

## 727TH AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR BATTALION

### BATTALION HISTORY TO LUZON OPERATION

On 14 December 1944 this battalion was relieved from attachment to X Corps and moved to a staging area to prepare for the Luzon (Mike 1) operation. During this period, equipment was replaced, and reconditioned - 24 new LVT's were issued to the battalion.

On 25 December 1944 five men were killed and one seriously injured in an accident involving a P-47 pursuit aircraft and a tractor which was moving parallel to the Tansu Airstrip. Names of those killed are as follows:

Black, Arthur R.	Pvt	33707719
Turner, Earl E.	T/5	36806094
Davis, Adrian J.	T/5	38563013
Bawlsak, Stephen Jr.	T/5	33077949
Cook, Thomas E.	Pfc	38101258

Name of seriously injured:

Moyers, William A. Jr.	Sgt	38344238
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Company "B", this battalion staged for the Luzon operation with the Sixth Infantry Division at Sansapor, Dutch New Guinea.

On 2 January 1945 the battalion minus Company "B" loaded on eight LST's. From 2 January to 11 January 1945 the battalion was aboard LST's enroute to Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands.

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### HISTORICAL REPORT OF LUZON OPERATION (CODE NAME MIKE I)

On "A" Day, 9 January 1945, Company "B" landed at 0700 on "Blue" Beach, Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands, in five waves carrying 20th Infantry Regiment of Sixth Infantry Division and Sixth Division Engineers. Beach was covered with a naval barrage and Amphibian Tractor machine guns. Contact with the enemy was made 200 yards inland but resistance consisted mainly of sniper fire. Tractors carried Infantry five miles inland on 9 January 1945. Company returned to Company Command Post 600 yards inland on Blue Beach. One enlisted man was wounded. Enemy planes strafed.

On 10 January 1945 Tractors worked with Infantry at front lines hauling supplies, gasoline and ammunition. Some tractors were used in assault to support Infantry.

From 11 January to 13 January 1945 Tractors of Company "B" were employed to carry supplies to front lines approximately 10 miles.

On 11 January 1945, Company "A" and Headquarters and Service Company debarked from LST's in Gulf at 1230 PM, assembled, and landed on Blue Beach against no enemy opposition. Company "A" and Headquarters and Service Company were under direct control of Sixth Army. Battalion Headquarters and bivouac area was established on Blue Beach one mile from the town of Bonnan Gasset.

On 14 January 1945, 40 Tractors of Company "A" were ordered to Green Beach to aid in unloading landing mats for Lingayen airstrip from ships lying offshore. Because of lack of cranes, high surf, these tractors could not accomplish this mission. Tractors did unload gasoline and 25 tractors were used to hold landing Craft on the Beach.

On 16 January 1945, Tractors of Company "A" were released by Green Beach Control and returned to battalion bivouac area. During this time company "B" working with Sixth Infantry Division was held in an assembly area to perform maintenance and awaited orders from Commanding General Sixth Infantry Division to move forward in support of ground troops. During this time some LVT's were used to aid 543rd Engineer Battalion in ship to shore movement of supplies all classes.

On 19 January 1945, 26 LVT's Company "B" in forward bivouac area at Santa Barbara left at 0800 to move forward to the Agno River. This mission was to move the 1st and 20th Infantry Regiments across the river with supplies. In this action First Lieutenant FRANCIS X SMITH, 0404226, was wounded with Corporal Harold V. Irvin, 36323791, 200 yards west of Villasis. Both were hospitalized and First Lieutenant FRANCIS X SMITH was awarded Purple Heart. The company was held up for 4 hours by enemy gun fire 300 yards east of Agno Bridge. Three enemy snipers were killed.

On 20 January 1945, 26 LVT's Company "B" worked hauling men and supplies of 1st and 20th Infantry Regiments across Agno River. Tractors were used

both on roads and over rice paddies. Tractors carried these two regiments eight miles beyond Agno River. Also on 20 January, 40 Tractors of Company "A" were ordered to work with Base Port Command, Base "B" at San Fabian, by C-3 and C-4 Sections thru Colonel McDONALD, Sixth Army Transportation Section. Tractors of Company "A" worked on 12 hour shifts unloading ammunition POL and general supplies direct from ships offshore to designated dumps. This company was employed in this manner to 21 March 1945. Battalion Command Post remained on Blue Beach one mile from town of Bannau Gossett.

