



703rd Road Block



Vol. III #4 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter 12/1992

HOLIDAY GREETINGS!

You are hearing, right now, from every one of your comrades in this association, wishes for every joy you can imagine for these Christmas and New Year holidays, the one so sacred, the other the call for good fortune, both echoing for all of us the plea to our creator, and for ourselves, to realize pace, shalom, PEACE! Fred and Georgia Hunt



P L E A S E

Get The Lead Out!

Send \$20.00, cash or check for your 1993 annual membership to the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association, \$10 for your 1993 membership and the voluntary \$10 for your annual subscription for the Road Block to: I.B. Wagon seller, 320 W. Walnut, Bowie, TX 76230.

AT THIS STAGE IN THE LIFE OF OUR ASSOCIATION
MAKE OUR FLAG OUR NEXT REUNION
AND R A L L Y TO IT!

Springtime In The Ozarks

We need each and every one of you to make this unit a great one, no longer as a fighting unit, but as people who care for one another. We're much too advanced in age to consider fighting, even in thought!

Have you reserved May 17-19, 1994 for our battalion reunion in Springfield, Missouri? Let's get it on your calendar.

Our T.D. motto was, "seek, strike and destroy." However, as all of you can recall, much of our action was sweat, blood and tears. Everyone recalls the actions in which he was stressfully involved, and none of us who remain shall ever forget those days and nights of personal loss, mainly our friends and "buddies"! Now we have a decision to make regarding our 703rd association as we know it today. We know for certain that we can survive as long as you continue your financial support, but as folks that enjoy fellowship, we need your attendance at our gatherings!!

INSIDE THE TURRET !

The title is the name of the present Fort Knox newspaper which Ed and Claire McIntyre (A) sent us. It contained a brief, glowing history of the Third Armored Division, and announced its Inactivation Ceremony to take place on the morning of 10/16/1992. The McIntyres went and felt it was "well done. They gave us full credit for establishing the Spearhead." In the program was the following:

As the golden years are winding down, so, too, are the numbers of those of us remaining in our generation. Call or write any or all of the 703rd alumni you know. The information of their whereabouts can be exchanged among all of us. Then, surely, so many more of us will join and plan together for the reunion at Springfield, Missouri in 1994. May we meet again there and God Bless each and every one of us. Bob Schutt (A)

"People are not in the army, people are the army." Gen. Creighton W. Abrams

"In special tribute to the soldiers and families, past and present, who served with pride and distinction, making the 3rd Armored Division great. We especially remember the over 2000 brave Spearhead soldiers who gave the ultimate commitment and laid down their lives during World War II and Operation Desert Storm in defense of peace and freedom throughout the world. God Bless You All."

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Henry and Florence Gosch (C) celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on November 28, 1992. Everett Stites (Rcn.), who "stood up for" Henry at Camp Pickett, shared in the occasion.

John Czajkowski, "The Barber", and Jennie (B) also spoke their golden vows in November.

All the 703rd adds its best wishes!!

WITH OUR DEEP SORROW!

As Everett Stites (Rcn), our association liaison, expected to "go to press" with this issue of the newsletter, his wife, Marie, succumbed to pneumonia and its complications on December 15. Private family services were held on Friday, the eighteenth.

Needs a Lift!

Rick Beckman, 2303 West Blvd., Holt, MI, 48842, Tel. # 517 699 1553, wrote that his dad, Bill (HQ), had a "serious stroke" 12/1990. Rick has to do Bill's writing, and Bill wants to get the Road Blocks, and all the news of his comrades. He lives at the Country Acres Home, 764 S. Michigan Rd., Eaton Rapids, MI 48827. Let's come through with notes and cards for Bill.

We Want More From Wetzel!

John Wetzel (Rcn) 7199 Brant Place, Apt. C-32, Philadelphia, PA 19153-2813 sent a note to Bob Schutt. We hope John makes it to our reunions. We are positive he has much more he could tell us about his experiences. Maybe if his "buddies" contacted him, he'd open up and add to what the Road Block tries to provide for all of us!

Just a few words, but MEANINGFUL!

"Please change my address. I am a service officer for the American Legion at the V.A. hospital here in Tucson. I will call Brother Schutt in Michigan this week to find out how his wife, Lora, is. Best regards from the hot state (in summertime)."

George F. Scruggs (HQ), 5324 E. 1st St., Apt. 281, Tucson, AZ 85711-7314

You're doing your job, George! Are the rest of us checking up on our comrades?

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM CLAUDE BALL (B)!

Claude returned from the 3rd Armored Reunion in Omaha filled with enthusiasm having found and joined our associations. Using our directory, he wrote five men in "B" Co. (Crochetiere, Misiacsek, Bill Johnson, Caillouette, and Czajkowski). Let's hope he has continued contact with them. All of us would love to share what memories they recall. That will happen if their "yarns" get into the Road Block.

