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UNITED STATES ARMY ★ ★ ★

# SECOND PLATOON RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY



# 811<sup>TH</sup> TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

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PREFACE

This, the overseas history of the second platoon is not a detailed story but just a memorandum of some of the more important accomplishments of this platoon's combat history in Europe. This was written entirely from memory, as censorship regulations prevented the keeping of an accurate platoon diary.

T/5B.C.Chapman.  
811 T.D.BN!  
Rcn.Co.2nd.  
Platoon





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811 T.D.BN.

PERSONEL OF THE SECOND RECONAISSANCE PLATOON, RECONAISSANCE  
COMPANY.

PLATOON LEADER: 1st Lt. Gordon R. Harris 337 N. Crescent Hgts. Blvd.  
Los Angeles 36 California.

PLATOON S/Sgt. --- Joseph V. Ash --- 204 West Merton Ave. Connellsville  
Pennsylvania *P.F.C. SCHNELL - 2349 CHARLESTOWN TOL, O*

SECTION Sgt. --- Roy F. Berry --- 1121 W. Elm St. Kokomo Ind.

SECTION Cpl. --- Lawrence F. Zimmerman --- 417 High St. Bellevue Ohio.

RADIO OPERATORS --- T/4 Arthur J. Cameron --- 151 Beachwood Ave. Mt.  
Vernon New York.

M8'S-20&24 T/5 George M. Jordan --- R.R. No. 2 Royal Center Ind.

DRIVERS M8'S T/5 Richard C. Chapman --- 3928 Burnham Ave. Toledo  
20&24 Ohio.

GUNNERS M8'S T/5 Merrill V. Marsh --- Wioza Iowa R.R. No. 2  
37m/m 20&24 T/5 Ralph J. Brendel --- 610 Colorado Ave. Evansville  
Ind.

JEEP DRIVERS-21 T/5 Leslie H. Westling --- Federal Dam Minn.

22 P.F.C. William B. Toomey --- Cynthiana Ky. R.R. No. 6

Messenger --- 23 P.F.C. Joseph P. Green --- 209 4th St. Evansville Ind.

25 P.F.C. Lee J. Stevens --- West Mississippi Box. 133

26 P.F.C. Coburn D. Henningsen Mankato Kansas.

P.F.C. William G. Bertsch Jr. 1118 Vine St. Hamilton  
Ohio.

MACHINE GUNNERS

30 Cal. 21 T/5 John Debarbera --- 201 Wesleyan St. Lockport Ill.

22 P.F.C. Robert E. Miller --- 1102 N. Briggs St.  
Hastings Nebraska.

23 No Machine Gun but scads of trailer.

25 P.F.C. Howard W. Haas --- 225 Woodlawn Ave. Norwalk  
Ohio.

26 P.F.C. Arthur T. Mahn --- 4396 N. 27th St. Milwaukee Wis.

Rifleman M/1 22 P.F.C. A. J. Yost --- Old Forge New York.

26 P.F.C. Albert E. Schnell --- 2349 Charleston Ave.  
Toledo Ohio.

FORMER MEMBERS OF PLATOON NOT WITH PLATOON AT TIME OF EMBARKATION FOR THE "GOOD OLD UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!"

Cpl. Noble E. Morgan --- 1137 West St. Eldorado Ill.

T/5 Ben H. Allison --- War W. Va.

P.F.C. John T. Watts --- 413 W. Union St. Bluefield W.  
Va.

P.F.C. Frank C. Higgins --- Madill Oklahoma.

P.F.C. Russel O. Pultz --- 448 W. Ferry St. Berrien  
Springs Michigan.

P.F.C. Harold L. Moe --- East Baton Rouge Baton Rouge  
La.

P.F.C. Robert D. Morgan --- West Terra Haute R.R. No. 2

P.F.C. Eugene Smith --- R.R. No. 1 Box. 142 Polloc Texas.

P.F.C. Wesley M. Berger --- 539 Allegheny St.  
Pellensby W. Va.

