



PANTHER PRESS

WWII TANK DESTROYER SOCIETY

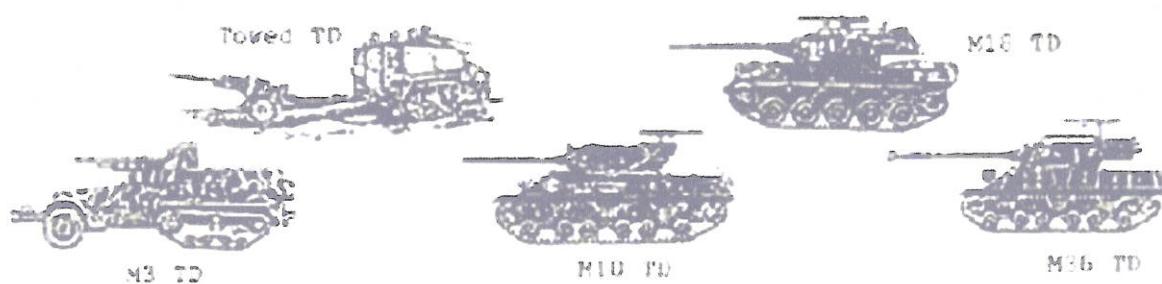


"ROLL TD'S ROLL"

WINTER 2008



M-10 Tank Destroyer at the Ordnance Museum in Aberdeen, Maryland.





WORLD WAR II TANK DESTROYER SOCIETY OFFICERS 2007-2009

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COVER STORY

The M10 Series

The diesel powered M10 and the gasoline powered M10 A1 were almost identical externally aside from the top rear engine doors. The M10 was powered by a GM 6046 12 cylinder, twin, diesel in-line engine while the M10 A1 featured a Ford GAA 8 cylinder 4 cycle gasoline power plant. Their suspensions were the standard vertical volute spring type with twelve wheels in six sets of bogies. The drive sprocket was at the front with a rear idler wheel and six return rollers, one at the rear of each bogie unit.

Armor protection was relatively thin with the gun mantlet being the thickest at 2.25 inches.

The front hull armor varied in thickness with the lower hull being 2 inches while the upper hull was 1.5 inches. The hull sides and rear were 1 inch on the lower and .75 inch on the upper angles. Top armor varied between .75 inch (front) and .375 inch (rear). The turret sides and rear were 1 inch with .75 inch on top. When fully loaded the M10 was 33 tons while the M10 A1 was 32 tons.

The main armament of the vehicles was an M7 3 inch gun in an M5 mount in an open top turret. The turret could be rotated through 360 degrees with elevations between -10 through +30 degrees. The maximum firing rate was 15 rounds per minute and 54 rounds of ammunition could be carried. The gun could fire armor piercing (AP), high explosive (HE), canister, and smoke rounds. Maximum effective range for the AP rounds was approximately 1,000 yards. Additionally, provision for a flexible, pintle mounted .50 caliber machine gun was made on the rear of the turret.

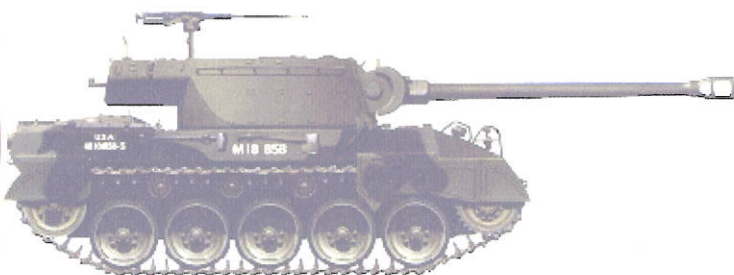
The crew consisted of five men, the commander, driver, assistant driver, gunner, and loader.

The driver was seated in the left front hull with the assistant to his right. Each had their own hatches for entry or exit. The remainder of the crew were positioned in the open turret with the commander seated on the right of the gun, the gunner on the left, and the loader positioned at the rear.

The basic shape of the two models changed very little over the life of the production run. The only major outward change was in the shape of the turret which went through a number of modifications and design changes to improve balance which was found to be a problem with the early production models. Tests had indicated that the turret was unbalanced due to the heavy gun and several attempts were made to solve the problem. Initially, track grousers were fitted to the rear of the turret and the .50 caliber machine gun was positioned at the rear corner. This did not solve the balance problem, however, and early units were often modified in the field with makeshift counterweights being welded to the rear of the turret. Eventually two large triangular shaped counterweights were devised and fitted to the turret rear to solve the balance problem. These weighed a total of 3,600 pounds and were fitted to new vehicles coming off the production line. Late in the production life of the series a new turret was designed which provided more working room and incorporated a new counterweight. This new turret had the upper part of the rear side extended back which squared off the rear of the turret and gave additional space for the crew. This new counterweight also provided more storage of gear which helped alleviate some of the crowding in the interior.