Claude dug deeply and found some 3rd Armored Div. booklets that we hope he brings to the reunions in the future. He promised to keep us posted and asked to extend his heartfelt greetings to all the men and women of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Assn. for a merriest of Christmases and a healthy, happy New Year.

Late in October of this year, Ball, who led 1B in place of Ernie Silva for a short period late in December, 1944, wrote that he had made another contribution to the battalion treasury in memory of three men killed in action while he "had charge of the platoon or section--during Bulge action and at other times during the drive to Mausbach, Düren and Cologne." He recalled Al Morrie and Bill French, but was not sure whether the third was Petrokovic. "I.B" (B,C), our treasurer, as he thanked Ball for his second great gift to the battalion, wrote that he believed that the third man was Estil Owens (B). I.B.'s letter to Ball follows:

I.B. Wagon seller
Rcn. Sgt. Co. "C"

FROM MY DIARY:

9/15/44 Marched through Neudorf, Driesch, Raereb, Berlotte, crossed the border into Langfeld, Germany at 1534, through the same gap in the line that the Germans had made in their retreat. Then on through Kornelmünster and into bivouac between Dorff and Breinig. Pierce fighting in Busbach, Mausbach, Stolberg...

9/16/92 3C lost a T.D. in Busbach. [Bob] Dotterweich, Estil Owens killed in Mausbach, Divine wounded. Overseas one year today.

12/1/92 Typed letters of condolence for Gosch (C.O."C") to Mrs. W.B. Wray, Knott, Texas and Mrs. Marcella Scallan, N.Y., N.Y.

703rd Road Block-3-

Ate lunch with Sgt. Joe Womack of Kerns, Texas and crew: Rogers, Freeman, Bornstein, Heskett...Co. "B" located in Breinigerheide.

1/2-3/45 Acted as liaison between battalion HQ and Co. "C". Battalion at Ferrieres. Lawson, my driver.

1/6/45 Up through Manhay by destroyed enemy and Shermans, TD's burnt, to 2B position; Schaefer's TD burning when we arrived, hit by direct fire from enemy road block 400 yards up the road at hill's crest, -Teates, Pulizzi, Houk, Combetti wounded, evacuated, Schaefer missing.

Enemy zeroed on road down which we drove. We were lucky not to be fired upon. We parked the Jeep behind the tail TD in the column, all of these vehicles abandoned by their crews. Returned to med. station about a mile down the road and Medic jeep went to front TD to evacuate wounded.

In cover of darkness crews recovered TD's and withdrew to position near Manhay. That village is completely ruined, captured by Germans twice, retaken by us twice. Roads are slick, sleet cuts our faces, a fog hangs low. We wish for air support but know we won't get it in this kind of weather.

Claude---I knew French, Morrie and Estil Owens. They were the great ones. Your memorial touches me deeply. The battalion appreciates it very much. --Best wishes for you in your search and good luck.

Sincerely, I.B.

LET'S HOIST ONE FOR "DOWNEY"!

Let's get to "Bob"(C) and wish him the best. He couldn't get to the Reading and Omaha reunions due his bout(s) with illness. We have a letter from him as of 30 April 92.

Last March he had a malignant colon tumor removed. He had to put up with a temporary colostomy that was dealt with the first week of April followed by five weeks of radiation treatments.

When you toss down that drink, alcoholic or dietary, with a good wish for "Downey", drop him a note telling him; the drink will taste ever better when he's beside you with one of his own!

90 Elm St., Oneonta, N.Y. 13820

WHAT A LUCKY DOG IS DIABLO III!

"The Bug House
11-6-92

Dear Nate and Florence,

The sickening elections are over - now maybe one can turn on TV without barking. Now millions of people (?) voted for something for nothing, and will spend four years to get nothing for something. OY VEH!

The Aftermath of the Reunion

Saw Joe and Martha Moen (A). He was pretty weak from his last chemo- but getting better and cheerful. Martha is pure gold. They don't come any better.

We were beginning to have transmission problems - finessed going to see my sister, nephew and wife and eight kids. They are way upstate in Minnesota, and I did not want to conk out in the boonies.

We stuck to interstates - did go off for about 20 miles to see Pete and Sadie O'Neil. They are fine. Pete is 79 but strong as a horse. Sadie has medication for her heart which works O.K. Their kids are great.

Sweated our way down to Port Huron. The cursed transmission getting worse all the way. Wouldn't shift half the time. Made it to Oneonta [N.Y.] and stopped to see Bob and Ruth Downey (C). Bob is taking chemo- a week out of each month until February, at least - knocks hell out of him. Ruth had a very bad time over heart medication. Both of them have sugar diabetes: the upset for her was between the various medications which almost did her in. She's coming along pretty well now.