P.F.C. John M. Barry --- 60 S. 12th St. Terra Haute Ind





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RECONAISSANCE COMPANY SECOND PLATOON OVERSEAS HISTORY.

On the fourth of September 1944, after having spent about one week at Camp Myles Standish in final preparation for overseas movement, we boarded the U.S.S. General Brooke.

At a wee hour in the morning of September fifth we sailed out of Boston Harbor for destination unknown. After a very smooth voyage and a few cases of sea sickness, we arrived at Cherbourg France on the fifteenth of September. It was here that we got our first view of German fortifications and the havoc wrought by the invasion both from sea and land. Over the side of the Brooke to barges to shore. At this point we boarded Army G.M.C.'s and on to Area F. where we spent one week getting our equipment, also getting our share of France's mud, rain, calvados and pup tents.

On the twenty second of September we moved to La Mare Du Parc, France where we put up de luxe pup tents of all descriptions. Almost upon arrival we moved out to run a coastal patrol and established three O.P.'s overlooking Englands Islands of Aldernay, Sark, Guernsey and Jersey then occupied by the Germans. Number one was at Sieville, France Sgt. Berry in Charge, two was our platoon C.P. with Lt. G.R. Harris in command. (HARRIS' HASH HOUSE NO ONE). Number three was at Omaha Beach with Sgt. Schnell in charge. A coastal patrol was run with S/Sgt. Morgan in charge. November the eighth saw us going back to our battalion area which was a virtual sea of mud.

On the eleventh of November we started our long journey to Luxembourg ending up in pup tents outside of Mersch Luxembourg where we waited for our firing companies to come in by rail. During our wait frequent trips were made to the front where we saw our artillery in action against the vaunted Siegfried Line. (Pvt. Moe, shooting in the night, at four legged Krauts with antlers. "Such goings on!")

On Thanksgiving Day, we moved to Kristnach, Luxembourg to our first inside billets. At this point, with our guns in indirect firing positions, we manned an O.P. at Berdorf, overlooking Germany. On December the sixteenth the Jerries started to throw a few back at us, chasing us off of our O.P. (HARRIS HOUSE NO TWO). Scads of chicken. Schnell fired his first shot of the war at a nice fat perker, result, scads of fresh pork to eat.

The Germans started their Ardennes offensive on December the seventeenth breaking through and taking the towns of Berdorf and Consdorf. Col. Brownfield decided to defend the high ground outside of Kristnach overlooking Waldbillig. This we did with success after almost a weeks hard fighting. A push was then started which drove the krauts back into their pillboxes in the Siegfried Line. At the start of the attack our first section was the left flank guard and the second was the right. Later the first section was pulled down below Waldbillig to go in on foot to draw fire from German positions that had one of our destroyers all but knocked out. German fire was so intense we had to back off to the high





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ground back of Waldbillig. It was on these hills that the first and second sections acted as infantry in muddy, cold, rain filled foxholes until support came. Upon being relieved we sat up many road blocks, outposts, and security positions. All of this was done under constant enemy artillery and mortar fire that was intense. All of us will always remember Kristnach, not only for our first taste of combat but also for the friends we all made, (POB Glesner? his good strong celler and our "C" ration Xmas dinner in it not to mention his beer we drank, both that we payed him for and that, that we drank after he left, due to the germans getting ever closer.) "Oh, yes" and Mahns sniper trouble causes the Redskin to shoot hell out of Glesners upstairs windows.

