

HISTORY

of



25th Tank Bn.

By Ralph Cardinal
Lt 25th Tank Bn

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Dedicated to the men of the
Twenty - Fifth Tank Battalion
Who fought and died in action.
Their lives will live forever in
our memories.

History of the 25th Tank Battalion

Part I

History of the 25th-1st Battalion

Part I

History, to the ordinary individual, suggests age. We are apt to skim lightly over certain dates and events with an air of casualness. However, when one takes part in a series of events that lead to a historical end, such actions should be recorded for posterity.

To fellow members of the 25th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division, we herewith present a word picture of your contribution to a job well done.

Friday the 13th! The Month, October the Year, 1944. Fate might have picked this day for us. Tuck it away in your memory file, we'll make reference to it later

The morning was cold, damp and rainy typically southern New York fall weather. We were alerted to embark. Long lines of GIs stood with full field packs, awaiting the order which would send them marching to the railhead. Some were gravely silent, others verbose due to nervous tension, while still others sat about resting their packs against the mop racks.

March order! Men with huge chalked numbers on their helmets started the trek to the waiting train. Loading proceeded smoothly with typical Army precision. A quick lunch on the run to the harbor, muffled curses as duffel bags were hoisted to the shoulders and on through the station to the ferry boat. Eyes were keen to catch a glimpse of the harbor and familiar landmarks enroute to our transport.

The ferry boat nudged its way into the quay and we proceeded through a long warehouse. A Military Band swung out with, "On Brave Old Army Team" followed by "On Wisconsin" and "The Notre Dame Victory March" Perhaps some felt that this was beside the point, as their thoughts were on loved ones at home. Certainly few hearts beat quicker or felt lighter at this moment. Remember the Red Cross Ladies? That candy bar and hot coffee plus the presence of these women was just the touch that was needed to pick up morale. Swell people.

The pale light shone over the Purser's Desk by the gangplank. A rustle of paper and a voice singing out, "Adair Robert E." came the reply. Thus we filed into the bowels of the ship, picking up our guide, Tec 4 Robert Tayler, of Gower, Missouri, who escorted us to our assigned place in the hold of the ship. The companionways were too narrow and the duffel bags too heavy but we somehow managed to push through and await further orders.

Well, we were on board. Let's go, what are we waiting for? Imagine our chargin upon awakening the next morning and finding that we were still tied to the pier. A quick trip on deck assured everyone that the convoy was to be of considerable size. Speculation ran high as to departure time.

On 14 October 1944, at approximately 1530, we cast off and with a lump in our throats, bade a silent farewell to the old Lady of the harbor some of us for the last time. "All military personnel clear the decks" came booming out through the loud speaker and reluctantly, we went below to our bunks.

Ship routine became monotonous after the first couple of days. Chow was served twice a day, that is, what passed for chow. It certainly didn't remind us of garrison food. Many spent hours on end staring seaward or trying to locate a WAC on another ship through binoculars. Others gathered in little groups cleaning weapons, exercising or just batting the breeze. Boat drill was instituted and the third day out a rendezvous was effected with other ships and we settled down to a quiet life.

The good ship S. S. Santa Rosa was a fine sailor much better than some of her Guests. However, all these difficulties were smoothed out as we moved along. PX rations were plentiful the first days. Full boxes of candy bars and cigarettes were purchased. Walnettos became the favorite.

Evenings were confined to movies, impromptu song fests in the foyer, reading mystery stories and writing letters. Some hardy souls even braved the elements to stay on deck and watch the phosphorescent waves dash by. In the holds, mouth organs gave out their twangy tunes, banjos strummed and all but the GIs with Mal-de-mer were enjoying the trip.

Gibraltar and the Straits at last. The beautiful, calm Mediterranean flows past the Rock but there its beauty ended. More on this later Tangiers presented a beautiful sight on the North African coast which stirred our romantic imaginations, while Gibraltar was magnificent in its strength. The aircraft carrier that we had all watched for days, peeled out of the convoy and went into anchorage here. This had been our loveliest day aboard ship.

In late afternoon, the barometer fell and we were in for the roughest storm the sailors had yet experienced in their tour of duty through these parts. Those who were mildly seasick upon leaving New York now became violently ill. Prayers for a quick death were muttered frequently. There was no let-up until we sighted land six days hence.

Land Ho! Where were we? Italy? France? Must be France but what part? Toulon? Marseille? Everyone was guessing, bets were plentiful and all were at once hopeful that it should be France. The sailors wouldn't talk, there was no indication from the advertisements which could be read through the glasses. Finally, a little dinghy went by the convoy with "Marseille" stenciled in huge white letters on its side. A cry of joy swept the ship upon this discovery. Yes, it definitely was France. The long awaited moment was at hand. Behind us stood nearly two years of the best training available. The show was on. The curtain was rising on the final act and we were destined to be in its star-studded cast.

We will now introduce the principal players, those to whom we owe so much for their excellent leadership and guidance through the campaigns that were to follow. The roster of key personnel reads as follows.

Commanding Officer	Major Ernest C. Watson
Executive Officer	Major Howard E. Philips
S-3	Major William E. Shedd III
S-2	Capt James J. Scanlon
S-3 (Air)	Capt Perry F. Patton
S-4:	Capt Neil K. Swift
S-1	1st Lt Gordon W. O'Donnell
Liaison Officer	1st Lt Willard V. Horne
Battalion Surgeon	1st Lt Lloyd I. Sexton
Co Comdr Hq Co	Capt Roy S. Printup
Co Comdr "A" Co	Capt Thomas H. Lasater
Co Comdr "B" Co	Capt Grenville T. Emmet, Jr
Co Comdr "C" Co	Capt Andrew W. Winiarczyk
Co Comdr "D" Co	Capt William D. Smith
Co Comdr Ser Co	Capt Arnold H. Green

Some of these men maintained their positions through out the fighting. Others went on to higher commands and their places were filled by capable members of the Battalion. To one and all, words cannot express the degree of praise that has been showered upon them by the men they so ably commanded, and therein lies the true criterion of a good command.

So on the 29th of October 1944, our Battalion walked down the gangplank into the port of Marseille and started the now "famous" hike to the Delta Base Bivouac Area. "Its only a couple of miles", some GI yelled. Would that we could have reached him some four hours and eight miles later.

First impressions are very often lasting ones. This impressed us. The port was completely destroyed except for the landing places set up by our port units. Rubble was everywhere along the shore front, the pitiful sight of little children with big boney knees and elbows and pot-bellies that belies starvation. What a difference from the pink-cheeked, chubby German children we were to see seven months later.

Then, the tiered, multi-colored homes on the hillsides. The orange tiled roofs, certainly an architecture much different from our own. Marching through the streets, we were followed by many children all asking for "chocolate and cigarette pour papa". This routine was to follow us all through our stay in France.

Delta Base was a bleak sight that afternoon. However, the advance party consisting of Capt Burns, Lts Wax and Hampton plus M/Sgt Gutzwiler and his band of enlisted men, had the foresight to erect pyramidal tents for the Bn and we were to live in comparative luxury for a week.

Our bivouac area was in the vicinity of La Malle. During our stay there, we drew all our vehicles and equipment. Our new 76's and 105's were test fired, the vehicles were combat loaded and ready to go. Everyone worked at top speed during this period. Weapon inspections were held daily and eight hour passes were granted the men to visit Marseille.

On the 6th of November, we began to load the tanks and Half-Tracks on the train for a movement to Portieux-la-Verrerie. Hq's Co departed from Septemes while the line companies left from Cannae Station, Marseille. The train convoy was under the control of Major William E. Shedd III. All personnel of the vehicles accompanied the convoy. They were billeted in 40 and 8's like their fathers before them. It was cold but the nights were spent in comfortable bedrolls. There were many amusing incidents. Here's what happened to Pfc Louis Brill, Chicago, Illinois. Brill was sent to contact the engineer to find out the time of departure, when to his amazement, the train tooted and pulled away. Capt Printup, Hq Co CO, said. "The last I saw of Brill, he was standing in the middle of the track" However, Brill's ingenuity arose to the occasion. Hailing the next lone engine, he handed the engineer a couple cigars and the next thing the gang knew, Brill was passing them on another track, sitting in the cab having a hell of a time.

Numerous latrine calls necessitated by the cold and long ride, cost the convoy a few men as the train never stopped long enough. Fortunately, a following train acted as pickup.

The wheeled vehicle column, under control of Major Ernest C Watson, departed from La Malle on the 8th of November. Valence was our objective that first day and we bivouaced in an old French cavalry stable that evening. The following day put us in Dijon. Although it rained continuously, we could picture the beauty of the vineyard country and the Rhone river valley through which we were passing. Here the country farmers looked more prosperous than their city cousins, but the war had left its mark here also.

It was between Valence and Dijon that we first saw German equipment strewn around in great profusion. The highways had been cleared with bulldozers and for a stretch it was one way traffic. It certainly was a monument to the Seventh Army and General Patch's hard-riding, straight shooting outfit. It gave us a feeling of great pride to belong to his organization. It looked like the beginning of the end for the Jerry.

At Dijon, we bivouaced in Memorial Park. We entered the city at dusk and moved out at dawn, consequently our impressions of the city are meager. The following day we passed through Charmes which had been badly damaged by Artillery and the Infantry in village fighting. Our bivouac area was located one and one half miles from here and near the little village of Portieux-la-Verrerie.

Portieux was a typical French farm center, with its cobble stone streets and ever present manure piles. The citizens were at once friendly yet reserved in their opinion of us.

The railhead being at Charmes, all the track vehicles were unloaded and convoyed to the bivouac area. The Battalion was again together.

Just as a football team polishes off the rough spots of a certain play on Friday afternoon before the big game, so did the Battalion smooth out certain little deficiencies during our eight day stay in the woods of Portieux. Weapons were test fired and Ordnance made a final check. Vehicle maintenance was stressed while the AG and Mortar platoons of Hq's received special training.

This outdoor living was old stuff to us. In spite of the inclement weather, the schedule functioned smoothly. Corduroy roads were built to facilitate moving vehicles in and out. The front was thirty miles away and the Battalion Staff plus the Company Commanders went to Bruyere to visit and talk to the members of a veteran tank Battalion. Many useful hints were thus acquired. We were ready for whatever the future offered and everyone was confident of success.

