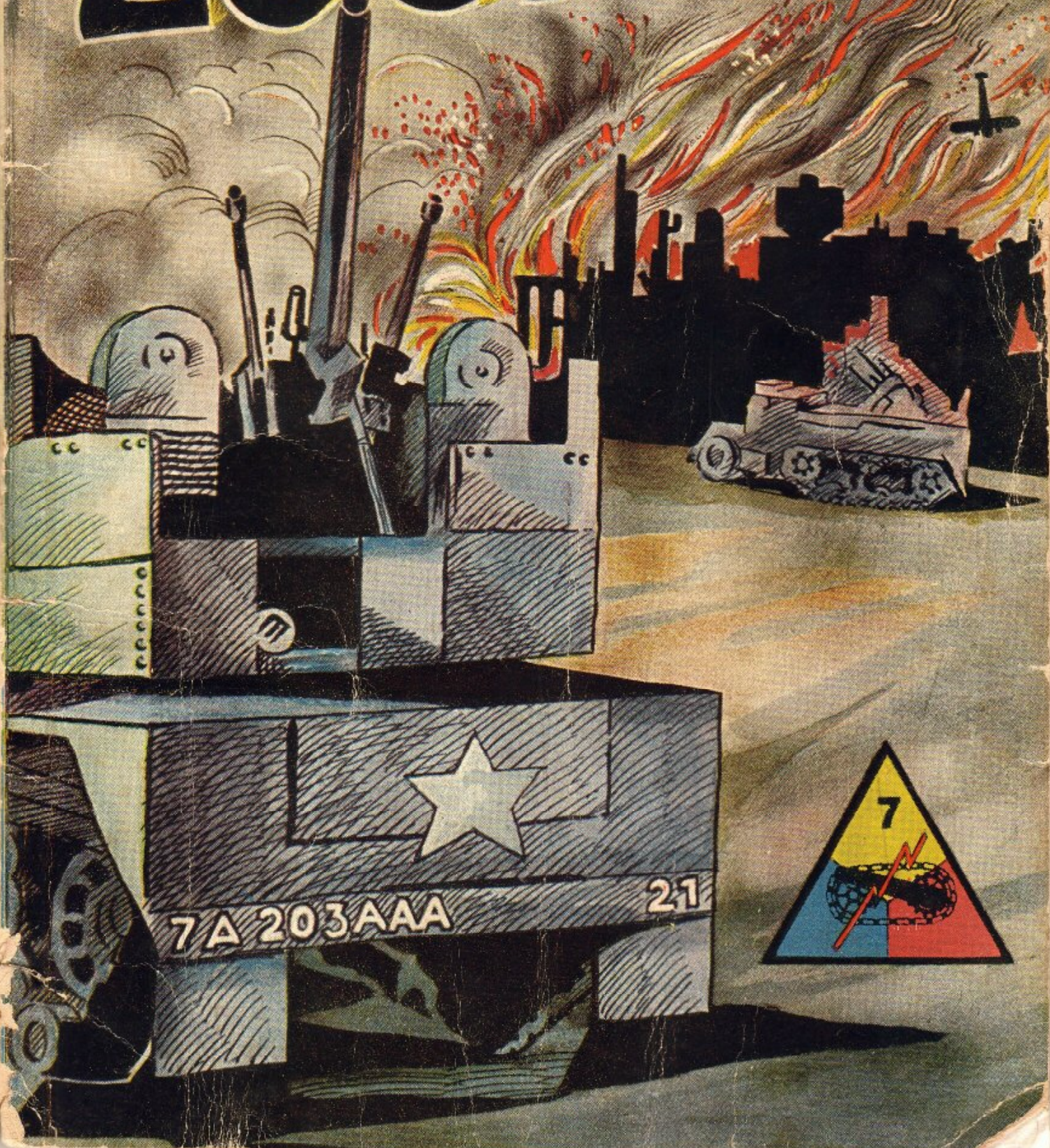




# 203AAA



## FOREWORD

*This book of experiences is dedicated to the men who gave their lives that the combat mission of the 203rd AAA AW Bn (SP) could be accomplished. They shared with us everything about war but the victory they inspired by the examples of courage they set. To the families and friends of these men, we express our sympathy; we share your grief. We hope that through these pages you may come to know the soldiers with whom they lived and fought, and the Battalion to which they paid the highest tribute of loyalty.*

## TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 203RD AAA AUTO WPNS BN (SP):

Since the activation of the battalion on November 15, 1942, the personnel have demonstrated that they had one determined idea in mind, that of defeating the Axis Powers quickly and decisively. Throughout the period of training, both in the States and in Eng-



land, that determination did not waver, as was attested to by the high standards of perfection attained in final tests prior to actual combat.

From the time the battalion crossed the channel to meet Jerry face to face, there has been no weakening in your determination. From Cherbourg, through France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and well into Germany, you have met Germany's best

under any and all conditions and have in each instance acquitted yourselves in a highly commendable manner.

The Battalion can proudly boast that all missions have been successfully accomplished. While enemy air activity was not heavy

in our sectors, you have, through your alertness and persistence, prevented Jerry from inflicting damage on the installation you were protecting, at the same time accounting for a goodly portion of attacking planes. In ground roles (not our natural province) you have slugged it out with the toughest and have gotten the decision.

Unfortunately this extensive activity has not been without its price. Many of our comrades have paid the supreme sacrifice; the loss of these men is keenly felt. It is my humble prayer that these men have found in the ranks of our ethereal army the peace which they so richly earned.

To those of you who carry wounds, it is my hope that their only effect on your health and well-being will be to remind you of an honorable service in defense of your country.

Throughout the existence of the Battalion, I have had a distinct feeling of pride and pleasure in being your commanding officer. To those of you who go to the Pacific Theater to meet and beat the Japs, I would ask nothing more than to accompany you again as your commanding officer. Some will soon return to civil life; to you I say "God speed," and to the Battalion as a whole, I sincerely say, "Thanks for a job well done".

GEORGE C. McFARLIN  
LT. COL., CAC, COMMANDING

*Geo. C. McFarlin*



HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMORED DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL



APO 257, U. S. Army  
6 June 1945

To the Officers and Men of the 203rd AAA Bn.

From 10 August 1944 to V-E Day, 9 May 1945, the 203rd AAA Battalion fought as an integral part of the 7th Armored Division in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. The Division admires you for your efficient support and effective contributions to its success. Some battles stand out in our memories more than others. I well remember the fine job you did during the German breakthrough in the Ardennes during December, 1944 at which time you manned isolated road blocks over a lonely stretch of twenty-five miles of road from Saint Vith to La Roche against the best troops the German Army had. These road blocks assisted materially in keeping our one line of communications open.

Another memorable assignment was that of protecting the famous Ludendorf Bridge at Remagen against the vicious suicidal attacks of the Luftwaffe in March of 1945. This was one of the most vital and important anti-aircraft missions of the war. The action spoke for itself; the German fighter-bombers never succeeded in knocking out the bridge.

It has been a pleasure to have the 203rd AAA Bn. serving with the 7th Armored. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on an excellent combat record and to express my appreciation for your excellent work both in your primary role against hostile aircraft and in your secondary role against enemy ground troops.

*R. W. Hasbrouck*

R. W. HASBROUCK  
Major General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

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## INTRODUCTION

This record of events concerning the experiences of the 203rd AAA Auto-Weapons Bn (SP) was planned and published during that period following V = E day when the cessation of hostilities was yet a novelty, and the adjustment from combat to peacetime soldiering had just begun.

Sudden relaxation from the tension of an omnipresent enemy was still a strange but wonderful feeling, and for the first time since activation day, way back in November 1942, the hustle of training and the strain of combat had ceased.

As we go to press the Battalion is engaged in a security role in the Saalkreis of Saxony, a rural peaceful section of Germany with rolling fields and tiny picturesque villages. We are comfortable and clean and rested, but our thoughts are on the future and hard on home.

The point system has just been announced and everyone is adding and wondering and trying to anticipate his fate.

The Battalion has just completed its first retreat parade in two years and according to General Hasbrouck "It wasn't too bad, considering".

Athletics, necessary guard, and the checking of German Identity Cards consumes most peoples' time and the policy of non-fraternization is still in effect.

At home the San Francisco Conference has gotten well under way, and the friendly smile of President Truman has become a familiar sight in the Special Service magazines.

The latest tunes being served up from the BBC and the AEF broadcasting station in Luxembourg, are "Serenade for Strings", "Don't Fence Me In" and "I walk Alone".

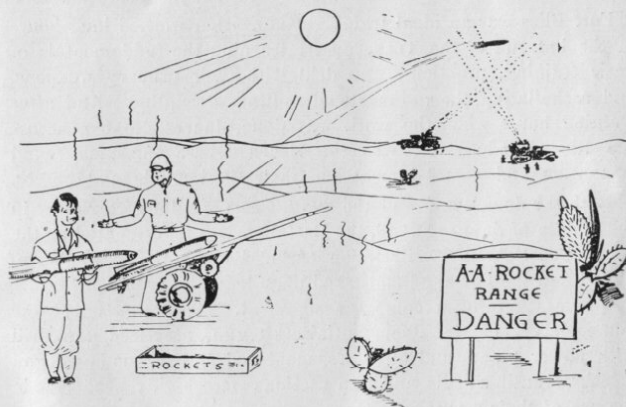
Frank Sinatra has again been classified 4-F.

In fact it is D + 375.

The committee which arranged this publication hopes that for you as for it, many memories will be aroused in reviewing the scenes and the notes of our travels. Photographs shown here were taken by amateurs and were submitted by personnel from all Batteries to illustrate the narrative. The story, which because of space limitations is brief, by no means includes many of the individual experiences of the Batteries or personnel. However this book should act as a guide to refresh our memories, and to give our families and friends an organized picture of the where, when, and why of our lives during that exciting period when censorship cloaked our movements and those of the Ghost Division.

## ACTIVATION AND TRAINING

When the halftracks of the 203rd Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, Self Propelled, rolled to a halt on the shores of the Baltic Sea, it marked the end of a long trail, which had its beginning almost three years before and some six thousand miles away. It was a long road and a hard one from Fort Bliss, Texas to the Baltic Sea, and now that the journey was over, the men of the Battalion recalled the sweat, toil, rain, mud, cold; the endless con-



voys, the uncertainty, the fear, the heartbreak, the utter exhaustion of mind and spirit; buzz bombs, K-rations foxholes, and complete subjugation to military discipline for the past three years. Multitudinous memories of the past cluttered the mind; recollections, which with the passing of time would fade into the limbo of forgetfulness, so that one day even the most imaginative would hardly believe that these things had happened. Yet nothing would ever be so real!

The story really begins when the Battalion was activated as the Second Battalion of the 608th Coast Artillery Regiment on the 15th of November 1942 at Fort Bliss, Texas. The officer cadre

assembled at Fort Bliss towards the end of October to await the activation of the unit, and upon activation, Lt. Col. (then Major) George C. McFarlin assumed command of the Battalion.

With the arrival of the enlisted cadre and fillers, the Battalion was formed, and ready to embark upon the first phase of training by the first of the year. The men came from all parts of the United States: from Brooklyn, from New York, from Ohio, Virginia, Texas, New Mexico, Massachusetts, and Indiana. Fresh from civilian life, with no previous military experience, the men entered into this new life, not without misgivings, but full of enthusiasm.

Fort Bliss was an ideal training camp. Men worked long hours in the hot sun of the Texas desert learning the fundamentals of basic training, practicing gun drill with their primary weapons, and assimilating the rudiments of military discipline. And after training hours when the work was done, Juarez, Mexico, across the Rio Grande river, was the Mecca where the men found relaxation and entertainment for their tired minds and bodies.

With the de-activation of the 608th Coast Artillery Regiment in the middle of January 1943, the Battalion was redesignated as the 203rd Coast Artillery Battalion (AA). Basic training was completed and the Battalion embarked upon long and arduous training in preparation for a combat assignment. The men studied the nomenclature of the 40mm antiaircraft gun, practiced gun drill with power plants and directors, emplaced and camouflaged gun positions until squads and gun sections were highly proficient in the use of their weapons.

But no sooner had the Battalion become thoroughly familiar with the 40mm guns and directors than the Battalion was again redesignated on the 20th of February 1943, as the 203rd Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, Self-Propelled. This involved a change from towed mounts to self-propelled halftracks, from 40mm guns to 37mm guns and from water-cooled .50 cal. machine guns to quadruple .50 cal. mounts.

There were new tactical problems to consider, new weapons to learn and new gunnery problems to be solved. Driver training was of paramount importance, and the halftracks were driven hundreds of miles up and down the Pipeline Road until the drivers became

thoroughly familiar with the handling of the vehicles. The high mobility of the self-propelled guns demanded increased efforts in the emplacing and camouflaging of the halftracks, and on field problems, men sweated and strained, digging in gun positions only to move a few minutes after the guns had been emplaced. Blackout convoys over the desert sands taught convoy discipline, and radio communications demanded long hours of practice and training.

By the middle of June tactical tests were conducted under the Antiaircraft Training Command, and demonstrated the progress of the Battalion; and the high state of training reflected credit upon the officers and men of the Battalion. The long hours of gun drill, the field problems, the inspections, the practice firing had not been in vain, for the Battalion had completed its training and was ready for assignment to a theater of operations.

For most of the men, the past six months had been an arduous and monotonous grind of training, liberally sprinkled with hours of recreation and enjoyment in El Paso and Juarez. The war was far away and the men grumbled at the amount of physical labor demanded in training. The digging in of gun emplacements, of foxholes, of camouflaging halftracks seemed foolish and useless under simulated field conditions. But most of the men appreciated the need for this training, and anticipated the time when adeptness in just such training might mean the difference between life and death.

Louisiana maneuvers stimulated interest in the tactical employment and deployment of halftracks working with Infantry, Artillery, and the Engineers. There was a vast difference in the field problems at Fort Bliss and the simulated conditions of warfare in the Louisiana maneuvers. The firing batteries found new problems and difficulties which had not been hithertofore experienced, but by the time maneuvers were concluded, the officers and men had a better understanding of the tactics of the Infantry, Artillery, and Engineers, and had devised new methods of deployment when attached to these units.

