



703rd Road Block



Vol. 1 No. 4 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter 12/90

AS MEANINGFUL TODAY!

HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMORED DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General

A.P.O. #253

U.S. Army

14 December 1944

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE THIRD ARMORED
(SPEARHEAD) DIVISION

The members of my staff and I extend to each individual of this Division and to their loved ones at home, our sincere good wishes for a Merry Christmas and for a very Happy New Year.

The successful operation of this Division from the beaches of Normandy to the banks of the Roer in Germany had been made possible only by your devotion to duty, self sacrifice, and adherence to the high ideals and standards that we have set for ourselves.

Please transmit to your loved ones at home my personal good wishes for the coming holidays, and my sincere hope that next Christmas will find all of us reunited with those we left at home, when the achievements of the Spearhead Division will be the subject of proud conversation rather than a basis for future planning. It will then be with a feeling of satisfaction that we will know that we have done our part to restore "peace on earth and good will to men."

MAURICE ROSE

Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

LET'S NOT FORGET!

(Continued)

The American Battle Monuments Commission
Washington, D.C. 20314

1. Normandy American Cemetery
Colleville-Sur-Mer, St. Laurent-Sur-Mer (Calvados) France

- a. Tec 5 James J. Allen (B)
Plot E Row 8 Grave 4
 - b. Sgt. Clyde A. Hildinger
Plot J Row 16 Grave 9
2. Brittany American Cemetery
St. James (Manche) France
 - a. Cpl. Joseph Juno (B)
Plot E Row 4 Grave 1
 - b. 1 Lt. John L. Wissing, Jr. (A)
Plot E Row 8 Grave 2
 - c. Pfc. Christy T. Ross, Jr. (C)
Plot C Row 6 Grave 6
 3. Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery
Henri-Chapelle, Belgium
 - a. Tec 5 Earl R. McCleary (C)
Plot B Row 1 Grave 43
 - b. Pfc. Norbert A. Papineau (C)
Plot D Row 7 Grave 32
 - c. Pfc. William H. French (B)
Plot G Row 4 Grave 28
 - d. Pvt. Estil Owens (B)
Plot G Row 9 Grave 60
 - e. Tec 4 Joseph A. Olson (A)
Plot F Row 3 Grave 46
 - f. Tec 5 Adolph O. Nordby (A)
Plot D. Row 4 Grave 5
 4. Netherlands American Cemetery
Margraten, Holland
S.Sgt Frederick J. Petrekovich (B)
Plot K Row 21 Grave 10
 5. Epinal American Cemetery
Epinal (Vosges) France
Pvt. Leonard J. Villemure (C)
Plot B Row 6 Grave 22

To Be Continued-- Leonard Straub (A)

AT LEAST ONE LIFE SAVED!

My jeep driver and I had driven through the center of this small French village numerous times, but on this particular occasion on the edge of the town something caused me suddenly to order, "STOP"!

This occurred in the rather open warfare after the breakthrough at St. Lo and soon the German counterattacks near Mortain. (703-ers recall it as the actions at Ranee-Fromental where Cpl. Juno, after knocking out a German Panther tank at point blank range and then attempting to provide medical aid to the wounded Panther crewman was himself killed by the exploding ammo.)

As for actual combat, the 703rd companies were attached to combat commands and the 703rd company platoons were attached to the armored task forces of the 3rd Armored Div. The responsibility of 703rd Bn. Hq., therefore, was limited to checking on the companies and platoons, verifying that their assigned missions were appropriate, that the commanders of the task forces were satisfied with the work of the 703rd platoons (which was invariably the case), and that the platoons had whatever support and supplies they needed.

On this particular day on our way through the village on our way to check on a T.D. platoon, I noted that the M.P. in the center of town was protected by a circle of stacked sandbags. This was unusual since in the past few days there had appeared no need for such extra precaution.

