



612 TANK DESTROYER BATTALION



## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	2
Foreward.....	3
Scotland and England.....	4
Barton Stacey to the English Channel.....	4
Normandy “Omaha” Beach.....	5
Cerisy Forest.....	5
Hill 192 and Vire Offensive.....	6
Brest.....	7
Seigfried Line.....	9
Battle of the Bulge.....	10
Presidential Unit Citation.....	12
Through the Seigfried Line.....	12
The Pursuit.....	13
Victory.....	14
Certificate of Commendation.....	16
Awarded the Silver Star Medal.....	17
Awarded the Bronze Medal.....	17
Awarded the Bronze Medal.....	19
Awarded the Purple Heart.....	22
Awarded the Soldier Medal.....	25
Awarded the Air Medal.....	25
Awarded the Croix de Guerre Medal.....	25
Awarded the British Military Medal.....	25
Russian Awards.....	25
Missing in Action.....	25
Acknowledgements.....	26
Lest We Forget.....	26

**DEDICATED  
IN MEMORY  
OF  
THOSE MEN  
OF  
612<sup>th</sup>  
TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**

WHO SO GALLANTLY GAVE THEIR LIVES SO THAT WE, WHO HAVE  
SURVIVED THE STRUGGLE, MAY ENJOY THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IN THE  
NEW WORLD OF PEACE.

TO YOU GALLANT MEN THIS BOOKLET IS HUMBLY DEDICATED.

1945

*PRINTED BY "NOVÝ VŠETISK"*

*PIZEN, CZECHOSLOVAKIA*

## FOREWORD

**T**he 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated as a light battalion at Camp Swift, Texas, on the 25th of June 1942, under the command of Lt. Col. W. A. Hedden. The cadre of two officers and seventy-three enlisted men were from the 631 Tank Destroyer Battalion.

The Battalion received its men and moved to Camp Bowie, Texas, the 4th of December 1942, where they received Basic Training. Major Jos. M. Deeley assumed command of the battalion on the 27th of February 1943.

For advanced training as Self Propelled, the Battalion moved to Camp Hood, Texas, the 3rd of March 1943. Completing this training the Battalion moved to Camp Swift, Texas, 14th of June 1943. The Battalion was made ready for battle by participation in. The Third Army Maneuvers 1943, in Louisiana, from September to November, then re turning to Camp Swift.

The 20th of December 1943, the Battalion was reorganized as a Towed Battalion, and was alerted on the 18th of February 1944, with a readiness date of 25th of March 1944.

The Battalion moved from Camp Swift, Texas, the 26th of March 1944, to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, arriving the 29th of March 1944.

The Battalion embarked on the "Ile de Prance", on the 5th of April 1944, at the New York Port of Embarkation, and sailed on the 7th of April 1944.

## CHAPTER I

### SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND

**O**ur overseas history starts, when the dawn showed us the far off coast of Ireland and the friendly pilot light off the Firth of Clyde.

A few hours later we sailed between the green hills of Scotland up the Clyde and dropped anchor off Greenoch. The majestic trans-Atlantic liners Queen Mary, Aquitania, and convoys of smaller ships, along with hundreds of warships, from the largest to the smallest, of all, our Allies were here. We were now in the big league.

We disembarked in two groups at Greenoch at the Princes Street dock and station on 16th April 1944. Despite our fears, the tiny locomotive did get the train started, and we remember the welcome along the tracks and our first contact with “Any gum chum” the universal greeting in the ETO. Moving swiftly through our first total blackout we crossed Scotland and into England, and by morning we pulled into Flax Bourton station, just four miles from Bristol, and met our new overseas home, Failand Tented Camp, tents and wooden buildings, on a golf course. Here we got our introduction into the newer things in life, hydrated food, cold water and daylight at midnight. We learned “You can’t miss it”, roughly translated means, “It probably isn’t even there anymore”. Driving was done on the left hand side of the road. A surprise visit from Ernie Pyle, gave us some unexpected publicity, and further strengthened the belief we were headed places, and soon.

Early on the morning of 24th of April, we had our first real air alert, and it was no dry run. At Failand Camp everyone was busy, waterproofing vehicles, schooling in in-direct firing and orientation on our job. Alerted on the 15th of April, we were fully equipped, combat loaded, ready to go the 26th of May.

## CHAPTER II

### BARTON STACEY TO THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

**O**n the 27th of May, leaving many memories and new friends, and maybe a broken heart or two, we moved toward the English Channel to Barton Stacey “C” Camp near An dover. The march passed through country rich in old English history, and sandwiched in between, were to be seen great concentrations of equipment and men, we hardly realized existed.

"D" day, June 6, and the night previous, the black and white striped gliders and bombers gave us the first idea the curtain had lifted on the big show. Many a letter was written to loved ones that morning. On the 11th of June, we were alerted for the marshalling area, forward elements arriving in the marshalling area the 12th of June. Water-proofing was completed, life belts issued and the partial payment of 4.03 dollars, invasion money, the first of a long line of new monies, and not to forget, the little brown bags.

### CHAPTER III

## NORMANDY "OMAHA" BEACH

"B" was our first element to sail from England, 2300, the 12th of June, arriving on the continent on the 14th of June. On 14th of June, Headquarters, and Headquarters Company, moved out and proceeded to the hard, Captain Rosenblatt and his supply section, with Lt. Grandy and 1st Recon platoon were loaded, where-as the rest had a dry run. At 0215 hrs, 15th of June the remainder of Headquarters, and Headquarters Company, "A", elements of "B" and "C" proceeded to the hard and began loading. After anchoring in the harbor we headed for France. Morning light, and we were in formation off the cliffs of Normandy at "Omaha" beach. At 1713 hrs, 16th of June, we disembarked on "Omaha" beach in the vicinity of Viereville Sur Mer, without any mishap, already preceded by "B" which had landed on the 14th of June. From the LST we proceeded up that narrow taped road, past the pillbox so well known to all, to the Transit Area, where de-water-proofing was accomplished, after which we moved out, through smashed Trevierers and the rail yard at LeMolay, to the vicinity of Cerisy Forest. 6

### CHAPTER IV

## CERISY FOREST

We spent the first night amid the hedge rows, and we were entertained by first, the ack, ack, firing at enemy bombers attacking the beachhead, and then the express.-train roar of fire from the battleships going overhead.