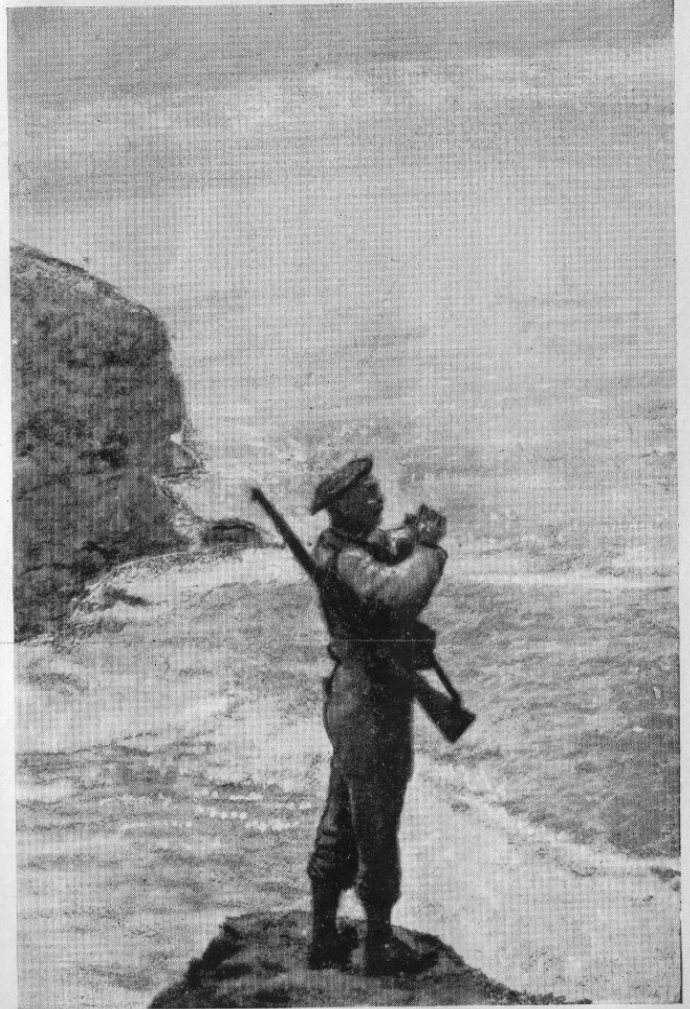
Amphibious training at Camp Pickett, Virginia brought the men in contact with the problems and practice of invasion training.

The men climbed debarkation towers, scaled landing nets, jumped in and out of landing craft, crawled through barbed wire fences, probed for and neutralized land mines, and practiced abandon ship drill. The work was novel and stimulating, and this business of preparing for an invasion caused much comment among the men



of the Battalion. Further amphibious training carried the Battalion to Camp Bradford, Virginia, where, under the supervision of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, the men trained on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Firing batteries water-proofed vehicles and drove them into the surf, half-tracks were loaded and unloaded from LST's, assault boat landing exercises were conducted, and lectures on amphibious landing procedure were given by naval instructors.

The future was still uncertain, but most of the men felt that the time of departure from the States was drawing near. Fully trained and fully equipped, with the recent naval training still fresh in the minds of the men, the Battalion awaited movement orders to a port of embarkation. Four thousand miles away, an invasion army gathered on the tiny isle of England, and it seemed certain that the Battalion would join that army and take part in what would surely be the most momentous assault in history.





## OVERSEAS

Late in the evening of February 8th, 1944, the 203rd AAA AW Battalion boarded His Majesty's "Andes", and on the following morning, the "Andes" slipped out of the New York Harbor and proceeded on a course toward Liverpool, England. The transport was extremely crowded and the men slept on tables and hammocks below deck, while others used the officers' lounge for sleeping quarters each night. The crossing was uneventful, save for a few



days of rough weather, when even the use of seasick tablets could not prevent an outbreak of *mal de mer* among the men quartered below the decks. This was the Battalion's first contact with British food, and breakfast of liver and onions, staple diet of the English seamen, hardly agreed with palates accustomed to fresh eggs and hotcakes each morning. After ten days on the water, the shores of Ireland were sighted in the distance, and a few hours later, the "Andes" docked in Liverpool, England.

Not many men of the 203rd AAA AW Battalion will forget the blackout trek through the dark, winding streets of Liverpool from the docks to the railway station, nor the Red Cross girls, who served coffee and doughnuts to them as they crowded into the small compartments of the train. The following morning the Battalion arrived in Leek, Staffordshire, where the advance party had made arrangements for a camp site in the nearby Blackshaw Moor. The Battalion was stationed in a British Regimental Camp, where sufficient hutting was available for sleeping quarters, mess halls and office space. Lt. Col. McFarlin, the Commanding Officer, immediately restricted the Battalion for a ten-day period of indoctrination, and administrative affairs were set in order and a training program instituted to ready the unit for a combat assignment in the near future.

The people of Leek and Buxton made the Battalion welcome with warm hospitality as the men went on passes into town and made friends wherever they went. After a short time, the men were able to compute and understand the English monetary system of pounds, shillings and pence; had learned to order "bitters" and "nutbrown" instead of Budweiser and Schlitz; had become accustomed to tea in the place of coffee; and had tuned their ears to the sharp trill of the English tongue. "Got any gum, chum" was the battle cry of the swarms of youngsters who pounced upon any unsuspecting soldier in the streets, but the men soon learned to counter this plaintive call with, "Got a sister, mister". It was confusing at first, this talk of "pubs", "ironmongers" and "grama-phones"; this reference to "bobs", "skittles", and "chips", but in course of time, the Battalion became acclimated in the British custom and tradition.

Soon after the initial issue of vehicles and equipment, the Battalion embarked upon an extensive training program which stressed physical conditioning, aircraft recognition, motor maintenance, driver's training and gun drills by squad and section. There were long marches through the hills by the moor, and drivers became accustomed to narrow roads and sharp turns as they drove through the narrow lanes of the English countryside.

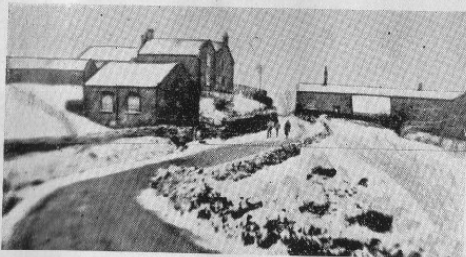
Early in April, movement orders were received, sending the





BATTALION VISITS  
STONE HENGE ON FIELD  
PROBLEM

A BATTERY STREET  
AT BLANDFORD



THE BLEAK BLACKSHAW  
MOOR

OFFICERS SURVEY  
BOMB DAMAGE OF LAST  
NIGHT'S RAID ON  
SOUTHERN ENGLAND



Battalion to Camp Blandford, Dorsetshire, to work with the British Mobile Training Command in the preparation of a Standard Operating Procedure for self-propelled anti-aircraft battalions. With this purpose in view, the Battalion busied itself with continuous field problems, emphasis being placed on column movement, deployment into position, camouflage, tactical problems, and radio procedure. Both new and old methods were tried, and either discarded or adopted, and in the final phase of training, a three-day field problem was devised to test the newly developed S. O. P. This test, which was to evaluate the speed of column movement, and effectiveness of deployment under changing conditions, was highly successful, and the S. O. P. was sent to the AA Section of the European Theater of Operations where it was approved by the Commanding General.

Although there was no news of the impending "D-Day", the men sensed that time was short, and the business of preparing the Battalion for a combat assignment was continuous. Racks were constructed for carrying gasoline and ammunition on the half-tracks, much needed equipment was secured, and plans were made for packing and shipping organizational equipment.

Early in May, the Battalion was ordered to move to St Agnes, Cornwall, and conduct practice firing on the AA range under the supervision of British instructors. The men welcomed the opportunity to test their new weapons, which had never been fired, and to sharpen their shooting eye on a moving target. The firing range was located on a huge cliff overlooking the sea and provided perfect fields of fire in all directions. The courses flown by the British fliers were excellent, and gunners and deflection setters quickly proved their state of training by knocking down every sleeve that was fired upon. The crews practiced "out-of-action" and "stoppage" drills until all squads were able to work smoothly as a team, despite unforeseen accidents.

When the Battalion returned to Camp Blandford, there was an increased amount of troop movement in the southern part of England, as armor and infantry moved to marshalling areas. The Battalion was alerted by the First United States Army and ordered to make immediate preparations for combat duty. Every effort

was made to secure additional equipment, and all vehicles were waterproofed and made ready for the Channel crossing. Practice loading exercises were held, radios were waterproofed and tested, and rosters of men and lists of equipment were prepared in accordance with existing instructions.

"D-Day!" The morning of June 6 found the Battalion still preparing for movement to the marshalling area. During the previous night, the constant drone of planes overhead gave some indication of the vast operation which was taking place on the coast of France, and on the following day, the men could still see continuous flights of C-47's with gliders in tow, an endless stream of Fortresses and Liberators, and countless fighter sweeps of Thunderbolts and Mustangs. The news was good, and the Battalion, like the rest of the world, was electrified at the announcement of the long awaited invasion of Europe.

As the days went by, the fighting in Normandy became tougher, but the American troops forged slowly ahead, and finally the 9th Infantry Division cut the Cherbourg Peninsula. On the 21st of June at 2300 hours, the Battalion was alerted and early the next morning, moved to the marshalling area near Weymouth, where Lt. Col. McFarlin revealed the initial assignment of the Battalion on the continent. The plan called for the 203rd AAA AW Battalion to provide antiaircraft protection for the port of Cherbourg, and further called for the Battalion to set up this defense on the day that the infantry entered the city. Battery "A" had the mission of providing antiaircraft protection to the northeast part of the city along the beach; Battery "B" was assigned the docks and terminals on the wharves; Battery "C" was to be located in the naval base and shipyard southwest of the harbor; and Battery "D" was to protect the high ground and defiles on the only highway leading into Cherbourg. The original plan called for the fall of Cherbourg on "D plus 8", but now it was the 22nd of June and General Hodge's army still battled in Valogne and Montebourg. But now the fall of Cherbourg was imminent as the 9th, 4th and 79th Infantry Divisions closed in on the city, and the Battalion was ready to cross and take part in the battle.

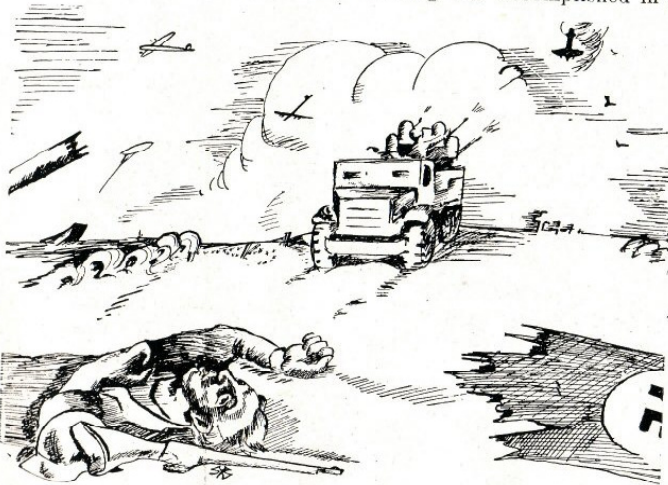
The weather raised a serious problem. The worst storm in 20 years broke on the Channel, and caused a serious delay in the shipment of men and materiel to the man-made ports on the beaches. For 3 days the Battalion lingered in the marshalling area, waiting for the storm to break, while the infantry edged closer to Cherbourg. Finally, on the morning of the 25th of June, the Battalion moved from the marshalling area to Weymouth, where two LST's were waiting to carry the men and equipment across the Channel to the beaches of Normandy. The storm had abated, the ships were there, and the Battalion was ready!





## NORMANDY

The port of Weymouth was crowded with vehicles and equipment as units moved through the city to the docks. The Battalion proceeded directly to the area where two LST's were waiting to receive the men and equipment. Loading was accomplished in a



minimum of time, and by nightfall the ships were ready to put out to sea. At midnight the convoy moved out of the harbor and proceeded on a course for Utah beach on the coast of France.

The convoy, which was composed of LST's, LCT's and Liberty ships, extended for miles across the Channel, and those boats which were out of sight of the naked eye could be located by the barrage balloons which flew from the superstructure of the ships. The convoy continually changed course in a zigzag manner in order to confuse any enemy submarine or torpedo boat which might attempt

an attack, and gunners stood by the anti-aircraft guns ready to forestall any sudden sweep by the Luftwaffe.

The shore of France was sighted on the afternoon of 26 June as the convoy stood off Utah beach, waiting for the beachmaster to call the ships in to unload cargo. The shallow approaches to the beach gave mute evidence of the terrible conflict and high cost of the invasion. Masts of LST's and Liberty ships protruded from the water; sunken barges and small landing craft lay half submerged near the shore; a huge breakwater had been formed to the north by the voluntary sinking of some 50 ships of various tonnage; tanks, trucks and jeeps were wrecked and burned along the sand dunes as far as the eye could see; ugly barbed-wire obstacles and vicious pronged iron snares were visible in the water, and clusters of mines still clung to these monstrous obstructions.

The LST's came into the beach late in the afternoon, rammed into the soft sand, and when the tide subsided the landing doors through which men and vehicles streamed ashore were opened. Forming in convoy, the Battalion moved through the sand dunes and proceeded to an assembly area near St. Mere Eglise. A heavy rain began to fall and the men settled down to an uncomfortable night in half-tracks and trucks. The dull boom of artillery in the distance, and the sharp crack of rifle fire by nervous sentries in nearby areas kept the Battalion in a state of imaginative excitement during this first night in a combat zone.