On December the twenty sixth we took off for Arlon Belgium for a rest but got stopped and went to a task force with our B.Co. and part of the ninth armored to whom we are attached. Our first section was part of task force Carstairs and the second part of task force Collins. We took off and followed the fourth armored's tanks up the auxiliary road to Siebret where we started on our part of the relief of Bastogne by taking Siebret and pushing on north and east taking several more towns thus opening the main road to Bastogne thus eliminating the supply problem and allowing the 101st. evac. hospital to get their wounded out of Bastogne which was still under heavy german bombing and shell fire. The second platoon spent almost one solid month in dugouts. The weather was most inclimate with bitter cold and unrelenting snowstorms. We were under constant enemy shell fire at all times and had only one days relief and that for only a few of us. We lost Higgins, hit with shell fragments. "AH", RELIEF at last and back to the company but much to everyones sorrow its just a thirty minute period and we get an order to get ready to move back to France for reorganization and a real rest, but this move didnt effect the second platoon or B.Co. (Westling gets a german halftrack)

Instead of going back we went forward to Bastogne to help stave off a reported armored threat. We were greeted with who the hell are you, where did you come from and who the hell sent you by the 101st. Airbourne C.O. He said he didnt really need us but held us in reserve and put us on a bald hill outside of Longchamps where we stayed for four days. We then came in to Savvy where we had one heated room and a hay mow for a billit. We spent three days here for maintenance and then on to

FOY= A hard fight, intense german shellfire, dugouts, cold, rain and snow galore. Scads of german tanks.

Neville=The P.47'S do their stuff both on german tanks and us.

Rachamps=Relief? yes for the 101st. but not for us. WE get reassignment to the 17th. Airbourne Div. The next week was just a repetition of the past.

Wiecourt=Back to the company. Take off on reconnaissance mission to Trivigny, picking up B.Co. enroute and on to

Steinbech="AH ME2 " At last we get relief as the third platoon comes up.



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Travigny=Back to Batalion Hdq. A short rest and Tommy Watts leaves us with trench feet.

CHANGE OF SECTOR.=Back to Luxembourg. Attached to the 80th. Div.

Medernach=Good billits, beer. Looking for direct fire positions on Seigfreid Line.

Beaufort= Attached to B.Co. and the 318th. regiment of the 80th. Div. Two day billits waiting for the bridge to be completed across the Sauer River. Bridge is in and ever we go to german soil. Into the woods and on security positions. February 13th.

Betenderf=Good billits and in every night after every days shell dodging. Contact patrols with 318th.

Crutchen=More of the same. We lose Schnell and Debarbera.

Frielingen= Jerry's on the run, good tank hunting. Allison gets Purple Heart and Ash is section sergeant.

Meterdorf=More fair billits and back with the batalion for one night.

Biersdorf=Fine billits and a good rest with the company. Off to a bald hill waiting to take off with the Fourth Armored Cavalry. (mission cancelled)

Bitbourg=Off on a screwy mission that wound up getting us ordered off the road. ( we all saw two stars that day) Was iss priority?)

Attached to 89th. Div. for pocket cleaning mission, scads of land mines (mission cancelled) We take off for

Saarbourg=Long road with route marking detail. Good billits at the end and scads of good Saar Wine. ( Oh my aching head) More contact missions. Onto

Zerff=Screaming Meemies galore. Jerry is beginning to crack and the prisoners are coming in fast. On to

Brittan= Krauts are on the run. Foot patrols are sent out and bridges are found in tact. Enemy is contacted.

Nunkirchen=Patrols are sent out again. This time bridges are found blown and a ford is found. Lots of eire and ham(helle Haas!) Haas gets a motor bicycle (Das iss mein Howard)

Kaiserlautern=THE KRAUTS are really running backwards at a fast pace now and the rat race is on. We stop east of Kaiserlautern WE hit the jackpot by finding a celler full of Cognac, Wine, Liquer, Champagne, and Brandy. At dawn were off again on point reconnaissance. Attached to the 319th. Regt. 80th. Div. Off for

Ludwigshafen=on the Rhine. After running all day Cel. Cestelle gives the second section the bums rush to try and take a bridge in tact. Result all bridges kaput. Back to

Waldrehweiler= Good billits and a short rest.

Gau Algesheim=Route marking to this burg as usual what would they do with out us? The krauts welcome us with a few rounds. score one hit on a backhouse. on to=

Bretzenheim= Fair billits and a four day break. Cognac stock drops to a new low but Cameron still say's "Lets have another drink". Ash makes staff and Skin makes corporal.