The next day, the 17th of June, the Battalion CP was established in the Forest of Cerisy. Already having been assigned to the First United States Army, attached to V Corps, and further attached to the 2nd Infantry Division. On the 17th of June the remainder of "C" arrived at the CP and the 18th of June, Lt. Johnson arrived to complete the forward echelon, a total of 25 Officers and 575 men. In the Cerisy Forest we had our first baptism of artillery fire, the enemy heavy artillery was interdicting the road adjacent to the bivouac area. A fortunate short move earlier in the evening, saved us from possible serious casualties, but all escaped, wiser and without injury. There were sounds heard that night, of some local engineering under construction, or being improved.

The first element of the forward echelon, consisting of two platoons of “B”, landed in France the 14th and 15th of June, and immediately moved into positions on the line in the 2nd infantry Division sector, with the mission to provide anti-mechanized protection for the Division. The 3rd platoon going into direct fire position at the crossroad at La Mave. The 2nd platoon later joined the 1st in the vicinity of La Mave, and engaged in harassing interdiction fires.

“C” was the Division reserve, and reconnoitered the Division front and flanks for positions and routes. During the period 20th of June to 10th of July, the Battalion protected the Division from anti-mechanized attack, with elements harassing the enemy with our high velocity interdiction fire. All during this time the enemy was looking down on our positions from Hill 192, and kept our units covered with continual harassing mortar, artillery, and long range machine gun fire.

On the 25th of June the rear echelon arrived from England, which completed the Battalion in. Normandy. On the 3rd of July we sustained our first casualty.

## CHAPTER V

### HILL 192 AND VIRE OFFENSIVE

**O**ne of the things to be remembered was the Hill 192 Offensive. This was our first experience on the offensive, giving close-up fire support to the infantry from practically the out-post line. Our mission was to protect the Division from tanks and SP guns. Following the infantry assault, our guns took positions amidst the carnage, wreckage and death atop Hill 192. The capture of Hill 192 paved the way for the adjacent Division to capture St. Lo.

The Vire Offensive, the 26th of July to 7th of August, was our contribution to FIRST ARMY’S tremendous display of power and was the beginning of the breakout from the beachhead. Here we witnessed the terrific aerial show over St. Lo after which 7 CPs were established during the next 21 days of advance. We had the mission of protecting the front and flanks of the 2nd Infantry Div. from anti-mechanized attack. The gun companies began the teams with the Infantry Regiments, to be successfully exploited the entire campaign, “A”, with the 9th Infantry Regiment, “B” with the 23rd Infantry Regiment, and “C” with the 38th Infantry Regiment. The plan of battle for the TDs, was to follow the assault infantry battalions and protect the Regimental fronts from armored penetration. In this action 3rd platoon of “C” showed their skill and shooting eye, firing 24 rounds at an enemy OP in St. Armand, and scoring 20 hits, and when examined later, two enemy dead observers were found in the ruins, and a knocked out SP guns at the base of the OP. On 2nd of August, Capt. Harding of “A”, together with his company officers and men on a reconnaissance for gun positions, were ambushed by an enemy pocket, and Capt. Harding and Pvt. John J. Arvin were captured. 1st Lt. William S. Groff Jr. assumed command of Company “A”.

We advanced with the 2nd Infantry Division to Tinchebray, closing in on the Falaise pocket, where we ended the Normandy Campaign, and on the 18th of August we were attached to the THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY.

## CHAPTER VI

### BREST

The 19th of August the first vehicle of the Battalion crossed the IP enroute to the vicinity of Brest in Brittany. It was 251 miles of road, lined with kisses, hard apples, eggs and cognac. After the arrival of the Battalion at Ploudaniel on 20th of August, immediate reconnaissance and preparations for the attack on Brest were begun.

Due to the absence of enemy armor in the Brest area, we furnished close in direct support to the infantry of the 2nd Infantry Division, on the assault on the Fortress of Brest.

Our missions covered every conceivable type of target, machine gun emplacements, pill boxes, bunkers, destruction of houses, harassing fire into the city and sniping at individual enemy soldiers with our three inch guns. The devastating accuracy and high velocity fire played no small part in the reduction of the Fortress of Brest.

Major General W. M. Robertson, Commanding General of the Second Infantry Division summed up the tactics and courage of the TDs in his commendation of "B" Company.

Company "B", 612th Tank Destroyer, Battalion was attached to the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division on the 19th August 1944. At the termination of the siege of Brest, 18th September 1944, "B" Company's guns had definitely destroyed fourteen pill boxes, two dugouts, seventeen machine guns, one ammunition dump, three anti aircraft guns, four large caliber artillery pieces, and eleven houses, including a large hotel. In destroying these enemy installations and material, the Company inflicted casualties upon the enemy estimated at more than four hundred. The Tank Destroyer guns also blasted numerous enemy observation posts, the old city wall of Brest and numerous other installations which either housed enemy, troops or were obstacles in the path of infantry troops.

Moving into Guipavas, France, 24th August 1944, the first platoon of the company prepared to support an attack by the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry on Hill 105. The third platoon of the Tank Destroyer unit also moved into Guipavas 25th August 1944 with the same mission. Both of these platoons remained, in positions entirely exposed to enemy observation for the next seven days in order to place direct fire on known enemy strong points. Although they were subjected to heavy mortar and artillery fire, some of which was timed over the target, they maintained exposed positions and as a result on 28th August 1944 knocked out a pill box, one mortar and five machine guns which had impeded the progress of assault companies in the 2nd Battalion for several days.



The enemy also sustained what was thought to be about twenty-seven (27) casualties as the result of fire from these guns during the day.

The next day, 29th August 1944, “B” Company’s guns destroyed two more machine guns and two mortars, besides inflicting approximately forty casualties upon the enemy. On 30th August, the company received severe counter-battery fire but knocked out a machine gun and killed or wounded what was estimated to be about thirty-five of the enemy.