Upon our return after visiting the T.P. platoon and as we approached the M.P.'s location, I was suddenly aware that something was different or wrong. In response to my "STOP" order, my jeep driver jammed on his brakes. As he did so a volley of artillery crashed into the town center causing several explosions and all kinds of smoke and noise. Assuming that this was the typical German interdiction or harrassing type of fire, and not part of several volleys, I yelled to my driver, "Let's go!" and we took off toward the center of town. Almost immediately we came upon two American infantrymen, both bleeding profusely, obviously victims of the German artillery. One was so terribly shot up that it was clear that he was beyond any hope whatsoever; the other, we sensed immediately had a chance to live. There was room for one more in the jeep,--we piled the second soldier in and took off past the M.P. to the nearest medical aid station a short distance out of town. Time was critical; we didn't have time, or take time to apply a tourniquet. On arrival, the aid station immediately started administrering to the wounded G.I.

We left him there and went on our way to our other tasks. We did not find out his

name, nor did we leave our names; why we did not know. I am convinced that we saved his life, and also that he knows we did. But he has probably wondered ever since, as have I, who the other party was. Why did I shout, "STOP" at the critical time? Possibly the sandbagged M.P. may have alerted me, but we proceeded past that point earlier without stopping. In reflection and disregarding any sixth sense. E.S.P., or the supernatural, a logical explanation is that I must have heard, sensed or felt the sound of the German artillery battery as it fired the volley. This sound or pressure would have arrived a few seconds before the rounds themselves. Whatever the reason, I'm grateful because we not only saved the soldier's life, but possibly our own as well! W.E. Showalter

TO EARL

I'd like to tell a story of a young hill-billy lad,
From the state of West Virginia, where
conditions were quite bad.
He left there to join the army,
And wound up in the 7-0-3
Where he became a peep driver, 2nd Plat. Co. C.
Met him first when I came from "A" to "C"
just before the St. Lo breakthrough.

He'd drive for me, with his handlebar, bright
red moustache, long as his hand span,
Blonde stubble all around his face,
and a smile that came on strong.
Though he was in his early twenties,
he looked more like fifty-four!
And I wondered how a man that old,
could have made it into the war!
Name was Earl McCLeary, much to my surprise,
Youthful zeal, ability, he was a true prize.
No chore too hard, no mission too rough,
uncomplaining he would go.
He proved a valuable scrounger, as the
contents of our peep would show.
The front seats of our peep came out,
and I kid you not my friends,
Replaced by the red leather seat of a
blown-up Mercedes Benz!
Champagne, cognac, eggs and ham, just to
name a few of the many "liberations"
that into our peep flew!
We sped through France, Belgium into Germany,
One day he asked, "I wish you'd transfer me?"
"I have a funny feeling, sir,
please put me in a destroyer.
I feel that I need steel around me,
or I'll be a dead warrior."

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So I put him in a tank crew, on with the war,
on into the Bulge and out again.
Then came the day that he foresaw.
We were stationed in a forest,
and in order to save our souls,
The members of each and every crew
were digging their foxholes.
Long deep and wide, then covered with logs
from a fallen tree.
On top of that there were sandbags,
a fortress apparently.
Then came that fateful tree burst. To this day
I don't know why that solitary fragment
could pierce through and get that guy!
He was one of five in that foxhole, out of
the fortress he sought,
And his was the only body,
that any of the shrapnel caught.
Now he lies in eternal slumber, in
Henri-La-Chappelle.
If there's justice he's in heaven,
for he served his time in hell.

"Hap" Paulsen

North of St. Lo
FIRST BLOOD--OURS!
Headquarters

703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion
Summary of Operations 7/1-31/1944
(See Spearhead In The West, 68,196)

At 1145 hrs. July 8, our Bn. C.O. had orders from CCA to move C Co. just south of St. Jean de Daye, with a platoon from Recon. ---At 1515 hrs. A Co. was ordered to assist C Co. roadblocks.-----On July 9 at 1530 hrs. orders were received to move the Bn. (less A and B Cos.) below St. Jean de Daye to meet a reported enemy tank threat.--- The C.O. of CCA rescinded the above order. At 1630 hrs. elements of B Co., with CCB, reported progress with little resistance.-----On July 9 at 1950 hrs. the Bn. CP moved to a new area S. of St. Jean de Daye.

At 0800 July 10 the 3rd Arm'd Division was attached to the XIX Corps. CCA with our A Co. was tied to 9th Inf Div, CCB with our B Co. linked to 30th Inf Div. At 1200 hrs our Bn. Trains, and at 1830 hrs A Co. less 2 platoons, moved into the vicinity of the Bn CP.