Managed to get us, car, trailer home, but don't really know how. \$1135.62 later. The jalopy is running again - rebuilt - a new one comes in at \$2500 plus labor. I might have found a junkyard replacement, but one would never know what one got.

Marge caught a very nasty cold right about then - fought it for 2 weeks without success and then gave it to me. I improved on it, made it into pneumonia, then found I have 2 kinds of that, like one kind ain't enough?

Marge is pooped out - I haven't done a damned thing for 2 weeks - she has had to do everything herself. I'm as useless as socks on a cow and put in most of my time in the sack. I better get better before she is completely worn out.

LOVE,

Frank, Marge + Diablo III.

WE HAVE A HEART IN TEXAS!

[Editorial Comment]

When your editor completes a draft of an issue of the Road Block, he sends copies to our association leaders, Frank Woolner and Laura Ann Goldberg, the editor's daughter. He keeps your liaison, Everett Stites, informed. who advises and sees that the newsletter is printed and mailed. The goal is to "get it straight".

Your editor looks back with appreciation on the help given him by "Bob" Downey (C), "Ed" McIntyre (A), "Hap" Paulson (C) and Bob Schutt (A) our recent officers.

Frank Woolner (A), under siege with illness, still writing professionally, is there in the clutch with a yarn and suggestions for "Herr Golt-boyg!" Laura, my daughter, never fails to be encouraging with her firm attacks in support of style, form, and always with loving criticism.

Now I have a another crew to put me in my place; Fred Hunt (Hq) and Merle Goodrich (Hq) have responded quickly, as needed. "I.B." Wagonseller (B,C) came through by proving they have a great heart in Texas, one that struggled to hold on to natural beauty and humor as he wrote in wartime. Read him for yourself.

10-8-92

Dear Nate,

A note about myself, and the dates Jan. 13,18,21, 1945. First I need to mention that I was transferred from "B" to "C" Co. in England. I was the Ammo Corporal in Petrekovitch's (B) platoon, and also the Latrine Corporal in charge of emptying the buckets on the beautiful hillsides around MERE. In "C" Co. I was Recon. Sgt. under Capt Regas. This duty I held under Capt. Gosch after Regas was wounded in Normandy. I rode with Gosch or near him until Siebert replaced him (?) after the Bulge.

I wrote in my diary, 1-13-45

Billeted in BERGIFAZ on a hill and from here see the snow-covered valleys and winding road to LIERNEUX, a comprehensive, beautiful view--would like to revisit when peace comes, burnt homes are built again and people are happy.

1-16-45

This morning Willie TROJACEK (C) of Ennis, TX, knocked out 1 MkIV and 2 MkV tanks.

Not In My Diary

Called Trojacek, 10-3-92, 214-875-5968, and he tells me that five German tanks were crossing a ridge. He got three of them and two escaped. Trojacek says Lt. Austin of Kentucky, the platoon commander, was the nicest person he ever met. Their Platoon Sgt. Luczek, a Russian; Pat Tafoya, a Spanish boy from New Mexico, driver, Helwig was the loader, Bat Patterson, the assistant gunner, Sgt. Nowlin of Kerns, TX, the Tank Commander, and B O R N S T E I N--he didn't know what he did except cause trouble.

Trojacek says that about 9 mos. after the war ended, Sgt. Nowlin was killed in a car accident near Hobbs, NM. Trojacek attended his funeral, and also that of Melvin Heskett a Nebraskan, Co. "C" 3rd Platoon, who died a few years back.

Trojacek is 77 years old, not in good health, but wants to receive the Road Block. Rte.2, Box 48, Ennis, TX 75119

In My Diary 1-16-45

The sun shines in the whole window in REGNÉ. Our planes are high in the sky searching for the enemy. Old men are returning to REGNÉ; find their homes burnt, walk the street mumbling to themselves, crying. They're cold, I doubt they have the appetite to be considered hungry. A native wrote in my book, "Crasson Fourgon, Regné".

1-18-45

In MONT LE BAN with the 1st and 2nd platoons; in VAUX with the 3rd. 2nd plat. attacks toward BRETSY in the morning. Trees frozen fall across the road when broken by the high wind. Perilous driving.

1-21-45 MONTEVILLE

Left Regné 1700 hrs. Said goodbye to the nice people there, to the lady Crasson and child whose husband has been a German prisoner five years. Marched through Manhay, Grandmenil, Ezeree, Barvaux, Petit Man ! Soft shoulders on road; bright sunlight. A cold 25 ride.

The Road Block III Sept. 1992 draft is great. Inez and I send our best wishes to you and your flower, Florence.

I.B.

P.S. Frank and Marge [Miller] ² called from N.Y.-talked nearly an hour.