Two platoons moved to the top of Hill 105 on 4th September and placed direct fire on enemy strong points and gun positions ‘on Hill 90. On 6th September the first and third • platoons knocked out a strongly defended hotel in St. Marc and several gun positions which had held up the advance of the 1st Battalion. During the next two days, after moving to Hill 90, both platoons were subjected to exceptionally heavy 88mm fire but nevertheless moved to positions fully visible to the enemy where they could place direct fire on German installations. Two platoons entered the city of Brest 11th September, following closely on the heels of advancing infantry. Receiving intense sniper fire as a result of moving directly behind foot troops, gun crews of both platoons abandoned all cautionary measures as they knocked out a pill box and several enemy observation posts during the day. The second platoon enjoyed a field day 12th September while its guns destroyed three pill boxes, two dugouts, one ammunition dump, two machine guns and sixteen inch naval gun which had been firing on rear installations since the outset of the attack on Brest. The platoon is believed to have accounted for more than one hundred enemy casualties during the day.

Despite heavy counter-battery and sniper fire on all gun positions during the final five days of the siege, the second platoon of “B” Company fired approximately 200 rounds per day and eliminated seven more pill boxes besides blasting paths through the center of city blocks in Brest which allowed units of the 23rd Infantry to move forward steadily.

Gun crews of Company “B” displayed a complete disregard for their own safety and unusual initiative and resourcefulness in rendering infantry troops the closest possible supporting fire throughout the siege. Without this fire, it is doubtful if the surrender of the enemy garrison would have come as soon as it did. Tank Destroyer guns operating amid front line rifle platoons had a demoralizing as well as casualty effect upon enemy. Many prisoners were taken, a large percentage of whom were undoubtedly driven from their positions as a result of the devastating fire from these weapons”

“C” supported Ivory “X” a task force that operated on the Ploegastel Peninsula to harass and destroy enemy installations in Brest from across the bay. On the 5th of September we were relieved from assignment to the First United States Army, and attachment to Third United States Army, and assigned to the Ninth United States Army.

The 18th of September saw the campaign successfully brought to a close and the Battalion assembled near Landerneau in preparation for further operations. After the close of the Brest

campaign we spent a rest full interlude from 18th to 26th of September, in the vicinity of Landerneau. Trips were made into remains of Brest for pictures and souvenirs, and through the intricate underground fortifications. We took the opportunity to become better acquainted with the local towns and inhabitants.

## CHAPTER VII

### SIEGFRIED LINE

**O**n the morning of the 27th September we began our 692 mile motor march to the new fighting front, across France and Belgium to Germany. Rumors had it we would see Paris on the way. We traveled back through scenes of earlier fighting.

On the afternoon of the 29th of September we passed through Paris, without having any losses, although there were more cases of motor trouble than usual within city. We bivouacked that night in the vicinity of St. Quentin. After a long drive across Belgium via Givet, across the Meuse River at Dinaut, and into the night, blacked-out in the fog, we arrived at our destination, a forest bivouac in the vicinity of Steinebruck, Germany on the Siegfried Line. LI

For about a week we bivouaced in the forest, winter was in the air, and darkness came early. It was far from the days of summer on the beachhead of Normandy.

Task force "X" was formed of Headquarters, and Headquarters Company and "A" Company of the 612th TDs, "K" Company of the 9th infantry Regiment, Cannon Company of the 9th Infantry Regiment, "D" Company of the 741st Tank Battalion and Company Namur of the Belgium Secret Army, with Lt. Col. Jos. M. Deeley in command, and the CP was established in Manderfeld, Belgium. Our mission was defending on a 9000 yard front facing the Siegfried Line, in the vicinity of Manderfeld, Belgium. "B" was attached to CT 23, in the vicinity of Winterspelt, "C" minus 2C was attached to the 38th Infantry Regiment, in the vicinity of Bleialf, 2nd platoon of "C" was attached to the 9th Infantry Regiment. On 22nd of October 1944, this Battalion was relieved from assignment to the Ninth United States Army. From the 4th of October until the 12th of December we acted in an infantry role, sending out patrols, setting up road blocks, and firing at pill boxes on the Siegfried Line. There were brushes with enemy patrols, prisoners were taken, and all in all it was a quiet sector.

## CHAPTER VIII

# BATTLE OF THE BULGE

The 11th of December elements of the 820th TD began to relieve our units and the relief was completed at 0130 hrs, the 12th of December. Moving in a blizzard, the Battalion moved to assembly at Sourbrodt, Belgium to prepare for the coming offensive on the Schuemanuel Dams, which controlled the flood waters of the Roar River and were vital to the Germans defense of Cologne.

The 13th of December “A” was attached to RCT 9 and moved to Hofen, Germany to support the planned attack of the 9th Infantry Regiment, with direct fire, on Rohren Germany.

The 15th of December the Battalion OP moved to Wirtzfeld, Belgium for the attack on the Roar Dams.

At 0530, the 16th of December the 3rd platoon of “A” was attacked by strong forces of the enemy which had penetrated the infantry lines and threatened the platoon, starting a battle at Hofen, which was one of the decisive actions of the Ardennes Campaign, in which “A” was awarded the Unit Citation. The enemy was driven off by vigorous counter attacks by “A” Company, fighting as infantry, and our lines were restored, enemy dead were piled up and 18 PWs were taken, 1st platoon capturing 3 PWs, 1 machine gun and 1 mortar position.

On the 17th of December, “B” with the 1st Rcn platoon attached, was detached from the 23rd Infantry Regiment, of the 2nd Infantry Division, and attached to the 99th Infantry Division, moved to the vicinity of Honsfeld, Belgium and took up positions of readiness. The full force of the enemy attack through the Ardennes struck the 1st and 2nd platoons of “B” and the 1st Rcn platoon, from the Southwest with tanks and armored infantry and resulted in the platoons being surrounded, with 3 officers and 110 men being reported as missing in action, and 1 officer and 18 men of 1st Rcn platoon also missing in action. During this action the platoons destroyed 3 enemy half-track personnel carriers, 2 SP guns, and 3 tanks. S/Sgt. Billy F. Wilson, escaped and was successful in returning to our lines, being wounded in action while infiltrating to safety. 1st Lt. Gribbin and Tec/5 Charles R. Morris and Pvt. Ronayne C. White, after being reported as missing in action, returned to duty having escaped from the enemy.