On 0300, July 11, enemy shell fire landed on the Bn CP. One (1) EM killed, two (2) wounded. One 1/4 T. truck burned after a direct hit. At 0700 CCA ordered A Co. to prepare to move to Le Desert by 0900. At 0915 radio intercept said "Enemy tanks in column moving N. from SW of Le Hommet". At 1100

radio intercept, "Small groups of enemy tanks moving towards St. Jean de Daye". C Co. was alerted and its 2nd Plat. began its move into position at 1125 hrs. At 1130 the 3rd Plat, C Co. deployed in depth to assist the 2nd Plat A Co.. At 1138 C Co. reported they were in position 1/2 m. S. of Le Desert. B Co. with CCB, was reported advancing in the vicinity of HTS Vents-Belle Lande. 1st Plat Recon. with B Co., 3rd Plat Recon. with A Co., rest of Recon. on missions W. of St. Jean de Daye.

At 0800 hrs. July 12, B Co. was strafed by friendly planes at Hill 91, the company was on an objective waiting to be relieved by the infantry. Two (2) EM wounded.-----

On July 13 the Bn. less B Co. had no change in locations.-----
B Co., near Hts Vents for 3 days with the 1st plat. at rear in reserve. B Co. had been under continuous artillery and mortar fire and to date had suffered nine (9) casualties. 1 EM killed and 1 seriously wounded. Two M-10's were temporarily out of action. They destroyed, confirmed 1 Mk-IV and shared the kill of another with Bazooka men of the 36th Arm'd Inf Regt. The confirmed Mk IV was destroyed by the Direct-Indirect method at a range of 200 yds. 42 rds of ammo were used on church steeples, OP's nests, etc.-----

BELOW IS A BIT OF "A" CO. EXPERIENCE DURING THE ABOVE PERIOD. DO YOU SEE HOW IT BRINGS ALIVE THE ABOVE REPORT? WHAT HAPPENED WHERE WE DID OUR JOB AND ALSO WHERE WE LOST MEN? IF THE ABOVE OR BELOW REMIND YOU OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU OR YOUR COMRADES, PLEASE TELL US ABOUT IT....

Late on July 8 the destroyers of the 1st Plat. A Co. were caught in the traffic jams around St. Jean de Daye in Normandy. Stuck in an intersection, open to zeroed German artillery that did not come, we admired the men of the 30th Inf. Division streaming by. With darkness Capt. Cole told Lt. Henderson, 1st plat. leader to move, when he could, about 2 kilometers south towards Le Desert to join tanks assumed to be to the left of the road. Lt. Henderson felt movement at night would be murderous for tanks under fire and did not move but a few hundred yards into a grove of trees forming the tanks in a circular defense. 83rd Recon. men told us of the stiff resistance ahead, that they had lost a light tank up there. No one had told us we were in No Man's Land, but it explained to us why no rounds had come close to us all night. Our

artillery rounds were heading into Le Desert and Jerry was firing over our heads into St. Jean de Daye. The exchange all night was heavily dominated by American shelling. We had been wise placing double guards on each vehicle that night.

With daylight, Lt. Henderson and Plat. Sgt. Toma reconnoitered, found a position back up the road, on a forward slope but with decent defilade and vision down range across a field and 1100yds. ahead towards Le Desert. Our security's machine gun was dismounted to cover the field to the left and the TD took under observation a garage door just off the road, that might have hidden the anti-tank gun that knocked off our light tank. During the day we learned that a Sherman was behind us, the 823rd TD Bn. (Towed) dug in about 100 yds. to our left. A couple of 90 mm. AA guns were at Anti-Tank levels behind us covering the road. The 36th Arm'd Inf. was close by, warning us that Germans were counterattacking. Being frightened did not keep Arrington from escaping into sleep. It rained lightly for most of the day as we waited, eyes steadily on the field or with Toma glaring through his field glasses at that garage door. We complained about not having rain-coats, field jackets or chow.

