

**Transcription of Notes
Floyd O. Swonger
Company C, 31st Tank Battalion
Seventh Armored Division
U.S. Army
World War II**

www.7tharmdiv.org/docrep/X-31C-Swonger-Box-Score-Notes.pdf

This is a transcription of notes, handwritten by Floyd Swonger, my father, on the edge of a map tracing the route and encounters of the Seventh Armored Division. Some words were difficult to read, thus the () indicate his spelling as I am able to read it. Capitalization is unusual and I have retained his use whenever it is clearly capitalized. Proper names have been checked with the map, when they appear, for accuracy. The map is in poor condition, split where folded and water damage on the edge. Otherwise the script is clear and done in fountain pen ink.

Floyd Ora Swonger enlisted in the Army and was in basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He also received Officer Candidate Training. He was thirty-four years old at the time and married with three children. He received a Silver Star and a Purple Heart as a result of his leadership during the Battle of the Bulge. He had been a pharmaceutical salesman at the time of his enlistment. Upon return from the service, he resumed this career, which he held most of his life. He became sales manager for a number of different pharmaceutical companies and finally, Executive Director of the American Cancer Society in Canton, Dayton and Lima, Ohio. – Nayda Colomb

Left Southampton England 22 August 1944. Landed at Omaha Beach France Morning of the 23. Remained in Replacement Depot there about a week and was transported by Red Ball to camp near LeMans France. At Le Mans we lost the replacement troops attached to us and were Broken up as a Group. My group of officers went to camp at (Mmalesharbes/r) France. We remained there about 3 weeks. Left there by 3/4 ton Courier driven along with Thompson, Copeda and Paneraty. We went through Paris and stopped there for about 3 hours looking over the scenery then went on to a Camp between the famous city of Verdun and Metz. This was around the 17th of Sept. We had been assigned to the 7th A.D. and were trying to get to them but were unable to do so. In the meantime the 7th started its long trip into Holland. This necessitated our being reassigned to another replacement pool and it took us until 10th of Oct to finally arrive at the seventh.

They had just finished Overloon and were in Indirect fire positions near Deurne Holland. We remained there firing artillery from for about 1 week and were pulled out in preparation for the Leisel. Meijel deal. Out the afternoon of 26th of Oct. I took a patrol down the canal which was just east of Liesel about 2000 yds. This was the first time I had been under direct small arms fire. A German Support opened upon us with a Burp Gun about 75 yds. Fortunately I returned my 12 man patrol Intact. Arrived back to Co. area around 1700 and they were in

preparation of moving out to assembly position to ward off the counter attack. I was in C Co 31st Tk Bn at this time my old friend whom I met in England-Bob (Flousvoy) was in the same Co. along with Bob Olmstead who was Co. Commander. At Dawn on the morning of the 27th we left the assembly. from there moving to the Line of departure which was the main highway between Liesel and Meijel. We were to attack directly east from this the Canal and secure a (Bride) Bridge to avoid its being used for the Jerries to bring Arms Across. We left the line of departure which was receiving heavy enemy Artillery Barrages and met resistance immediately we never moved over 400 yds from it during the two days we were there. This was my first experience with VonRunstedt. Things were pretty rough and due to casualties we were only in the battle about 2 hours when I was contacted and told to take over the Co. The only other officer I had was Howie Livingston who later got a million dollar wound. The British finally got their Arty in the second PM. Late and started pounding the Jerries. We were withdrawn at Dark and relieved by the British.

We then Marched to an assembly area near Weert Holland remaining there seven days and were then thrown into another defensive position along a canal just east of Weert. We were finally relieved after about 1 week of no sleep and pulled to Heerlen Holland near Maastricht remaining there until 1st part of December when we made a March through Heerlen across the German Border near Ubach Germany. We remained there Planning an Attack on Rachelen, Germany just west of the Ruhr River.

This Attack never Materialized and at 0300 17th of Dec. We started our long march to Vielsalm and St. Vith Belgium. We arrived just west of St. Vith at 1400 PM and Gassed our tanks right on the highway in preparation for going into the attack that nite. My Co. was assigned to Col Rhea of 23 task force and finally we Bivouacked about 3000 yds West of St. Vith.

The Following AM I was told to report to C.C.B. no longer being in Rheas task force. I reported and took up defensive position just N. of St. Vith on the Hunningen road. I only remained there about 1 hour and was relieved by a 9th A.D. task force. I then went to Col. Fullers force on the schonberg road. I remained there under heavy artillery fire until dusk when I was withdrawn 1000 yds. West of St. Vith on the kromback road. At 2200 was called to Bn Hq where Col. Erlenbusch told me to take a platoon of Engineers north of St. Vith on the Wallerode road & go into a holding Position setting up road block and a block on the railroad running Parallel with road. We remained there with no activity with exception of heavy Arty and plenty of screaming Meemies-on the 4th day in the P.M. I was ordered to make an attack to the right of the railroad and neutralize 4 A.T. guns which were distressing our boys on my left Flank. We made a Perfect Field Manual Attack and had completed our mission in 45 minutes. Were then

ordered back to our old position remaining there until about 2000 when I was ordered up in support of the left Flank. By this time the Jerries were getting well underway in one of their Fanatical attacks. Plenty of planes and arty. At 2200 we were all ordered to withdraw my force back to our holding position and the rest to go into assembly west of St. Vith. I held in my position there until 2330 under the most intense artillery and small arms fire also flames-it was one of the most spectacular sights you can imagine.