The following day dawned bright and clear as the Battalion, with firing batteries in the lead, moved from the assembly area to Cherbourg, where the infantry still fought in Fort De Roule and the naval arsenal. Through battered Monteburg and past Valognes, which had ceased to exist as a city, the Battalion rolled on to the outskirts of Cherbourg. Though the city had not yet fallen, Capt Watkins took Battery "B" into the heart of the port and set up the tracks around the harbor bases, while Capt Johnson led Battery "C" to the assigned positions in the naval arsenal, where the infantry still battled isolated pockets of Germans in house-to-house combat. Enemy snipers were active throughout the night, and though the German garrison had officially surrendered, fanatical groups of Nazis continued to fight until dawn.



1



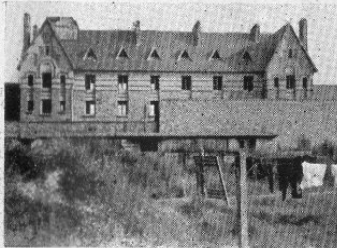
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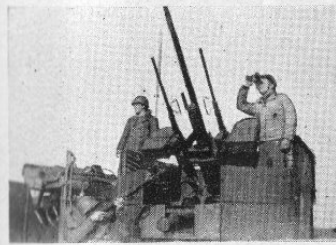


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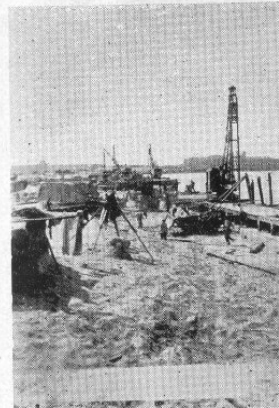
1-3: SCENES OF DEVASTATION IN TOWNS ADJACENT TO THE BEACH  
 4: AN M-15, OF "A" BATTERY, IN POSITION AT CHERBOURG  
 5: BATTALION CP AT CHERBOURG. THE LAST UNDER A ROOF FOR MANY MONTHS TO COME  
 6: VALOGNES, CITY OF RUBBLE AND DEATH



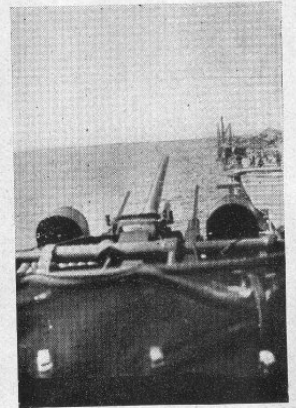
AN M-15 SEARCHES THE SKY



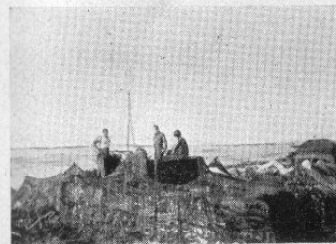
"B" BATTERY PROTECTS A P-61 AIR FIELD



DOCK AREA IS REPAIRED



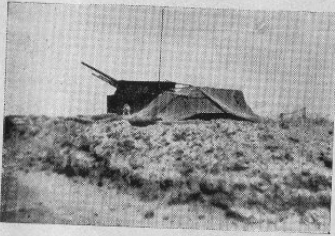
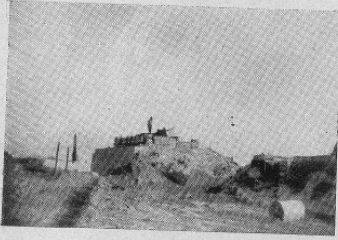
"C" BATTERY COVERS THE WATER FRONT



"B" BATTERY ON THE HARBOR



A JEEP HITS A LAND MINE



M-15 AND M-16 GUNS IN PREPARED POSITIONS. THESE CREWS HAD A RINGSIDE SEAT FOR THE BOMBING OF ISLAND FORTS

The next morning Batteries "A" and "D" moved to their assigned sectors and took up their positions, while Battalion Headquarters was established in a former Nazi headquarters in Tourlaville, near the Fort Des Flamonds.

Although Cherbourg had fallen, the harbor forts were still controlled by the Germans, and mine sweepers were unable to proceed with the business of clearing the port until these approaches were secured from the enemy. Thunderbolts dive-bombed the forts, and field artillery, emplaced along the beach, fired at point-blank range into the harbor islands. After two days of merciless bombardment from the air and from the beach, the German garrisons hoisted the white flag, and these important forts fell into American hands.

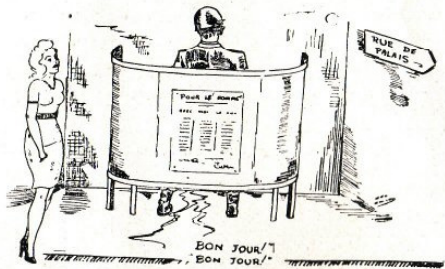
Cherbourg was a well defended city, and the men who had the opportunity to examine the fortifications were amazed at the thoroughness of the German preparations. Fort De Roule stood on a high cliff dominating the approaches by land, with guns emplaced and zeroed on every road, field, and path leading into the city. Underground tunnels made passage to any part of the fort accessible without danger of exposure to enemy fire, and vast store rooms cut out of solid rock were filled with ammunition, food and supplies of all kinds. Concrete pillboxes were cleverly concealed and camouflaged, with strategically placed minefields and anti-tank obstacles to the fore. Along the beach heavy artillery was emplaced to cover the harbor, and the island forts stood in the way of any invasion by the sea. The city seemed impregnable, and yet American troops had stormed the heights, blown the pillboxes, skirted the minefields, and routed the enemy from the city.

These were days of watchful waiting as the enormous task of reconstruction on the fort began, but the Luftwaffe came over only at night, and even then did nothing to hamper operations. Minesweepers swept the harbor daily, and huge founts of water spouted into the air as the mines drifted against the island forts and exploded. Engineers blew the pillboxes along the beach and began the construction of landing docks and piers along the waterfront. There was a frantic hubbub of activity at the Hotel Atlantique, where Army Officials worked night and day to bring order out of the chaos which is the inevitable result of war in a city.

There was a lull in the fighting front in Europe after the fall of Cherbourg. The British held only a portion of Caen, while American infantry battled bitterly around La Haye De Puits, and made small gains upon the important road junction of St Lo. Meanwhile the Battalion was assigned to the 47th AAA Brigade and assisted in the establishment of a AAAIS radio net, which furnished early warning information throughout the Cherbourg Peninsula.

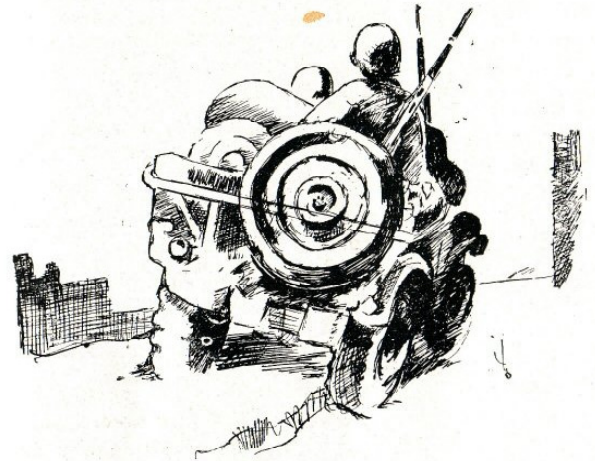
Cherbourg was rapidly returning to normalcy, and by the middle of July a Red Cross club was opened, movie theaters were showing nightly, and tiny bistros all over the city provided nightly entertainment and recreation for the soldiers. There was a new language to be learned, and the readily adaptable GI's picked up enough stock phrases to make themselves understood whenever the occasion demanded it. Cognac and calvados became staple drinks for those soldiers whose asbestos-lined stomachs and cast-iron heads permitted indulgence in such liquid dynamite, while other less toughened souls assuaged their thirst with wines of all types and vintages. Sun bathing became a popular pastime and men with gun positions along the beach found fishing an agreeable sport, as well as a means of bringing variety to the daily ten-in-one ration.

Meanwhile St Lo fell to the 29th Infantry Division, and rumors began to form concerning a new assignment for the Battalion. This much was known, the 203d AAA AW Battalion was scheduled to join an Armored Division. But what Armored Division? Where? When? No one knew! And so the Battalion hopefully watched and waited.



## NORTHERN FRANCE

The aerial bombardment which prefaced the breakthrough out of Normandy did not go unnoticed by the Battalion at Cherbourg. The vast armada of Fortresses, Liberators, Havocs, and Marauders which passed overhead on that 25th of July was reminiscent of the tremendous concentration of air power during the invasion. Even the lowliest private could sense meaning into this display



of aerial might. For two hours the bombers loosed thousands of tons of bombs on German positions and, by the enormous magnitude of operations, wrought chaos and destruction to an entire German army. As the bombardment ended, infantrymen rose out of their foxholes and, rushing to the attack, drove a wedge deep into the battered and shell-torn German defense line. When the penetration was deep enough, General Patton brought up his armored might and

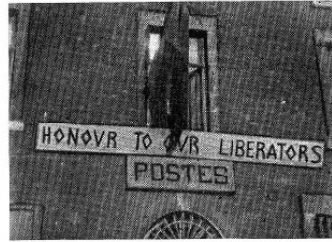
swing his tanks into the attack. The rampaging Third Army's armored spearhead broke through the crumbling German resistance, and drove on to Rennes; then, fanning to the left and the right, overan the bewildered German defenders, and drove up through the Brest Peninsula. This was no limited objective drive; this was the big breakthrough!

It was the 9th of August when the Battalion was relieved of its mission in Cherbourg, and orders were received for the Battalion to proceed to La Haye De Puits to join the Seventh Armored Division, which was poised and ready to strike into the heart of France. Lt. Col. McFarlin reported to the Commanding General of the Seventh Armored Division on the following day, and received the initial assignment of the firing batteries to elements of the Division. By the time the Battalion arrived at the assembly area, Combat Commands of the Seventh Armored had already jumped off and made contact with the enemy near La Ferte Bernard.

A 36-hour convoy carried the Battalion into Avranches, through Fourges, past Laval, and on to La Ferte Bernard, where the Division was already moving east to attack the city of Chartres. Battery "D" was assigned to provide AA protection for Division Headquarters during this operation, and the remaining batteries were placed under the control of Division Trains.

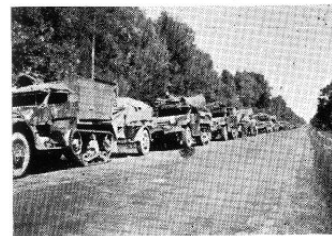
As the armored column moved along the highway to Chartres the liberated people of France lined the streets and roads cheering the advancing Americans. Men and boys, women and girls, stood along the route frantically waving to the men in the column. Young girls threw bouquets of flowers into each passing vehicle, while glasses of wine and cider were offered by eager hands; and kisses freely bestowed by lovely madamoiselles to any and all soldiers fortunate enough to halt beside them. Gifts of fruit and eggs were tendered by the joyous French people, and the American soldiers reciprocated by throwing chocolate and cigarettes to the surging crowds. It was a triumphant parade in many respects, and amply demonstrated the eager appreciation and gratitude of the people of France.

The cathedral city of Chartres was heavily defended by fanatical German soldiers, and the Combat Commands met bitter opposition



GRATITUDE OF A FREE PEOPLE

THE 203rd JOINS THE 7th ARMORED



THE BATTALION ASSEMBLES FOR THE RACE ACROSS FRANCE

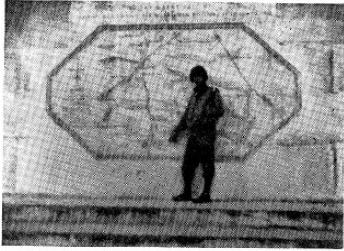
CIGARETTE FOR PAPA



FRENCH CITIES SUFFERED

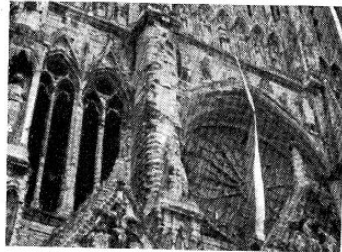
PARIS! SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR



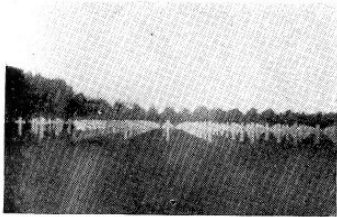


MONUMENT OF WORLD WAR I,  
CHATEAU-THIERRY

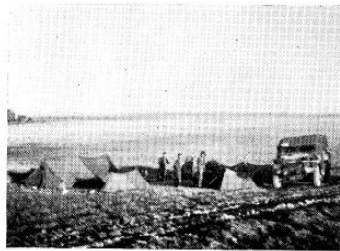
RIEMS CATHEDRAL



GRIM REMINDER OF LAST WAR AT  
ST. MIHEL



BIVOJAC IN FRANCE



CAMOUFLAGE IN AN OPEN FIELD



TEC-5 KENNETH WOOD IS DECORATED  
FOR HEROIC ACTION NEAR THE SEINE



upon attempting to enter the city. Armored task forces were able to skirt the town and pass beyond, but inside the city the infantry engaged enemy strong points and machine gun nests in the very shadow of the famed cathedral, and progress was slow because of the stubborn resistance. Artillery laid supporting fire for the beleaguered infantry, and after several days of hard fighting, the city fell to the Seventh Armored Division.

The Division then turned north towards the city of Dreux, which lay on the road to Paris. As the Division Headquarters column passed in convoy up the highway, a flight of Focke-Wolfe 190's broke out of the clouds and came in to strafe the vehicles. Battery "D" was in the column providing antiaircraft protection for Division Headquarters, and as the enemy planes swooped low, the firing tracks of M16's and M15's sent up a withering barrage of fire, which effectively changed any ideas that the enemy pilots might have had about attacking the column. As Battery "D" continued to fire, the enemy planes took evasive action, and departed from the scene.

The Falais Pocket was now closed and the Division was diverted from the road to Paris, and the tanks began to roll along the road from Chartres to the Seine. The rampaging tanks of the Seventh Armored Division smashed through the weakening defenses of the enemy and town after town welcomed the advancing armored men. These were days of fast moves and short bivouacs and a stay of over 24 hours in any one position was considered a long halt. Through Gallardin and Abilis to Chauffeur Les Eterchy, the Division raced on the Seine.