Tension built,--An advance began at 1600. The barrage ahead was comforting, but within minutes our forces were moving back of us to regroup. Heinie was coming at us. The cackle of German small arms fire was to our left. At about 16:15, German artillery had bracketed the field and hedge ahead of us. We thought their rounds would move right up to our hedge another 100 yards. We sweated, scared, wondered if our machine gun, carbine and rifle could do any good covering the TD,--Jenkins and Whitehead of the destroyer crew had hopped back in.

I believe it was Col. Boudinot, CO of CCB, who came to us and told us to hold our position because shortly before the 823rd had left their guns and moved back with many dog-feet. We had been warned of the snipers in the trees.--I was sure that two men in rain capes were crossing the field. I wondered if they should be targets. Hadn't two G.I.'s gone back down there. I called to Steinhart and Arrington. They saw nothing. I tapped off MG rounds just above the waving blades of grass. Gosh! I was scared but relieved except fearing I had hit someone American.

Now a lull! The 30th Inf. was filling in to our left,--the 823rd returned to their guns and G.I.'s filled in the hedgerow ahead of us. One of our M-8's (6 wheeled, 37 mm. gunned armored car) had come barreling down the road, stopped and was hit! Trombley saw the garage doors were open and when our artillery opened on that target, fired five rounds of H.E. to make sure that if there was a gun there, it would be no longer. The two German anti-tank guns in ditches had been abandoned before we got there.

A few of the Krauts had moved up on our left successfully so that their infiltration had almost surrounded us, but were driven back. The 30th pulled out that night, to be relieved. We had some hated sniper fire to keep us ever alert. In the morning P-47's came over, bombed and strafed strong positions to the west of Le Desert. They put on a beautiful show. Our mortars opened up, sounding like tom-toms! Three hours later the advance began. Capt. Owens (32nd Arm'd. Reg't.) directed us back in front of the crashing fire of our artillery. It had been our "baptism of fire". We cleaned weapons, tried to shake off the clammy feeling of the previous wet day. Our air force had done much to slow German artillery that could have raised havoc on the crowded roads. Our slit trenches felt good even if Boswell, on guard, got us up with the whisper of a round coming in and we had to dive for our holes. A peep driver, Aultman (Recon), did not get to a hole and was killed. Editor.

WILL SOMEONE TELL US MORE OF WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SHELLING OF THE BN. CP?

"B" CO. TOOK A LACING BY HEINE ARTILLERY. WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT!

I'M CONFIDENT THAT YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL US OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU OR WHERE YOU WERE IN NORMANDY THE ABOVE SECOND WEEK OF JULY, OR ANY WEEK.

"I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO!"

(Completed)

(A short way into Germany "Charlie" (C-3) and three men were captured. Wounded slightly only because his track medal kept a slug out of his chest and struggling to overcome hunger, he made a deal for bread with a German youngster who was caught by a civilian and brutalized.)

Investigating a door that was left unguarded during morning hours, "Charlie"

learned it led to a mine shaft and on out to a grain field. He found a farmer there who dealt him a loaf of bread for his pen. When he shared it with other P.O.W.'s he got the "shaft" for his troubles! A "Quisling" among the prisoners turned him in. The next day, with the Camp Commandant elsewhere, three Hitler Youth, shorts and daggers, appeared, taking "Charlie" aside, used blows to his stomach, returning on two further days to continue to punish him for leaving camp. He could hardly walk, but making grass soup sustained him. The friendly guard told him that these Hitler Youth had mistreated townspeople. Because of the informer and the beatings, further mistrust developed among the prisoners. However, soon, a British soldier told "Charlie" they knew who the informer was. "Charlie" was glad to hear the assurances that other P.O.W.'s were ready to take care of the S.O.B.!

For more than two days and despite the objections of the Camp Commandant the Wehrmacht emplaced "88's" close to the camp and carried out indirect firing missions. Fortunately there was no return "mail"! But on the third day, the "88" outgoing salvos were getting counter battery, and the Camp Commandant ordered the P.O.W.'s into the mine shaft for protection. Now a comic event developed. Because he could speak some German, "Charlie" was asked to lead the men into the shaft till ordered to stop. He was surprised when a flash light at the far end of the tunnel was followed by calls, "Given Sie Up!" The P.O.W.'s learned that it was part of the gun crews of the "88"'s who had taken cover and thought that American troops had infiltrated through the shaft to attack them. They surrendered, and handed "Charlie" a burp gun, putting their hands behind their heads. By this time the German camp sergeant coming up from the rear straightened out both confused parties. The embarrassed German gun crew took back their weapons, began to punish the P.O.W.'s, adding another whack at "Charlie" before the German sergeant stopped them.

