

Veteran 894th TD Gave Kraut 300 Troubled Days

By A Staff Correspondent

WITH THE 5TH ARMY, Sept. 25—The veteran 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which has had more than 300 days of combat against the Germans, was recently fighting as an artillery task force north of Lucca, it was revealed today, coincidentally with the announcement that the battalion forms a unit of the 5th Army.

Tank destroyer platoons of the 894th were leap-frogged to artillery indirect-fire positions while its recon men acted as forward artillery observers, directing their battalion's accurate long-range tank destroyer fire.

During the drive from Rome to the Arno, the 894th TD crews raced ahead through Civitavecchia, Tarquinia and Monte Alto, destroying enemy self-propelled guns, machine gun nests, mortars and infantry strong points. Of the 21 German tanks encountered by the unit north of Rome, the 894th destroyed nine and forced the others to retreat.

The battalion began supporting French forces of the 5th Army on June 28, moving into the line at Riparbella and fighting north through Siena, San Gimignano, Certaldo and up the hills to Castel Fiorentino before opening fire across the Arno.

The 894th recently spent its 330th

day of combat against the Germans in this theater; 79 of those days were spent in Tunisia. The battalion arrived in Italy Oct. 28, 1943. Since Dec. 17, 1943, when the battalion first went into the line for the 5th Army in the Mignano sector, it has been in action continuously except for a two-week rest period.

It has fought mainly against infantry, but its score includes 17 enemy tanks, a large number of self-propelled guns, half-tracks, trucks and machine gun and mortar nests. Throughout much of its time here, the battalion has enjoyed the closest comradeship with British troops, many of whom often rode into battle atop the American TDs, firing the turret machine guns.

The 894th fought with the 34th Division and assisted in cracking the Lanuvio-Velletri line before Rome. Its B Company has been cited as a distinguished unit.

Previously, in Tunisia, the battalion fought at Kasserine Pass, Tebessa, Sbeitla, El Guettar, Sedjenane and Bizertia. It began service in Africa on Jan. 17, 1943, after going through advanced training in England since Aug. 17, 1942.

About 20 percent of the battalion became casualties in Italy. Seventy percent of the unit's personnel are selective service men from all sections of the U. S.