In addition to changes in the turret, there were changes to the interior which were incorporated during production. These were mostly of a minor nature and caused no outward change in the vehicle's appearance. Initially the M10 had only sights for direct firing, but later provisions were made for indirect firing also. Some work was done on changing the manual traverse mechanism, but before this was ready for installation production wound down and it was never installed. One of the more obvious problems which was highlighted in combat was the lack of overhead protection for the crew. Both in Europe and the Pacific the M10 was found to be vulnerable when used in close confines such as the hedgerows in Normandy and in the jungles of the Pacific. In Europe this became even more of a problem as fighting progressed through towns in the drive toward Germany. In the close confines of street fighting the crews were often exposed to snipers, grenades, and overhead shell bursts which could be deadly. Some units made improvised overhead protection using sandbags, wood, and in a few cases, jury rigged armored enclosures. There were no modifications on the production line to address this problem and it was to remain a major concern to the end of the war.

HOW THE BUICK WILDCAT GOT IT'S NAME



Story from Old Cars Weekly
August 30, 2007



The Wildcat legend

So how does the World War II, GM's Design Center, camouflage, and a car's name get linked together? In reading through a January 1954 interview taken by Detroit's Stanley H. Brams with Harley Earl I realized some strange links occurred.

So what does Harley Earl do with a bunch of car designers at the beginning of World War II? Harley, on his own immediately had them started designing camouflage. They made hundreds of designs using camouflage to hide towns, weapons, seaports, etc., etc. Then they had scale cities built with the camouflage they had designed. They also used photography to see if their designs hid the object they were trying to hide. Once they had everything

perfected, Harley invited in the Army.

They were so impressed that the general in charge stated: "I want the Army officers at each door of this building until we decide what we're going to do. I don't want anybody to come in or out of this place. I want to lock it up!"

At the same time, other GM designers were designing a tank destroyer called a Wildcat. Once the Army approved the design they assigned the construction of this tank destroyer to Buick Motor Division. You can read about this in the Buick book, "THE BUICK - a Complete History" authors Terry B. Dunham and Lawrence R. Gustin, in chapter 13 titled "Buick Turns to War".

Now quoting from the interview with Harley, is the rest of the story:

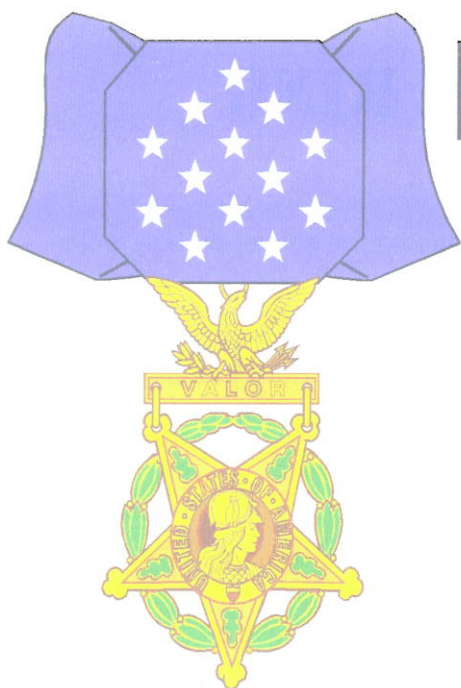
"So I (Harley) got a call from General Bruce's colonel...can't think of his name; an awful nice fellow...said the colonel wants you fellows, now that you've designed that (tank destroyer), to design

the armband for the Army division using the tank. And I said, Well, can you give us a lead? He said, 'Yes, we're supposed to crush the tank!' And so I brought some of our smart designers...creative designers... up and told them, and they came up with a panther crushing a tank in its mouth. That arm band is the one that's on that division; that activity."

One of our Church members is retired from the Army reserves and he collects Army memorabilia including these arm bands. I stopped at his house and told him the above story and he produced the first of these arm bands and with several other iterations of them. A sample arm band is shown in the upper photo, and the lower photograph is from a 1968 Buick Wildcat wheel center. It would be interesting to find the history of many of our car's model names.

