

UNCLASSIFIED

AAR# 457 R

847.17

AFTER ACTION REPORT

636TH TD BATTALION

Sept.
~~October~~ 1943 thru *Sept* ~~July~~ 1944, Dec 44

Classification cancelled or changed to
by authority of ~~DAD DIR 5200.9~~, by
on....., 19.....

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JOHN L. GRANT
Captain, Armor
Ch. Sect & Det Branch

9 JUN 1959

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847.17
636TH TD
1015

24 September 1943
APC 306

REPORT OF COMBAT, 636th TD Battalion
Operation - Avalanche
Period Sept 1, 1943 to 0800 Sept 20, 1943.

CALENDAR EVENTS:

September 1: At 0030 hours the S-1 was ordered to report to Headquarters Sixth Corps Staging Area and there receive orders for embarkation that morning. Details to ride the Hugh Williamson and David Caldwell were to entruck at 0630, those riding the James Woodrow were to entruck at 0915, and those riding the Duchess of Bedford entruck at 1130. The Battalion was loaded in that manner on the morning of September 1, 1943 and that afternoon moved out into the Gulf of Oran to await the loading of the remainder of the convoy.

September 2: The Battalion layed at anchor in the Gulf of Oran.

September 3: The convoy left the Gulf of Oran at 1515 hours proceeding eastward along the north coast of Africa.

September 6: The convoy arrived at the harbor of Bizerte, Tunisia at 1200 hours. During a forty-five minute attack by enemy planes starting at 2100 hours three men were wounded necessitating their evacuation.

September 9: The convoy left the harbor of Bizerte at 1200 hours.

September 10: At 0820 hours depth charges were dropped by one of the British Corvettes off our starboard bow. Later it was reported that one German submarine had been sunk. At dusk on the same day, a Corvette and two destroyers dropped fourteen depth charges about 1000 yards to our starboard. No report of results was received.

September 11: At 0900 hours our convoy approached the Gulf of Salerno and at 0930 hours there was an enemy air attack during which an American cruiser was hit and damaged. There were repeated air attacks during the day and night.

September 12: The air attacks continued. About half the Battalion succeeded in debarking on the beach at Paestum and moved into an assembly area about five miles from the beach ((86.7-08.0) Sheet 2094 Map 1:50,000). At 1000 the Battalion Commander received orders to make a reconnaissance for our first combat mission and the reconnaissance was completed that afternoon.

September 13: At 0700 the Battalion Commander formed a provisional company composed of twelve M-10's to carry out plans made during the previous night. At 2130 the Battalion Commander and the S-3 left the assembly area and moved with twelve destroyers to the combat area. The Battalion was notified at 1530 that a tank attack was expected south of Persano at the junction of the Calore River and F. La Cosa Creek and appropriate positions were taken. At 1930 the ranger platoon reconnoitered and occupied positions on the bank of F. La Cosa Creek. Sgt Garland G. Humphrey of Company B was killed at 2000 by bomb fragments during and air raid and Pvt Joseph D. Ventresca, Company B, was seriously wounded by strafing. During the 13th the ships continued to unload and twelve more destroyers were ready for action by the following morning.

September 14: At 0030 the Battalion Commander was apprised of a dangerous situation and the twelve M-10's which were received from the ships the previous day were assigned a sector about 1500 yards in width and at 0130 they were guided to their positions. During most of the day the Battalion was under considerable artillery fire and some small arms fire. Company B knocked out seven tanks during the day and Company C destroyed seven tanks. Company C also destroyed one ammunition vehicle. Pvt 1 cl Salvatore V. Vinci, Company C, was killed. Ten destroyers from various companies which had been unloaded from the ships were given the mission of guarding the Fifth Army Headquarters.

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September 15: The Battalion was engaged in the positions selected the previous day with ~~the enemy~~ ~~Company~~ to the front. A number of enemy tanks were reported to be opposite our position across the F. La Cosa Creek and the Battalion fired indirect fire for a considerable period. Our forward observers reported a direct hit on one of the enemy tanks which burst into flames. Artillery fire continued to fall on our positions throughout the day.

September 16: The enemy shelling of our positions continued and Company B fired an indirect fire mission on Persano. During the afternoon a B Company destroyer was struck by enemy fire and began to burn. The fire was extinguished by the Platoon Commander and the Platoon Sergeant before any serious damage resulted and the destroyer was put back in action in a short time.

September 17: At 0100 our intelligence reported a dawn attack by the enemy was imminent. All destroyer crews were alerted and plans made to mass fire on the enemy. Our destroyers were to coordinate their fire with that of the 645th TD Bn. The anticipated attack by the enemy was never launched.