Reading Between The Lines !

Charlie called the other day and I read I.B.'s letter to him. Then he called Willie Trojacek, and both really enjoyed renewing their close association in "C" Co. Their "steel mattress" had been under the bore of the "3 inch" gun of their T.D.

The Texan, called "Tro'Jack" by Charlie, has had a busy life, what with fathering six lads, three daughters, who have given him twenty two grandchildren.

After rereading the letter and learning from Charlie how he enjoyed the telephone talk, it's clear that Willie's compliments for Austin were backhand slaps, and that Charlie sure "caused trouble", but probably with reason. The troublemaker was most sincere as he had praise for the character of the late Sgt. Nowlin. Charlie had expressed his admiration for the tank commander earlier in gabfests with your editor.

"Come on, Charlie", we expect a fine description of what made him a fine person, even a eulogy for your fine tank commander. Maybe Willie knows where we can find Nowlin's family, and we can let them know how we felt about him! Keep after him !

A few days later Charlie called your editor and added praise of Willie. Also he had telephoned Henry Gosch who enjoyed recalling their association in "C" Co.

2 B and CHENEUX
December 17-24, 1944

Let's get into some action in "The Bulge" involving "B" Co. from 12/20-24/44. What did the men in the platoons led by Claude Ball (1B), covering for Ernie Silva and Jim Roberts (2B), see and experience when their sections were attached to the 504th and 505th Parachute Inf. Bns. of the 82nd Airborne ? The major problem is that what the historians tell of the action hardly mentions them.

At 2300 of 12/19/44 "B" Co. was ordered by the Fifth Corps to join the 82nd Airborne Div. as of next day, 12-20-44. They rolled headed for Werbomont at 0745.

The problem for American forces was clear; to contain the advancing Germans and halt their forward progress toward the Meuse R. and on to Antwerp. In moving into position on the north side of the Bulge, contact

with the enemy had to occur, and defense positions established. General Gavin of the 82nd AB had a rough time locating the positions of his units into 12-22-44 as the enemy pounded ahead. Most baffling for a while was locating defensive gaps which needed to be filled. Gavin's division could only offer a thin line in the face of the German attack.

The approximate center of the 82 AB defense was the village of Trois Ponts. The Amblève R. very winding, came from the E.N.E. through the villages of Stavelot and Trois Ponts, then W.N.W. past Cheneux. The Salm R. comes N.N.W. past the villages of Grand Halleux and La Neuville to join the Amblève close to Trois Ponts. The assignment of the 82nd AB was to come from the west to secure the Amblève from Cheneux to Trois Ponts, and the west bank of the Salm to Grand Halleux.

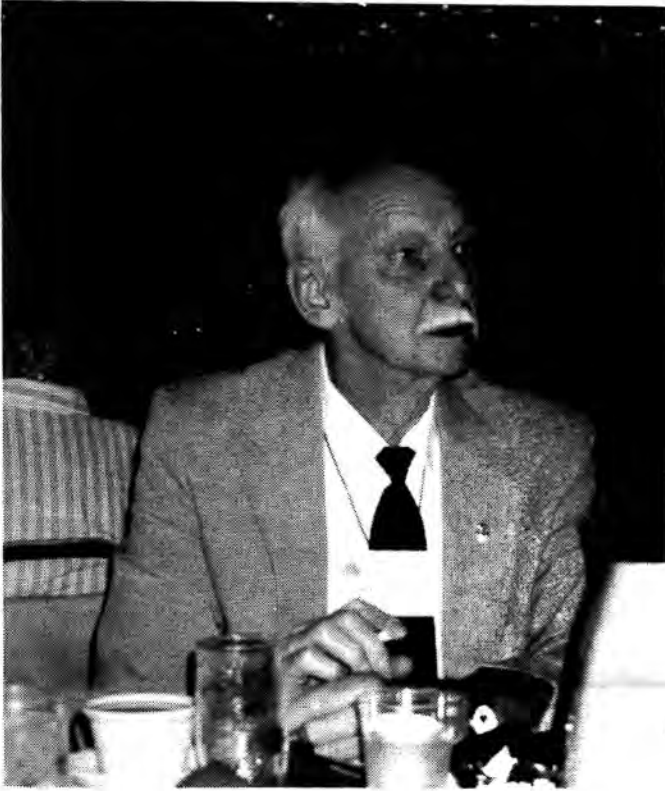
From Werbomont, 1B, heading east, joined the 505th PIR at Basse Bodeux, and into defensive positions along the Salm. 2B also moved east, a bit north, through Rahier towards embattled Cheneux to work with the 504th PIR. Coming down from the north of the Amblève were Task Forces McGeorge and Lovelady and the 117th Infantry Regt. If the 82nd Airborne could hold and Lovelady's tanks and 117th Inf. cross the Amblève, the 1st SS Panzer Div. (Peiper) could be cut off.