The morning of the 17th of December the Battalion CP in Wirtzfeld was in action against the enemy, 4 enemy tanks and a personnel carrier having attacked the town at daybreak. There was a short engagement in which the town defense destroyed the tanks, and a personnel carrier and all the enemy personnel, and prevented the penetration of the town. The CP moved out of Wirtzfeld that day as soon as a route was reconnoitered and opened up, across to Berg to Elsenborn and the OP was again established at Sourbrodt.

The morning of the 17th of December “C” was attached to the 99th Infantry Division, on the same day at 1400 were relieved from attachment and attached to the 26th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division, and took up defensive positions at Butgenbach, Belgium. On this day remnants of “B” were relieved from attachment to the 99th Infantry Division and placed in direct support of the 23rd Infantry Regiment.

“A” again was attacked at Hofen by an enemy force estimated to be one Regiment and they beat off this counterattack successfully.

At the Battalion CP in Sourbrodt, the maintenance platoon and Company Headquarters of Headquarters Company under the command of 1st Lt. Kosak was formed and 13 attached to Task Force Hoke and maintained defensive positions Southwest of Berg, Belgium. Our personnel section was on the line as doughboys at this same period.

“C” was relieved from the attachment to the 26th Infantry Regiment of 1st Infantry Division, and placed in support of the 38th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd’ Infantry Division, and took up AT’ defense positions East of Wirtzfeld on the 19th of December.

Once again “A” was attacked by strong enemy forces, and again they repulsed the attack, 11 of our men were reported missing in this action.

The defense platoon from Headquarters Company was relieved from their defensive position in the vicinity of ‘Berg and returned to the CP at Sourbrodt on the 20th of December. During the evening meal a 380 MM caliber shell struck the kitchen and mess- hall, causing 11 casualties, and I died as a result of wounds.

The Battalion Forward moved to Elsenborn to the 99th Division Advance CP, where Lt. Col. Deeley took command of AT defenses of the 99th Infantry Division the 20th of December.

21st of December “A” had another engagement with enemy paratroopers, killing 5, capturing 1.

Clearing weather and our heavy air attacks had stabilized the situation somewhat and a regular turkey Christmas dinner was eaten by all, even though the conditions were on the rough side, in many sectors of the Battalion activities.

At the end of the year “A” and “B” were relieved from their positions as it found us in the course of being converted to self-propelled M-18 TDs in the vicinity of Verviers, Belgium in the place known to us as the Chateau. “C” was still maintaining their positions East of Berg.

The weather was steadily getting colder, snow falls amounted to two feet, and was drifting to four and five feet. “A” completed its conversion in a race against time and the 2nd of January the company minus 2 platoons was attached to the 99th Infantry Division and took up prepared

positions East and Northeast of Elsenborn, while the 2nd platoon was in mobile reserve at Nidrum, Belgium. "A" maintained these positions until relieved by "C" on the 19th of January. In the meantime "B" was attached to the 23rd Combat Team, and further attached to the 1st Infantry Division and furnished close fire support to the infantry on the attack on Weismes, on through Onderval Pass, and to Monteneu, Belgium pushing in the sides of the "Bulge" and opening the way to St Viths re-capture, to seal the enemy escape corridor. It was a severe test for the new equipment and training.

### PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

**D**uring the period of 12th December 1944 to 29th December 1944 in the vicinity of Hofen, Germany, Company "A", 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion distinguished itself by exhibiting outstanding courage and superior heroism in the presence of the enemy. The officers and men of Company "A", 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion, by spirited and outstanding aggressiveness, were successful in preventing a breakthrough by the enemy in the sector occupied by the 3rd Battalion of the 395th Infantry Regiment. During the entire action the personnel of Company "A", 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion were employed in the role of infantry, one for which they were not trained nor to which assigned, fighting with the courage and spirit of infantrymen and being responsible for, the capture of many enemy personnel and enemy materiel as well as the killing of numerous Germans. Their outstanding courage, bravery and discipline exhibited to all that this was a superior fighting unit and was instrumental in resisting the northern arm of the German Pincer aimed for Eupen, Belgium through Monschau, Germany. Had the enemy offensive successfully overrun the positions of Company "A" 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the entire northern flank of the First United States Army would have been endangered, and the major supply depots in the vicinity of Eupen and Verviers threatened.

### CHAPTER IX

### THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED LINE

**W**e moved into active offensive operations through Rockerath and Krinkelt, toward Harperscheid and Schoneseiffen. The enemy was now being forced into his second belt of Siegfried fortifications and minefields around the Wohlerscheid crossroad. The terrain was initially densely wooded, breaking into broken terrain and series of high bald hills and deep wooded valleys.

"A" attached to the 9th Infantry supported their attack on Schoneseiffen, and Harpescheid, Germany. "B" attached to the 23rd Infantry, supported their attack through the Monschau Forest on through to Bronsfeld. "C" was in Battalion reserve and attached to the 38th Infantry and gave them fire support on Hellenthal.

The enemy having opened the Roer dams, we spent a period experimenting with star shells giving the enemy a good case of the nerves, and some sleepless nights. Fill boxes and strong points were taken under Lire and destroyed as continual pressure was exerted on the enemy while we waited for the floodwaters to subside.

## CHAPTER X HEADED FOR THE RHINE

The 6<sup>th</sup> of March was our jump-off on the drive for the Rhine. Traveling from the Roer dams through Gemund the terrain was initially densely wooded hills with deep valleys breaking into open terrain extending to Munstereifel. Main defenses consisted of road blocks and scattered mines. The majority of towns and villages entered, offered little or no resistance, the white flag having come into prominence by this time. There were some stubbornly defended towns where Machine Guns, Panzerfaust teams, Hitler Youths, and some Volkssturm, slowed down the drive until the infantry had dismounted and cleared the towns while the tanks and destroyers covered them with fire.