September 18: During the morning of September 18th patrol activity continued by our Reconnaissance Company and the Battalion fired some indirect fire missions with the targets in and near Persano. That afternoon the Battalion Commander led certain elements of the Reconnaissance Company into Altavilla, on a reconnaissance mission for the Division Commander. No enemy resistance was met and the Battalion Commander reported to the Division Commander that it was safe to move troops into the town. Two German Prisoners were taken by our Reconnaissance Company.

September 19: On the morning of September 19th the Battalion Commander led elements of the Reconnaissance Company on a reconnaissance of the area in and around Persano. No enemy resistance was found in this area and the Division Commander was notified that troops could safely be moved up to that area. During the night of September 19th and 20th six destroyers of Company C were moved to positions back of the 141st Infantry to support them. (see overlay)

September 20: At 0100 Company C was assigned to Fifth Army as security for the Fifth Army Headquarters and the remainder of the Battalion was detached from the 36th Division and assigned as Corps troops in Corps reserve.

MAP REFERENCE: Italy, 1:50,000.

Attached Annexes:

1. Overlay of positions.
2. Copy of Unit Journal.
3. Personnel casualties during period of battle.
4. Vehicular casualties during period of battle.
5. Enemy casualties caused by 636th TD Bn during period of battle.
6. Recommendations for awards.

For the Battalion Commander:

REAGAN L. DUNCOSE
Captain, Infantry
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

Reagan L. Duncose
REAGAN L. DUNCOSE
Captain, Infantry
Adjutant

SECRET

ANNEX NO. 3

CASUALTY REPORT

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

6 September 1943

WOUNDED

M Sgt Robert H. Hamilton, 20814478, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT

21 September 1943

WOUNDED

Pvt Raymond M. Rand, 32397184, - Seriously wounded by mine explosion.

COMPANY "A"

6 September 1943

WOUNDED

Techn 4th Gr Henry (MEM) Royuk, 37146944, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel in right leg.

Techn 5th Gr Charles W. Trumbo, 15116060, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel in right leg.

14 September 1943

Sgt Roy A. Adams, 38038261, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

Techn 4th Gr Lynn E. Mills, 20816090, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

Pvt 1 cl Frank (MEM) Pesiba, 37145583, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

COMPANY "B"

13 September 1943

KILLED

Sgt Garland G. Humphrey, 38037442, - Shrapnel from enemy bomb.

18 September 1943

WOUNDED

Pvt Joseph D. Ventresca, 31257416, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel in left foot.

19 September 1943

Pvt Louis (MEM) Filoteo, 38024388, - Slightly wounded in chest by vehicle while in foxhole.

COMPANY "C"

14 September 1943

KILLED

Techn 5th Gr George A. Polter, 38033803, - Killed by shrapnel.

Pvt 1 cl Salvatore T. Vinci, 34209832, - Killed by enemy strafing from the air.

15 September 1943

WOUNDED

Pvt 1 cl Earl A. Ferguson, 38504236, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

15 September 1943

WOUNDED

Sgt Sgt Raymond C. Murphy, 10602898, - Slightly wounded in vehicle accident.

Pvt 1 cl Francis A. Murphy, 32379030, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

16 September 1943

Sgt William A. Jones, 38025058, - Slightly wounded by shrapnel.

ANNEX NO. 3

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ANNEX NO. 4

~~SECRET~~

VEHICLE CASUALTY REPORT

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>VEHICLE</u>	<u>TROUBLE</u>	<u>WHERE REPAIRED</u>	<u>BACK TO DUTY</u>
9/13/43	B	M-10	Track Thrown	Battalion Maintenance	9/13/43
9/13/43	B	M-10	Track Thrown	Battalion Maintenance	9/15/43
9/14/43	Hq	Half-Track	Track Thrown	Under Fire	9/14/43
9/14/43	C	M-10	Escape Hatch Blown	Under Fire	9/16/43
9/14/43	Hq	3/4 Weapons Carrier	Burned	Replaced	9/15/43
9/15/43	C	M-10	Escape Hatch Blown	Battalion Maintenance	9/16/43
9/15/43	Hq	2 1/2 Ton	Broken Axle	756th Ordnance	9/16/43
9/16/43	O	M-10	Damaged by shell fire	Battalion Maintenance	9/17/43
9/17/43	C	M-10	Motor Trouble	Battalion Maintenance	9/18/43