Cheneux was strongly held by the Germans and had to be taken so that the defensive line could be secured on the Amblève. Rashly, the CO of the 504th PIR ordered two companies to attack across open fields to take the village late in the afternoon of 12/20/44. He had tried to locate a section of 2B to help in the attack, but went ahead without them. The infantrymen took a terrible lacing, and had to pull back. They tried again, later that evening. "Hand to hand fighting was still going on when the two self-propelled TD's at last moved forward. With their help the survivors got a toehold on the village." The 3rd Bn. of the 504th then encircled Cheneux, and got in behind the Germans at the bridge over the Amblève. Next day, 12/21/44, they took the high ground and cleaned out the surrounded Kraut.

"Two companies of the 504th had lost 23 killed and 202 wounded. The attack was incredibly heroic, across open fields laced with barbed wire fences,--ill conceived and senseless. Afforded time to mount an attack with accurate artillery support, or even with the support of just two TD's, those companies

703rd Road Block-6-

The 703rd in Omaha at the 3rd Armored Division Reunion
September 9-12, 1992



Frank Miller (A)



Marge Miller



Bob Green (HQ)



Inez Wagon seller

703rd Road Block-7-



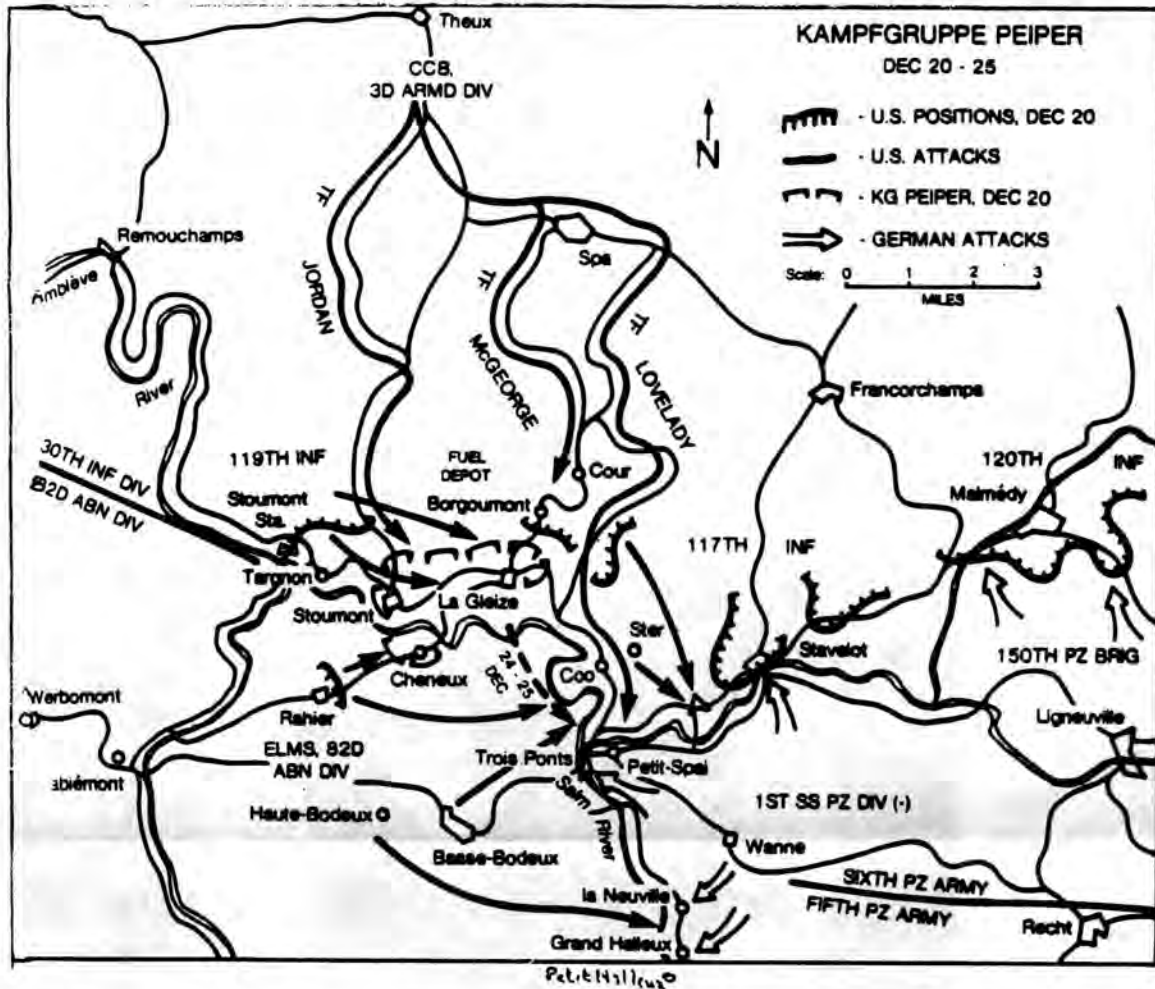
Fred and Georgia Hunt (HQ)



Cecil and Eva Stagman (HQ)



Vic and Florence Borek (A)



could have taken Cheneux at far less cost and with not a great forfeiture of time.

