan. 25, 1943 - "C" recd four 75 SP.
 - Jan. 26 - 30, 1943 - Field duties and preparation for combat.
 - Jan. 30, 1943 - Battalion, composed of Hq Co., Rcn Co - Lt Smith plt., C Co - Lt. Lewis plt (MP with CC"B") and Med Det attached to CC"D" for attack on Sened, left Bou Chelha area at 1830 hours.

SEE COPY OF CC"D" DIARY