German resistance on the east bank of the Seine was strong, but infantrymen paddled across the river in assault boats near Port Seine and laid the ground work for a bridgehead on the eastern bank. With infantry across, the engineers threw up a pontoon bridge for the Combat Command, and the following day the bridgehead was expanded as the tanks came across the river and the Germans fell back. Battery "B" was sent to provide antiaircraft protection for the bridge, and, despite an intense artillery barrage, the tracks went into position on the high ground overlooking the crossing. For two days Battery "B" was on the incoming end of



artillery aimed at the bridge site, and several casualties resulted when German artillery zeroed in on one of the gun positions. The Battalion was in bivouac near Melun when Battery "B" was released from the bridge and returned to Battalion control. Enemy aircraft were active throughout the afternoon, and early in the evening a Messerschmidt 210 came out of the low hanging clouds, zoomed overhead and dropped anti-personnel bombs near the Battalion area. Battery "A" opened fire on the enemy aircraft, but the engagement was only of a few seconds duration, and no claims were submitted. The Battalion crossed the Seine River at Fontenbleau, which rests in the heart of the famed chateau country of France, and the drive along the river to Melun presented a pageant of natural scenic beauty. All along the river, lovely girls, wearing abbreviated sun suits, waved and cheered the passing columns, and glasses of beer and wine were pressed upon the thirsty GI's when the column came to a halt. Garlands of flowers went around the necks of countless men, and bushels of tomatoes and dozens of eggs were freely given to the American troops. Each time the vehicles came to a halt, the French people crowded around, eager to shake the hand of every man, and valuable expressions of friendship and gratitude poured out of the hearts of these liberated people. "A bas les Boche" and "Vive la American" were the cries that greeted the grinning Americans riding in tanks, halftracks, trucks and jeeps. Small youngsters stood with outstretched hands and pleading looks, asking for chocolate and chewing gum, and many GI's tore open K-rations to comply with the requests of these tiny citizens of France.

On ahead, the Combat Commands raced to Chateau Thierry, the famous city where the Marines made history in World War I, and the city was liberated by the tanks of the Seventh Armored Division on the 28th of August, when advanced elements of a combat command seized a bridgehead across the Marne River. Battery "A" was hurriedly dispatched to Chateau Thierry to provide anti-aircraft protection for the two bridges across the Marne in the city. After a long march, the tracks arrived late in the evening, and went into position just as enemy aircraft swept down to attack the bridges. The light was poor and the planes were almost invisible.



FLASH, FLASH, FLASH!



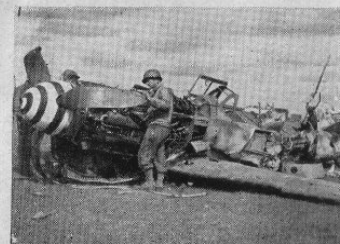
TARGET!



READY FOR ACTION



ENGAGE!



CAT. II

but Battery "A" opened fire, aiming by occasional glances at the silhouettes as the planes passed overhead. After a brief engagement, the German planes dropped their bombs which landed outside the city, and then returned to strafe the bridges. Battery "A" opened fire at the green gun flashes in the sky and succeeded in driving the planes away without damage to either the bridge or defending halftracks.

At Fismes, the Seventh Armored Division turned east, and, without slackening the pace, the tanks roared on to Rheims, famous for its beautiful Gothic cathedral and for the world renowned Pomeroy Champagne. Fleeing Germans, driving cars, trucks, horses, and motorcycles, were sniped and left burning as the tanks rolled on past Rheims on the highway to Verdun. The Battalion passed through Rheims on the Division route, and had a brief glimpse at the majestic cathedral as the column raced through the city.

German anti-tank guns barred the way to Verdun, but still the tanks kept rolling, smashing enemy strongpoints until elements of the Division entered and captured the city on the 31st of August. As the combat commands gathered their strength to drive on past Verdun to Metz, a serious supply shortage slowed down the advance. During one month of frenzied fighting of blitz warfare, the tanks of the Seventh Armored had rolled from Utah Beach, across France to the very borders of Germany. Trucking companies had worked day and night, hauling gasoline, ammunition and food to the fast moving tankers, but now the limit was reached. The trucking companies were still ready, willing and eager, but the Seventh Armored had out-stripped the supply line. The saturation point was reached, and there was no gas available for the Division.

For five days the Division rested in Verdun, while the firing batteries of the Battalion provided antiaircraft protection for the entire Division area. On the evening of 1 September, three Focke-Wolfe 190's attacked Verdun, dropping their bombs inside the city. The planes swept over the Division area, and, engaged by Batteries "B" and "C", the enemy planes took evasive action as soon as the batteries opened fire, and headed back into Germany.

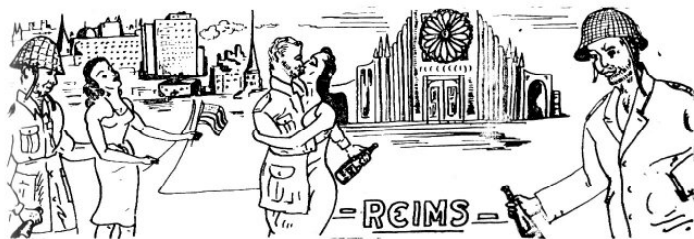
Refitting, re-equipping and maintenance occupied the Division for five days while waiting for gasoline to be brought up from the rear areas. But this five day period also gave the Germans time to regroup and form a strong defensive line around the fortress city of Metz. The forts and pillboxes were manned by fanatical Nazi's, who were determined to hold the city at all costs.

The combat commands rolled out of Verdun, smashed into the strong defensive positions, and were repulsed with heavy losses. Strategically placed artillery, elaborate mine fields, and well-prepared and camouflaged fortifications gave the Germans every advantage. Fall rains turned the highways and fields into muddy morasses, which hampered armored operations and prevented the use of air power during the assault.

An enormous concentration of artillery was emplaced in the area and Battery "A" and Battery "D" were detached from the Seventh Armored and placed under Corps control. These batteries accompanied the artillery across the Moselle River and went into position on the high ground in front of Metz. For five days, Battery "A" and Battery "D" were under continuous counter-battery fire, which necessitated living in muddy foxholes half filled with water.

The Division crossed the Moselle and for two weeks battered its head against the stone wall of Metz. Casualties in men and materiel were high, and progress was measured in yards as the infantry, supported by the artillery, moved slowly forward each day. Sloughing through the mud and slime, the infantry attacked each defensive position and paid a high price for each yard gained.

The Division came out of the line on 25 September, with orders to move north into Holland where the British fought along the approaches to Antwerp.





## RHINELAND

The British Army still battled on the approaches to Antwerp when the Seventh Armored Division was ordered from Metz, and sent to Holland to protect the exposed right flank of the British Second Army. The Battalion followed the Division route through Arlon and Huy, past Hasselt, and went into bivouac in a pine grove outside Eysden, Belgium. For three days the Battalion busied itself with maintenance on vehicles and equipment as the Division prepared for a combat assignment.



The sunny skies of Belgium were a welcome relief after the storm clouded days at Metz, and the pine groves and sandy soil contrasted strangely with the deep mud and clay of France. The men were able to get hot showers at nearby mines, and personal clothing and equipment was cleaned and readied for use.

The Division moved to an assembly area near the vicinity of Asten, Holland, and on the 1st of October the Combat Commands moved out on a mission to seize and hold the small village of Overloon. It was rocky going through the forests outside the town, for the fields and woods were littered with minefields, machine gun

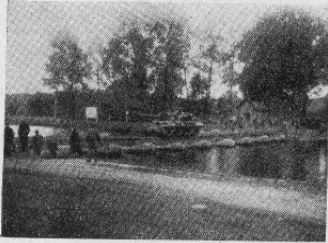
nests and foxholes held by the German infantry. German artillery blasted at the tanks and infantrymen with 88's mortars and "screaming meemies", but after seven days of hard fighting, Overloon fell to the Seventh Armored Division.

Meanwhile the Battalion was located outside Asten, with Battery "A", Battery "B", and Battery "C" providing antiaircraft protection for Division Trains. On the 2nd of October Battery "A" and Battery "B" were placed on outpost duty along the canal, and halftracks went into position around the bridge which crossed the canal outside of Asten. Enemy snipers and patrols were active in this area at night, and Battery "B" engaged unknown ground targets on two different occasions with unknown results.

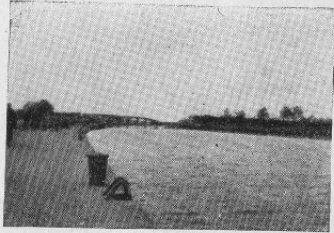
After the capture of Overloon, the Division went into a defensive position extending 28 miles between Weert and Duren, and outposts and roadblocks were set up along the canal. Battery "B" was attached to Combat Command "B" and its tracks were placed as outposts in the northern part of the Division sector. Battery "C" was attached to Combat Command "R" and established roadblocks in and around the village of Meijel.

On the 13th of October, the first platoon of Battery "B" engaged an enemy patrol of nine men who attempted to infiltrate through the position under the cover of darkness. Alert guards sounded the alarm as the patrol came out of the woods, and the machine guns from the halftracks sprayed the area, killing one enemy soldier while four others were captured. On the following morning, the remaining members of the patrol were found hiding in the nearby woods and taken prisoner by the battery.

The second section of Battery "C" 's first platoon, which was on outpost duty east of Meijel in support of the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, was on the receiving end of a German Artillery barrage on the night of April 13th. When the artillery ceased firing, a German infantry patrol of an estimated fifty men attempted to force the position. The section immediately returned fire with small arms and hand grenades, and after a brief skirmish, the attack was beaten off, and the enemy withdrew, leaving machine guns and small arms behind. During the engagement, the M15



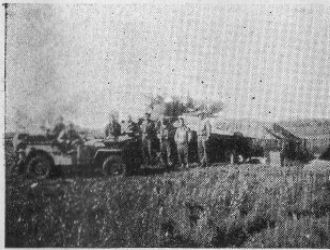
ACROSS THE ALBERT CANAL TO  
JOIN THE BRITISH 2nd ARMY



WEERT



WIND MILLS DOMINATED THE LANDSCAPE



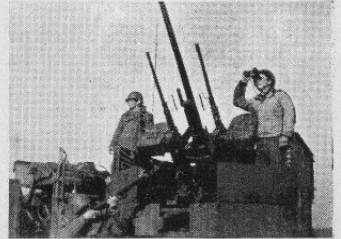
DOG BATTERY PREPARES TO DEFEND



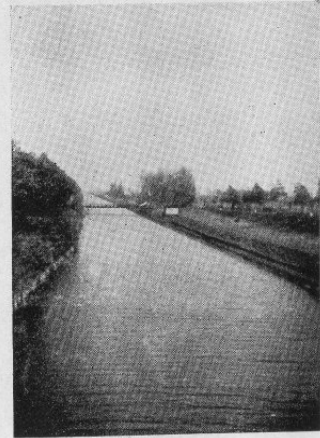
"A" BATTERY PROTECTS THE CUB AIR STRIP



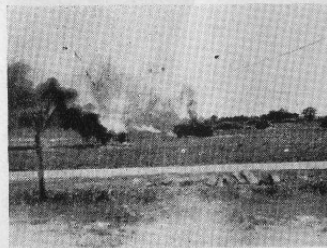
A LAND MINE EXPLODES



IN "BUZZ-BOMB ALLEY"



CANAL AT ASTEN



THE ENEMY COUNTER-ATTACK IS SMASHED



LIKE BUMPS ON A LOG SURROUNDED  
BY MARSH



"A" BATTERY IMPROVISES A SHOWER



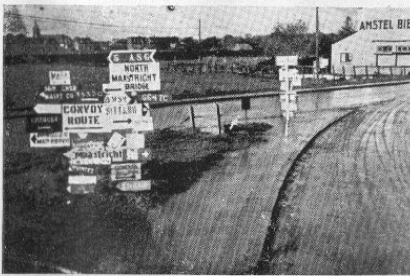
HAIRCUT IN HOLLAND



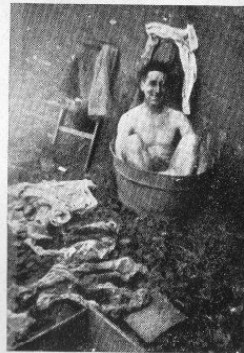
CHOW TIME FOR A SQUAD



MAASTRICHT



ARMY CHRISTMAS TREE AT A ROAD JUNCTION



A BATH IS A BATH

halftrack of this section received a direct hit from a German bazooka, and was placed out of action.

During the following week, the Battalion remained on outpost duty, and instituted a training program which included such subjects as aircraft recognition, motor maintenance, and radio procedure. This training was conducted by platoon leaders while the gun sections were still on the alert for enemy action.

On October 27th a large scale German counter-offensive, designed to relieve pressure on the Germans in the Scheldt Estuary, was directed at the over-extended Division Front. An entire Panzer Army massed across the canal, and struck at Combat Command "R" 's positions in Meijel. Desperate and heroic fighting took place as the Division met the threat of the overwhelming Nazi power. Outnumbered and outgunned, the Division was forced to fall back as overwhelming pressure was exerted by the Germans in the area of Meijel and Leisel, but the delaying rear guard action of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron enabled the Division to conduct an orderly withdrawal to consolidated positions in the rear. Immediate re-inforcements by the British Second Army arrived in time to contain the German offense to limited gains in the Meijel area.

Battery "B" went into position around a bridge across the canal, over which the Combat Commands were to withdraw on Division order. For three successive nights enemy aircraft attacked the bridge, and Battery "B" opened fire with a hastily conceived barrage fire which blanketed the sky above the bridge. This improvised barrage defense was quite effective in repelling the enemy aircraft, and though bombs were dropped each night there was no damage to either the bridge or to the halftracks.