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ANNEX NO. 5

DAMAGE TO

DATE

COMPANY

9/14/43

B

Destroyed seven Mark IV Tanks

9/14/43

C

Destroyed seven Mark IV Tanks
Destroyed 1 Ammunition Vehicle

9/15/43

B

Destroyed 1 Mark IV Tank

ANNEX NO. 5

HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army

24 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474, U.S. Army. (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named **enlisted** man: EDWIN A. YOST, 37146627, Sergeant, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion
2. During the day of September 14, 1943, Sergeant Yost, destroyer commander, moved his destroyer to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position, the tank destroyer crew destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. In so doing, a grave menace to the safety of American troops was removed. Sergeant Yost's quick thinking and speedy action in causing the tank destroyer to be moved into the open in the face of such odds was a display of courage and determination and was an inspiration to the men under his command. His actions reflect the finest traditions of the Armed Forces and were above and beyond the call of duty.
3. Sergeant Yost, at the time of the action described, was a tank destroyer commander, 2nd Platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The undersigned was present during the action described and certifies that he was an eye witness to the heroic accomplishment.
4. Sergeant Yost is at present tank destroyer commander, in the 2nd Platoon, Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.
5. Sergeant Yost's entire service from the time he was inducted into Federal Service, February 24, 1942, to the present time, has been honorable. Present address, and address at the time of induction; Gorman, Kansas.

VAN W. PHILLARD
Lt. Col, Infantry
Commanding

[REDACTED]

HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army

24 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474, U. S. Army. (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: ALVIN B.Q. JOHNSON, 20805648, Technician 5th Grade, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.
2. During the day of September 14, 1943, Technician 5th Grade Johnson, ginner in a tank destroyer, assisted in moving his destroyer to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position he destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. In so doing a grave menace to the safety of American troops was removed. His quick thinking and speedy action in destroying the enemy tanks was a display of courage and determination that reflects the finest traditions of the Armed Forces, and were above and beyond the call of duty.
3. Technician 5th Grade Johnson, at the time of the action described was assigned as gunner in a tank destroyer of the 2nd Platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.
4. Technician 5th Grade Johnson, is at present assigned as gunner in Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.
5. Technician 5th Grade Johnson's entire service from the time he was inducted into the Federal Service with the Texas National Guard, November 25, 1940 to the present time, has been honorable. Present home address, and address at the time of induction: Route #2, Granbury, Texas.

VAN W. PYLAND
Lt. Col, Infantry
Commanding

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**HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army**

21 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474, U. S. Army (Thru Channel)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: JOSE H R. O'BRYAN, 35484531, Private 1st, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. During the day of September 11, 1943, Private 1st O'Bryan, driver of a tank destroyer, caused his destroyer to be moved to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position the tank destroyer crew destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. Private 1st O'Bryan's quick thinking and speedy action in causing the tank destroyer to be moved in the open in the face of such odds, was display of courage and determination which reflect the finest traditions of the Armed Forces and were above and beyond the call of duty.

3. Private 1st O'Bryan at the time of action described, was a driver of a tank destroyer, of the 2nd Platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

4. Private 1st O'Bryan is at present a driver of a tank destroyer in Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

5. Private 1st O'Bryan's entire service from the time he was inducted into the Federal Service on July 15, 1942, to the present time, has been honorable. Present address and address at time of induction: Route #1, New Haven, Kentucky.

COPY

VAN W. PYLAND
Lt. Col, Infantry
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. ARMY

24 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474, U.S. Army (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: CLAUDE H. STOKES, 38463151, Private, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. During the day of September 14, 1943, private Stokes, assistant gunner in a tank destroyer, assisted in moving the destroyer to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position the tank destroyer crew destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. In so doing, a grave menace to the safety of American troops was removed. Private Stokes's quick thinking and speedy action in causing the tank destroyer to be moved into the open in the face of such odds was display of courage and determination which reflects the finest traditions of the Armed Forces and were above and beyond the call of duty.

3. Private Stokes is at present an assistant gunner in a tank destroyer in the second platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

4. At the time of the action described, private Stokes, was assigned as assistant gunner in the 2nd platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

5. Private Stokes's entire service from the time he was inducted into the Federal Service January 14, 1943, to the present time, has been honorable. His home address at present and at time of induction: Route #1, McAlester, Oklahoma.

VAN S. PYLAND
Lt. Col, Infantry
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army

24 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #174, U.S. Army (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: CLYDE T. STOKES, 32463140, Private, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. During the day of September 11, 1943, Private Stokes, ammunition passer on a tank destroyer, assisted in moving the destroyer to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position the tank destroyer crew destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. In so doing, a grave menace to the safety of American troops was removed. Private Stokes's quick thinking and speedy action causing the tank destroyer to be moved into the action in the face of such odds, was a display of courage and determination which reflects the finest traditions of the Armed Forces and were above and beyond the call of duty.