The Americans were close. Piper Cubs were overhead. The P.O.W.'s felt liberation near and the German crew was desperate to escape. It made no sense for the Camp Commandant to move Stalag 6A. For the moment, some women from the town continued to bring a little food across the small bridge to the camp. In 48 hours the 7th Armored Division freed the prisoners telling them to stay put

till they could be evacuated.

Now the comic and the trauma interwove! The Camp Commandant called on "Charlie" to help him because Bornstein knew some German. To properly surrender he felt he had to yield his weapon to an officer of his own rank. Since the Commandant had protected him, "Charlie" agreed to help. He was able to get clean clothes, "a French tunic", shoes, shave and the use of the Commandant's luxurious Deussenberg motor car. He had to find a Colonel to whom the Commandant could surrender his "Luger"! When he drove into town and asked questions at CP's, he had trouble because of his odd clothing, but G.I.'s finally directed him to a Colonel's CP. "Charlie" fulfilled the instructions given him by the Commandant, but then added a twist of his own, asking for the Luger pistol for himself! He had asked for the pistol even before driving out of the camp. The German sergeant of the camp guards had told him, "I will help you locate these young gangsters--- who did this to you, and if you want to even the score I will show you where they live and I will show you where the Gestapo agent lives, and for that I will be grateful if you do what you have to do!"

The 7th Armored Div. Colonel thought "Charlie" was kidding. "Charlie" fabricated an unbelievable excuse, but the Colonel did not need the excuse. He would rather have the Deussenberg. He would "confiscate" the car as "Charlie" suggested, and give the P.O.W. he thought an officer, the Luger. He drove "Charlie" back to Stalag 6A, and only then did the Colonel learn that the unkempt P.O.W. was an enlisted man. With a minimum of formality the surrender was effected and the Colonel slipped "Charlie" the pistol as he drove away in luxury.

Shortly thereafter "Charlie" learned the location of his tormentors when he returned to town accompanied by the German sergeant.

"I told him I was ready to find out who are these men who came in and viciously attacked me for no reason at all. ---I followed him, and he pointed to one house, and I went in that house and did what I had to do. He pointed to another house. I went in that house and did what I had to do. He pointed to a third house and I followed him, and I did what I had to do for the 3rd time. Then I asked him if he could find out who this Gestapo agent was and

he pointed to the Burgermeister's house, and I went in---and did what I had to do. Unfortunately, I felt very bad, but I was so mad I didn't want these animals loose--and I did what I had to do!.

"Charlie" had been a P.O.W. for about 32 1/2 days. A truck took the P.O.W.'s to a flight going to Camp Lucky Strike in France where the men could get army-fit and uniformed.

"Charlie" still regularly meets with a support group of five or six other P.O.W.'s who are in worse shape than himself, who can not completely shake the traumas of North Korea, Vietnam, or the Second World War.

Here was the picture of the period in the 703rd T.B. Bn. S-3 report of Merle Goodrich, as he recorded the events .

Battalion units were in the area of ALTENKIRCHEN as of the 25th of March, 1945. By 12:30 hours on the 28th the 3rd Armored Div. had been ordered to send two combat commands abreast to take a road center in PADERBORN. "C" Co. was with C.C. Howze on the left and had moved out of HOF that morning. That order included the following: "--objectives will be captured by combat commands, otherwise any enemy resistance will be bypassed in order to reach the division objectives as rapidly as possible."

On March 29th the "C" Co. C.P. and CC Howze followed TF Richardson and TF Kane to the vicinity of THULEN by 0200, March 30, Sgt. Price's destroyer had to drop out of the column of TF Richardson for repairs and "destroyed a 75mm. SP gun on an M-4 chassis" from its position, getting back to its place in the column early in the morning. "C" Co. third platoon, (C-3), with TF Hogan attacked at 0600 and moved ahead during the day, then set up road blocks with an infantry platoon.