Meanwhile the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Weert, Holland, and Battery "A" was placed on outpost duty along the canal near Neederwaert. On the evening of the 28th of October, a gun section of the second platoon of Battery "A" spotted a German gun crew attempting to emplace an anti-tank gun across the canal. The halftrack opened fire and scored direct hits on the emplacement, knocking out the gun and injuring or killing the crew. Two days later, Battery "A" was subjected to an intense enemy mortar

barrage which resulted in several casualties among the men on outpost duty.

Upon being relieved by the British, the Division was highly commended by General Dempsey for its heroic stand in the Meijel sector. The Division then moved to a bivouac area southeast of Maastricht. Battalion headquarters was established in an apple orchard east of Eysden, Holland, and the firing batteries reverted to battalion control, and assembled in the surrounding area.

For three weeks the Battalion stayed in this static condition while adverse weather conditions hampered operations, and the continual rain and cold made life in the field almost unbearable. The mounting rate of trench foot in the Battalion caused serious concern, as the cold and damp weather produced the most favorable conditions for contracting this disease. Buzz bombs passed overhead, both day and night, and the men learned to wait for the roar of the motors, and "sweat out" the sound until it had passed overhead.

On the 17th of November, Battery "A" and Battery "B" were ordered to proceed with Division Artillery to join the newly organized Task Force Biddle which was assembling in the Heerlerheide sector. On the same day the remainder of the Battalion moved near Moorslag, Holland, and for the first time occupied billets. Four days later, Battery "A" and Battery "C" were relieved of their mission with Task Force Biddle, and rejoined the Division.

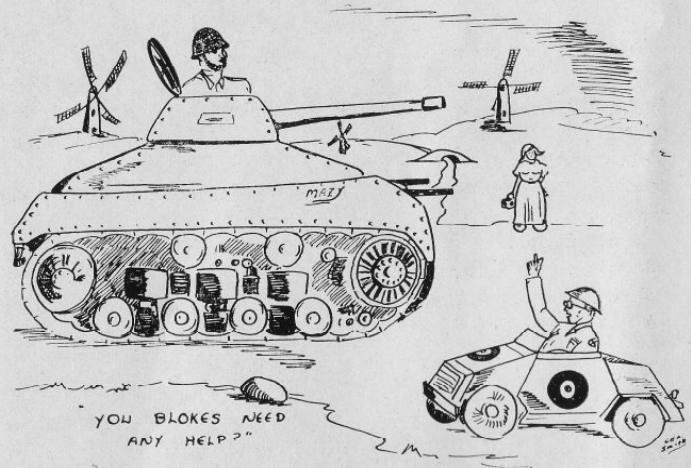
The Battalion moved to the vicinity of Heerlen, Germany, and established headquarters in a farmhouse near Heerlerheide. Battery "A" and Battery "C" were attached to Division Artillery for the coming operations. Battery "D" joined Combat Command "B", and Battery "B" was attached to Division Trains.

Five Focke-Wolfe 190's circled the Division area on 1 December and were engaged by Battery "A", Battery "C" and Battery "D". The planes were driven off with no damage done to Division installations, and Battery "D" claimed one plane as the result of the engagement.

Battery "A" and Battery "C" were in position near Geilenkirchen where Division Artillery was giving support to the infantry

divisions nearing the Roer River. Battalion headquarters moved to Rimburg, Holland and established a headquarters in a row of houses in the town. For two successive days, German aircraft attacked in the artillery sector on bombing and strafing raids, and Battery "A", Battery "C" and Battery "D" engaged the planes on each occasion. As a result of this action, Battery "A" submitted a claim of one Category I for a Messerschmidt 109, and Battery "C" submitted a claim for a Focke-Wolfe 190.

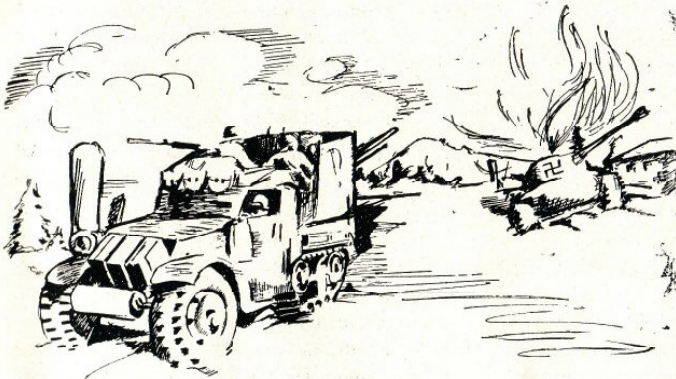
Christmas season was drawing near, and from all indications the crossing of the Roer would be delayed until after the first of the year. The Battalion settled down to a period of maintenance and training, when the Western Front erupted into activity on the 16th of December in the Ardennes sector.





## ARDENNES

There was a lull on the European front in the middle of December as the Allied armies stood poised along the border of Germany from the Maas River to the Swiss border. Rain and mud hampered operations in the north where the Ninth Army was massing for the crossing of the Roer, and the First Army still battled in the Hurtegen Forest, which guarded the approaches to the Roer Dams.



Metz had fallen to infantry of the Third Army and now armor was pressing forward into the Saar Basin. But heavy rain and fog brought aerial operations to a standstill, and with the Roer Dams still in enemy hands, it seemed likely that the Roer defensive would be delayed until the first of the year.

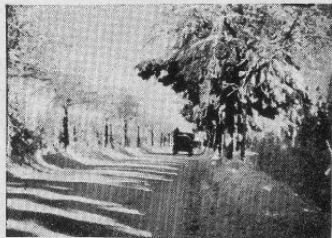
The Seventh Armored Division was in the Ninth Army's sector, near Heerlen, Holland, where Division Artillery was giving supporting fire to the infantry divisions along the river. Battery "A"

and Battery "C" provided antiaircraft protection for the artillery in the Geilenkirchen area, and were under continuous counter-battery fire from the German artillery. The Division was almost up to full strength in men and tanks, and Combat Command "B" was preparing to go into an attack position near Puffendorf, Holland.

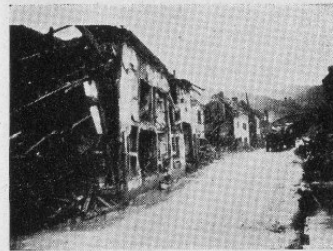
On the 16th of December, the Division was alerted and subsequent instructions ordered a movement on the following day to an assembly area near St. Vith, Belgium. There were rumors of a German offensive in the Ardennes sector, and enemy paratroopers had been dropped in the night, but it seemed unlikely that the German attack constituted a serious threat to the American lines. The Seventh Armored Division moved out on the following morning, with the Combat Commands and Division Trains following Route "A" through Belgium, while Division Artillery, with attached troops, moved down Route "B" inside the German border. For the march, Battery "B" was attached to Division Trains, Battery "A" and Battery "C" moved with Division Artillery and Battalion Headquarters, with Battery "D", traveled behind Division Artillery.

Unknown and unknowing, the Seventh Armored Division moved into the heart of the great German counter-offensive, which broke through the thin American line and began to swiftly exploit initial gains. Late in the afternoon of December 17th, the Battalion approached the outskirts of Malmedy, where information was received that German armor had cut the road ahead leading into St. Vith. From all indications, the German offensive was increasing in tempo and the artillery column turned to seek a new route to the concentration area in event that the Combat Commands were to be committed and needed artillery support. The Battalion turned around outside Malmedy and traveled all night down the highway to Verviers, turning south through Stavelot and proceeding to Vielsalm where Division Headquarters was established.

Units of the Seventh Armored Division found no time to recuperate from the 80-mile convoy, for the Nazi armor held the initiative and was threatening to overrun the vital road-junction of St. Vith. As each unit arrived upon the scene it was committed into action. Combat Command "B" went into a defensive position



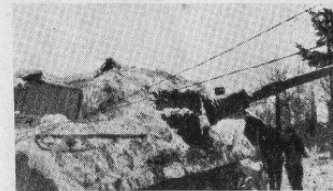
1-6: THE BELGIAN ARDENNES:  
A WINTER WONDERLAND OF FROZEN HELL



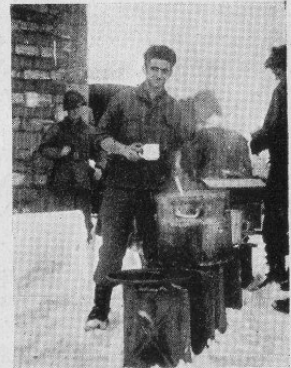
NO BILLITS HERE



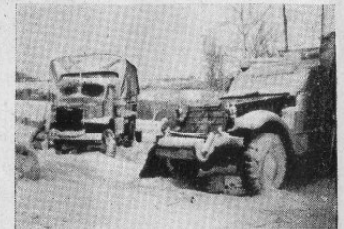
RETURN TO S. VITH



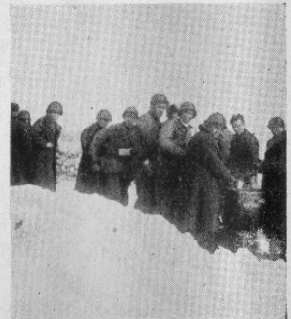
A PANTHER TANK



CHOW LINE IN THE SNOW



BROTHER, IT WAS COLD!

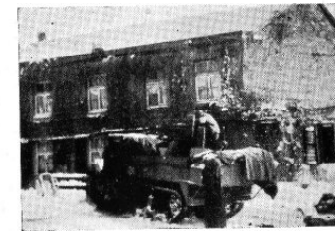
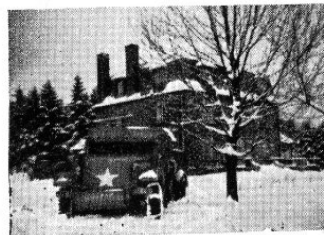
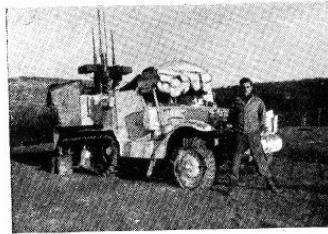


COLD FEET — HOT COFFEE



around St. Vith, while Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "R" established lines on either flank. Upon arrival the following morning, Batteries "A" and "C" followed as Division Artillery moved up and supported the Combat Teams, and went into position between Vielsalm and St Vith. The first six vehicles of Battalion Headquarters passed through Stavelot unmolested behind the Artillery, and halted in Grand Halleux to wait for the remainder of the column to close in.

During the blackout drive, the Headquarters convoy had been delayed, because of the tremendous amount of traffic on the roads, and it was dawn before the column came into Stavelot. During the night German infantry had seized the high ground dominating the approaches into Stavelot, and as the Headquarters column of supply trucks and jeeps came down the long hill leading into the town, the enemy opened fire with machine gun, small arms, and mortars on the apparently defenseless convoy. But Battery "D" was immediately behind the Headquarters vehicles, and Captain Eaton quickly moved the firing tracks forward and opened fire on the machine gun nests on the far hill. For several minutes the M16's, with quadruple mounted machine guns, and the M15's pumping 37mm shells, raked the machine gun nests and set fire to the houses in which they were placed. Under this covering fire of Battery "D", the Headquarters column was able to withdraw without the loss of a man or vehicle. By this time German efforts were concentrated on blocking the escape route of Battery "D". Despite an intense mortar barrage which blanketed the road, Captain Eaton was able to effect an orderly withdrawal. A halftrack received a direct hit by a mortar shell and several men were injured, but the driver kept the vehicle rolling until it was out of range of enemy fire. Another halftrack received a hit and had to be abandoned. Medical personnel evacuated the wounded under fire, and were forced to abandon their trailer of medical equipment when enemy armor moved down the slope into the town. Meanwhile, Major Bradshaw, who accompanied the six Headquarters vehicles that were waiting in Grand Halleux, discovered that Stavelot was in enemy hands, and assumed command, setting up the Battalion Command Post in Salmchateau, Belgium. Despite



WHITE PAINT FOR HALF-TRACKS, PILLOW SLIPS FOR HELMETS, CAPTURED SNOW COATS FOR PERSONNEL — AND THEN THE SNOW MELTED

limited transportation, the small headquarters functioned smoothly, sending out gas, food and ammunition to the firing batteries in the area. Two days later the remainder of Headquarters Battery and Battery "D" arrived at Salmchateau after traveling a circuitous route through the rear areas.

Unable to dent the stubborn defense of the Seventh Armored Division around St. Vith, Von Rundstedt sent armor and infantry around the flanks and attacked Division Trains at La Roche. Battery "D" was placed under control of the Trains Commander, who ordered the establishment of a road block at the important road junction of the Houffalize-Liege highway, near Manhay, Belgium. After the road block was established by one platoon, the second platoon was placed into a defensive position around Samree.

These were anxious days! A heavy fog blanketed the area, hampering artillery operations and preventing the use of air power. Nazi SS troopers in American uniforms roamed the woods in the rear areas, and single vehicles and small patrols were ambushed in sight of their own command posts. German pressure increased on the front lines, and fanatical SS troops, armed with Panzerfausts, infiltrated through the American lines and attacked supply columns and ammunition trains. Huge Tiger Royal Tanks crashed out of the misty woods to smash into the American positions.

South of LaRoche, Battery "B" established a road block, and on the evening of December 19th, a German column, led by an American M8 scout car, approached the section. Recognition was difficult, but the road block tracks opened fire and were engaged by a Tiger tank which followed behind the leading vehicle. The Tiger Tank sent an 88 shell into the turret of the M15, killing one man and injuring five others. The Tiger then turned to the second halftrack which continued to fire until it too was knocked out by the heavily armed German vehicle. The German column made no attempt to force the position, but withdrew and sent out patrols to probe the defenses. After evacuating the wounded, the remaining men of the section were placed as infantry outposts until relieved by the Trains Commander.

The following morning German infantry and armor attacked Samree where the Division gasoline, ammunition, and food dumps

were located. Halftracks from Battery "D" and Battery "B" outposted the town and engaged the enemy at the beginning of the attack. One section of Battery "D" engaged two German Mark IV tanks and destroyed them by firing AP ammunition at a short range into the lightly armored sides of the tanks. When the crews attempted to escape from the burning tanks, the machine guns of the M16 mowed them down.