On the 19th of November, the Battalion I & R Platoon had the mission of reconnoitering routes to St Die. The first night was spent in Baccarat. They billeted in an old farmhouse and needless to say everyone was constantly on the alert. About midnight, a time bomb, set by the Jerries sent a bridge hurtling skyward. There was no sleep the remainder of the night. A quick run was made back to report the findings and the Battalion was ready to move.

The March order came at 1400. The Battalion plus attachments, was under control of CC "A". The Division was in VI Corps of the Seventh Army. 1st platoon, Company "C" formed the point as we began our march toward the Vosges Mountains and La Salle, near St Die. "B" Company went to the 62nd AIB. Ahead lay the never-before-crossed Vosges Mountains, the monotony of "C" and "K" Rations, the piercing, relentless, cold winter nights and the ever present enemy. These we were never to forget.

The march was quite uneventful although there were numerous delays due to the 3rd and 103rd Inf. Divs. having road priority. We slept in our vehicles that night and at daybreak moved out to Nom Patalize, arriving there about 1400. The 3rd Platoon of Company "D" went to act as security for Division "A". Trains and the rest of the Battalion proceeded to get ready for an evening's rest. Here it was that Sgt Horace Rudd's Tank of "A" Company ran over a mine planted near a house. Sgts Rudd and Hill and Cpl Weinstein were injured and the Sgts were evacuated by our Medics. At 1500, plans were changed. We now were attached to XV Corps with the mission of seizing Barenbach. The Rcn. Platoon took off to the vicinity of Blamont on a route rcn, and at 1630, the Battalion moved through Rambervillers towards Blamont. We were on the road again that night, stopping near Cirey. It was decidedly uncomfortable in the tanks. A cold, drizzling rain dampened all spirits.

At St Quiren the head of the column, paced by the 48th Tank Battalion, met resistance in the form of Road Blocks, covered by Mortar and MG fire. After a brief skirmish, we pushed on as the third column behind the 62nd AIB and the 48th Tank Battalion.

At this point the Battalion was in CC "A" Reserve. "B" Company came back to us while its 3rd platoon went to Hq, CC "A" to act as security. We were deep in the mountains and enemy snipers were numerous. When we stopped, all guns were trained on the hillsides and many of our tankers flushed out a sniper or two.

Passing through Aberschwiler, the 2nd Platoon of Dog Company fell out to protect the left flank of Battalion Trains and we continued our trek through the mountains arriving at Le Donon on the 25th of November. Here, we reverted to VI Corps control and received the mission of moving to the vicinity of Selestat, cutting off any retreating Germans that might be running for the Rhine. We were ordered to close up on the 48th Tank Battalion, then at Schermeck. Lt. Chrisman's platoon of lights, which had returned to us, took the point. Our CP in Schermeck turned out to be the local bistro, minus the beverage.

We moved out at 0700, 1-B-94 in the lead, followed by Lt. Tomey's platoon from "A" Company and the main body. It was the morning of the 27th of November and a beautiful daybreak greeted us. At the outskirts of Schermeck, we branched off on our own and wound on down through the Vosges foothills to the Alsace plain.

Upon entering the village of Obernai, civilians warned the Rcn squadron of the 94th that there were Germans in the next town of Goxwiller which lay directly in our route of march. Ever watchful, the column proceeded down the road. At 1400, Rcn spotted a road block in the entrance of Goxwiller and reported it to Lt. Tomey. He immediately dispatched one section of mediums led by S/Sgt Wesson to reduce it. Despite heavy mortar and MG fire, the abattis was reduced. In the meantime, our attached artillery battery went into position and placed fire mission after fire mission on the town of Gertwiller which lay in the path of the retreating Germans.

The point moved through Goxwiller to road junction some 200 yards from Gertwiller. Here was a heavy log road block, supported by MG nests. Our 75's were unable to reduce the block although the MG nests were wiped out by Wesson's Section. The doughboys riding the tanks jumped off and dug in. Lt. Martin, Hq Co, was called upon to reduce the obstacle with his 105's. The tanks pulled up and blasted away, clearing a passage for the point tanks. The tanks moved slowly into the town, firing as they crept along. The bridge was found blown but Lt. Tomey discovered a by-pass and took his platoon through. Sgt Donges of the AG platoon went through to screen the flank of the point.

It was clouding up and darkness was upon us. Orders came down to secure the town for the night. Intermittent artillery and mortar fire was being received. Visibility was limited. As the order went out to the point, a cry came through the receiver, "Lt. Tomey's tank has been hit." In the failing light, it had been impossible to locate the 88 so cleverly concealed by the roadside and Lt. Tomey's tank suffered several direct hits, mortally wounding Lt. Tomey and Tec 4 Tucker. Sgt Wesson then ordered the platoon to withdraw and in the process, his tank was knocked out, and he suffered severe concussion along with Tec 4 Mitchell. They were pulled to safety by Pfc Ortiz, Pfc Deighton and Cpl Podraza. Once again the 88 boomed and this time Sgt Ray Taylor's tank was out of action. Fortunately the crew jumped to safety. The fourth tank commanded by Sgt Roberson escaped without getting hit. While this was going on

Lt. Walton's platoon was in Gertwiller getting plenty of action. Krauts were everywhere and the 75's were spitting out projectiles as fast as the loaders could fill the breeches. The doughboys of B-62 were clearing the houses rapidly but suffering casualties from accurate mortar fire and snipers. One of the tankers, Sgt Levi Wood, spotted a sniper behind a chimney. Quickly lining his sight on the Kraut, he fired his 75mm, demolishing the chimney and blowing the sniper to bits. Action was fast and furious. Everyone knew his job and performed it well.

There was a lull in the fighting and the men from the ill-fated 1st platoon came straggling in. The Battalion Supply Officer, 1st Lt. Morris Wax moved in with his supply trains and the tankers filled up with gas and ammunition, while the doughs loaded themselves with rifle bandoliers.

At 0330, sniper fire broke out and enemy artillery increased its tempo. It looked like a counter attack. Looked, Hell!! It was!! The enemy had infiltrated through the outposted doughs into the town and burp guns were singing their now familiar tune. Artillery hit Sgt Moods' tank but was quickly retrieved by T/Sgt Hightower, the maintenance sgt and his crew. Orders came to withdraw. Lt. Walton's platoon covered the Infantry withdrawal. Lt. Wood's platoon which had stayed by the road junction to cover the town, now opened up to cover the general withdrawal. Sgt McClarren's crew KO'd an Anti-Tank Gun which they had spotted from the gun flashes. The Battalion Mortar Platoon was set up and fired from map data. It was the works, our first battle and we were giving our all.

Upon receipt of a radio message that the enemy had been engaged and that we were suffering casualties, Lt. Sexton immediately withdrew his medical section from the road column and set up an aid station in the cellar of a house in the southern outskirts of Obernai. Hardly had this been accomplished when the aid men began returning with the first casualties. As twilight deepened into stygian blackness, the number of wounded

increased to such proportions that it was necessary to move the aid station into the spacious Obernai schoolbuilding. From the evening of the 27th of November until Gertwiller was firmly within our control, the battalion medics labored almost constantly in evacuating and treating the wounded.

We fired intermittently during the morning. Lt A. P. Hyde's tank had been knocked out but none of the crew were injured. At approximately 1300, the 1st platoon of "B" Company, Lt Swager commanding, began to enter the town. Sgt Edward Thomas's tank received a direct hit, so the platoon withdrew to the road junction and the Battalion proceeded to level the town. The forward CP was set up in Goxwiller with the rear CP in Obernai.

On the morning of the 28th of November, the Battalion I & R Platoon led by Capt J J Scanlon and Lt Day, entered Gertwiller to clear the town of snipers. Injured 62nd Infantrymen were located and sent back to Obernai, the town was reported clear at 1100 and Lt Geneser's platoon plus the 94th platoon came in to cover the Engineers as they built a treadway. The bridge was completed by 1600 the Battalion went into Reserve and B-62 reverted to its parent organization. It had been a month to the day since we landed in France, and already we had tasted the full bitterness of war. We celebrated a belated Thanksgiving, but its meaning was deep in our hearts.

While this action had been taking place our "C" Company, under Capt Andrew Winiarczyk, had been assigned the mission of overtaking "C" Company of the 62nd AIB and "C" Company of the 48th Tank Battalion, supporting them on a quick thrust to the Rhine. They picked up the column which had been pinned down by 88, small arms fire and 20mm flak guns. Rolling up under blackout the enemy did not realize that this Company had joined the column. Lt. Hilliard Kirby, 1st platoon leader, sent the "No Firing" order over the radio. Watching through the periscopes, the tankers saw the artillery creep down the road towards them. A barn was set on fire and its glare revealed a C-48th Tank. Almost immediately an 88 pierced its hull and it went up in flames. Orders came to withdraw as bazooka teams had infiltrated to the rear. Lt. Donald Corlett's 3rd platoon covered the withdrawal of all three companies as they made the run successfully back to Anglau. "C" Companies' first prisoners were taken in this action.

On the 1st of December, Charlie Company was attached to the 409th Regt of the 103rd Infantry Division. Barr, Dambach and Shearewiller were taken that day and they were to assist the 409th in attacking Selestat, one of the larger Alsatian cities.

At 0400, 2 December 1944, the 2nd platoon plus one Company of Infantry went to the aid of another Infantry Company that had crossed the Moselle River and been pinned down resulting in heavy casualties. As the tanks approached the bridge, it was blown, consequently the tanks deployed and fired on enemy emplacements. Lt Fred Gisse, acting as FO, succeeded in wiping out a MG nest with Infantry mortar fire. 75mm fire drove the enemy out of houses in the outskirts of Selestat and they proved easy targets for the 30 Cal fire of Machine Guns as they attempted to hide in a nearby woods. In the afternoon, the 1st and 3rd platoons fired at the enemy in support of the Infantry. The 103rd Division took Selestat the following day. On the 3rd of December, "C" Company returned to the Battalion fold.

We had then moved to St Pierre and were in Corps Reserve but alerted to move on one-half-hours notice. Much time was devoted to maintenance of weapons and vehicles. We received our first hot meal in eleven days and our first mail call. Morale was high. Capt Grenville T. Emmet Jr. became Battalion S-2 and Capt J J Scanlon assumed command of "A" Company, while 1st Lt Homer L. Swager took over "B" Company. We were again ready for action.

At 1700 on the 3rd of December, we moved some sixty miles north through Obernai, Molsheim, Hochfelden to Riedheim. Closed into the bivouac area at 2230. The CP was established in a school house.