" MacDonald, Chas. B., A Time For Trumpets, (N.Y. 1985) 448-9. See also Cole, Hugh M., The Ardennes, (Wash., D.C., 1965) 366-7.³

Our liaison reported at 0905, 12-21-44, that 2B was in defensive positions near Cheneux. The battalion summary reported a message that 2B had destroyed (3) H/T's with 20mm guns, (2) H/T's personnel carriers and killed (8) infantry.

It was at 1000 on the 22nd near La Neuville, between Trois Ponts and Grand Halleux, that Morrie's range estimation was right on target and an attack of battalion strength backed off its try to get across the Salm. At 1640 that day the liaison brought in a "B" Co. S-3 Report that 2B knocked out two (2) enemy H/T's. Was that Morrie's gunnery?

On the day following, 12/23, the liaison report of the activities at 1030 held nary a detail, but Goodrich, battalion exec., back from "B" Co. HQ at 1630 [?], had news that Crochetiere's section had lost Morrie, KIA, and Bengston, Bailey, Johnson and French, WIA

but not evacuated. "1B [?] knocked out (2) Mk V Tanks. 2B knocked out (3) 20mm AA guns SP, (2) H/T personnel carriers, (1) Ground Mount 210 mm gun."

The 82nd Airborne had held their ground with the help of "B" Co. Was the C.O. of the 504th PIR justified in expecting 2B to be there when he wanted to begin a senseless attack? What can Jim Roberts and his crews tell us of the actions in which they were involved and claimed kills?

In the next Road Block, 1B on the Salm R., will get our attention.

A DIARY AND A POEM

Summary of a diary 6/30 - 7/12/44
 6/30-44 Debarked on Normandy Beach and moved through Isigny to waterproof vehicles.
 7/4/44 Reconnoitered area near Caumont with Lt. Austin. Near Litteau saw soldier of 9th Inf. Regt., 2nd Inf. Div. (Indianhead), I asked him whereabouts of my brother, Wayne,

their Sgt. Major. He pointed to a CP, and as we drove in, enemy shells came with us. Wayne came out yelling, "Get that damned vehicle under cover." The three of us hit the dirt... I had a great though short visit with him.

7/7/44 Moved a mile east of Cerisy La Forêt.

7/8/44 moved to area between Airel and St. Jean de Daye. Fierce fighting for the crossroad; our planes, one after the other were strafing the enemy, and a few went down. As we advanced dead Germans and dead cows were around us; serenades from our own guns was deafening. There were Germans without weapons, hands behind their heads, walking up the road toward us.

7/10/44 Screaming meemies, and some mortar fire fell during the night. At first barrage Regas had no foxhole so piled on top of me. I didn't mind; it kept me from trembling..

7/12/44 Jim Allen (B) and Clyde Hildinger (B) were reported killed by mortar fire. I.B.

BE SAFE MY BROTHER

Rumble artillery, rumble through the night,
Burst near me or on me.
Your burst cannot hurt,
My heart is with my brother
Who is somewhere beside me
In the hedgerows of Normandy.

Rumble on thy classic ditties
Ye whining rockets, silent mortars,
We are here in the mist
In the valleys of Airel
Conspiring with a God you know not
Eloquent in the cause of our brothers.

Catostrophic flashings east and west,
Where are you brother, east or west?
Not knowing just where, my heart's everywhere.

Beautiful, beautiful, tapestry Bayeux,
Not a stone demolished in this proud city--
Cathedral steeples proudly high
To heights where one might stand
To see tank battles in the south.

Tilly is south, is heaps of rubbish.
In pastures where once fat cattle grazed
No thing is living, stock laid on side,
Bloated and stinking.
Do not mind the smell, Brother;
A German dead by the hedgerow--
One does not mind.

Only a calvary stands unscathed
In what was Caumont.
Our T.D.'s bore-sighted on the left edge--
Caumont in the moonlight,
And we walked with those who loved this view
From the hill.

Men died for that view, and I,
I stood amongst the debris
Looking east and west;
Looking for you, Brother.

I.B. 7-11-44

"Hap", Ever Better !