A section of Battery "B" engaged a group of infantry coming down a hill south of the town. The Nazi infantry was halted from the withering fire of the M16's, and the tracks held their positions until their ammunition was exhausted.

Perhaps the bitterest fighting was at the road junction held by five halftracks of Battery "D". On December 20th a German bicycle patrol of fifteen men came out of the fog and attacked the position. The road block opened fire and wiped out the entire force of Nazi cyclists. The following day the road block was reinforced by the arrival of three 105 field pieces of the 106th Infantry Division, and this tiny group was the object of an intense artillery and mortar barrage, which lifted only long enough for the German infantry to attack. The men took cover in foxholes during the barrages and rushed to their tracks when the infantry began to advance across the field, and though two tracks were knocked out by artillery fire, the German infantry was unable to dent the position. Ammunition ran low, and an ammunition train from Headquarters brought a new supply under cover of darkness. On the 22nd of December the road block was further reinforced by five tanks from the Third Armored Division, and a group of infantrymen from the 82nd Airborne Division. The following day, Nazi SS troopers made an all-out attack, and though the small garrison fought until their ammunition was exhausted, the position was overrun on the 23rd of December. Fourteen members of Battery "D" were able to infiltrate through the German lines and rejoin their organization, but three men were killed, fourteen men missing in action and five halftracks lost in this operation.

Increased pressure on the Division's front forced a withdrawal from St. Vith, and the Division, flanked on both sides, with supply lines cut at the rear, began an orderly retreat. Battery "A" and

Battery "C" stayed with Division Artillery and were among the last out of the Vielsalm area. The weather broke on 24 December, and for the first time since the German offense began on 16 December, Allied air power was able to strike a blow. Fortresses and Liberators bombed the rear areas, striking at troop concentrations and supply dumps, while Thunderbolts dive-bombed and strafed enemy position in the salient, and struck at convoy movements along the highways inside the bulge.

Christmas Eve found Battalion established in a chateau near Aywaille, while firing batteries continued to support elements of the Division, still in contact with the enemy. The German airforce came out in strength on Christmas Day, and Battery "C" engaged and downed a FW 190 which strafed their position.

The heroic stand of the Seventh Armored at St. Vith had won the admiration of the world! But the cost was high! Men and materiel had fallen by the wayside and the fighting efficiency of the Division weakened as a result. The Battalion had lost nine firing vehicles, as well as many men who held key positions and could not be easily replaced. The Division was pulled out of the line early in January and began regrouping and reorganizing for another combat assignment.

Within two weeks the Battalion had drawn sufficient personnel and equipment to bring it almost up to full strength, and when the Division moved to an attack position near Waimes, Battery "A" and Battery "D" were attached to the Artillery and Battery "C" went with Combat Command "R".

The Division was given the mission of re-taking St. Vith. The German Bulge had been hammered and smashed by Allied units, and though the fighting was bitter, and weather conditions difficult, the Germans had slowly withdrawn out of the Bulge.

As the Seventh Armored Division jumped off at Waimes, the snow and ice of the Belgium winter hampered operations. Roads were covered with ice, and snow drifts covered extensive fields of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. The old "bug-a-boo" of trench foot reared its ugly head, and an increasing number of men suffered

from frozen feet. Tracked and wheeled vehicles slithered along the roads, and passed with difficulty through the snow covered fields. But despite the handicap of adverse weather conditions, almost one month to the day from the time the Seventh Armored was forced to withdraw from St. Vith, tanks of the Seventh Armored routed the Germans from that vital road junction and triumphantly took possession of the town.

The Division withdrew to a rest area in the vicinity of Eupen, Belgium, and Battalion Headquarters was established at Hevremont. This was a period of rest and recuperation, and the men of the Battalion welcomed the chance to re-equip and re-group for the final assault on Germany which was to begin in the near future.

The Battle of the Bulge was over. It had been a tough fight — perhaps the toughest the Battalion had seen since being in combat — but now the Battalion looked ahead to the land beyond the Rhine!





## CENTRAL - EUROPE

By the end of January, the German salient in the Ardennes had been hammered flat, and the line was restored along the German border; but the cost in men and materiel was high, and the Seventh Armored Division, which had borne the brunt of the attack for five bitter days, moved to Eupen for a much needed rest while reorganizing and regrouping for future operations.



The Battalion was billeted in Hevremont during the rest period, and firing batteries were busy with maintenance of vehicles and equipment, as well as training the new reinforcements assigned to the Battalion.

The long delayed Roer offensive began in the middle of February, when the First and Ninth U. S. Armies jumped off across the Roer, and drove swiftly towards the Rhine. After the infantry broke

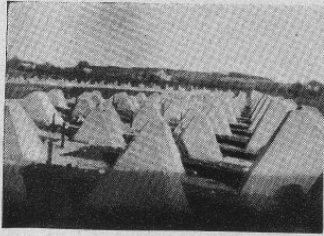
through the outer crust of the German defenses, armored spearheads raced across the plains, routing the Germans from fortified positions, and by the end of the month, Cologne and Dusseldorf were in American hands.

The Division moved out of the rest area early in March, and crossed into Germany through the broken Siegfried Line. Battery "A" and Battery "D" traveled with Division Artillery; Battery "C" was attached to Combat Command "A" and Battery "B" followed with Division Trains.

As the Division moved up to the Rhine, the news was flashed back that the Ninth Armored Division had seized the Ludendorff Bridge, which spanned the River at Remagen, and the First Army threw men and equipment into the first bridgehead across the Rhine, Battery "A", Battery "C", and Battery "D" were immediately detached from the Division by Corps order, and sent to supplement the antiaircraft defense of this vital installation.

Not since D-Day had any single area been such a high priority target for the Luftwaffe! For nine days German airmen tried desperately to destroy the bridge, using every available type of aircraft and means of attack. Focke-Wolfe 190's and Messerschmidt 109's swooped over the bridge on low level bombing missions; Junkers 87's came out of the clouds to dive-bomb the narrow span; and jet-propelled Arado 234's streaked through the sky on sneak raids over the area. It was like a firing range in a training camp, as enemy plane after enemy plane swept out of the distance to brave the concentration of antiaircraft fire and drop their bombs. Most of the enemy aircraft were brought down or diverted from the target before their bombs were dropped; others salvoed their bombs into the river while attempting evasive action; while some planes miraculously flew through the concentration of antiaircraft fire, and were hit while attempting to leave the area.

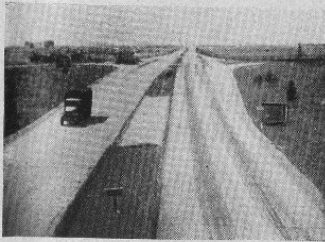
It was a happy hunting ground for the gun crews of the Battalion. For nine long months, through France, Belgium, and Holland, gun sections had stood alert by their guns, watching and waiting for the Luftwaffe to appear in the skies. But save for single plane raids, enemy air activity had been extremely light over the Battalion area. Now at last there were enemy planes in the sky; so many that the



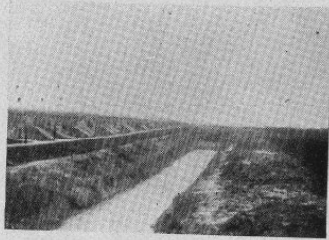
DRAGON'S TEETH THAT CANNOT BITE



BREAKING DOWN RATIONS



THE AUTOBAHN TO COLOGNE



A TANK TRAP



DAMN THE MUD!



'SOFTENED UP'

gunners could hardly keep ammunition in the machine guns, and observers were hard pressed in keeping track of the enemy planes making passes at the bridge. The operations section was snowed under with claims for enemy planes destroyed and ammunition expenditure reports. The final score of the operation resulted in claims for seventeen Category I's and six Categorys II's.

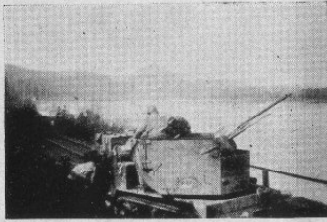
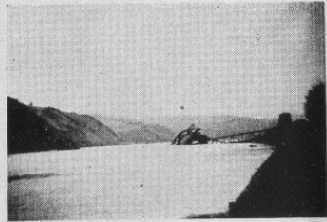
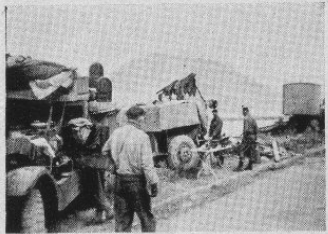
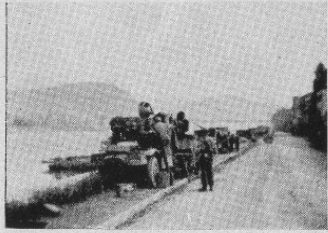
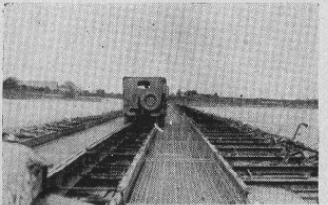
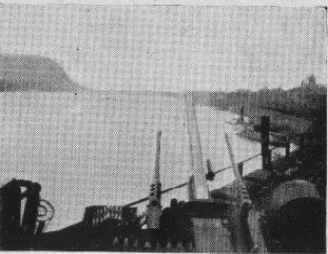
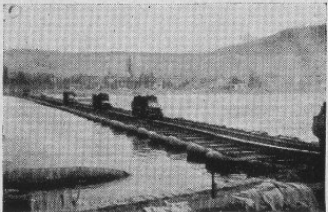
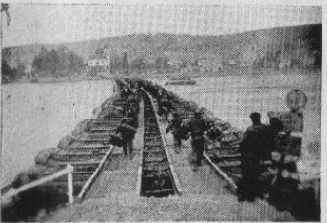
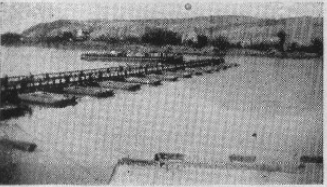
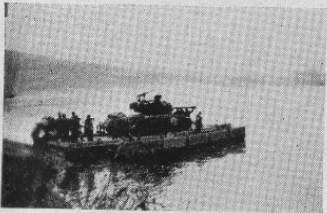
Meanwhile, German long range artillery blasted the area, causing nine casualties in the Battalion, and on March 18th the firing batteries were on the receiving end of two V-2 Rocket Bombs which caused considerable damage.

The Ludendorff Bridge collapsed on March 18th, but the batteries stayed in position along the river near Remagen, to protect the pontoon and Bailey bridges across the Rhine. Reverting to Division control, Battery "A" and Battery "B" were attached to Division Artillery; Battery "C" sent one platoon to Division Artillery and one platoon to Division Headquarters; and Battery "D" was attached to Division Trains.

Crossing the Rhine on March 25th, the Division went into attack position in the bridgehead area and prepared for an assault southeast down the Autobahn. The Combat Commands hit the super highway, and in a matter of hours reached their objective short of Limburg, where, on Corps order, the Division swung east towards the new objective of Geissen. Armored task forces set the pace, smashing through German defenses and town after town fell in the hands of the advancing tankers.

The front appeared to be crumbling, and burning German vehicles along the highway marked the route of advance. White flags flew from the houses in every German town, and the German people watched silently as the armored might of the Division spearheads rolled on to the east. Streams of prisoners cluttered the roads, and it was not uncommon to see large groups of German soldiers marching to the rear without escort or guard, looking for American prison cages. Scores of displaced personnel — French, Belgium, Poles, Russians and Hollanders — cheered the advancing American columns.

SCENE'S OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A  
BAILEY BRIDGE ACCROSS THE RHINE  
WHILE A "D" BATTERY M-15 COVERS THE  
ENGINEERS



PROTECTION OF THE REMAGEN AND BAILEY  
BRIDGES ON THE RHINE PROVIDED THE  
BATTALION WITH ITS BIGGEST SHOOT

The Battalion moved down the Division route close behind the Combat Commands, whose rapid advance kept the column continually on the move. It was reminiscent of the drive across France, as the Battalion moved across the Autobahn and passed through still burning German villages, stopping only to refuel and rest a few hours each day.

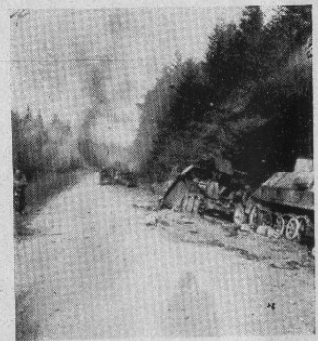
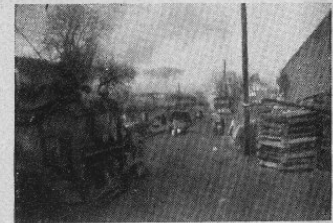
Task forces of armor and infantry drove towards Geissen, a city strongly defended by German artillery in prepared defensive positions. After a short but bitter struggle the city was captured, and over a thousand American prisoners of war, including men of the Seventh Armored Division captured at St. Vith, were liberated from a German prisoner of war camp located near Geissen.

While the Battalion was in bivouac on the outskirts of Heskin, Germany, a flight of Focke-Wolfe 190's came out of the east to attack Division installations. Battery "A", Battery "B", and Headquarters Battery engaged the enemy planes which were attempting to strafe the highway and bomb bivouac areas. The German pilots took evasive action in the face of this heavy concentration of anti-aircraft fire, and bombs were dropped outside the Division area. One plane was seen to burst into flames as it glided towards the enemy lines, and Battery "B" submitted a claim for one Category I and one Category II as a result of the action.

On the following day, armored spearheads rolled north towards the Edersee Dam. Task forces cleared mined roads, smashed road blocks, by-passed enemy strongpoints, and climaxed the sixty-mile drive by capturing the Edersee Dam intact.

There was a brief halt after this operation, as the Division assembled near Frankenau. Battery "D", was guarding the prisoner of war cage at Division Trains and thousands of prisoners were processed and sent to the rear. Each day combat commands gathered prisoners from the woods and fields in the area and prisoner of war figures for the Division mounted daily.