This was Alsace and it looked good to us even though the roads were muddy and the manure piles bigger. This was to be a period of rest and relaxation but work on vehicles never ceased. The tanks were sandbagged and named. Maintenance was a continual chore but necessary. Our Battalion Commander was promoted to Lt. Col. which caused much rejoicing within the Battalion.

We were eighteen miles from the front and on the 6th of December, Lt Hyde's platoon had the mission of supporting the 94th and elements of the 19th AIB in an attempt to seize Gamsheim. A blown bridge prevented the tanks entering the town so the platoon moved to a rendezvous point on the Weyersheim — Gamsheim road. Since all communication with the Infantry was cut off, the tanks and a section of Rcn proceeded down the road towards Gamsheim to try and reestablish contact. Anti-Tank Fire was encountered and due to darkness they withdrew to Weyersheim for the night. On the 8th of December, the platoon rejoined its Company at Riedheim.

On the night of the 8th of December, "C" Company took to the road during the hours designated, occasionally racing their motors and creating noise to indicate a large concentration of tanks. The Tanks remained concealed during daylight hours. Capt Emmet and the Rcn platoon made a reconnaissance of roads, bridges and areas in and around Gundersheim, Brumath, Weitbruch, Weyersheim and Kurtzenhouser.

On the 9th of December, we were on a forty-five minute alert, ready to move out in road fighting formation. Finally, our mission came down. The Division was to attack. We were to establish a line on the Rhine-Lauter Rivers. The 79th Infantry Division was on our right and the 103rd Infantry Division was on our left. Weissenbourg was to be the main objective.

At 0745 on the 13th of December we off from Riedheim, "B" Company and the 1st Platoon of "D" Company went with the 62nd AIB in CC "A"'s other column which was to be on our left. The 2nd platoon of "D" Company joined CC "A" Reserve while Lt "Smiley" Klinefelters' platoon of lights spearheaded the 25th Tank Battalion attack. We passed through the 103rd Infantry Division doughs and on through Hochfelden, Hagenau, the Foret de Hagenau, into Surbourg where we spent the night. Early the following morning, we passed on through Sultz where "A" Company remained in CC "A" Reserve. Here we encountered our first Maginot Line fortifications. At an accelerated pace we passed Hoffen and north of Hoffen encountered a blown bridge. Lt Bardwell's engineers had it fixed in jig time but it wasn't substantial enough, so a treadway was put in. Our CP was a Railroad Station. At dawn, the point moved on through Oberseebach. Rounding a curve in the road and nearing a railroad bridge, the whine of an 88 was heard. Lt Klinefelter's tank was burning instantly and Sgt Mello's tank received two direct hits. The gun position was reported to Lt. Col. Watson. "C" Company tanks meanwhile had deployed on either side of the road and the doughs had dug in. Sgt Winslow's Assault Gun went into action, firing at a point where he had seen gun flashes. Mortar fire and medium artillery fell along the road. It seemed to be fired from Weissenbourg. Sgt Worth of the mortar platoon directed fire on the Anti-Tank Guns. While this was going on, S/Sgt Preston Rensch of the Battalion Medical Detachment had arrived to evacuate the tank casualties. In direct view of the enemy, Rensch succeeded in evacuating the members of the lead tank, during which time artillery and mortar fire fell unceasingly. Lt Fred Gisse, seeing that there was no one available to drive the peep, jumped in and drove, while Rensch attended the wounded as well as possible. For this courageous action, S/Sgt Rensch was awarded the Silver Star. The column set up defensive positions on our side of the bridge for the night and the following day, the column entered Weissenbourg.

The second column of CC "A" consisting of the 62nd AIB with B-25 in support also had the mission of taking Weissenbourg. Their route of march paralleled the 25th Tank Battalion's advance. Lt. Geneser's platoon operated as the point. Slight resistance was encountered until the town of Reidseltz hove into view. Here the Jerries had decided to make a stand. The 1st and 2nd Platoons supported the Infantry in a bitter fire fight and the town was considered clear by dusk. Enemy artillery was particularly heavy and casualties were suffered by both tankers and infantry. An attempt was made to push on to Weissenbourg the following day but it was necessary to withdraw to Reidseltz and regroup due to the intense artillery and mortar fire received.

After heavy Artillery preparation by supporting units and with Lt Hyde's platoon acting as the point, the 62nd moved out again for Weissenbourg. Lt Geneser's platoon was in direct support, being deployed on a ridge overlooking the city. Our display of force had been sufficient to cause the Jerry to withdraw to the comparative safety of the Siegfried Line which was about eight kilometers away.

As Lt Hyde reached the edge of town, he encountered a road block. Ever alert, he fired a 76mm shell into the block in an attempt to reduce the obstacle. Moving forward to investigate the results of his fire, to his surprise and amazement, there stood Capt Grenville T Emmet Jr., his former CO now Battalion S-2 and his driver, Tec 5 Curran. Capt Emmet had rushed past the point of the 25th Tank Battalion column into the city and is unofficially credited as being the first 14th Armored Division man in Weissenbourg. The time was 1100. It was the 16th of December 1944.

The 25th Tank Battalion had ground to a halt due to a blown bridge in Altenstadt. However, the column moved through Weissenbourg by-passing the blown bridge and continued east toward Schweighofen, Germany. An undefended road block was cleared by 1600. 1st platoon "B" Troop, of the 94 Reconnaissance Squadron, went ahead and drew Anti-Tank fire from Schweighofen. Lt Gisse moved his platoon into position and fired on the town. The Assault Gun platoon quickly went into action firing White Phosphorous and time fire into the gun positions. Darkness, however, was moving in fast so the column closed in for the night, and security was maintained to prevent enemy infiltration.

Task Force Shedd was born that night. Major William E. Shedd III was to take a token force composed of 1 platoon of medium tanks, 1 platoon of light tanks, 1 platoon of doughs and 2 Assault Guns from Headquarters Company. The task force wound its way through Schweigen, Rechtenbach and reached Ober-Otterbach. Here the Krauts opened up with artillery. The lead tanks and AG went into position. Ober-Otterbach was the Siegfried Line! Pill boxes, dugouts and dragon's teeth were plainly visible. Enemy Infantry could be seen moving from houses. Soon enemy artillery came in their direction. The Rcn. platoon leader asked for more Infantry but they could not be supplied. Two light tanks were ordered to move into the town. Meanwhile Lt Martin, the AG platoon leader, had spotted two enemy tanks. Rcn reported that the tanks were moving. Artillery dropped all around. Major Shedd ordered "Cease Fire" and the column withdrew to Weissenbourg and Altenstadt, taking up positions SE of Schweighofen by a huge Chateau. Rcn elements moved into the courtyard while Lt Chrisman deployed his lights into defensive positions around the building. The sound must have carried to the Jerry positions in the line for artillery

found its way into the Chateau. The Tank Force withdrew to Schweighofen for the night.

Dawn found the 25th Tank Battalion attacking in force, and Schweighofen was cleared by 1035. However, the 12th Tactical Air Force was to have a mission on Steinfeld, a town in the outer defenses of the Seigfried-Line, therefore, all forward elements of the 14th Armored Division drew back on a line Oberseebach-Riedseltz. The medium bombers flew over at 1215 but the mission was a failure as far as the 25th Tank Battalion was concerned since points to the north and east of Steinfeld were hit. In early afternoon the Battalion moved back through Schweighofen and occupied Kapsweyer after a brief fire fight. Here, we had our first glimpse of the vaunted Seigfried Line. From the 3rd floor of our CP fire was directed on pillboxes and casements. Lt Martin placed his assault guns on the south edge of town to enable them to fire directly at the pillboxes. Capt Benoit and his gallant Infantry, "A" Company, of the 68th AIB, mopped up the town and proceeded to outpost positions. "C" Company tanks deployed along a ridge, overlooking the line and fired directly at pillboxes. The 501st Field Artillery Battalion was in support and Capt Tweedle and Lt John Larson were the forward observer's. They immediately took up a position in the church steeple which was subsequently demolished by the enemy. Fortunately the FO's were not injured. The Battalion I & R Platoon formed the forward CP guard, while rear stayed in Schweighofen. Enemy artillery fell all night. It was worth anyones life to walk around the town in the dark. All men were on the alert for a counter attack. It was the 17th of December

At 0830, Lt Martin moved a 105mm into position to observe the effect of APC on concrete pill boxes. While it seemed that the shells did pierce the pill boxes, it did not neutralize them as Jerry went down underground during the firing and would return later to man the guns. This firing drew counter battery and Lt Col Watson, Lt Kirby and elements of the Rcn platoon who were at the forward CP were caught in the open. Lt. Kirby and Sgt Robert Colburn were severely wounded and evacuated by our Medics. It was a ticklish situation. 120mm Mortar shells landed intermittently with their familiar "klop". Burp guns were constantly sounding off and Lt Martin was receiving direct fire every time an AG boomed. The town was rapidly being demolished.

At 0100, a ten man patrol led by Capt Emmet and the Rcn leader made a reconnaissance of the dragon's teeth on the west edge of Steinfeld. This patrol went through the teeth and found that there were seven rows. At 0200, Lt. Bardwell and his engineer platoon moved out carrying 700 lbs of dynamite to blow a gap through the teeth. As they were reaching the last row machine guns opened up and the heavy fire pinned them down and forced them to withdraw. However, their mission was successful in part, as they captured a German sentinel and returned him to the CP for questioning. At dawn the tanks of Charlie Company and the AG continued their firing at emplacements in the line. Corps Artillery of 8" howitzers and 155's fired numerous missions on Steinfeld. That night, the I & R platoon sent two patrols into the Dragon's teeth to establish listening posts. These were maintained until 0300. A little further down the line Lt Fraser and four men from "D" Company plus five men from the recon squadron made a foot recon of the line. By-passing enemy guns firing on the 25th Tank Battalion in Schweighofen, they measured the size of the teeth and returned to Kapsweyer

The following day the Battalion was relieved by the 48th Tank Battalion, the relief to be effected by platoons. The move was completed by 1730 and a temporary Battalion CP was set up in Salmbach. All Companies were now with the Battalion and we were attached to CC "B" commanded by Col Gillespie. The following day we established quarters in Schleithal; "A" Company remained in Salmbach and "B" Company occupied Ober-Lauterbach. The "B" Company men had a rough time in the past action. The following is their story as far as it can be pieced together.