[Editor's comments on, "Sometimes It's How You Look At It ! How Did You ?" In R.B. III,3, 9/92, pp. 10-11]

Your editor is trying to recreate what the men of the 703rd T.D. Bn. were doing. He wants to tell you what you hardly had time to even sense, the whole action. Thus he wants to know where the sections of the 703rd went, and what part they played in sharing the scrap with the outfit to which they were attached. The above item, "2B and Cheneux", tries to help you see "the big picture". We need to look at the whole of the action. Only then can we come to the truth of what the 703rd experienced. Hap's letter helped remind your editor to tell you that the Road Block tries to show your part of the action!

Here's Hap's contribution!

Greetings from Florida! If September had not been "so hectic" for him, Hap might have gotten to Omaha! He corrected me as of his poem in the last issue. At O.C.S., it was "Washout Night" when officer candidates learned whether they would get commissions.

Another correction he made was of the battalion After Action Report-Summary of Operations for 1-13-45. The last great attack to end the war began when the allied armies rolled the Germans back out of "The Bulge" in the first weeks of the new year, 1945. Merle Goodrich was S-3 at the time and wrote the A.A.R. The battalion records are very useful in learning what happened to the 703rd; however, reports from the T.D. sections to company C.P.'s and on to battalion S-3 are incomplete, and often lifeless. Many records in U.S. Army archives were destroyed by

fire. The historian has to use what documentation is available, thus we compare what Merle wrote and what Hap says occurred. We learn more and we ask questions.

1-13-45 2C (with TF Kane) fired 22 rds. of APC at targets of opportunity from a position N.W. of Mont-Le-Ban. From the [AAR Summary of Operations]

"I couldn't remember the town, or the Task Force C.O. I couldn't remember how many rounds, but they weren't all A.P.; some were smoke and a few were H.E. and it wasn't targets of opportunity, it was ONE BIG PANTHER TANK. I'll write that one up for a later edition." [Hap's letter of 11-1-92]

Some questions are raised as we try put the above story together:

1. What was TF Kane's assignment as The Bulge was to be cleared?
2. How did Kane use Hap's platoon?
3. Did Hap have his whole platoon with him, or was a section elsewhere doing what? Any action?
4. What members of his crews are still available to tell us what happened? How did they see it?
5. What happened to that Kraut tank? Did Hap's TD's make it hot enough for the Kraut tank?

True that it happened long ago, but the historian has to play detective. With the published histories of the 3rd Armored, and with "The Bulge", added to what you recall going on as you did your job, we may come closer to the truth.

SO WE WEREN'T INFANTRYMEN !

While riding through France, our column was split,
When a tank on our left flank scored with two hits.
The lead tanks kept rolling, but those in the rear
Pulled off in a field, to wait for new orders to hear.
No patrols were sent out for an hour or more To locate the enemy and even the score.
"If we just had bazookas," I said to my men,

"I'd go hunt them myself, so we can start up again.
"I've got a bazooka," said a man in a truck,
"And plenty of ammo so I guess you're in luck!"
With two of my non-coms, Price and Ayala,
We went into the woods in search of that fella!
Stay ten yards apart," I warned my two men.
They'd split up for a while, then got together again.
We came to a clearing about fifty yards wide,
I told them to cover me till I was on the other side.
Zigzagging and dodging, I raced into the trees,
I turned to call them up. They were right there with me!
I lectured on covering fire, both faces looked blank,
Hell! They weren't infantry. They were trained in a tank!
So again we went forward right through the woods,
When we reached the next clearing, I said,
"Listen to me good!"
"While I run across, you stay here, give me cover,
When it's safe, I will call you to come over."
While I was sprinting across, I heard a noise from ahead
The German tank was withdrawing, and all my hopes fled.
So I rejoined my duo, heading back for our lines.
We just strolled back together with naught on our minds.
As we approached, someone called out to me,
"Keep your men ten yards apart, like the real infantry."

"Hap" Paulson

F E A R !!!

After being a Prisoner of War, I was "shipped" to the Lake Placid Country Club for re-evaluation for two weeks. During my stay there I fell off a horse while it was standing still, and was thrown off the golf course on the first tee! I was then sent to North Camp Hood, Texas as a tank driver instructor.
Getting there, I was sent to Head quarters Company for assessment, and very soon, as of army tradition, put on K.P.

I was an acting Sergeant doing K.P.! After six days of that detail I was called to camp headquarters,--told to wear my "A" uniform, and that the Brigadier General wanted to see me. I came into his office and reported for duty. He asked me to sit down saying he wanted to talk to me about making a speech at a battalion orientation class. It seemed I was the only one in camp that had been a P.O.W. The subject was to be "Fear in Combat"! I sat in the chair in fear. I had never made a speech in my life! He gave me two texts on psychology, and asked me to avoid speaking more than thirty minutes.

I told the General I was on duty at the moment, needing a long break to prepare for the talk. He asked me what I was doing. When I told him I was on K.P., he almost fell off his chair.