3. Private Stokes, at the time of the action described was assigned as ammunition passer on a tank destroyer in the 2nd Platoon, Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

4. Private Stokes is at present assigned as ammunition passer on a tank destroyer in Co "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

5. Private Stokes's entire service from the time he was inducted into Federal service January 11, 1943, to the present time, has been honorable. Present home address and address at time of induction: Route 11, McAlester, Oklahoma.

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W. L. YOUNG
Lt. Col., Infantry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army

AG 200

24 September 1943

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

TO : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474 U. S. Army (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: Oscar G. Sparks, 38035702, Staff Sergeant, Company "B", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. On the afternoon of September 16, 1943 during heavy fighting, an M-10 Tank Destroyer of Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion was struck by fragments from an enemy shell igniting the destroyer and causing the crew to abandon it. Staff Sergeant Sparks, Company "B" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion accompanied by two other men, ran to the destroyer and in the face of heavy small arms and artillery fire, shoveled dirt on to the burning vehicle which was fully loaded with oil and ammunition, and by his action displayed unusual courage and utter disregard for his own safety. This prompt action above and beyond the call of duty, save a valuable piece of equipment much needed by our troops, prevented serious damage and permitted it to be placed back in use the same day. His courage and gallantry were an inspiration to his command and reflects the finest traditions of the Armed Forces.

3. Staff Sergeant Spark's Platoon was a part of Company "B" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The undersigned certifies that he was an eye witness to the heroic accomplishment.

4. Staff Sergeant Sparks is at present Platoon Sergeant, 1st platoon, Company "B" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion and was at the time of the action described. Staff Sergeant Sparks' entire service from the time he was inducted into Federal Service January 15, 1941 has been honorable. Home address at time of induction and at present: 137 West Illinois Street, Dallas, Texas.

JOHN S. BODENMILLER
Capt., 636th TD Bn.
Commanding Co. B.

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**HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #386, U. S. Army**

24 September 1943

Subject: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star and Citation.

To : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #474, U.S. Army. (Thru Channels)

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star and a Citation be awarded the following named enlisted man: Raymond G. Murphy, 20802898, Staff Sergeant, Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. During the day of September 14, 1943, Sergeant Murphy, seeing a number of enemy tanks, caused his destroyers to be moved by his crew, to a position under direct fire of enemy tanks and small arms. From that position, the tank destroyer crew destroyed five enemy tanks and one ammunition truck by firing only six rounds of ammunition. In so doing, a grave menace to the safety of American troops was removed. Sergeant Murphy's quick thinking and speedy action in causing the tank destroyer to be moved into the open in the face of such odds was a display of courage and determination and was an inspiration to the men under his command. His actions reflect the finest traditions of the Armed Forces and were above and beyond the call of duty.

3. Sergeant Murphy, at the time of the action described was Acting Section Sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The undersigned was present during the action described, and certifies that he was an eye witness to the heroic accomplishment.

4. Sergeant Murphy is at present Motor Sergeant, Company "C" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

5. Sergeant Murphy's entire service from the time he was inducted into Federal Service with the Texas National Guard, November 25, 1940, to the present time, has been honorable. Home address at time of induction: 512 East Nevada Street, El Paso, Texas. Present Home address: 2577 Park Street, Jacksonville, Florida.

**VAN W. FYLAND
Lt. Colonel, Infantry
Commanding**

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HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #306, U. S. Army

24 September 1943

AG 200

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the award of the Silver Star.

TO : The Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #74, U. S. Army (Thru Channels),.

1. It is recommended that the Silver Star be awarded the following named enlisted man: ROBERT L. DODSON, 20617189, Staff Sergeant, Company "B", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. On the afternoon of September 16, 1943, during heavy fighting an M-10 Tank Destroyer of Company "C", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion was struck by fragments from an enemy shell, igniting the destroyer and causing the crew to abandon it. Staff Sergeant Dodson, accompanied by two other men ran to the destroyer and in the face of heavy small arms and artillery fire, shoveled dirt on to the burning vehicle which was fully loaded with oil and ammunition and by his actions displayed unusual courage and utter disregard to his own safety. This prompt action above and beyond the call of duty saved a valuable piece of equipment much needed by our troops, prevented serious damage and permitted it to be placed back in use the same day. His courage and gallantry were an inspiration to his command and reflects the finest traditions of the Armed Forces.

3. Staff Sergeant Dodson's Platoon was part of Company "B", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The undersigned certifies that he was an eye witness to the heroic accomplishment.

4. Staff Sergeant Dodson is at present Platoon Sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Company "B" 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion and was at the time of the action described. Staff Sergeant Dodson's entire service from the time he was inducted into Federal Service with the Texas National Guard, November 25, 1940 has been honorable. Home address at time of induction and at present: 608 North Jefferson Street, Beeville, Texas.

JOHN S. BODENHILLER
Captain, 636th TD Bn
Comd Co "B"