With the taking of Weissenbourg the new objective of the 62nd AIB became Bergzabern. The idea was to push through, keeping the enemy disorganized and on the move. Lt Hyde's platoon was still in the lead as they pulled up to a ridge overlooking Ober-Otterbach. Darkness was settling fast so the Infantry dug in and furnished security for the tankers during the long night. Jerry kept hammering away at these positions with 88's, MG and Mortar and artillery. They pulled back in the morning for the bombing mission, but returned in late afternoon and held along the same line as the previous night. The 62nd AIB was relieved by the 68th AIB but the tankers stayed right there. 1st platoon of "B" Company commanded by S/Sgt William Close, supported by two Infantry Companies moved into the town of Ober-Otterbach on the 18th of December with the 2nd and 3rd Tank platoons covering from the ridge. About half-way through town, the tanks were forced to halt due to a blown bridge which was covered by Anti-Tank and Machine Gun Nests. At 1130, the Germans counter attacked from the left, forcing one of the Infantry Companies to withdraw. This left the second company, which had passed through the town, in a most unsatisfactory position. The tankers had to withdraw because of lack of support. In the act of withdrawing, Sgt Thomas's tank received a direct hit by HE which hit the gun tube, spinning the turret around and breaking Cpl Zeunge's right ribs. Again the attached Medics were heroic under mortar and artillery fire, evacuating the wounded to the rear. The tanks withdrew to the ridge and the 3rd platoon laid down a smoke screen which enabled the isolated Infantry Company to escape. "B" Company was then sent to Rechenbach where Sgt Roberson's platoon of "A" Company reinforced the Company for a fire mission on Ober-Otterbach. The 20th of December saw them all returning to Battalion control at Salmbach.

It was here at Schleithal that news began trickling in that all was not going "according to plan" in the First Army Sector. Von Rundstedt was attempting a break-through with all the forces at his command.

At the same time, a sizeable enemy force was being assembled on the west bank of the Rhine in the 1st French Sector which was on our right. It placed the Seventh Army in the embarrassing position of being cut off, should the northern breakthrough be successful and join up with equally successful attack by the Germans through the French. Yes, these were uneasy days, and security was doubled. Indirect fire missions were given all companies and the AG platoon. The firing was prescribed by CC "B" Our Battalion Rcn platoon ran four daily patrols over routes within the Battalion Area. In addition, listening posts on the Lauter River were maintained on a twenty-four hour schedule. Although Mortar Fire fell intermittently on the town all men kept busy cleaning weapons, washing clothers and themselves for the first time in weeks. Vehicle maintenance was never once forgotten.

December 23rd ushered in some 79th Infantry Doughboys who were to relieve us. We prepared to move to Rittershofen and did so on the 24th, arriving at the chosen CP at 2220. The Division went into Corps Reserve. It was Christmas Eve.

Christmas Day in France. It was business as usual for us in the morning. Road blocks had been set up during the night and all people challenged were requested to prove their identity. This was due to message from higher Headquarters which said that enemy parachutists were being dropped in the Seventh Army Area. That afternoon all companies were told to celebrate Christmas but in a mild way. It could only be such for thoughts were thousands of miles away Mail call brought many cherished letters and the Battalion sat about swapping experiences and talking about Christmases at home.

On the 27th the Rcn platoon began its roving patrol of roads leading out of the Battalion area and in the vicinity of Rittershofen. Catholic and Protestant Services were conducted in the beautiful Gothic Church of Rittershofen, which was adjacent to the Battalion Command Post. It was in the church courtyard that General Smith presented the following awards to personnel of the Battalion.

Silver Star Medal	S/Sgt Preston N. Rensch, Med Detachment.
Bronze Star Medal.	Lt Col Ernest C. Watson, Bn Comdr
	Capt Lloyd I. Sexton, Bn Surgeon.
	1st Lt Morris Wax, Bn Supply Officer
	1st Lt John R. Martin, Hq Company.
	2nd Lt William A. Close, "B" Company.
	Sgt Wilfred F. Barton, "B" Company.
	Sgt Edward H. Thomas, "B" Company.
	Sgt Philip R. Terman, "C" Company.
	Tec 4 Donald C. Yarbrough, Service Company.
	Tec 5 Ervin L. Nissen, Service Company.
	Sgt Normann J. Hargraves, "C" Company.

Bn S-3, Co Comdrs "C" and "B" Companies reconnoitered routes and positions for indirect fire from vicinity of Schoffhouse. The tankers from "B" Company fired indirectly on the town of Illinger and Elchesheim. Air CP reported the fire "on targets" At 1400 on the 30th of December, orders came to move to the vicinity of Neuwiller-Griesbach. Battalion moved out at 2230, closing in Neuwiller at 0330. "B" and "C" Companies billeted in Griesbach. Again local security was established immediately One rcn jeep was lost enroute as it turned over hospitalizing Lt Day, Pfc Pierce and badly shaking up Pfc Dessel.

The German threat to the North was turning into a large scale offensive and Von Rundstedt had overrun many positions in the First Army Sector The famous "Battle of the Bulge" was on. General Patton's 3rd Army was called upon to relieve the beleaguered American Forces at Bestogne. The situation was serious.

On New Years Day, the Battalion was alerted to move to the vicinity of Uhrwiller, and hold passes leading to the North through the Hardt Mountains. After a hasty but delicious Turkey Dinner we prepared to move. In the mountains, our attached Infantry Company was ordered to the vicinity of Bitche with the 19th AIB to reinforce Task Force Huddelson. Due to icy road conditions our Able Company, which was with the 19th AIB, had difficulty staying on the roads with slick tracks. Dog Company was sent to reinforce them at Zinswiller However, CC "B" later requested a Medium Tank Company, to replace "D" Company, so Lt Swager moved out at 1230 and proceeded to Zinswiller where he outposted the town and mountain pass. "D" Company reverted to Battalion control. By this time, Battalion had completed its move, and the CP was located in the schoolhouse. "D" Company was assigned the pass at Ingwiller, while "C" Company maintained the block at Rothback with the Company CP in Bischoltz. "B" Company of the 62AIB, commanded by Capt Moore arrived in Uhrwiller and an infantry platoon plus an Anti-Tank Gun Section was sent to each Company to act as support. A defense plan was established and as Lt Swager, CO of "B" Co. so aptly stated, "We were prepared to hold all winter" Direct communication was established between the outposts and the Company CP's, radio contact was established daily and the Battalion Staff frequently visited the outposts. The Battalion I & R platoon became attached to the 94th Cavalry

and maintained listening posts between Zinswiler and Rothbach. It was cold and snow covered the ground. The nights seemed endless and the ever present threat of German infiltration kept everyone on edge. This little band of men are to be praised for their courageous work atop the mountain peaks in early January.

This period was by no means a quiet one although the men did have a chance to clean up and work on their vehicles. Enemy Air and Artillery were busy sending their harassing fire into the towns blocking the mountain passes. "B" Company captured a lone Jerry who came walking out of the woods. The 313th RCT, on our left, was attacking in the direction of Bitche. The 191 Tank Battalion, our Battalion CO's former unit in North Africa, was attached to the 45th Infantry Division, and our "Able" Company, relieved from the 19th AIB and its supporting action at Barenthal and Phillipsbourg, moved to join the 45th, which was coordinating the attack, in its move on Reipertswiller and Wildenguth.

At 0300, the 2nd of January, two Companies of doughs from the 313 RCT supported by Lt Walton's platoon went through town, enroute to attack Wildenguth, just north of Reipertswiller. At 0530, Kraut Artillery began falling in Reipertswiller, and company Trains were ordered to Ingwiler. Two crippled tanks were moved to the lower part of town to outpost the road where the enemy attack was expected. About 0800, the 2nd and 3rd platoons arrived and Lt Wood immediately relieved the two tanks. Lt Walton, with Infantry arrived in Wildenguth by 1530 after a short fire fight.

It was the 3rd of January. Darkness fell rapidly and the men in the CP began to prepare supper. Suddenly all hell broke loose. Seven or eight houses went up in flames. burp guns started belching everywhere. Krauts were pouring into the town from all sides. Surprised momentarily, the tankers snapped into action and raced for their vehicles, which were already being manned by crew members on duty. The Krauts attacked frantically, rushing at the tanks, only to be driven back by 75's fired at blank range, and 50 and 30 caliber chattering incessantly. Krauts lay everywhere, and others milled about screaming "Kamerad, Kamerad". At this point Lt Solari and his platoon joined the company and they entered the town with all guns blazing. A 3/4-ton truck full of Germans took a direct hit. Suddenly a bazooka hit Sgt Whitaker's tank. The bedrolls and equipment on the back deck caught fire but Whitaker managed to kick them off. It was now early morning, and more Infantrymen from the 313th RCT poured into town. Everyone got set for another attack which wasn't long in coming. This time, their objective was a wooded ridge overlooking the town. The Tanks laid down a concentration which was murderous, then the doughs attacked. By 0900, we held the high ground.

As this action was taking place, Lt Solari moved into Picardi, a little town north of Reipertswiller. It was here that his tank was hit, injuring the crew members. As Lt Solari jumped from the turret on the back deck of the tank in an effort to man his 50 cal a sniper fired, killing him instantly. Sgt Stamp, the driver, managed to turn the tank around and made a dash through town to the Medical Aid Station where the wounded were evacuated.

Meanwhile, Lt Walton's platoon had been cut off from the remainder of the company, when the attack on Reipertswiller began. Service Company tried to reach them with fuel and ammunition, but lost one truck in doing so. Fortunately, the tankers had three days rations in the tanks and plenty of gas, although ammo was running low, and were able to resist all enemy attacks on their positions until Lt Wood's platoon crashed through to relieve them on the 5th of January.

Many PW's were taken during this action and casualties inflicted upon the Germans were tremendous. In one instance, Major Hollis of the 191st Tank Battalion, notified our Commanding Officer that "A" Company had captured 118 prisoners plus a Battalion Commander and praised them for their good work.

"A" Company was finally relieved and they returned to Muhlhhausen during the hours of darkness and prepared themselves for a well deserved rest.

Salvaging two of "A" Company's tanks in Reipertswiller became a serious problem. Capt Donald H. Burns Maintenance Section led by S/Sgt Heller made one attempt to reach the vehicles but the icy road conditions prevented their completing the mission. The steel tracks on the retriever were changed to rubber and another attempt was made. This time, the retriever reached the tanks and the men were in the act of hooking up when Kraut artillery opened up on them. Nothing could be done until a liaison plane flew around overhead. Jerry, not wishing to disclose his position, kept silent and the tank was pulled out of the frozen earth, and returned to Uhrwiler. The following day, while in the act of winching out the second tank, the Krauts again opened up with mortar fire. It was impossible to continue during the daylight. In the evening, however, Jerry could hear the retriever motor and immediately sent more artillery and mortar fire from their data. The men returned to Uhrwiler. Two days later, they returned and the scene had changed a little. The Krauts had taken every moveable object off the tank and broken the tracks in an effort to keep us from salvaging the tank. There were Nazi dead piled all around it, as the infantrymen had kept as close a watch over it as possible. The Maintenance Crew managed to get the tank out and pull it back to town where the track was rejoined and the tank put back in action.