" 'C' Co. took 60 prisoners during the period-----At 0900 hours RCN Co. reported Lt. Edwards with (3) EM and (1) 1/4 ton truck were missing in action."

A battalion morning report of 9 April 45, to division, states that on the 27th of March, the M-20, to which "Charlie" had been assigned, at the end of the column, had to be towed many times, and lost contact 0100, 28 March. "Charlie's platoon leader, Lt. Austin, confirmed the time, that the four men never showed up as instructed and a search was

fruitless.

["Charlie" found this report inaccurate. When I first heard his account, he told me that he did not know what the mission of the M-20 was all about, because no one told him.]--Editor

A TELEPHONE CHAT WITH "CHARLEY" !

"Charlie" Bornstein was back from a Saturday picnic with other men of his P.O.W. support group when he called about questions I had for him concerning his shocking experience when captured near the end of the war. Out of the service he studied at a community college for two years, enjoyed success, particularly in "math". He spent his working life as a tool and die maker, and was sought because of his skill in making dies for medical items, e.g. sutures, needles.

He recalled with pleasure that at his wedding, his "C" Co. comrade, MOTTNICK (Deceased) was his best man. STEINHART and WEYBOLDT were men he felt were good friends.

We should not be surprised that "Charlie" recalls events forty-five years ago with certainty. They were beaten into a man who was sensitive to people in the first place. We ask you to recall people and incidents that left an impression on you while you were trying to survive or experienced everything from trying to hold up your end in combat to dreaming of the day when you would shed your O.D.'s! Let's hear from you. Editor

SCHUTT'S CORNER-___As of August 18,1990, there were 69 dues paying members. 56 of them attended the Mt. Airy reunion.

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TOGETHER

I so long to thee,
May your feelings fulfill your dreams
To come forward, together, always and always,
Together in our dreams, can it not be,
But one in two separate bodies
That cry out for each other,
No matter the distance we are but one.

"Charlie"Bornstein to Jean on their "30th".

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TO HELP YOU LOOK BACK, TO RELIVE AND TO
RECREATE FOR EVERYONE!

S E C R E T
HEADQUARTERS

703RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 230

2 April 1945

Action of "A" Co., 26 February - 7 March 1945.

During operations of the 3rd Armored Division in its attack from the ROER River to COLOGNE, Germany, "A" Co. was attached to Combat Command "A". The following narrative covers its action during this attack.

1st Platoon

The First Platoon was attached to TF Kane, and on February 25, assembled in the vicinity of DUREN (F1247) in preparation for the attack the following morning. During the first several days of the attack the platoon remained in TF Reserve, maintaining defensive road blocks and had no offensive role. On 26 February, the platoon moved to BUIR (F192517), on 27 February to HIPPENDORF (F230578) and on 28 February to ZIEVERICH (F218618) where it remained until 2 March,, for a bridgehead to be established across the ERFT CANAL into BERGHEIM (F231622)

On 2 March the task force attacked toward OBERHAUSEN (F259645) where the platoon maintained road blocks, and on 3 March, secured BUSDORF (F281665), by-passed FLEISTEDEN (F302665), took MANSTEDTEN (F320659), and PULHEIM (F345670). During the attack on BUSDORF the TD's covered the tanks from the high ground to the south of the town, and fired two rounds of APCBDF, range 2000 yards, at a tank alongside the railroad track just to south of RHEIDT (F265685). Only one of the TD's was in position to fire at the tank, and it was in such a position that although the TD Commander could see the tank over the crest of the hill, the gunner could not see the tank through the sights. The Commander directed the fire by observation, and the tank withdrew through the underpass, after the second round had been fired.

Late in the afternoon the platoon reached PULHEIM, and remained there for two days. On Mar 5 the task force attacked east through ORR (F364682) and AUWEILER (F381675), and then moved south in COLOGNE, where it reached the RHINE RIVER on 6 March 1945.

This ended the operation for the task force, other than the maintenance of road-blocks and road patrols, until they were

relieved on 16 Mar. At this time the platoon reverted to Company control and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of KNAPSACK (F376507).