Continuing the pursuit along the AHR valley to the Rhine, the companies had enemy targets of retreating columns over-run by our speeding columns. Enemy prisoners streamed in. Horse flesh was no match for steel and gasoline.

The 11th of March we reached the Rhine in the vicinity of Sinzig. The companies deployed to protect the famed Remagen Bridge from enemy attack from the water, firing at boats and floating debris suspected of containing demolitions, and boat loads of enemy escaping across the river. Guns were sited to engage enemy targets across the Rhine. "C" was with the 38th Infantry protecting the south flank of the FIRST ARMY against an enemy thrust at the bridge from the South.

## CHAPTER XI THE PURSUIT

"A", "C" and Headquarters crossed the Rhine on the 21st of March, with the Battalion CP established at Honningen. "C" further attached to CCA of the 9th Armored Division., drove along with the combat command up the Rhine and then eastwards through Langescheid, Rechterback, Bernfeld, and Homberg. Our 2nd Rcn platoon acted as advance point for the spearhead on the drive to Paderborn, dosing in the Ruhr Pocket.

The terrain along the east bank of the Rhine was initially rolling hills with wooded areas here and there. But as we progressed to Homberg and Sachsenhausen the area, consisted for the

main part of high wooded hills with broad valleys dotted with small towns hanging on small peaks jutting from the plain.

“C” with GCA, 9th Armored Division, still spearheading the northern prong of V Corps attack and pursuit through Central Germany, moved eastward. The terrain was generally open, and railing at times, with the crossing of the Weser and Saale rivers made without difficulty. “A” with the 9th Infantry Regiment and “B” with the 23rd Infantry Regiment followed closely behind the armored spearheads mopping up by-passed pockets. The largest city captured in this area was Gottingen which was subdued by heavy 50 caliber machine gun fire.

The sharpest engagement in the drive was in the attack on the Leuna, Merseberg and Markranstadt area, surrounding Leipzig, where considerable opposition was offered by large caliber anti-aircraft guns, which were used to defend Leipzig. The enemy leveled them against our armor and infantry, throwing a skyful of airbursts. The terrain being flat made them a formidable obstacle, which were silenced only by night attacks, before the attack was made on Leipzig.

From Leipzig the Battalion drove eastward to the Mulde River and ‘continued operations against the enemy. At once patrols were sent out to contact the Russians.’ The operations consisted ‘mainly in processing prisoners, displaced persons and liberated allied soldiers, swept toward the American lines ahead of the advancing Russians.

## CHAPTER XII

### VICTORY

**O**n the Mulde River it looked like the end of the trail, there seemed no new worlds to conquer. The enemy was already squeezed out by the meeting of the East and the West.

But others had plans for us and on the 2nd of May the Battalion began a 209 mile march, destination Czechoslovakia, and relieving elements of the extended THIRD ARMY in the vicinity of Waldmuenchen, Germany. The entire distance was covered in one day through a May snow storm, traveling on the Autobahn to Bayreuth, thence East toward the Czechoslovakian border.

There was little enemy opposition, just great evidences of the complete defeat and disintegration of a once great war machine. Our Ron platoons were bringing in the prisoners in formation, trucks and bicycles. The 6th of May we were assigned to the THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY, and operations were under way to relieve and liberate Pilsen. The town was cleared and VE day, May 8th, 1945, found us firmly entrenched in Pilsen and in the hearts of the people, a welcome reminiscent of former days of liberation in France and Belgium.

Thus after 10 months and 23 days fighting, the European War has ended for the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion’. During the course of our combat career, we expended 40,149 rounds of three inch ammunition against the enemy. We traveled 1936 miles on the continent, from beachhead at Normandy to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, corralling 742 enemy prisoners and killing 1145. We

knocked out 57 machine gun nests, 65 vehicles of all types, 11 tanks and 27 guns from anti aircraft to 6 inch Naval guns. Our units held like a stone wall at Hofen, to stop the German breakthrough in the Ardennes, they fought across Germany on the spearhead, to seal the final fate of the Third Reich.

For these achievements we have been authorized to wear five Bronze Stars on the European Theater of Operations Service Ribbon, signifying our participation in the five major campaigns on the Continent, namely: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe. Our "A" Company proudly wears the Unit Citation, for their stand at Hofen, Belgium in the battle of the Ardennes.

We have a record we can all be proud of and such a record is due to the individual effort, determination, loyalty and courage on the part of each and every soldier. Few battalions have been so long engaged with the enemy, and so continuously engaged and the superior morale in evidence at all times is an attribution to the success over our common enemy.



# Certificate of Commendation



## Second Infantry Division



*For outstanding and especially  
meritorious service, this Certificate of  
Commendation is awarded to:*

612TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

**Citation:** The 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion is commended for outstanding performance of duty in combat operations against a highly trained and tenacious enemy throughout the various campaigns while in support of the 2d Infantry Division. The highly efficient performance by this organization was in a large measure instrumental in the success of this Division. The superior skill and exceptional courage displayed by this battalion reflect great credit upon each officer and enlisted man and the Army of the United States.

*W. K. Harrison*  
W. K. HARRISON  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding



## AWARDED THE SILVER STAR MEDAL

**for gallantry in action**

1st Lt. WILLIAM H. BRANNON

1st Lt. ALAN G. ROBERTSON

Sgt. CLARENCE W. REED Jr.

Sgt. ARNE H. SUOMI

Cpl. GROVER E. GILBERT

T/5 STEPHEN F. GEHNY

Pfc. RUSSEL O. HELMICK

Pvt. PAUL DARRETTA

Pvt. JEWEL W. RAULINS

Pvt. R. B. TAYLOR



**AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL****for heroic achievement**

Capt. CHARLES A. HARDING \*

T/5 DAVID D. BARTO \*

Pfc. MORRIS N. BRYANT \*

*\* Also received Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star Medal.*

Capt. WILLIAM S. GROFF Jr.

1st Lt. EDWARD H. FARRINGTON

1st Lt. PETER W. HAIRSTON Jr.