By the end of March the Ruhr Valley was isolated and a German army trapped in the packet. The Division was given the mission of attacking the pocket from the east, and Combat Commands made preparations to attack.



BATTLE OF THE RUHR POCKET. SCENES TAKEN DURING COMBAT BY MEN ON GUN SECTIONS. 1. SHOWS A V BOMB EXPLODING. THE MAN WHO TOOK THE PICTURE WAS KNOCKED DOWN BEFORE HE SNAPPED THE SCENE

The terrain was ill suited for armored operations; steep hills with narrow, winding roads, and thick forests on either side made it difficult for tanks. The Germans had an abundance of artillery and anti-tanks guns and fought desperately to stave off the inevitable defeat. Spring rains bogged the roads, and the infantry and artillery bore the brunt of the attack.

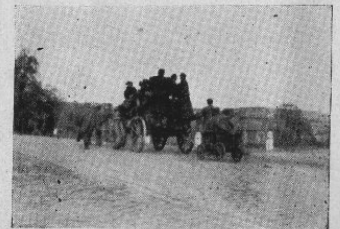
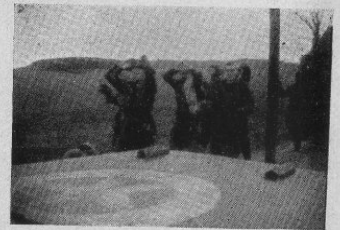
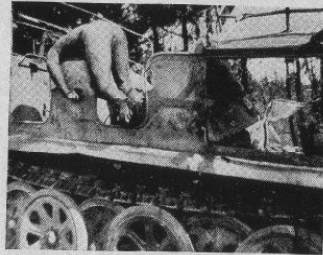
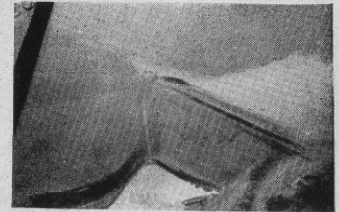
Battery "A", Battery "C", and Battery "D" were attached to Division Artillery for the drive into the pocket. Near Schmallerberg German counter-battery fire caused considerable damage and casualties to Battery "B" and Battery "C" as the artillery moved up in close support of the infantry. Task forces continued to drive west, and as Allied Armies applied pressure on all sides, resistance suddenly collapsed as armored spearheads captured the town of Menden on the 16th of April.

During the drive prisoners streamed into the Division cage which was guarded by halftracks of Battery "D", and spot estimates of the number of prisoners soared each day, so that soon halftracks of the Battalion were escorting huge convoys of prisoners to the rear. The climax was reached with the capture of a Nazi Army Corps of over ten thousand German soldiers.

With the closing of the Ruhr pocket, the Battalion moved to Leopoldhausen, and the firing batteries went into bivouac in the Division area. The strain of the past eight months was beginning to tell on all vehicles, and the Battalion was in sore need of maintenance and supply.

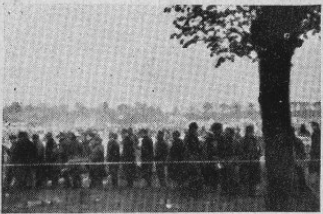
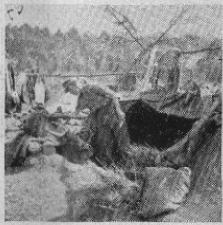
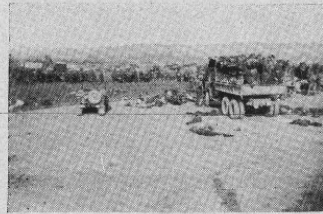
Meanwhile American Armies moved forward to the Elbe River, and in the south, armored spearheads crossed into Austria and Czechoslovakia. The Russians were fighting in Berlin and the linkup was expected momentarily. The sands of time for the Nazi state were running out!

After a brief rest the Battalion moved north into the British Second Army area and was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps for operations to the northeast. Battery "A" and Battery "B" moved out with Division Artillery; Battery "C" was attached to Division Headquarters and Battery "D" continued with Division Trains.



IN THE RUHR POCKET SOME WERE LUCKY AND SOME WERE NOT — THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS CHOSE TO SURRENDER — SOME CHOSE TO FIGHT ON. THE UPPER LEFT PHOTO SHOWS THE HEAVILY CONTESTED DAM AT SCHMIDT





THOUSANDS OF GERMAN SOLDIERS STREAM TO THE AMERICAN LINES TO SURRENDER. AFTER BEING COLLECTED THEY WERE PLACED IN CONCENTRATIONS GUARDED BY THE GUNS OF THE BATTALION

The 82nd Airborne Division established a bridgehead across the Elbe near Luneberg, and the Division moved across the River to drive towards the Baltic Sea. The Battalion crossed the Elbe and proceeded along the Division route to an assembly area near Wittenberg, while the firing batteries moved on towards the Baltic Sea with elements of the Division.

An incredible sight greeted the men of the Battalion as the halftracks rolled off the pontoon bridge. A convoy of German vehicles of all kinds, packed with German soldiers and civilians, stretched for miles along the highway. There were no guards, and the Nazi soldiers still carried their weapons and the sight of these thousands of German soldiers marching into surrender gave an indication that the end of the war was near. Trucks, halftracks, ambulances, horse-drawn wagons, motorcycles, and bicycles were used as a means of transportation by the Germans who came willingly to surrender to the Americans.

The Battalion moved with difficulty along the crowded highway to the assembly area, and on the following day moved out in convoy to the Baltic Sea. The war was virtually over in this sector, and the firing batteries established road blocks and check points along the highways to direct and collect prisoners of war who were roaming through the countryside attempting to surrender. There seemed to be no end to the number of Germans in the area, and the Division prisoner of war cage was filled to overflowing.

No one who saw this mass surrender of the German Army in the Baltic area could doubt that the war was near an end! Organized resistance on the British Second Army front had ceased, and though fighting continued in the south, the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany was expected momentarily.

The war officially ended on the 9th of May 1945, but to the men of the Battalion, the news was almost an anti-climax. For two weeks the Battalion had been established in Boizenberg, Germany, collecting prisoners of war, feeding and housing displaced per-

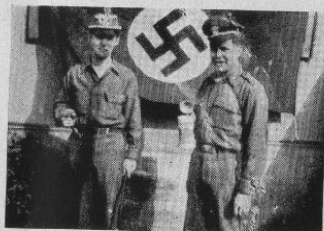
AFTER V-E DAY CAME THE TASK OF CLEANING UP AND RESTING



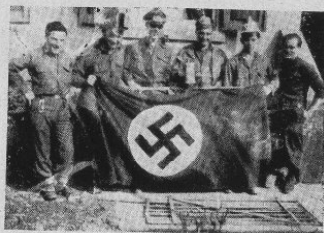
A FIELD INSPECTION



WASHING VEHICLES



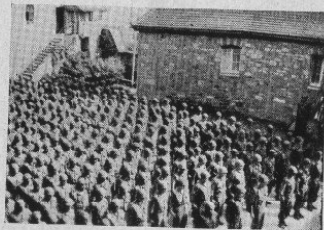
HORSE PLAY



THE CONQUERING HEROES



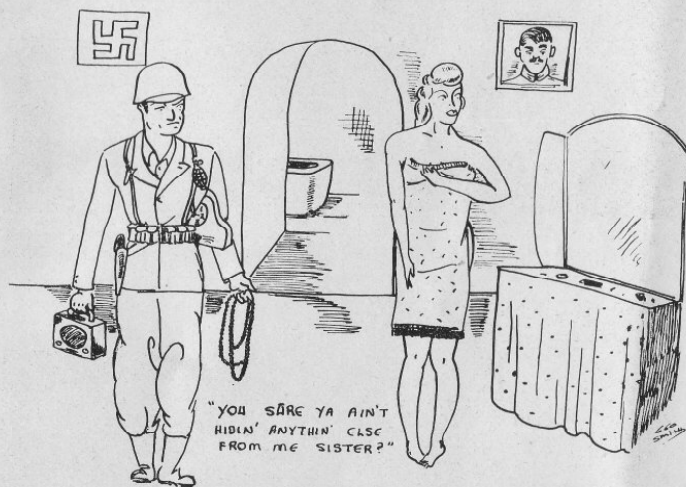
A MESS HALL, FIRST IN 13 MONTHS



MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE 30 MAY 45

sonnel, and administering to German communities, and the official announcement only served to confirm what was already a reality.

The Battalion had made a long trek from the sands of Utah Beach, through France, Belgium, and Germany, to the shore of the Baltic Sea. There were many memories of the past as the men of the Battalion relaxed, and felt the comfortable relief of a hard job well done. But even as the men relaxed, there was uncertainty in their minds. Germany was defeated, but there was always the Far East. And so the men waited and wondered where the trail might lead.





OLD GLORY — LONG MAY SHE WAVE

## MEMORIUM

TO THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMAND  
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT  
AND IN TRAINING

Denis K. La Paille	Louisville, Kentucky
Edward Kasmarski	Port Chester, New York
Charles R. McKinney	Spruce Pine, North Carolina
Michael L. Manzillo	Brooklyn, New York
Gabriel C. Gonzales	San Elizario, Texas
Egidio G. Prior	Bronx, New York
Joseph J. Kabala	Yonkers, New York
Charles F. Adams Jr.	Fairmont, West Virginia
Walter F. Brown Jr.	Tipp City, Ohio
Leo G. Berube	Woonsocket, Rhode Island
Vernon I. Ray	Galveston, Texas
Charles A. Reed	St. Albans, Long Island, N. Y.
Ira G. Cooke	laeger, West Virginia
Thomas J. Mahoney	Dorchester, Mass
Louis Vroble	South Fork, Pennsylvania
Robert L. Weissenberger	Maumee, Ohio
Nick Fizef	Girard, Ohio

THE FOLLOWING MEN  
OF THIS COMMAND ARE MISSING  
IN ACTION

Vernon L. Bigness	Waterlown, New York
Asa B. Golden	Pittsfield, Mass.

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THE FOLLOWING MEN  
HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISONER  
OF WAR CAMPS

George Botu	Indianapolis, Indiana
Bud W. Christian	Hensley, West Virginia
Byron J. Ellis	Providence, Rhode Island
Bobbie T. Harrington	Toledo, Ohio
Herry Kurta	Bronx, New York
Thomas Martin	New York, N. Y.
Edward J. Schellmann	Port Chester, New York
Arthur J. Veve	Cohoes, New York
Elray Weidman Jr.	New Holland, Pennsylvania

## AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



### SILVER STAR MEDAL

*Sgt. Leonard R. Brohman*  
*Sgt. Rhinold R. Mruzinsky*      *Cpl. Joseph M. Goncalves*  
*T/5 Edmund L. Jones*      *T/5 George Botu*  
    *T/5 Kenneth F. Wood*  
    *P. F. C. Charles H. Ostermeyer*



### BRONZE STAR MEDAL

<i>Major Clyde W. Bradshaw</i>	<i>1st Lt. Charles R. Horton</i>
<i>Capt. Norton M. Bedford</i>	<i>1st Lt. Lawrence R. Laughlin</i>
<i>Capt. Henry A. Eaton</i>	<i>1st Lt. Clayton G. Lovell</i>
<i>Capt. Robert A. Reid</i>	<i>1st Lt. Richard C. Pinegar</i>
<i>Capt. Philip D. Sunseri</i>	<i>1st Lt. Oliver H. Stafford</i>
<i>Capt. Frederick Ward Jr.</i>	<i>1st Lt. Leroy Webb</i>
<i>Capt. Benjamin C. Watkins</i>	<i>1st Lt. Donald H. Weeks</i>
<i>Capt. Leonhard A. Zerull</i>	<i>1st Lt. Lawrence W. Zetzman</i>
<i>1st Lt. Jerome L. Aleff</i>	<i>2nd Lt. Albert J. Bepersi</i>
<i>1st Lt. Calvin P. Bigelow</i>	<i>CWO. Orlando J. Pulzone</i>
<i>1st Lt. James M. Brantley</i>	<i>M/Sgt. Fred E. Johnston</i>
<i>1st Lt. Rainsford E. Colbath</i>	<i>1st Sgt. Theodore C. Tewes</i>
<i>1st Lt. Donato J. Curcio</i>	<i>T/Sgt. Albert R. Anderson</i>
<i>1st Lt. Harry Hanzlik</i>	<i>T/Sgt. James R. Carlin</i>

<i>T/Sgt. Lawrence E. Lape</i>	<i>Sgt. Joseph P. Janostak</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Raymond H. Ayres</i>	<i>Sgt. Gerald E. Nicol</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Thomas J. Bass Jr.</i>	<i>Sgt. Robert J. Ouellette</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Wilbur H. Brooks</i>	<i>T/4 Frederick J. Allen Jr.</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Johnnie W. Brumpton</i>	<i>T/4 Donald M. Ashton</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Francis J. Carr</i>	<i>T/4 Gerald F. Malin</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Clayton A. Danielson</i>	<i>T/4 John W. Ruth</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Bernard J. Fallon</i>	<i>Cpl. Elwood R. Brant</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Royce V. Jennings</i>	<i>Cpl. Lawrence H. Hamilton</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Joseph H. Klecak</i>	<i>Cpl. Levi J. Kiger</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Steve Pesyk</i>	<i>Cpl. Ambrose A. Mc Kellick</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Forrest H. Zirkle</i>	<i>Cpl. Joseph J. Pretti</i>
<i>T/3 Michael Mikula</i>	<i>Cpl. Harold A. Rail</i>
<i>Sgt. Mitchell E. Bilodeau</i>	<i>T/5 Bernard J. Connolly</i>
<i>Sgt. Jesse C. Cardoza</i>	<i>T/5 Jesse A. Cook</i>
<i>Sgt. Thomas W. Cochran</i>	<i>T/5 Walter B. Kinkaid</i>
<i>Sgt. Frank P. Collura</i>	<i>T/5 Wilbur F. Rhode</i>
<i>Sgt. Norton D. Cox</i>	<i>T/5 Paul W. Ringlehan</i>
<i>Sgt. Byron J. Ellis</i>	<i>T/5 Verl. Swonger</i>
<i>Sgt. Leonard J. Falco</i>	<i>Pfc. Billy J. Napier</i>
<i>Sgt. Arthur B. Farmer</i>	<i>Pfc. Ignagio Messana</i>
<i>Sgt. Joseph G. Gosztyla</i>	<i>Pfc. Edmund F. Rutkowski</i>