2nd Platoon

The Second Platoon remained with the Company CP in C Comd "A" reserve throughout the operation, and saw no action whatsoever. On 26 February they remained in DUREN (F1247), on 26 February at MERZENICH (F148487), on 28 February at MANHEIM (F202542), and on 1 March and 2 March at BERRENDORF (F193594). While at this location the town was strafed on the night of 1 March by enemy aircraft, but the platoon suffered no casualties.

On 3 March it moved to KENTEN (F239618), 4 March to OBERHAUSEN (F259645) 5 March to PULHEIM (F345670), 6 March to BROCKELMUND (F390642), and on 7 March into COLOGNE, when the operation ended.

3rd Platoon

The Third Platoon was attached to TF "X"(Battle Group ORR) and on 26 February took positions just south of MERZENICH (F148487), covering the attack on GOLZHEIM (F187495). When GOLZHEIM was secure, the task force attacked BLATZHEIM (F224515) and the TD's moved into town and went into road block positions overnight. On 27 February the task force attacked BERGERHAUSEN (F235522), the TD's covering the attack from the east end of BLATZHEIM. After dark they moved into BERGERHAUSEN taking up positions covering the right flank of the task force, and remained there for the rest of the night. The following afternoon they moved to THOR (F225605) and went into a rest position until 2 March.

On 2 March the platoon crossed the ERFT CANAL under heavy artillery fire, arriving at OBERHAUSEN (F259645) at dusk, and they remained there that night. The following morning the task force continued the attack, and at FLEISTEDEN (F306665), moved into position covering the attack on the towns of GEYEN (F335652), SINTHERN (F328645), and MANSTEDTEN (F320659). From this position the platoon fired 3 rounds of HE, range 800 yards, knocking out a machine gun nest in the sector of the 104th Infantry Division to the south, and 9 rounds of HE and 4 rounds of AP at possible anti-tank positions in MANSTEDTEN. The range was 3200 yards, results unobserved. At 1430 hours they moved into GEYEN,

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and fired 3 rounds of HE at 300 yards range into a barn suspected of housing enemy.

On 4 March the platoon moved to PULHEIM (F345670), and relieved some tanks on road block at a factory at F565658 for the night. The following morning they moved to BROCKELMUND (F390642), protecting the right flank of the task force, and in the afternoon moved again to BICKENDORF (F415628) for the night.

On 6 March the platoon split into sections, each section moving with a combat team into COLOGNE. During the attack the first section fired 7 rounds of HE into buildings from which snipers had been firing. The 2nd section fired 3 rounds of HE at a machine gun nest, and knocked it out.

The task force reached the RHINE RIVER that night, and the platoon remained on road block positions vicinity of COLOGNE, until they were relieved on 16 March 1945.

For the C.O. E.H.Swett Capt. 703rd S-2

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association

421 Nordberg, N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

Robert Schutt
Secretary/Treasurer



November 25, 1990

Gentlemen & Ladies:

It gives all of your staff members great pleasure in the manner you have responded to encouraging our membership to recruit new members for this organization.

As we joined together at Mt. Airy Lodge, Mt. Pocono Pa. this past May for our mini-reunion, the realization & understanding that we need to contact more of our (buddies) colleagues, to renew the friendships we had when we were all members of a great division. Time is of Essence!

Also, I wish to thank the people who have sent brochures for various places to meet for '92.. Plans are moving forward to that objective & you will be notified in due time!

At the membership meeting at Mt. Airy, you voted to establish the newsletter "Roadblock".! Too, this vote was for quarterly mailing, of which you have received three to date. Hopefully, Nate Goldberg shall produce the 4th and final newsletter of the year before years end.

As the secretary-treasurer of your organization please, let me remind you again, our dues of \$10.00 is due by Jan. 1st of each calander year. And the supplement to continue the "Roadblock" is the same!

Let me thank the past presidents, Everette Stites, & Robert Downey for their efforts in establishing one very fine group of people, of which you are a member.

May you all enjoy a Happy - Joyous - Holiday.

Respectfully,

Bob Schutt



Normandy • Northern France • The Rhineland • The Ardennes • Central Europe