1st Lt. JAMES R. PENTON

S/Sgt. JAMES E. SHAVER

S/Sgt. MAYNARD C. TAYLOR

Sgt. WILLIAM DI NINO

Sgt. FREDERICK T. KAMINSKI

Sgt. MIKE N. KOULIANOS

Sgt. HOMER OUSLEY

Sgt. FOY C. PEAVY

Cpl. JOSEPH S. CHAVES

Cpl. CHESTER J. GREGORZIK

Cpl. ERIC S. HINSON

T/5 ALVIN S. HARGROVE

T/5 LESLIE F. STRACK

Pfc. MARCUS L. BEALS Jr.

Pfc. ROBERT L. FARLEY

Pfc. JOHN O. GROSS

Pfc. ROBERT J. KUCERA

Pfc. THOMAS J. MURRAY

Pfc. LEVIO D. SEAMEON

Pfc. EZRA C. STROUD

Pfc. ROGER P. TYNDALL

Pfc. WILLIAM VICKERS

Pvt. GEORGE A. BLOCK

Pvt. REEVY C. HENSLEY

Pvt. ARCHIE W. HOLMAN

Pvt. RAYMOND W. HUBLER

Pvt. GARFIELD JAMES Jr.

Pvt. WADIE MENEM

**AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL****for meritorious service**

Lt. Col. JOSEPH M. DEELEY	M/Sgt. RAYMOND A. SMITH
Major JAMES B. KEMP	1st/Sgt ALBERT B. BEANE
Capt. JOHN J. KENNEDY	1st/Sgt. JOHN B. PARISH
Capt. JOHN B. MEYERS	T/Sgt. DAVID W. COUSEY
Capt. HAROLD ROSENBLATT	T/Sgt. EDWARD J. HANLEY
Capt. WILLIAM S. GROFF Jr.	T/Sgt. JOHN H. KELSOE
Capt. DICK H. KING	T/Sgt. LYLE NETHERIJY
1st Lt. WILLIAM H. BRANNON	T/Sgt GEORGE W. YANCEY Jr.
1st Lt. GEORGE E. HRUNER	S/Sgt. PATRICK E. COONEY
1st Lt. HENRY S. CHAPMAN Jr.	S/Sgt. JOSEPH DE FINO
1st Lt. STEPHEN E. DULUDE	S/Sgt. JOHN EASTHAM
1st Lt. WILLIAM M. EDDY	S/Sgt. FRANKLIN G. FAUSNET
1st Lt. EDWARD H. FARRINGTON	S/Sgt. ROY C. GUSTAVSON
1st Lt. LAURENS B. GRANDY	S/Sgt. JOHN H. HALL
1st Lt. WILLIAM J. GRIBBON	S/Sgt. BEN I. HARDY
1st Lt. CHARLES R. MANN	S/Sgt HERBERT W. MAURITZ
1st Lt. ALAN G. ROBERTSON	S/Sgt. GEORGE U. McCLOUD Jr.
1st Lt. JACK A. SCALES	S/Sgt. DEWEY W. OBY
1st Lt. CRAMER U. WILLIAMS	S/Sgt. CHARLES R. OAKES
2nd Lt. RICHARD L CHANDLER	S/Sgt. LIMUEL T. PATE
M/Sgt. TOM W. DIDLAKE	•S/Sgt. CLYDE H. ROWLAND
M/Sgt. ALLEN M. LINTON	S/Sgt. OTIS V. SHORT



S/Sgt. CALVIN A. SMITH	T/4 HARRIS W. HAMBRICK
S/Sgt. MAYNARD C. TAYLOR	T/4 JAMES C. MADDING
S/Sgt FRED WHITSON	T/4 ALFRED E. STONER
S/Sgt BILLY F. WILSON	T74 HERBERT J. VOLK
Sgt. CHARLES E. ARMSTRONG	Cpl. TRAVIS H. GALLERY
Sgt. WOFFORD J. BATTLES	Cpl. WARREN L. COOPER
Sgt. RUSSELL A. BAUER	Cpl. OCIE L. FINUFF
Sgt. FRANK H. BEITLER	Cpl. GEORGE B. MOUCHETTE
Sgt. JOHN S. BRELAND	Cpl. JAMES B. REED
Sgt PRILLIP A. CHRISTINE	Cpl. ROBERT E. REIGHARD
Sgt. CHESTER E. DAVIS	Cpl. JOSEPH ROIBINCHECK
Sgt. WILLIAM DI NINO	Cpl. WILLIS D. SMITH
Sgt. FRANCIS C. HAYES	Cpl. PAUL TALLAS
Sgt. CHARLES O. HUTTOE Jr.	Cpl. ALEX WEISBERGER
Sgt. PETE MERLO	T/5 DAVID D. BARTO
Sgt. HOMER OUSLEY	T/5 FREDERICK P. BUNDY
Sgt. JAMES D. PENUEL	T/5 REX L. DUNN
Sgt. DAMON B. SANDERS	T/5 STEPHEN F. GERNY
Sgt. JAMES H. SCAIRBROUGH	T/5 NELSON P. MARTIN Jr.
Sgt. RICHARD H. SHOWALTER	P75 JAMES W. MEDDERS
Sgt. JULIAN K. SMITH	T/5 DALE R. RUDERSMITH
Sgt. CHARLES W. TOWNSEND	T/5 FRANCIS TALIERERCH
T/4 LEE W. BROWN	T/5 FELIX M. WHITAKER