The second takes off for Mainz and over the 1726 foot bridge





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UNITED STATES ARMY ★ ★ ★

across the Rhine River to catch the 318th. Regt. 80th. Div. We caught them and took off on point reconnaissance to Hombourg. The ME109'S straffed hell out of us and Brendal had a picnic with his fifty Cal. From here we moved into a small town where we got a mission to clear twelve towns which we did in three hours and took scads of prisoners. Lt. Harris received the Bronze Star for this mission. We then moved closer to Kassel and found a warehouse full of Cognac and Whiskey (My Aching Head and Back)

Kassel= Ran into scads of Tiger Royal Tanks. Lost two platoons of destroyers. WE sat up an O.P. and reported their movements, result the kreuts lost their Royals. Kassel is kaput. A knaut officer gets tired of war and tries to ride home on his bicycle, one more prisoner. WE move two towns east of Kassel and Sgt. Berry almost gets shot out of an O.P. window. The 69th. Div. pinches us out and we go back to the company.

Holzhausen= Good billits and then off to another sector route marking to Gotha.

Seebergen= Prima O.P. with scads of beer and visability, good chew too.

Smire= Our doughs take it on the chin. A shoe warehouse is looted by the slave laborers, lots of excitement. Perfect O.P. up in a church steeple.

Dietendorf= Back to the company and more swell billits.

Erfurt= Quite a fight resulting in a mass surrender. WE get guns galore and some good cameras. Chapman gets Browning Shotgun via Lt. Harris. Our Hdq. gives us a bumb steer and we wonder around half the night and finally find them in the town of Mac Nemar, i mean

Weimar= This was a one night stand in good billits. WE hear of the death of our Commander in Chief President Franklin D. Roosevelt. On to

Gera= Trouble with the S.S. our mission to clear twenty four towns on the Autobahn flanks with the help of our other two platoons. In one of the towns we are the recipients of Capt. Parsons reconnaissance by fire. (P.S. The Capt. gets the Purple Heart off of a hot fifty barrel.) While the third platoon was shooting their T.O. lead off and at the S.S. troops and the first was tied up on the left flank the second went on to take (HARRISTOWN)

Meerane (Harristown)= Yes we took it all alone, taking one hundred and three prisoners. WE also replenished our supply of drinks again and took dozens of prisoners pistols. Backing off at dark and reentering the next morning to find the 318 in the town finishing the job. They took some two hundred more prisoners. We also captured fifty new german trucks of which we kept three for our own use. The batalion then moved in and we stayed on for four days. Schnelland Morgan came back to us and we got Rusty and Tead " Fresh from the States".

Chemnitz= We got to its out skirts about ready to meet the Russians and had our mission changed.

Persdorf= A two nightstand.

Schweisdorf= Four days on the highest hill, in tents, for maintenance and short arm. Retreat Formation (foey)





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Bamberg= Berry, Schnell and Chapman take off for shell casings and return with scads of cheese, pickles, pears, cherries, and a barrel of cognac. Lt. Harris says "Cameron you will still operate that radio even as a private" to which Cameron's only reply is "Damn it that calls for another drink". On to

Nurnbourg= Birthplace of the Nazi Party. Rest in marvelous billits. A good G.I. show in Hitlers Plaza. Our first shower in months. We think the war is about over for us but get badly fooled. Off on a fast road march until we start across country in mud galore. Good old 702 tanks. Thanks to the tanks for no sleep that night. Over the Danube River to

Regansbourg= In again and out again and on to

Pleiskahn= Mission to sweep woods for air corp's. This we did shooting, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and getting four prisoners. Coming out of the woods we saw dozens of deer running away from us. No time was lost and nine deer were shot and we all had plenty of venison for two meals. On to=

(AUSTRIA) Muhlendorf= Reached our destination contacted 14th. armored. Took 112 prisoners inclusive of a complete German staff with a Col. in charge. Our Dutchman Mann throws his P.F.C. at the Col. We then took over their billit which was a very beautiful Chateau. Again we get our supply of wine and cognac, the finest of continental brands. The owner being an English count. ~~On~~ We then reverted to company taking off for=

Braunan= We crossed the Inn River and on to =

Steindorf= We had a fire fight with some krauts at a railroad. They waved the white flag of surrender and when we went down to take them they opened up on us, we backed off and really let them have it in a big way. They finally gave up, that is those that were left did. Brendel shot down a German liaison plane by doing some excellent shooting. On to=

Vecklamarkt= Another hard fight and the cavalry loses a light tank and a M8. Panzerfausts got them both.