It was a splendid job, and two more tanks were to continue fighting for victory.

The "Battle of the Bulge" had been contained and now the strategy was to probe along the Seventh Army front in an attempt to find a "soft spot". Not finding one in the Bitche sector, the next try was in the Weissenbourg Cap Sector. The ensuing action was one of the greatest defensive battles ever fought in World War II. Had not this German counter-offensive been halted, it would have resulted in a disastrous set back for the Allies and a consequent prolonging of the war.

For the past week and a half, Intelligence had reported large concentrations of armor and infantry near Rittershoffen and Hatten and the outlying towns of Buhl and Stundwiller. We knew that something was in the air as we prepared to move to an assembly area near Woerth, on the 11th of January. Charlie Company moved out to join the 62nd AIB and support them in an attempt to regain Rittershoffen and Hatten, thus restoring our MLR. The Battalion was to attack, following the 62nd by 500 yards, cross country and seize the high ground north and east of Hatten. We jumped off at 1130 from the western edge of Hohwiller. "B" Company in line formation followed by "A" Company, the Assault Gun Platoon, "B" Company of the 62nd AIB, and "D" Company which had the mission of screening the Battalion's left flank. Moving cross-country, unopposed, it was evident that our OD colored vehicles didn't blend with the snow covered terrain. "C" Company ran into trouble right away. Heavy mortar and artillery began to fall. The tanks were on the reverse slope of a ridge north of Rittershoffen and were drawing direct fire from the right. Lt Gisse, 2nd platoon leader, acting on orders, moved his tank over the ridge and had started down the front slope when his tank received three direct hits and it started to burn. Both he and Pfc Rush were hurt. S/Sgt Knight and his tank pulled over the ridge and received the same fire. Knight was instantly killed and his vehicle also burned. The crew members of the platoon hastened to their aid under this intense fire.

"B" Company was in for its share of trouble also. As the attack developed and "C" Company ran into tremendous artillery and direct fire, "B" Company was ordered to pass through "C" Company and reach the objective with the utmost speed. Arriving at a ridge overlooking Rittershoffen, Sgt Clyman's tank was hit but the tank was still able to maneuver. Cpl Maurice Fuquay in Lt Close's tank sighted an enemy tank and opened fire, putting it out of action. The tanks withdrew and skirted the left edge of the ridge. As soon as they started across the flat, intense artillery and Anti-Tank cross fire greeted them. Visibility was poor and the tanks began to withdraw to the LD. At this point "B" Company had two men and three tanks that had been hit although they were still in operation.

Lt Martin's platoon set up quickly and fired indirectly on Buhl and Stundwiller. Great flames leaped from homes in Rittershoffen, as other divisional units were attacking from the south. The 62nd AIB had managed to gain a foothold in the edge of town and the battle continued to be an artillery duel during the night. Lt Martin's guns fired 1270 rounds that day.

CC "B" wanted a reconnaissance made of the terrain near the Selzbach River, so Lt Klinefelter's light tank platoon was assigned the mission. Despite heavy artillery fire, the mission was accomplished and at 1500 they returned to their company. Meanwhile, Lt Fraser's platoon had moved under cover of darkness along the Rittershoffen road to prevent any enemy infiltration. This platoon maintained the same outpost for three nights, in the bitter winter cold. The enemy had located their position and many barrages were directed that way.

The second day, both "B" and "C" Companies fired indirectly on the neighboring villages. On completion of this, Charlie Company's 3rd platoon moved east in an attempt to cut two roads leading to the village of Hatten. Sgt Ternan spotted two silhouettes to his right front. Before he had time to fire, a round had hit his tank resulting in the death of Lt Doerr, and seriously injuring himself, Cpl Ritche and Louis Fink. S/Sgt Neff took up a position, and excellent shooting by Cpl Wellman KO'd what proved to be a Mark IV and an SP. Several enemy doughs were killed in this fight. With the tank of Cpl Hisekorn setting up adequate fire cover, the wounded men were loaded on Neff's tank and evacuated. Sgt. O'Brien, under heavy SA fire and in full view of the enemy, dismounted from his vehicle to go to the aid of Sgt Ternan. He worked his way across the open terrain to the stricken soldier administered emergency medical treatment and while attempting to evacuate the casualty to the safety of his tank, was mortally wounded by an enemy sniper.

In the meantime, Lt Chrisman's platoon had attempted to move down the main road, but Sgt Rossa's tank received direct hits. Following the route taken by the 3rd platoon in the morning, the whole company moved to the left. Jerry let the lead tanks through and then hit them with savagery. S/Sgt Neff's tank went out of action. However, S/Sgt Shelton's tank accounted for two Mark IV's and, Cpl Smith, in Sgt Parrish's tank, added still another. "C" Company then moved back to the ridge to lay more indirect fire. Here, "A" Company moved in to relieve them.

Again the mission of observing enemy employment was entrusted to Lt Klinefelter's platoon. It looked almost impossible in the face of what had happened to the mediums, but "Smiley" moved out grinning. Enemy personnel and vehicles were spotted in orchard. The artillery FO was given the information and the batteries began their familiar song. Lt Klinefelter adjusted fire. Everything worked out nicely, as Lt Hyde's platoon was in Hatten, and they were firing on targets spotted by the light tank platoon. The information was relayed to them by the I & R platoon halftrack which was located in Leiterswiller. In all instances, heavy artillery and direct fire hampered operations.

Lt Geneser relieved Lt Hyde and this platoon accounted for six halftracks and one tank. Many enemy personnel were killed by the accurate fire of the 76's. It was a game of "cat watching mouse" Whenever we saw enemy personnel or vehicles moving, we fired, and they retaliated. Our rcn missions were carried out daily, Lt Martin's AG platoon fired thousands of rounds, and the counter battery was excessive. The dough-boys of the 62nd AIB did a wonderful job outposting the tanks of both "C" and "A" Companies. No one can imagine the suffering that was endured those cold nights in the tanks and foxholes. "A" Company KO'd its share of enemy tanks and halftracks. The intense cold brought on several cases of trench foot in the Company went to relieve them. Jerry first showed his jet propelled plane to us during this action.

On the 19th of January, orders came to withdraw to the vicinity of Hochfelden and revert to Corps Reserve. Lt Chrisman with 17 Infantrymen remained in position on the ridge until 0500 on the morning of the 20th of January, as rear guard, then, speedily pulled out before the enemy could notice the change made during the darkness.

The withdrawal was a success and the Battalion closed in Hochfelden at 0130. Permission was granted the Battalion to move to the vicinity of Littenheim, where the CP was set up. "A" and "B" Companies billeted in Altenheim, "D" Company in Dettwiller, Service Company and Battalion Maintenance in Lupstein. "C" Company closed in Littenheim on the 21st of January.

Behind us lay the dead towns of Rittershoffen and Hatten. Rittershoffen, with all its memories of Christmas Eve and a tranquil Christmas Day Turkey Dinner and a tiny Spruce Tree decorated with bells fallen comrades. The church was a mass of rubble as the Germans had used it for a strong point. Yes, this might well be termed the 14th Armored Division's contribution to the utter defeat and surrender of the Nazi Army. The report from VI Corps stated that 39 German Artillery batteries were employed to stop our attack. It was the greatest concentration ever faced by VI Corps troops, and VI Corps was at Anzio.

Our stay in Littenheim was limited. We had left Jerry swinging at air, but his probing patrols located our MLR at the Moder River and he began concentrating troops opposite Hagenau and Bischwiller "C" Company became attached to the 79th Infantry Division and moved to Weitbruch. Here the company was divided up with the 1st platoon attached to the 242nd Inf at Kaltenhouse, 2nd platoon to the 314th Inf at Marienthal, and the 3rd platoon to the 314th in Bischwiller

The Battalion moved to the center of the defense zone to the little town of Huttendorf. Here we reverted to CC "B" control and set up road blocks. Should we have to move, the Battalion, as part of CC "B", would be under 79th Infantry Division control.

On the 25th of January, orders came to move generally northeast, seize the town of Schweighausen and cut roads leading to the town. The Germans had crossed the Moder River, penetrated the 42nd Rainbow Division defensive positions and were threatening to encircle the troops in Hagenau. The LD was a line, Batzendorf-Ohlungen. "B" Company jumped off and Lt Hyde's platoon drew first blood when it spotted a MG nest in the Ohlungen woods, and quickly neutralized it with 76mm fire. Lt Geneser's platoon on the right flank covered the woods, keeping the Jerries low with their fire. When the tanks entered the woods, orders came to hold present positions. This enabled the Krauts to encircle the tanks, but, Lt Close, with his platoon as reserve, opened fire with devastating effect. S/Sgt Thomas led his section through the woods to an open area, faced the woods, and waited for the Krauts to be flushed out. This would have been ideal, but the Krauts had enough and 75 of the Supermen were captured. The tanks withdrew to Ohlungen by platoons to refuel and pick-up more ammunition, then returned to the woods. However, the Jerries had withdrawn across the river and, the MLR having been restored, "B" Company returned to Batzendorf.

S/Sgt Bachus, of "A" Company, and a squad of infantry moved to the vicinity of Schweighausen. Crossing the road, they had an excellent field of fire and killed many German Infantrymen. They moved on to the woods to the northwest and picked off some of the Jerries that "B" Company was flushing out of the woods.

At Kaltenhouse, Lt Kekar and the 2nd platoon of "C" Company were enjoying the battle. A Mark IV on the enemy side of the Moder became a bit bold, and Cpl Al Miller speedily knocked it out. On the 25th, the enemy threw a foot-bridge across the Moder and penetrated the line between Hagenau and Kaltenhouse. The 2nd platoon came to the rescue, capturing 130 Nazi's and inflicting casualties, numbering over 100, on the enemy. The jet-propelled planes were active daily over the area, but our P-47's were bombing and strafing Oberhofen, the Jerry stronghold. There was no great display of air power by the Germans.