T/5 MORRIS WOODALL	Pvt. GEORGE R. BACHORSKI
Pfc, JOHN BARNOSKI	Pvt. EDWARD L. BUTLER
Pfc. WILLIAM B. COONE	Pvt. ALBERT L. CHRISTOPHER
Pfc. ROBERT M. DeCHANT	Pvt. SAM DeLEON
Pfc. CLETUS D. DERRICK	Pvt. ANSEL N. DREGGORS
Pfc. CLAUD M. EARNEST	Pvt. LEONARD P. FLYNN
Pfc. ROBERT L. FARLEY	Pvt. VIRGIL E. GALLIAN
Pfc. FRANCIS T. FIE	Pvt. HERMAN W. GEARY
Pfc. RAYMOND B. FINNIGAN	Pvt. JOHN W. HALL
Pfc. WILLIAM L. GALLMAN	Pvt. CASIMAR L. HARTWICK
Pfc. PARMER R. GUNTER	Pvt. DESSIE JOHNSON
Pfc. ANDREW J. HAGGARD	Pvt. ERNEST G. LEWIS
Pfc. DEREK J. HENGEL	Pvt. BERNARD J. MALLON
Pfc. ALFORD L. IRA	Pvt. RUFUS H. NOLAND
Pfc. EDWARD L. KENNEDY	Pvt. WILLIAM A. OWENS
Pfc. ROBERT J. O'MALLEY	Pvt. GEORGE M. PANIK
Pfc. LESTER W. REEVES	Pvt. FOSTER PARKER
Pfc. LEVIO D. SEAMON	Pvt. THOMAS H. PARKER
Pfc. JOHN W. SOWERS	Pvt. ELMER R. PATTERSON
Pfc. WILLIAM VICKERS	Pvt. ERWIN G. POTTER
Pfc. KENNETH E. WEBB	Pvt. JOHN SEDLAK
Pfc. HERBERT E. WILLIAMS	Pvt. CHARLES W. SMITH
Pfc. AARON H. WILSON	Pvt. KENDALL G. VANCE
Pfc. JOHN B. WILSON	Pvt. JOHN F. VOSBURG



## AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART

for wounds received as a result of enemy action

1st Lt. EDWARD H. FARRINGTON \*

Sgt. WILLIAM T. CAMPER \*

Sgt. PETE MERLO \*

T/4 WALTER F. OWENS \*

Pfc. RADY McCARTER \*

Pvt. EDWARD F. HALL \*

*\* Also received Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart.*

1st Lt WILLIAM J. GRIBBIN

1st Lt. PETER W. HAIRSTON Jr.

1st Lt. JOSEPH C. KOSAK

1st Lt. JACK A. SCALES

T/Sgt. EDWARD J. HANLEY

T/Sgt. LYLE NETHERLY

S/Sgt. LLOYD M. COATES

S/Sgt ANTHONY F. CONROY

S/Sgt JOSEPH T. ROACH

S/Sgt. OTIS V. SHORT

S/Sgt. BILLY F. WILSON

Sgt. WOLLFORD J. BATTLES

Sgt. PAUL T. COCCHI

Sgt. WILLIAM DI NINO

Sgt. JOHN J. GESSELL

Sgt. STANLEY D. GREENLEE

Sgt. NORMAN V. HARMON

Sgt ORVILLE A. JOHNS

Sgt. WILLIAM T. LYNCH

Sgt. SAMUEL E. MESTREZAT

Sgt. HOMER OUSLEY

Sgt. JAMES D. PENUEL

Sgt. JULIUS POLITSKY

Sgt CLAUDE V. SULLIVAN

Sgt JAMES M. WILEY

T/4 MILTON H. DAVIS

P74 JAMES C. MADDING

T/4 MARTIN SPELLMAN

Cpl. JOSEPH S. CHAVES

Cpl. WARREN L. COOPER

Cpl. ALBERT U. GAINNEY

Cpl. KENNETH C. HIGGINSON

Cpl. FRED T. MELVIN

Cpl. JAMES B. REED

Cpl. ALBERT H. RUNCO

Cpl. CHESTER L. SMITH

T/5 DAVID D. BARTO

T75 VAUGHN S. CLEARY

T/5 CALVIN W. COLLINS

T/5 LEO C. GONSER

T/5 BOBBY T. GRAHAM

T/5 MILTON B. HESS

T/5 LACY E. HUTCHINSON Jr.

T/5 RALPH L. JONES

T/5 JOHN S. LATHAM

T/5 RICHARD A. McKINNEY

Sgt JAMES M. WILEY

T/4 MILTON H. DAVIS

T/4 JAMES C. MADDING  
T/4 MARTIN SPELLMAN  
Cpl. JOSEPH S. CHAVES  
Cpl. WARREN L. COOPER  
Cpl. ALBERT U. GAINEY  
Cpl. KENNETH C. HIGGINSON  
Cpl. FRED T. MELVIN  
Cpl. JAMES B. REED  
Cpl. ALBERT H. RUNCO  
Cpl. CHESTER L. SMITH  
T/5 DAVID D. BARTO  
T/5 VAUGHN S. CLEARY  
T/5 CALVIN W. COLLINS  
T/5 LEO C. GONSER  
T/5 BOBBY T. GRAHAM  
T/5 MILTON B. HESS  
T/5 LACY E. HUTCHINSON Jr.  
T/5 RALPH L. JONES  
T/5 JOHN S. LATHAM  
T/5 RICHARD A. McKINNEY  
T/5 SANFORD L. MONTGOMERY  
T/5 TRAVIS R. PHILLIPS  
T/5 FRED C. TIDWELL  
T/5 ARTHUR E. WELCH  
Pfc. GREEN B. ADAMS  
Pfc. CARROLL H. BERNHARD  
Pfc. LEO G. BIGLEY  
Pfc. MORRIS N. BRYANT  
Pfc. FARES CARDOVA  
Pfc. ERNEST S. CARUTHERS  
Pfc. ALBERT CASTILLO

Pfc. CHARLES W. CUNNINGHAM  
Pfc. ROBERT M. DeCHANT  
Pfc. HAROLD W. ENOCH  
Pfc. DONALD J. FRAZIER  
Pfc. BOB GALADATI  
Pfc. LEROY V. HARLEY  
Pfc. RUSSBL O. HELMICK  
Pfc. GUY HODGIN  
Pfc. WILLIAM H. LAMBERT  
Pfc. ERNEST J. LETOURNEAU  
Pfc. WILBER C. LOADHOLZ  
Pfc. HARRY G. McCOURT  
Pfc. JOHN R. MCGINN  
Pfc. PETER J. MERCANTANTE  
Pfc. FLOYD H. MILLER  
Pfc. ROBERT J. O'MALLEY  
Pfc. ERNEST PERRYMAN  
Pfc. THEODORE PORRECO  
Pfc. LESTER W. REEVES  
Pfc. JOSEPH RUOCCO  
Pfc. LUTHER V. SALLER  
Pfc. GEORGE L. TALLEY  
Pfc. RALPH S. TENNEY  
Pfc. ROGER P. TYNDALL  
Pfc. RONAYE WHITE  
Pfc. CLARENCE F. WILLIS  
Pfc. GEORGE R. WOODINGPON  
Pvt. CHARLES R. AILEY  
Pvt. LEONARD BACHMAN  
Pvt. GEORGE R. BACHORSKI  
Pvt. LOUIS BLASS



Pvt. ANTHONY C. BURCH

Pvt. JULINA G. CAVAZOS

Pvt. SAM DE LEON

Pvt. WILLIAM A. EMORY

Pvt. CLAY ERVIN

Pvt. LEONARD P. FLYNN

Pvt. HUGH T. GOSS

Pvt. RICHARD A. HARVEY

Pvt. GARFIELD JAMES Jr.