Vecklabruck= On a night patrol to check routes and bridges, finding the bridge blown and running into scads of Hungarians still under arms. Back to Vecklabruck for two hours sleep. UP in the morning and on to =

Holzleithen= We go around in circles, take hot coffee on the run. We cross the Traun River.

Pergern= ~~One night stand, on to=~~ Tank through the bridge.

Steyr= One night stand. On to=

Kirchdorf= Task Force Black, covering the flank. We took a kraut Major and his staff, payroll and all. We disarm a Hunky garrison consisting of a Major and 250 men. We then try a little mountain climbing with our vehicles and all roads lead to trails. We then went up the Traun River to pick up the 80th Recon; then down to Spital (lyhrn) where we received the surrender of the German 7th. Army inclusive of several panzer divisions. This is the town that held the 46,000,000,000 dollars in Hungarian gold plus the royal jewels. AT THIS POINT THE WAR ENDED WITH THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF ALL GERMAN MILITARY FORCES!





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We stayed in Spital for two days. Ash, Toomey, Marsh and Stevens took off on a mission in the mountains to try and capture some nazi party big wigs reported to be in hiding there. Upon their arrival they found they had taken off the day before. They disarmed a lot of die hard S.S. troops and got quite a collection of pistols. We fished the mountain streams both with hand grenades and fishing tackle having fair luck catching a few nice rainbow trout. We then took off for=

Laakirchen= We spent thirty five days here doing maintenance on all of our equipment, close order drill, calisthenics and guard duty on a road check point. We also organized soft ball, volley ball, and hiking teams. Shooting meets were held with the second running away with all of the prizes. Brendel, Westling and Marsh all won passes to Paris. Passes were also given for Thionville France, Paris, and the Riviera. One day trips were taken to Gmunden Lake and to Hitler's Berchtesgaden. Our billits were nice but crowded, that is when everyone was present. We had plenty of beer, some good movies and generally a good time was had by all of us. We move to=

Bobingen= This is where we are now and where this masterly manuscript was written. Our billits are the best we have had so far with good beds, hot showers and half modern latrines. We spent most of our time doing maintenance and pulling guard on two road check points and a cheese warehouse containing one quarter of a million pounds of cheese. A few passes to Paris were issued from here. We organized the 811 club with beer and sandwiches being the main attraction. Crap and card tables were the main forms of entertainment. Thirty horses were obtained for those that like to ride. The softball league was continued with Recon's team doing quite well.

JULY 3rd. This is a day of days for us as we are starting our trip to the UNITED STATES, home and furloughs for all of us.

THUS ENDETH THE OVERSEAS HISTORY OF THE SECOND PLATOON  
OF RECONNAISSANCE CO 1811 T.B.BN.

Author & Writer.

T/5 Richard C. Chapman.

Co Authors

S/Sgt. Joseph V. Ash.

Sgt. Roy F. Berry.

T/5 George M. Jordan

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Credit U.S. Army Signal Corps

Photog. J. C. Wagner - 166.

Lt. G. R. Harris, Los Angeles, Cal. and his crew Tee 4  
A. Cameron, Mt Vernon, N. Y. Tee 5 P. C. Chapman  
Toledo, Ohio, Tee 5. R. J. Brendell, Evansville, Ind. - went  
25 miles into enemy territory, cleared 18 towns and  
took 247 prisoners in three hours

Gen. - Chemnitz, Germany.