With the MLR restored after this probing attack, the Battalion moved back to Huttendorf on the 27th of January. Charlie Company returned to our control and closed in Minversheim for a much needed rest.

Our second stay in Huttendorf was brief. The 101st Airborne had moved in fresh from the "Battle of Bastogne" and were cocky as hell, but we were just as proud of the 25th Tank Battalion, and lost no time in letting them know it. They relieved the 42nd Infantry Division along the Moder River, and we spent the next few days welding lugs on all tank tracks. It was a busy time for Capt Burns' welders. Here plans

were made for forthcoming operation by the 36th Inf Div, with CC "B" as an attachment, to restore the MLR, Bischwiller-Drusenheim-Rhine River.

The weather was clear and cold. Many of the men went rabbit hunting; others cleaned up and wrote letters. The Rcn Platoon made a route and terrain reconnaissance towards Bischwiller. Capt Emmet was sent to Paris for six days to attend I & E school.

At 1630, 1 February, the Battalion executed its move to Bischwiller, setting up the forward CP in the northwest edge of town. Special security measures were established. The Rcn Platoon set up an OP overlooking Oberhofen and maintained it for the duration of the battle. "A" and "B" Companies went to the 68th AIB, with "B" Company receiving the mission of flanking the town of Oberhofen from the east and securing the railroad to the northwest of town. "A" Company was to be in support. The 1st and 2nd platoons of "C" Company went into firing positions to the east, to furnish protective fire and cover to the north, northeast and east. The mortar platoon set up with the 68th, and prepared to fire north into the wooded area near Oberhofen. Lt Walton of Able Company was sent to act as flank guard. The stage was set and the attack began on the morning of February 2nd.

"B" Company moved out, followed by Lt Walton's platoon on their right. The ground was soft, due to the melting snow. A series of irrigation ditches slowed the advance. An "88" boomed from the edge of the woods near Camp D'Oberhofen and Sgt Thomas's tank was hit, killing the driver and wounding three crew members. Sgt Thomas was unhurt. This was "Number 3" for Thomas, and Lady Luck still rode with him. The tanks pulled up to the last water barrier but were unable to cross. Visibility was poor and they stopped in place. Later that night, resupply was accomplished in Bischwiller by platoons.

The following day, the 68th relieved elements of the 36th Division in Oberhofen and "B" Company entered the town. "A" Company moved out across the flat, wet ground, with Lt Wood's platoon leading. Enemy infantry were in cellars and dug in along the northeast edge of town. 75's and 76's quickly ended the war for them. The AT Guns in the woods were hard to spot. A call to the AG platoon brought heavy fire concentrations to bear on the gun positions, but Jerry was tenacious and refused to be moved. Bazooka teams were plentiful. Lt. Wood remarked that they looked like footballs coming through the air. Fortunately, his tank was never touched. The battle knew no bounds. It was continuous, with the Germans' infiltrating at night and the doughboys' and tanks' fighting house to house in the daytime. Huge fires lit the winter sky, sharply silhouetting the tanks, making them targets for the AT Guns and Bazooka teams. "A" Company had a toehold in the houses, facing the woods. They caught the brunt of the German artillery. It was a touch-and-go proposition. The 753rd Tank Battalion was relieved by "A" Company, and "B" Company jumped into the gap when "A" Company pulled out to resupply. Lt. Close was between two buildings when a bazooka man KO'd his tank. Artillery demolished the building, causing a whole side to fall on the tank. Infantrymen stayed close to the tankers all night, and in the daylight hours, the tank guns roared loudly as targets were pointed out by the doughs. It was a fine piece of teamwork, and cool thinking kept the tide of the battle on our side. The Germans wanted this town, but we were giving them a run for their money. P-47's were overhead, constantly bombing enemy installations in the vicinity of Camp D'Oberhofen and the adjacent woods. We never relaxed for a moment. Finally we held three-quarters of the town, and the 36th Inf Div came in to relieve us. Rcn made a route reconnaissance of roads Bischwiller-Kurtzen-dorf-Weyersheim-Gries, and we moved to Gries on the 5th of February. "A" Company was relieved from the 68th AIB and closed in Gries at 1630. The 2nd and 3rd platoons became attached to the 117th Cavalry and supported them in the capture of Offendorf and Gantsheim. Both platoons were relieved at 1930 on the 6th and rejoined their parent unit at Weitbruch at 2130.

From Weitbruch, the Battalion moved back to Huttendorf, our old stamping ground, and "A" Company and "C" Company outposted Morschwiller, while elements of "B" Company outposted the towns of Batzen-dorf, Morschwiller, and Ohlungen. Other Battalion units remained in Huttendorf. Capt Benoit and his A-68 boys joined us here also. For the next week, the Battalion worked on vehicles, movies were shown and the Division Band played a twenty minute concert. A shower point was established and trucks carried the men to Mommenheim for showers. Our Battalion Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Watson, went to the hospital at Sarreburg, and Major H. E. Philips assumed command during his absence.

Just as we were getting comfortable settled, the 101 Airborne came into the picture again. This time they wanted the whole town, and came with a VI Corps order advising us to move. This move was accomplished as we journeyed to Alteckendorf, some eight kilometers away.

Although units of the Battalion were in constant touch with the enemy while at this position, Alteckendorf was an escape from the rigors of war for the next few weeks. The AG Platoon, now commanded by 2nd Lt Frank L. Reissner, set up positions near the outskirts of town, and fired indirectly at targets of opportunity. The Mortar Platoon became attached to the 62nd AIB and occupied sandbagged emplacements, supporting the infantry along the Moder River line. Although the platoon was under direct observation at all times, no casualties were suffered, despite light artillery falling in their midst.

"B" Company was relieved from the 68th AIB and closed into Morschwiller while the 1st and 3rd platoons of "C" Company took their place. 2-C-25 went to the 19th AIB. It was the 19th of February. Lt Col Watson returned to duty and we were glad to see him.

On his side of the line, Jerry was very active. Daily patrols reported minefields, enemy emplacements, while air OP's located artillery batteries and much vehicular traffic. To prevent any loss of ground, should a counter attack develop, three assault guns, plus the Mortar Platoon, were sent to Pfaffenhoffen. Rcn also moved to the high ground south of this town and maintained a twenty-four hour OP Missions on Kindwiller and Bischofen were fired by the Assault Guns. Later, the three guns rejoined the remainder of the platoon at Alteckendorf and continued their fire missions there. The new Multiple Rocket Launcher tank fired many missions at this time.

To quote Maj Gen Prichard, "We had come a long way," since our landing in France. Past combat operations were still vivid recollections in our minds. We were combat veterans in every way. One had only to inspect our unit records to see that our Battalion had reached the point of deepest penetration into the German defenses on the whole Seventh Army front. Many dangers lurked ahead, but the confidence that is born from success lay within us. We looked anxiously toward the future.

Something was in the wind! For days we noticed the heavy guns moving up. New armored and infantry divisions were in the area. Each night the artillery's roar deepened. Huge engineer trucks blocked the roads. Where were they all going? At last we were to be on the move. It might be called "The Road Back" for our division. We were ready!

On the 11th of March we moved to Ohlungen and Uhrwiller. We began to lose some of our Sections, which is the first step in preparing for an attack. Able Company's 2nd platoon went to the 19th AIB and one Section to Hq CC "B", to act as security. "C" Company went to CC "A" Reserve and sent a platoon to CC "A" CP for security, while one platoon remained with the 68th AIB. Rcn set up a twenty-four hour OP at Schweighausen, observing the enemy across the Moder River and directing the AG fire. The Mortar Platoon also went into position north of Ohlungen in support of the infantry. Intermittent artillery fire, estimated as 150mm and 75mm shells, fell on Ohlungen. Capt Lloyd I. Sexton, the Battalion Surgeon and Cpl McKinney, driver of the command halftrack, were injured.

At 1945 on the 14th of March, orders came down attaching us to CC "A". CC "A" was to attack in three columns: 68th AIB, 25th Tank Bn., and Task Force Blue commanded by Major Townsend. The 36th Infantry Division was to lead the attack, and we were to pass through them once they had established a breakthrough. "A" Company went with Task Force Blue, "B" Company with the 68th, and our attack column now consisted of "C" Company, "A" 68th AIB, Hq & Hq Company, 3rd platoon "C" Troop of the 94th, 2nd platoon of "C" of the 125th Engineer Battalion, Battalion Medics, and Battalion Maintenance.

We moved out on the 15th to regroup at Ettendorf. The Rcn and Mortar platoons joined us. "D" Company went into CC "A" reserve; our attachments pulled in, and the Battalion was placed on a one hour alert.

At 0430, the morning of the 18th of March, the CC "A" column with Sgt Hamilton leading the 2nd platoon of "C" Company, moved on through Pfaffenhoffen. We passed through the now clear Hagenau forest (Courtesy of the 36th Infantry Division), devastated Mertzwiller, Morsbronn-les-Bains, Surbourg, Hohwiller (Remember this town?), and veered north as Rittershoffen had already been taken, to Leiterswiller. A blown bridge was quickly replaced by the Engineers, and the column moved Oberroedern, Stundwiller, and bypassed blown road craters to continue to Ashbach, Oberseebach, and Geitershof. Here we halted after an advance of thirty miles. No organized resistance had been met, although several Germans had been captured. Our total for the day was nine towns and 18 PW's. We went into defensive positions around Geitershof, and Capt Benoit sent a platoon of infantry ahead to see if they could reach Altenstadt.

They proceeded down the road, reached an overpass and saw that it was blown. Mortar and artillery fire pinned them down and they returned to report their findings. Two enemy tanks were located with considerable enemy personnel movement on a ridge near Weissenbourg. Lt Reissner set his AG platoon up for action. Lateral liaison with the 36th Infantry Division was maintained by Sgt Rumburg of the Rcn platoon, while Sgt Short reported in on the whereabouts of Task Force Blue, on our right.

The second day of the offensive, the tanks moved cross-country due to the blown overpass, with the A-68 doughs beside them. Every man was on the alert. An AT Gun was spotted near the edge of the woods on our right flank and immediately eliminated. As the column returned to the road near Altenstadt, Hamilton's tank was fired on by a bazooka. The projectile was deflected by the tow cable, and the sand bags on the front slope stopped it completely. The bazooka man plus two of his comrades were taken prisoner. The advance continued. An AT Gun hit Sgt. Hamilton's tank killing the loader Pfc Hampton, and stunning Hamilton. Allison, the gunner, directed the driver to back up. Crawling underneath the gun, he removed the body of the loader, threw a round in the 75 and fired on the suspected enemy position. Again, prisoners were taken. The tankers then entered Altenstadt along with the infantry, and it was reported clear at 1130.