Don Mayton; Zeeland, Michigan

We value your opinions and invite you to write. *Old Cars* cannot publish or answer all letters we receive. Letters to the Editor sent via e-mail will not be published unless your name is included and permission to print accompanies the message. Unsigned or profane letters will not be published, and others may be edited.



The Nation's Highest Military Award

The Medal of Honor

The Bravest of the Brave

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
IN THE NAME OF THE
CONGRESS TAKES PLEASURE IN
PRESENTING THE MEDAL OF HONOR TO**

1st Lt Turney W. Leonard

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Company C, 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Place and date: Kommerscheidt, Germany, 6th November 1944.

Entered service at: Dallas, Texas.

Born: 18th June 1921, Dallas, Texas.

G.O. No.: 74, 1st September 1945.

CITATION:

He displayed extraordinary heroism while commanding a platoon of mobile weapon at Kemmerscheidt, Germany, on 4th, 5th and 6th November 1944. During the fierce 3-day engagement, he repeatedly braved overwhelming enemy fire in advance of his platoon to direct the fire of his tank destroyer from exposed, dismounted positions. He went on lone reconnaissance missions to discover what oppositions his men faced, and on 1 occasion, when fired upon by a hostile machinegun, advanced alone and eliminated the enemy emplacement with a hand grenade.

When a strong German attack threatened to overrun friendly positions, he moved through withering artillery, mortar, and small arms fire, reorganized confused infantry units whose leaders had become casualties, and exhorted them to hold firm. Although wounded early in battle, he continued to direct fire from his advanced position until he was disabled by a high-explosive shell which shattered his arm, forcing him to withdraw.

He was last seen at a medical aid station which was subsequently captured by the enemy. By his superb courage, inspiring leadership, and indomitable fighting spirit, 1st Lt. Leonard enabled our forces to hold off the enemy attack and was personally responsible for the direction of fire which destroyed 6 German tanks.

1ST LT. LEONARD'S AGGIE RING



A picture of 1st Lt Leonard, and his citation on display at the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University

After the war, Leonard's family recovered his body for a proper burial, his personal effects were lost and the Aggie ring the soldier proudly wore was not found.

57 years after the battle which claimed Leonard's life, German Lt. Obit Volker Lossner had found Leonard's ring amongst his father-in-law's possessions. His father-in-law had found the ring while relocating the graves of American soldiers killed during the battle.

The German soldier decided that the right thing to do was to return the ring to its rightful owners. Reading the inscription of Leonard's name on the inside of the ring, he was eventually put in touch with Texas A&M officials who arranged a presentation of the ring to the family of Leonard.

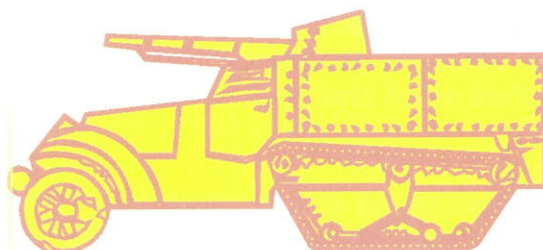
On November 11, 2000, before the football crowd at Kyle Field, German Lt. Obit Volker Lossner presented the ring to Douglas Leonard, brother of Turney. Leonard responded by thanking Lossner and Texas A&M for the ring's return. He then announced that the ring will not leave Texas A&M, because it will be a permanent fixture in the Sanders Corps of Cadets Center on campus.

Leonard was member of the Texas A&M class of 1942. He was one of seven Texas A&M WWII Medal of Honor recipients.

What is the Medal of Honor?

The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the military, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.



MAIL CALL

Dear Readers,

First I want to introduce myself, My name is Ben Savelkoul and I'm living in The Netherlands, two years ago I adopted a grave at the American Military Cemetery in Margraten. It belongs to Sgt. Micheal De Febio, registration_number: 20154302 and he was a member of 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. A few months ago I started to look for family-members of Michael DeFebio At first nothing .. but then I found an website in Providence RI. I also made an page about the memorial (http://www.bensavelkoul.nl/Rhode_Island_WII_Monument.htm) It was about a WWII Memorial that was build, and on November 11,2007 dedicated. I contact the webmaster and he wanted to help me One day later he already had find a sister of Micheal and he gave me her e-mail address. And now I also have contact with a niece of Michael's. "Great people ... " Last month I adopted my second grave at the American Military Cemetery Henri Chapelle (Belgium) and it belongs to TEC5 Gerard k. Duncan, registration_number: 20152748 and was also a member of the 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. Several times a year (Memorial Day, Christmas etc ...) I visit the graves and lay some flowers, because I'm thankful for what these men did for us, so that we now can live in freedom.