Pvt. BENNIE H. JENSON

Pvt. GEORGE W. KEITH

Pvt. ERNEST M. LYTLE

Pvt. RUFUS H. NOLAND

Pvt. RICHARD M. ODLE

Pvt. THOMAS M. PARMELY

Pvt. SYLVESTER PARTIDA

Pvt. LLOYD P. RANDKLEV

Pvt. THADDEUS J. RYBAK

Pvt. PAUL A. SANDAGE

PVT SAM D. SEBASTIAN

Pvt. CHARLES W. SMITH

Pvt. JAMES R. STEPHENS

Pvt. JOHN STRAZIERI

Pvt. EZRA C. STROUD

Pvt. HUGH L. WALDROP

Pvt. HOWARD N. WALKER

Pvt. JOHN W. WORLEY

Pvt. GRAYDEN J. YEAGER

**AWARDED THE SOLDIER MEDAL****for heroism not involving actual conflict with wz enemy**

T/4 HUGH F. RAFFERTY

Pvt. LESTER P. HIRSCH

**AWARDED THE AIR MEDAL****for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight**

Capt. GEORGE W. SCOTT

**AWARDED THE CROIX DE GUERRE MEDAL****Republic of France**

Lt. Col JOSEPH M. DEELEY

S/Sgt. MAYNARD C. TAYLOR

**AWARDED THE BRITISH MILITARY MEDAL**

1st/Sgt. RUPERT E. CANADY

**RUSSIAN AWARDS**

Sgt. CLARENCE W. REED Jr.

Cpl GEORGE R. POLK

**MISSING IN ACTION**

Capt. CHARLES A. HARDING

Sgt. ORVILLE A. JOHNS

T/5 MICHAEL J. KARDOS Jr.

Pfc. ROBERT L. FARLEY

Pfc. JAMES J. McGINITY

Pvt. JOHN J. ARVIN

Pvt. EDWARD F. DUNN

Pvt. RALPH W. STRUBLE Jr.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Narrative and Map T/Sgt. John M. Wilson

Cover Pfc. Barney J. Wesoly

Source of Material Morning Reports & Unit History

Advisors Battalion Staff

### LEST WE FORGET

Sgt ROBERT A. BEATY	17 December 1944, Nashville, Tennessee
Sgt. CHESTER E. DAVIS	18 January 1945. Hoytville, Ohio
Sgt JACK W. PEBSWORTH	20 October 1944, Bennington, Oklahoma
Sgt. GEORGE W. NUTTAL	18 December 1944, Chester, Pennsylvania
Sgt. RUDOLPH ROSENBERGER	17 January 1945, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sgt DAMON E. SANDERS	8 February 1945, Crown Point, Indiana
Cpl JAMES S. FRANYA	17 December 1944, Walnut Porte, Pennsylvania
Cpl JAY C. HYDE	17 December 1944, Atlanta, Georgia
Cpl WILLIS D. SMITH.	21 July 1944, Whitleyville, Tennessee
T/5 EDWARD C. SAPP	17 December 1944, Palm Harbor, Florida
T/5 SIDNEY A. SCARBOROUGH	20 December 1944, La Grange, Texas
T/5 EDWARD L. STEGALL	17 December 1944, Humboldt, Tennessee
T/5 ROBERT H. THOMAS	17 December 1944, Murfreesboro Tennessee
Pfc JOHN E. CROWELL	17 December 1944, Unionville, Tennessee
Pfc PARMER R GUNTER	17 December 1944, Woodbury, Tennessee
Pfc. RUSSELL O. HELMICK	18 April 1945, Hamilton, West Virginia
Pfc. GLOVIS MILLER	18 February 1945, Lexington. Tennessee
Pfc RUSSELL H. McQUISTON.	16 February 1945, Kokamo, Indiana
Pfc. BUFORD C. SIMMONS.	17 December 1944, Morristown, Tennessee
Pfc. JOHN W. SOWERS.	3 July 1944, Ft. Wayne, Indiana
Pvt. WILLIAM E. BRADLEY	17 December 1944, West Point, Tennessee
Pvt. REVERE M. ELLIOTT	29 December 1944, Norway, Iowa
Pvt. WALTER E. HEIDERHOFF	20 October 1944, Austin, Texas
Pvt. RAYMOND E. JORDAN	17 December 1944, Pensacola, Florida

**LEST WE FORGET**

Pvt. WADE K. KING.	20 October 1944, Henderson,
Pvt. EDWARD KLIMEK	23 February 1945, Cleveland, Ohio
Pvt. LEO J. KROLL	17 December 1944, Pe Ell, Washington
Pvt. EVERETT H. LOCKE	17 December 1944, Beattyville, Kentucky
Pvt. WADIA K. MENEM	16 April 1945, Austin, Texas
Pvt. JAMES M. MILLINER.	1? December 1944, Grayson, Kentucky
Pvt. NORDELL OGDEN	12 August 1944, Odum, Georgia
Pvt. THOMAS M. PARMELY	17 December 1944, Ramer, Tennessee
Pvt. HOMER E. REEDY	17 December 1944, Columbus, Indiana
Pvt. WILLIAM D. SORTEBERG	17 December 1944, Milwaukee, Montana
Pvt. SHERVIN V. SAMUELSON.	5 April 1945, Kewanee, Illinois