By this time we were catching hell from German artillery. For the first time we heard the dreaded Nebelwerfer, and the projectiles sounded like flying boxcars. During one of these barrages, Lt Reissner and his driver, Pfc Kistner, were caught in the open while looking for new positions for the Assault Guns. When

the artillery lifted, Kistner was unable to find his platoon leader, who had been hit by shrapnel and evacuated by Medics of the 36th Inf Div

A blown bridge in Altenstadt threatened our advance. Artillery had pinpointed the site, and the engineers were having a rough time of it. Major Shedd, Battalion S-3, received permission from the 36th Commanding General to use the Weissenbourg bridge, so the Battalion moved on through Weissenbourg into Schweighofen. Outpost positions were taken up amidst a hail of "Screaming Meemies" and 170mm shells, as darkness set in.

In anticipation of the continuance of the attack at dawn, Rcn peeps were busy all night-leading tanks into position. Artillery pieces lumbered by in the darkness, and foot infantry went slogging by in continuous lines. Tracers and flares lit up the sky, AA searchlight beams wove a pattern across the horizon. It was like a huge Hollywood setting, except that we were the players and death was a reality.

Our Battalion CP was a huge apartment house on the west edge of town, This was to be our Headquarters while the troops assaulted the Siegfried Line. It was like a beehive, activity, keeping it humming night and day.

On the 20th, two platoons of A-68 and one from "C" Troop of the 94th probed the Siegfried Line to test the enemy defenses. Lt Bardwell, with nine men from his attached Engineer platoon, advanced to the Dragon's Teeth and blew out one row. They drew no fire and they returned at 0550. The artillery preparation for the ensuing attack was tremendous. It seemed that everything was firing, the huge 8" guns, 240mm howitzers and 155's really laid it on the Siegfried defenses and the towns of Schaidt and Steinfeld. A section of "C" Company's tanks went into position north of Kapsweyer in support of the infantry. TaskForce Blue pulled up behind us, and Lt Martin and his "A" Company now rejoined the Battalion.

Information concerning friendly troops was brought in by Sgt Rumburg, Cpl Hoxie, and Pfc Dessel of the Rcn Platoon. To the north, elements of the 36th Infantry Division were having a tough time penetrating the inner defenses of the line. Two attempts had been repulsed. This seemed the time to put in our bid, so the morning of the 22nd of March, with "A" Company in the lead, the Battalion moved across a treadway, which had been erected over an Anti-Tank ditch, into the town of Steinfeld. Pillboxes and casements were camouflaged to look like houses and barns. Our attached TD's were blazing away with their 90mm guns and penetrating these defenses. S/Sgt Roberson's tank was hit by AT fire and knocked out. The krauts knew their ground and their artillery was accurate. A phosphorous shell hit a "C" Company tank commanded by Cpl Hart. Sgt Ried, "A" Company, while attacking an enemy pillbox, was hit and the tank spun around under the impact. Sgt Stallings also took direct hit from artillery. Lt Klinefelter received a severe wound while making a dismounted reconnaissance of a pill box. The infantry was having a rough time as cover was inadequate and many casualties were incurred.

The Mortar Platoon led by Lt Ferguson, laid down smoke screens in front of the pillboxes. The Assault Guns moved to the forward edge town to take up firing positions on the pillboxes. Cpl Hall's 105 received a direct hit the ammo trailer started to blaze and Pfc Crawford jumped down and released the trailer. Hall was evacuated by the Medics, who had been doing a wonderful job. Many a trip was taken by the Medics peeps on up through the Dragon's Teeth and into the hell that was Steinfeld. The whole route was under artillery fire, yet, without thought of personal safety, they brought back the wounded for treatment.

The attack was resumed at 0500 on the 23rd, with "A" Company on the right, "C" Company on the left, and "B" Company in the center with A-48 and the TD's in reserve. Almost immediately "B" Company lost two tanks as AT Guns reached out to strike them. Lt Geneser, Sgt Corio, Cpl Juga and Pfc's Teeters and Swain were mortally wounded. "A" Company was held up, due to marshy ground, and "B" Company was pinned down by the aforementioned weapons. Lt Chrisman of Charlie Company, on the left flank, succeeded in knocking out five pillboxes, neutralizing the guns that were holding up "A" and "B" Companies. 50 PW's surrendered to them. A-48 and the TD's were now committed. The attack moved forward with three companies abreast. They reached an AT ditch close to the outskirts of Schaidt. Smoke was laid on the far side of the ditch and a dozer moved up to fill in a passage over the ditch. By 1100, three passages had been made, and "A" Company pushed into Schaidt and on through to neutralize the pill boxes and AT Guns of Jerry's last main line of defense, The Great West Wall.

A message came through to send a reinforced tank platoon on a reconnaissance mission to the town of Freckenfeld. Lt Chrisman was elected and moved out of Schaidt. Two 88's were knocked out, and, after by-passing a blown bridge, they continued into Freckenfeld. Here they were engaged in a short fire fight, cleared the town by 1730, enabling CC "A" and CC "R" to continue rapid movement to the east in close pursuit of a now badly disorganized enemy.

The action just described emphasis on our big mediums, for an assault wave against fixed defenses, such as the Siegfried Line, was no place for our light tanks of "D" Company. However, "D" Company had not been idle and they were where the artillery was heaviest at all times. The unit left Ringendorf on the 15th of March in CC "A" reserve. Once again they saw Rittershoffen and Hatten, the dust and ruins bearing mute testimony to the ferocity of the battle fought there back in January. On through into Weissen-

bourg where defense positions were set up. When CC "A" moved into Schweighofen, the 2nd and 3rd platoons acted as flank guards. Later these platoons were to enter Kapsweyer and fire on some Siegfried defenses. Sgt Leatherman's tank was punctured when a rocket mortar landed a few feet away. CC "A" pulled on through Schaidt, Freckenfeld to Minfeld where foot patrols were maintained by the tankers. After a further advance to Minderslachen, "D" Company returned to Battalion Control and reported into Schaidt where they shared outpost duties with "A" Company of the 68th AIB. On the 29th of March the first platoon went to Schweighofen to guard Division Headquarters Trains, and on the 30th remainder of the Company moved to Steinfeld to guard Division Supply Trains.

While we were at Schaidt, the French passed through us on their way to the Rhine. The black Algerian troops, with their cavalry horses, presented a picturesque sight. The Battalion Recon party, under the direction of Lt Williams, left on the 28th of March to make a survey of roads and bridges in the vicinity of Worms and Altripp. Upon their returns a report was turned into CC "A" In the meantime, the Battalion reverted to CC "R" control. It was the first time since the 26th of November that we were behind the light line. Even so, blackout conditions still existed as far as billets were concerned. The following days were spent doing the necessary work that follows each major engagement. We were "at ease"

Taking full advantage of the breakthrough in the north, the Seventh Army established a bridge across the Rhine at Worms. Our orders were to move across into Gross-Bieberau, and we started out at 0210 on April Fools' Day, which was also Easter Sunday. We closed at 1600 and it was 115 miles from our starting point. It was the longest, continuous tank trip we had ever made.

We were off early the next morning, crossing the Main River at Woerth. We had been moving North, but now we turned east. No opposition was met, and we set up at Rohrbrun that night. A treadway at Gemunden was erected and the Battalion continued its march, leaving Lohr on the 5th of April. The next few days were uneventful. All the towns flew white flags from their respective city halls. Deeper into Germany we drove; with scarcely any opposition and meeting numerous Displaced Persons along the highway who cheered us as we sped by.

On April 12th, we arrived near the outskirts of Lichtenfels. Here we encountered some small arms fire and bazooka fire. The bridge across the Main had been blown. Lt Col Watson and Capt Emmet walked to the water's edge to look if over. Suddenly a bazooka and Machine Gun fired over their heads. Capt Emmet hit the water while the Battalion Commander lay flat on the ground. A "C" Company tank quickly pulled up and covered them while they withdrew to safety. It was a close call. The Mortar Platoon moved into position and laid a smoke screen on the east bank of the river, while the colored doughs of CC "R" Rifle Company entered the town. "C" Company tanks fired on the nearby buildings, causing many fires. The mayor surrendered the town at 1500 and the infantry went on through to outpost the town, while two platoons of "B" Company occupied the town of Michelow, just north of Lichtenfels, and set up out posts.

The following day, we pushed on to Roth, and from there closed in Alladorf at 2130 outposting the town. Here we received the mission of moving to Haag. We left at 0800 on the 15th and arrived about 1230. Two platoons from "Baker" Company, and an Infantry platoon, were dispatched to Creussen to assist the 94th Rcn Squadron which was being attacked. The platoons moved down the autobahn to the town of Schwurz. Between Schwurz and Gottsfeld, they ran into direct fire from enemy tanks. Four of our tanks were hit, two being put out of action. The infantry then entered Gottsfeld and cleared it. By this time, the Battalion Commander and Capt Swager had made a foot run to the east edge of town and noted vehicular movement in the woods. The tanks were moved up, and suddenly three MarkIV's rode out into the open. "B" Company let loose, and Cpl's, Orff and Hurl quickly accounted for two tanks, and Gunner Stoffrigan kayoed another at a range of 3800 yards. In all, five enemy tanks were knocked out and the pressure on Creussen was relieved.

Service Company, commended by Capt Arnold H. Green, ran into a peculiar situation at Haag. They had pulled into a bivouac position on the left side of the autobahn and were busy with ordinary duties, when two German boys approached Tec 5 Chris Schwabauer. They said that there were a "large number" of Germans in the woods just below the bivouac area. Capt Green, believing it to be a trick, assembled about twenty five men, and they marched off with the German lads in the front. They suddenly broke into a clearing, and ran into a near complete German Supply Battalion. Not a shot was fired as the Jerries were more than willing to surrender. The total bag was 433 prisoners, including ten women. The men picked up several pistols as souvenirs.

On the 16th, Lt Chrisman moved his platoon into Gottsfeld with a platoon of CC "A" Rifle Company as support. No resistance was encountered in the town, and he sent a section with Infantry into Kraimoos. Seventeen PW's were picked up there. In the machine, the Mortar Platoon, with the aid of two Assault Guns, patrolled an area within the Battalion zone. This patrolling continued until we were relieved by the 5th Infantry Regiment of the 71st Infantry Division.