Finally at 2330 I was ordered to withdraw on the Krombach road to the position I had left 4 days before. Upon arrival there I was told to Form a holding line with remnants of Infantry and other Tank units along with some T.D.s. We were receiving direct enemy A.P. fire at this time but fortunately did not have a loss. It was snowing quite hard and we were putting out a covering screen of Col. 30 Ammo. I was also calling artillery support. At 0400 the following morning I was ordered 1000 yards farther west into another position there the Infantry all deserted me and I was alone with 4 tanks and crews we held there until 0900 and could see the Jerry Infantry in snow suits coming toward us about 1000 yds to our front we were then ordered to an assembly Position just east to Krombach, Belgium. We assembled in a woods there receiving direct 88 fire all the time. I was on the south Flank of our Position and out in the open near a R.R. track. It was Moonlite and snow on the ground which made the tanks stand out. I was dozing in my tank turret when a Dough boy came running telling me a Jerry tank was coming down the R.R. track. I immediately got out tanks into the edge of the woods and in a little cover but the Flank got through the Infantry and started firing at my tanks. My Tank was hit twice with a.Pa. and then with IU.C. We evacuated the tank and I drew in other tanks strengthening the Position We were able to keep the Jerries from breaking through.

I took another tank and at 3 A.M. was called to the Tank of Maj. Loshe and given the order for our move out at dawn. I was also informed that I would take the Lead tank. We had spare parts of many different units with us. It was quite a long column. We were able to get out and marched to a point about 10 Mi West of Vielsalm. That was one time when we reached the Arty installations that I was really glad to see them because we knew we were out of the greatest danger. We later Moved to a position just north of Manhay out in the woods and remained there over Tuesday. My crew along with all the other people we could get in the Tank sang Xmas carols at daybreak Xmas morning.

After settling there a few days we moved to Niveze Belg. near Spa remaining there about 10 days when we moved to the assembly area at Waimés, Belg. (home) to the Attack on Monteneau. We were working with C Co. of 501 Airborne after taking Monteneau. We then moved into the Ardennes Forest using the Bull Dozer tank to break the way. We finally arrived at the line of Departure which was

about 1500 yds West of Born We were in Position after losing 2 tanks from Mines when all hell broke loose and the A.T. fire was terrific. We were finally withdrawn at dusk and went into (Hervis) physical defense for the nite. The next A.M. at Dawn the Infantry took Bourn and we were drawn out to make the Attack on Neider Emmels & Hunningen then to S.Vith. Was at Hunningen I lost my good friend Don Lechene also Howie Livingston was evacuated. After taking St. Vith we went into a defensive position east of St. Vith on the Schonberg road where we were for a short time while at St. Vith in Dec. We spent 2 of the most horrible days and nites one can imagine. It was zero weather & the inside of the Tanks were like refrigerators that needed defrosting. Finally we were withdrawn and eventually went to Welkenraedt, Belgium where we took a long needed rest. Remaining there until the later part of March.

At this time we headed back into Germany and landed at Puffendorfen on the Rhine going into Indirect fire for about 1 week. We assisted in holding the Remagen Bridge head and eventually crossed the famous Rhine at Remagen heading in the general direction of Giessen. In fact the first resistance we met on this march was just west of Giessen where we ran into a battery of 6 A.A. Guns which caused us a lot of Grief I also lost my good friend John Durn. Later same day Tally and Leach were both out of the picture. This left me as C.O. and Beck as platoon leader. That nite at 1200 I attacked Grossen Buschel and captured same and at 0300 next morning is when the 3 Jerry tanks came in on me. Our next engagement was at Kirchau where some fresh Troops from Denmark had been shipped. We hit the town late afternoon and consolidated our position. At 0600 the following day we headed our March to the Edersee. I was Advance Guard Commander for the Combat Command on this March and it was a bit nerve racking. The Dam was the first Objective I had ever taken over which we raised Old Glory & believe me it was quite a thrill. We remained at the Dam Guarding it a little over a week then came the long trek westward into the Ruhr pocket.

The Ruhr pocket was almost a dream because of the long time we were in it and the constant nervous strain. I was in Task force Beatty and believe Me Maj. Bill Beatty was one swell fellow. We had 1 co. of Infantry My Co. of tanks - 3 Tank Destroyers and 3 Assault Guns. I was in command of the Assault Guns and T.D.s. We took so many towns that it is almost impossible to recall all of them.