## PURPLE HEART AWARD

<i>Capt. Philip D. Sunseri</i>	<i>T/5 Michael Narolis</i>
<i>1st Lt. Richard C. Pinegar</i>	<i>T/5 Henry I. Poulin</i>
<i>1st Lt. William K. Richardson</i>	<i>T/5 Romeo St. Jean</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Raymond H. Ayres</i>	<i>T/5 Ralph J. Veltri</i>
<i>S/Sgt. Charles F. McCarthy</i>	<i>T/5 John J. Walsh</i>
<i>S/Sgt. James C. Sanford</i>	<i>T/5 John F. Ward</i>
<i>Sgt. Leonard R. Brohman</i>	<i>Pfc. Charles E. Banks</i>
<i>Sgt. James R. Buxton</i>	<i>Pfc. Joseph C. Baumann</i>
<i>Sgt. Arthur B. Farmer</i>	<i>Pfc. Joseph A. Becker</i>
<i>Sgt. Ercel S. Grafton</i>	<i>Pfc. Albion E. Gilman</i>
<i>Sgt. William F. Leck</i>	<i>Pfc. Frederick S. Hammer</i>
<i>Sgt. Rhinold R. Mruzinsky</i>	<i>Pfc. Alva M. Henderson</i>
<i>Sgt. John H. Weaver</i>	<i>Pfc. Richard D. Ilg</i>
<i>Sgt. Sylvester H. Trader</i>	<i>Pfc. William Kaczowka</i>
<i>T/4 Edward V. Cross</i>	<i>Pfc. Lloyd Lynch</i>
<i>T/4 Frederick G. McDaniel</i>	<i>Pfc. Ramon O. Miranda</i>
<i>Cpl. Elwood R. Brant</i>	<i>Pfc. Silvio J. Perazzo</i>
<i>Cpl. Clayton Clay</i>	<i>Pfc. Robert C. Smith</i>
<i>Cpl. Lawrence H. Hamilton</i>	<i>Pfc. Floyd H. Stewart</i>
<i>Cpl. Bobbie T. Harrington</i>	<i>Pfc. Joseph J. Taormina</i>
<i>Cpl. Charles J. Hastedt</i>	<i>Pfc. Rudolph R. Yacovoni</i>
<i>Cpl. Joseph J. Pretti</i>	<i>Pvt. Lacy R. Dalton</i>
<i>Cpl. Willie Shadwick</i>	<i>Pvt. William A. Hajosy</i>
<i>Cpl. Harold A. Rail</i>	<i>Pvt. William Hale Jr.</i>
<i>Cpl. Alfred M. Tucci</i>	<i>Pvt. Clarence Lesh</i>
<i>T/5 Anthony Corey</i>	<i>Pvt. Harold S. Malone</i>
<i>T/5 Ferrer F. Goffi</i>	<i>Pvt. Ernest R. Mansfield</i>
<i>T/5 Robert W. Hayes</i>	<i>Pvt. Jimmie E. Perez</i>
<i>T/5 Harry Kowal</i>	<i>Pvt. Alfred T. Ward</i>
<i>T/5 Harold L. May</i>	<i>Pvt. James L. Wentworth</i>

## OPERATIONS OF 203RD AAA AW BN (SP) IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE

(D-DAY PLUS 20 TO V-EDAY)

### 1. GENERAL

- a) The 203rd spent a total of 308 days of combat on assigned missions out of a possible 318 combat days (97%) from 26 June 1944 to 090001B May 1945, as only 10 days were spent in a rest area. The former date was the first taste of combat for this Battalion, and the latter the date for the cessation of hostilities in Europe. The Battalion landed at Utah Beach, France on the Cherbourg Peninsula, the 26th of June 1944.
- b) Over the entire combat period there were many days which were occupied by marches to assembly areas, zones of occupation and other sectors within Army areas, but during which the Battalion was on constant alert to repel air attacks.

### 2. LIST OF EVENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER:

- 26 June 1944:* Debarkation on Utah Beach, France.
- 27 June — 10 August 1944:* AA defense of Cherbourg.
- 10 August — 25 September 1944:* Drive across France to Metz. Assigned to Third United States Army, XX Corps.
- 26—27 September 1944:* March to Defensive positions Vic Eysden, Belgium, from Vic Sponville, France. Assigned to Ninth United States Army, XIX Corps.
- 29 September 1944:* March to defensive positions Vic Vlierden, Holland.
- 30 September — 08 November 1944:* Operations in Holland. Assigned Second British Army, British VIII Corps 8 October 1944.
- 09 November 1944:* March from Vic Marheeze, Holland to defensive positions Vic St. Geertruid, Holland.
- 10 November — 16 December 1944:* In position Vic St. Geertruid, Holland and W. Heerlen, Holland. Assigned Ninth United States Army, XIII Corps.

16—18 December 1944: March from Vic Aachen, Germany to St. Vith, Belgium.

17—30 December 1944: Stand at St. Vith and withdrawal to Vic St. Roch, Belgium. Assigned First United States Army, VIII Corps 18 December 1944; XVIII Corps Airborne, 20 December 1944.

30 December 1944 — 19 January 1945: Defensive positions Vic St. Roch, Belgium.

20—29 January 1945: Ardennes Offensive and resulting in the recapture of St. Vith.

29—30 January 1945: March from St. Vith, Belgium to Vic Eupen, Belgium.

30 January — 28 February 1945: Defensive positions Vic Eupen, Belgium.

02—06 March 1945: Remained Vic Simmerath, Germany, prepared to move on V Corps order.

07—08 March 1945: March to Vic Zulpich, Germany from Vic Simmerath, Germany. Atchd. III Corps 07 March 1945.

08—09 March 1945: Clearing area W of Rhine between Zulpich and Bad Godesburg, Germany.

10—22 March 1945: Defensive positions around Remagen Bridge.

12—14 March 1945: Heaviest enemy air activity (Remagen bridge defense), 19 enemy aircraft claimed destroyed.

23—25 March 1945: March across Rhine River and movement to assembly positions in Remagen bridgehead.

26—30 March 1945: Breakthrough from Remagen bridgehead.

31 March — 4 April 1945: Defensive positions Eder See Dam.

05—16 April 1945: Operations against Ruhr Pocket.

17—18 April 1945: Movement to Vic Gottingen, Germany from Ruhr Pocket.

19—28 April 1945: Assembled Vic Gottingen, Germany — Kassel, Germany in defensive positions. Div. in Shaef Reserve, AZchd V Corps. Div. released from attachment to V Corps and re-

verted to control First United States Army 22 April 1945, remaining in Shaef Reserve. Division atchd. XVIII Corps (Airborne) 25 April 1945, under control 21st Army Group for operations, under control Ninth United States Army for administration and supply.

29—30 April 1945: March to defensive positions Vic Celle — Uelzen, Germany from Kassel — Gottingen area.

01 May 1945: Battalion in defensive positions Vic Celle — Uelzen, Germany.

02 May 1945: March to defensive positions N Elbe River Vic Vellehan, Germany.

03 May 1945: Attack N from Elbe bridgehead to Baltic Sea.

04—09 May 1945: Occupation of general area from Elbe River to Baltic Sea between Schonberg on W and Grevesmühlen on E. Processing PWs captured and enforcing civilian control.

**HEADQUARTERS UNDER WHICH 203RD AAA  
AW BN (SP) HAS OPERATED DURING THE PERIOD  
26 JUNE 1944 — 09 MAY 1945**

*SHAEF* 18--22 April 1945: Atchd. V Corps in Shaef Reserve. 22 --25 April 1945: Detached from V Corps, reverted to First United States Army control, remaining in Shaef Reserve.

*21st Army Group* 25 April -- 09 May 1945: Atchd. XVIII Corps (Airborne), Asgd. 21st Army Group for operations, under Ninth United States Army for Adm. and Supply.

*Third United States Army* 11 August--25 September 1944.  
*Ninth United States Army* 08 November -- 17 December 1944.

*First United States Army* 26 June -- 10 August 1944; 26 September -- 07 October 1944; 17 December 1944 -- 17 April 1945; 22--25 April 1945.

*Second British Army* 08 October -- 07 Novemb. 1944.

*XII Corps* 10 August 1944.

*XX Corps (112th AAA Group)* 11 August -- 25 September 1944.

*XIX Corps (12th AAA Group)* 26 September -- 07 October 1944.

*VIII Corps (Br) (12th AAA Group)* 08 October--07 November 1944.

*XIII Corps (19th AAA Group)* 08 November -- 16 December 1944.

*VIII Corps (113th AAA Group)* 17--20 December 1944.

*XVIII Corps (ABN) (11th AAA Group)* 20 December 1944 -- 29 January 1945; 25 April--09 May 1945.

*V Corps (115th AAA Group)* 30 January -- 06 March 1945; 18 -- 22 April 1945.

*III Corps (16th AAA Group)* 07 March -- 17 April 1945.

*7th Armored Division* 10 August 1944--09 May 1945.

*47th AAA Brigade* 26th June -- 10 August 1944.

*108th AAA Group* 26 June -- 1 July 1944.

*92nd AAA Group* 2 July -- 10 August 1944.

During this period the 203rd AAA AW Bn (SP) was under control of Shaef, 21st Army Group, four (4) Armies, nine (9) Corps, one (1) Division, one (1) Brigade, and nine (9) AAA Groups.



# ROSTER OF OFFICERS

(AS OF V-E DAY)

## BATTALION STAFF

Lt. Col. George C. McFarlin  
Commanding

Maj. Clyde W. Bradshaw  
Executive Officer

Capt. Frederick Ward Jr.  
S-2

Capt. Vernon W. Nickerson  
S-4

Capt. Joseph C. O'Neill  
Chaplain

1st Lt. E. P. Alworth  
S-1

Capt. Robert A. Reid  
Ass't. S-3

Capt. Henry A. Eaton  
S-3

1st Lt. Lawrence W. Zetzman  
Liaison Officer

## MEDICAL DETACHMENT

Capt. Autino Fiore  
Medical Officer

1st Lt. Edgar L. Colton  
Ass't. Medical Officer

Capt. Philip D. Sunseri  
Dental Officer

## HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

Capt. Norton M. Bedford  
Commanding Officer

Wojg. Zacheus M. Stanaland  
Ass't. S-1

Cwo. Orlando J. Pulzone  
Ass't. S-4

1st Lt. Donato J. Curcio  
Mot. Transportation Officer

## BATTERY "A"

Capt. Leonard A. Zerull  
Commanding Officer

1st Lt. Edward N. Gilbert  
Executive Officer

2nd Platoon

1st Lt. Rainsford E. Colbath  
Platoon Commander

1st Lt. James M. Brakebill  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

1st Platoon

1st Lt. Donald H. Weeks  
Platoon Commander

2nd Lt. Albert J. Beperski  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

## BATTERY "B"

Capt. Benjamin C. Watkins  
Commanding Officer

1st Lt. Leroy Webb  
Executive Officer

2nd Platoon

1st Lt. Oliver H. Stafford  
Platoon Commander

1st Lt. Richard C. Pinegar  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

1st Platoon

1st Lt. Lawrence R. Laughlin  
Platoon Commander

1st Lt. Keith P. Moore  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

## BATTERY "C"

Capt. Farrell Johnson Jr.  
Commanding Officer

1st Lt. Charles R. Horton  
Executive Officer

2nd Platoon

1st Lt. Eugene C. Owen  
Platoon Commander

1st Platoon

1st Lt. James M. Brantley  
Platoon Commander

2nd Lt. Winfield D. Buzby  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

## BATTERY "D"

1st Lt. Harry Hanzlik  
Commanding Officer

2nd Platoon

1st Lt. Jerome L. Aleff  
Platoon Commander

1st Lt. Calvin P. Bigelow  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

1st Platoon

1st Lt. Clayton G. Lovell  
Platoon Commander

1st Lt. Robert M. Sullivan  
Ass't. Platoon Commander

# THE RECKONING

In its primary role, that of protecting friendly troops and installations from enemy aircraft the Battalion has:

*Been attacked . . . . . 126 times*  
*Engaged . . . . . 204 enemy aircraft*  
*Claimed Destroyed or Damaged . 45 enemy aircraft*

By being at the right place at the right time no damage has been done to any installation or troop concentration under Battalion protection.

In the secondary role, of engaging ground troops, guns, and vehicles, the Battalion has the following score:

enemy		Battalion
6 . . . .	Vehicles Destroyed . . . .	2
2 . . . .	Tanks Destroyed . . . . .	
5 . . . .	Guns . . . . .	8
286 . . .	Killed . . . . .	11
341 . . .	Wounded . . . . .	60
12,624 . .	Captured . . . . .	11

A few Statistics:

*Miles Traveled . . . . . 2400*  
*Ammunition Expended . Cal. 50 Machine Gun. 662,350*  
*37 MM. Machine Gun. 21,140*

The Battalion removed 95 enemy mines without a casualty

While the Battalion was never given the mission of shooting down Flying Bombs, it was subjected to 175 V-1 attacks and 25 V-2 attacks.

The rapid rate of fire of the Battalion's Weapons may be realized by the following table based on all guns firing simultaneously:

<i>Cal. 50 Machine Gun . . . . .</i>	<i>110,000 Rounds per minute</i>	<i>7 Tons</i>
<i>37 MM. . . . .</i>	<i>3,840 Rounds per minute</i>	<i>3 Tons</i>
	<i>113,840 Rounds per minute</i>	<i>10 Tons</i>

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Publicity and Psychological Warfare Detachment  
Twelfth Army Group

**OPERATIONS**  
 203 AAA  
 June 26/44 to May 45  
 Combat → Convoy →