Orders came to move to vicinity of Litzllohe. The Battalion proceeded down the autobahn to Pignitz, Altdorf, Sindback, into Litzllohe. Enroute, the column was bombed and strafed by ME 109's, but no casualties were incurred. Litzllohe lay east of Nurnberg, and "C" Company prepared to join the 45th Infantry Division in a scheduled Victory Parade in the Nazi Citadel. In the midst of these preparations word came to move, and once again we started down the autobahn, working south towards Allersberg. Suddenly, the artillery opened up, drawing casualties from our supporting Negro Infantrymen. "C" Company's lead tanks quickly knocked out the church steeple in Gogglesbruch as a precaution against any enemy observation. Supporting artillery went into position and fired several missions on Allersberg. The Bn CP was established in Altenfelden and security was effected.

The Battalion prepared to move out on its mission at 0630 when 3 Mark V tanks were sighted on the high ground south of Allersberg. "C" Company tanks and TD's brought them under fire, knocking out one of them. Orders were then received to move back on the autobahn and things went smoothly, until "C" Company reached a road junction outside of Gogglesbruch. Jerry fire — 88 — had the spot "zeroed in", and a hit on S/Sgt Shelton's tank disabled his 76mm. Close on the heels of "C" Company came the AG Platoon. Lt. Hosak's tank escaped the enemy fire, but Tec 4 Anderson's tank took a direct hit through the left sponson, seriously injuring Tec 4 Berg and mortally wounding Pfc Gilbert Chapman. The tank went up in flames, burning Anderson, Burriss and Holt. The lead tank halted and its' crew members jumped out to give aid to the injured members of the burning tank. Pfc Kistner entered the burning vehicle which was still under direct fire and evacuated one of the severely burned occupants. The medics arrived quickly to take charge of the men.

A TD was sent to neutralize the gun position, but it too received a direct hit, after going into position. The crew scrambled to safety, but the barrage of artillery that followed inflicted severe casualties on the crew. Our Battalion Medics again evacuated these men in an efficient manner

This gun position had to be located, so Capt Swager, CO of "B" Company, set out with his driver to make a personal reconnaissance. They were pinned down by MG fire, and Capt Swager was killed by a sniper. A short time before, Capt Swager had stopped Sgt Rumberg, who was maintaining liaison between "C" Company and the Battalion CP, to notify him of the MG position, consequently Rumberg was the last man to see him alive.

Meanwhile, at Altenfelden, a counter attack was in progress. Lt Col Watson's tank had stayed in position on a ridge overlooking Allersberg. T/5 John Curran looked up and saw Infantrymen moving in toward our position. He quickly jumped on the back deck of the tank and manned the 50 Cal. The Artillery FO in the OP saw what was happening and called for a fire mission. The mortar platoon laid down concentrations on the advancing enemy. A hurried call was put in to the tanks in Gogglesbruch and they came rushing past "88 Junction", to help relieve the situation. "B" Company, and a platoon from "C" Company, pulled up, "B" Co covering the left flank, while the tanks from Charlie Company outposted the ridge line with the Command tank. One tank from "B" Company pulled up behind the foxhole of Tec 5 Jones, Service Company. The tank was firing over his head and the muzzle blast blew the loose dirt into the hole, while the counter fire that the tank drew was blowing the dirt from the front of his hole back in and he felt as though he was being buried alive. Other Service Company men were protecting the tanks in the event that the Jerries would break out through the woods on our left. Two direct hits on "B" Company tanks rendered them useless. The Battle was furious and everyone that could be spared to man a gun took up positions on the eastern ridge near the mortar platoon emplacements. The fire power of the Battalion proved too great for the krauts and the attack was contained by 1500.

This had been the first time that Service Company had participated in a pitched battle and the men handled themselves well. We, in the Battalion, were apt to minimize the importance of this company, yet, if you'll recall, the transportation section drove long hours bringing up ammo, fuel and rations. Tanks were refueled when Kraut Artillery barrages were the heaviest and they suffered casualties like the men in the line companies. The maintenance section worked overtime keeping their vehicles and those of the Battalion in action. The cohesion established between the Battalion S-4, Capt Morris Wax and his staff, with the CO of Service Company, Capt Green hastened the flow of supplies to the front.

The Battalion is proud of the work of these men whose efforts so cheerfully given, insured the success of each operation.

The presence of enemy in the woods to our left brought up the possibility of their cutting off our supply lines to the rear by infiltration through the lines to the autobahn. As a preventative measure, Lt Fraser and his platoon of lights were to patrol the road from Altenfelden to Feuct where our supplies were located. On the third run during the night, Lt Fraser's tank was ambushed by a bazooka team and put out of action. Fraser and gunner Martinez were seriously burned, while driver Caldron and the other members of the crew were seriously wounded. Sgt Abbott and Tec 4 Williaams, in the second tank, fired on the suspected the casualties. S/Sgt Gilliland and Sgt Sopczynski took over the patrol for the remainder of the night.

Two attempts to enter Allersberg, from the south, by "C" Company plus the CC "R" Rifle Company failed. However, our show of force had been sufficient to drive the krauts out of the town, and we moved there on the 23rd of April. Hard on the heels of this victory came the news that we were now a part of General George S. Patton's Third Army.

The 86th Infantry Division was driving towards Munich but ahead lay the Danube and the city of Ingolstadt. Our Battalion was ordered to send "B" Company to the 341st Inf Regt and "C" Company to the 342nd Inf Regt. Major Shedd, Sgt Hoxie and S/Sgt Rench with driver Pat Murphy went with "C" Company to act as liaison and see that the company was kept adequately supplied while Lt Hampton, Sgt Short and Medics Amason and Carder trailed along with "B" Company. Our "A" Company had been with the 62nd AIB all through our mad dash across Germany from the Rhine so our Battalion was quite depleted by this order.

On the 5th of April, "A" Company plus the Battalion I & R Platoon spearheaded the 62nd AIB. The following method of attack was used: Before entering each town, the lead peeps would go forward and if resistance was offered, the tanks came up quickly to reduce the obstacle and the column would push on. The column did not halt, if white flags were flying in the town. Near the town of Gresthal, the column caught up with the retreating Germans. "A" Company tanks and the doughs boys assaulted the town, and a brief but one-sided down fight ended with our elements still on top. The column regrouped and started down the road with Sgt Rumberg's peep driven by Pfc Pierce, in the lead. The tanks were close behind.

Suddenly a tank man was spotted 1000 yards to the left front. Close observation revealed it to be an American tank with German markings. "A" Company fired but the tank withdrew immediately. It was later captured intact by "A" Company. The lead peep moved on into the woods to its front when it was fired on and upset. The men returned fire on the position and withdrew to the safety of the tanks. The remainder of the march, the tankers were successful in routing the enemy. Lt Walton's platoon met a German column head on and the men battled their way through it, inflicting many casualties. The I & R Platoon reverted to Battalion control for the march on Lichtenfels. Lt Walton's Platoon continued with the 62nd AIB all through its drive until they halted east of Munich, while "A" Co joined the Battalion for the crossing at Ingolstadt, which lay ahead.

Charlie Company was having a field day with the 342nd Inf Regt. Their first objective was Eichstadt which was taken after a short fire fight. However Lt Chrisman was injured by flying shrapnel, and Sgt Parish assumed command of the platoon. On the outskirts of Rothenstein, Sgt Kicinski's tank was hit by an 88 which had been by passed by the Inf Rcn Platoon. No casualties were incurred. "B" Company supporting the 341st Inf Regt on the left flank of the 342nd met no resistance. The advance was continuous. Lt Neff's platoon moved into Ingolstadt but the bridge was blown, and they supported the Inf river crossing. Lt Kekar, moving in from the east with another column of the 342nd, ran into AT fire at Hepberg and his tank was knocked out. The platoon withdrew to resupply at Wettstetten, "B" Company, still on the left flank, kayoed an enemy tank and was instrumental in capturing 200 PW's and killing or wounding 100 of the enemy. Here the advance stopped until a bridge was erected at Ingolstadt.

The Battalion, in the meantime, had moved to Menning, on the Danube. We sat tight, awaiting developments in Ingolstadt. Harassing medium artillery fell on our positions throughout the day.

The bridge was in. "C" Company jumped off for Freising on the Isar. The advance now assumed the proportions of a road march. "B" Company moved along the left flank with Mainburg as the objective. Several enemy columns were dispersed by tank fire, and "B" Company captured over four hundred PW's in the next couple of days.

In the wake of this rapid advance our Battalion entered Ingolstadt and relieved elements of the 99th Infantry Division. The following day we moved to Furth, near Landshut. "A" Company, minus Lt Walton's platoon, and CC "R" Rifle Company joined the 68th AIB in the action on Landshut. However, they returned to us the same day and we moved out, closing into Loiting at 2200. It was snowing, and everyone felt miserable at this point. It had been a long hard grind, and nerves were taunt from the strain of battle.

The next morning, with the Rcn Platoon leading, the Battalion moved into Hilpolding, and "A" Company sped into Dorfen to see if it was clear. A quick reconnaissance was made towards Velden on the left flank, and the Battalion moved over the route into the small German town of Stephanskirchen. Here we received the news that the Germans in Italy and Bavaria had surrendered unconditionally, and radio commentators were giving out such nonsense as, "Admiral Doenitz is holding peace talks with the Swedish Count Bernadotte." Perhaps so, we thought, but there are still plenty of Germans left. The next day an order came down to "Halt in present positions until further notice" Consequently, "B" and "C" Companies returned to Battalion control, and elements of "D" Company who had been guarding Division Trains, returned to Stephanskirchen. We never relaxed our security. The town was outposted and patrols were maintained by the Rcn Platoon.

Daily, the radio kept up its chatter on the capitulation of Italy and commentators mentioned that the "Big Three" would announce jointly to the world the conclusion of the war. Finally, on May 7th, Prime Minister Churchill proclaimed May 8th as "V-E Day." We took the news quietly, for each of us had foreseen Germany's defeat and its effect was anti-climatic.

8 May 1945. V-E Day was a reality. We had embarked on Friday, the 13th, a day that some feared would bring disaster and evil times us. However Fate waved her magic wand and we helped to overthrow Nazism as an evil. Hitler stood for power, and the Siegfried Line was constructed as a symbol of his might. Our overcoming of this line was a major step leading to the downfall of Hitler's Empire and the complete submission of those people who believed themselves infallible.

Two down One to go, with the memory of fallen comrades still vivid, we rededicated ourselves to the task ahead.