On 21 January 1945, 26 LVT's of Company "B" relieved of work at Agno River and returned to Company Command Post at Villasis. Tractors in rear assembly area were given mission of guarding bridges at Santa Barbara and vicinity. Remainder of tractors in assembly areas awaiting mission.

On 26 January 1945, 26 LVT's moved 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment from Rosales to Cabarus against an enemy pocket of resistance in Cabarus Hills.

On 2 February 1945, Company "B" was relieved from attachment to Sixth Infantry Division and reverted to control of I Corps effective 0001L, 29 January 1945 per General Order 16, Headquarters I Corps dated 29 January 1945. Company maintained a defense of bridges and supply dumps in I Corps zone of action. Two Japs killed in hut by patrol from 3rd Platoon Company "B". First Lieutenant ROBERT D BARR Jr., 01018027 and Technician Fifth Grade Charles F. Barnes, 34867215 were wounded. Both were hospitalized and received Purple Heart Award. This mission of bridge guard was completed on 7 February when company was relieved by a company from 826th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Movement to Battalion Command Post was then initiated.

From 5 February to 21 March 1945, Company "B" was employed with Company "A" in the unloading of supplies in ship to shore at White Beach, San Fabian.

On 9 February 1945 the 3rd Platoon Company "A" departed from White Beach on LVT's for secret destination and mission. Platoon of 12 LVT's attached to XI Corps. On 12 February 1945, LVT's went ashore at Subic Bay and set up bivouac area. Used LVT's on details unloading LST's. On 14 February 1945 12 Tractors boarded LST 711 for secret destination. On 15 February this platoon made a combat landing at Marivales, Luzon, Philippine Islands at 1015. LVT's fired overhead Machine gun fire in support of Infantry, but no enemy opposition was encountered. LVT's then returned to beach at Marivales to haul supplies from ship to shore. They continued this work to 21 February 1945. On 22 February 1945, two LVT's made reconnaissance for enemy caves. Two other LVT's were supplying front line infantry and returning dead to USA Cemetery #1. Four LVT's made trips out into bay to capture enemy swimming from Corregidor to Batan.

From 22 February 1945 to 12 March 1945, LVT's were used to move supplies forward to infantry, haul supplies from ship to shore, continued to pick up enemy in surrounding water, and carry American dead to Cemetery. On 13 March two LVT's made trip to Corregidor to make reconnaissance for enemy caves and to draw fire from enemy positions. LVT's were also used to get fish from bay with engineer troops for starving Filipino natives.

On 19 March 1945, twelve LVT's went to Corregidor and at 1030 embarked with infantry to land on Cabillo Island at 1130. This infantry attempted reconnaissance of Island but intense enemy resistance caused withdrawal. The entire group returned to Corregidor at 1630.

On 21 March 1945 the platoon received orders to return to bivouac area at Blue Beach on Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Philippine Islands and embarked at 1500 to arrive on 23 March 1945 at 1000.

On 19 March 1945 the battalion received warning orders of an impending operation and prepared to break camp and load on assigned ships.

## NOTES ON LUZON OPERATION

Extensive use of LVT's was made over roads of all type surface. Such use always causes track deterioration and burning out of bogie wheels.

Supply of replacement parts was inadequate. At one time 50% vehicles were deadlined for one particular track part, which was not available on Luzon.

Co-operation between Company "B" and Sixth Infantry Division was excellent throughout. LVT's were used to best advantage and not assigned missions that they were unable to accomplish.

The use of LVT's in unloading cargo ships is not recommended for a prolonged period of time as LVT's engines running for hours without stopping while along side ship causes undue wear on engine. If use of LVT as cargo vehicle from ship to shore is intended, vehicles should be supplied with rope fenders to prevent damage to vehicle - These were not issued at Luzon.