The next Friday we had that orientation class, and my talk went real well. I closed with what drew a belly laugh.

"The real fear in a human being is having a bowel movement with your clothes on while you're standing up!"

Charles Bornstein (C)

ON TO CAMP POLK, LOUISIANA

From the Editor's Diary

2-15-42 Three men in a berth. 10 miles from Dayton our troop train passed the General Cigar Co. factory (White Owl). At Indianapolis, at about 1 P.M. free cigars (Phillies), Terre Haute, then St. Louis close to 5:45 P.M.

Before bedtime a draftee explained the "butcher racket" to us, the thrown-away meat garbage in cold cuts: you really learn something when you travel! As I was washing, that butcher boy tossed a cupful of water down my back. I retaliated by tossing some through the ventilator as he sat on a toilet seat.

2-16-42 I saw the Mississippi R. midmorning at Vicksburg, Miss, a sad town. We were on the freight rails. The sight of squalid filth and privation hurt. It is the worst I have ever seen: mud, rain, landlords in cars collecting their pound of flesh, and a beaming-faced Negro girl with a parasol and a "co-ed" red pair of socks below the knees--

After all that flat land, here were the tenant farmer districts. Crossing the river

whose color was like cold coffee and milk. Ruston, La. the home of Louisiana Tech, was the first half-pretty town we passed. We Yankees realized that we were going to have Spring two months earlier than we were accustomed.

We were in and out of Shreveport, 3:55 P.M., with a delay to pick up guides. South through a bit of Texas. Stopping we were shot at once. I had sight of my first oil wells south of Benson, La. The boy without shoes I saw reminded me of Whittier's poems. At Leesville, 8:35 P.M., was a boomtown because of an army camp and a great town for beerhounds. We crawled the 12 miles south to Camp Polk, and were glad to get off a pullman, our confinement for 2 1/2 days.

There was a band there to greet us, and they were very good. We stepped off the train onto a sea of truck-rutted, red mud, marched to a hall for private parts inspection and given temporary barracks. It was 2230 but cooks from upstairs made us a swell meal of ham and eggs.

2-17-42 Again, classification in the morning. They had our Devens info, but asked us, separately, our civilian activities. I became 521-2, clerk-mechanic, the #2 as of an intelligence test. Then to a truck and told I was a member of the 703rd TD Bn. Heavy, "a fast fightin' outfit. There aren't more than 30 guns and 10 trucks now. There isn't a rifle or pistol in the Bn. area. All guards carry sub-machine guns at night." Again body inspection, assigned tents, more clothing. We rode all over camp to find our barracks bags. 2-18-42 1st drills, We sure were told we fit the term, "rookies!" Night movies of gas attacks, how to take care of masks though we haven't any. 75 yards to the latrine, 350 to wash up.

GENERAL BRADLEY'S DECISION AT ARGENTAN 8/44

He prevented Patton from a move north through Argentan to join the Canadians on the way from Caen toward Falaise, thus the Allies failed to close the Argentan-Falaise pocket. The virtually surrounded German forces in Normandy, escaping through the Argentan-Falaise gap, avoided complete encirclement and almost certain destruction. Why Bradley made this decision and whether he was correct remain questions still discussed.

703rd Road Block-12-

Patton should have been allowed to take Argentan. However, even if the Germans got out of the gap, of their seven armored divisions that got to the Seine River, 1300 men, 24 tanks and 60 artillery pieces got across. Other army remnants got across with little to stop the Allies before they got to Germany.

Blumenson, Martin, "Bradley's Decision at Argentan" in Blumenson, M. et al, Command Decisions, NY: Harcourt Brace, 1959, 303,319.

GET MOVIN', SOLDIER !

Your 703rd Road Block will be getting to you quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

Please get your letters, information, "yarns", news, responses to our questions, pictures, gripes to us, by the third week of the month before the issue date.

Let us know how we can make this newsletter better. Sincerely--we really want to hear from you !

703rd Tank Destroyer Bn.
Association

President Fred Hunt
2447 Wallis Smith Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804

Merle Goodrich Vice President
10105 Grand Park

San Antonio, TX 78239

I. B. Wagonseller , Treasurer
320 W. Walnut

Bowie, TX 76230

Fred Hunt, Secretary till 9/93
2447 Wallis Smith Ave.

Springfield, MO 65804

Deacon Leonard Marchewka, Chaplain
511 Page Avenue

Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

Everett Stites, LIAISON

581 Forest Drive

Rivervale, NJ 07675

Nathan Goldberg, Editor

86 New England Ave. Apt. 50

Summit, NJ 07901



703RD ROAD BLOCK

Nathan Goldberg, Editor
86 New England Ave. # 50
Summit, New Jersey 07901

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