About 1 or 2 weeks ago an uncle of my and his son has visited the Danbury Museum (I asked them, because his other son lives in Monroe and the where on vacation in the States) and made several photos for my website, they had spoken, I believe with an Mr. Samual Johnson, and they told me that he maybe can help me find some more information? Now I'm looking for any photos/links/information/books about the 643rd TD BN can you help me???? ... any information about the 643rd is welcome. And maybe someone knows about Michael's or Gerard's story (which Company?, After Action Reports etc ...) Or story's of the other members of the 643rd that are buried in Margraten (The Netherlands) and Henri Chapelle (Belgium).

A few weeks ago I also purchase the book "Hellcats Don't leak oil, they mark their territory!" great book ... still reading it, but some sentences I have to read twice before I understand it? Question ... In the Book they always talk about the six one three, why????? I also wrote a mail to Mr. Lester R. King, but the mail returned "Wrong Address" I looked up his home address and wrote a letter ... still waiting for an answer? I also wrote a few days ago an e-mail (Company-Account) to Mr. Ian Dick he was also a member of the 643rd , also waiting for an answer?

I had made a site about Michael and the 643rd and more, and on Gerard's sites I'm working, but I don't have enough information yet. Please check the site for more. Several pages are in Dutch but I'm working on trying to translate it into English. (Some pictures need no words!)

Greetings from the Netherlands. (Sorry for my English)

Ben Savelkoul

Minghof 13
6367BL Voerendaal
The Netherlands

Please visit my Website at: www.bensavelkoul.nl

Bless you, Ken

24 OCT 2007

Thanks for all your fine reports.
I pray instead of writing — and with
divine help of Jesus + God the Father
we heal! 7506 French, was back at
one of our meetings was healed of his
deafness.

Enjoy all of you — and you all
are prayed for every day!

Father David Nichols
Your Chaplain.

Dear Ken,

My name is Kevin Graham and I am an Associate member of the 704th Tank Destroyer Association. I am a member because my uncle, Pvt. Richard F. Graham, C Company 3rd Platoon, was KIA on September 19th, 1944 in the Battle of Arrocourt.

Our association has just discontinued its newsletter, The Five Star Review from the lack of ability to produce it anymore. I enjoy reading your newsletter very much, it is very well done.

I thought it would be helpful to have a list of members of the 704th, so they would have the option of joining your WWII TD Society. If you would like, I will try to get that list of people together and provide you with that. It might be beneficial to everyone.

Thank you for your time, and thank you and the rest of the Tank Destroyer men for all of your sacrifices you have endured for the freedom that you have provided us with.

Sincerely yours,

Kevin J. Graham

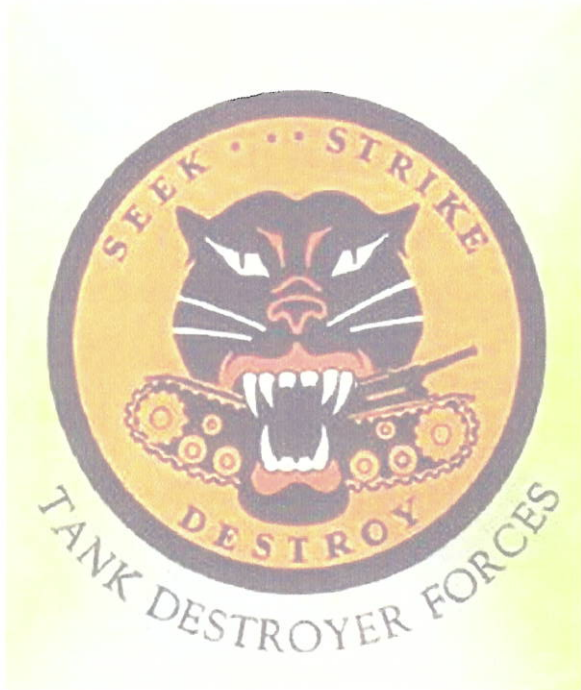
Kevin J. Graham

**WE REPLIED TO THIS LETTER AND SENT OUT THE NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS TO ALL OF THE
704th ON THE LIST.**

PLEASE SEND YOUR MAIL TO:

Ken LeLacheur
35 Gibson Rd
Milford, CT 06461

THE EDITORS VIEW



A MEMO FROM COL. FRENCH

For the past couple of years I have been under the weather and have neglected to collect dues for membership. Our Treasury is getting pretty low on funds and it supports this new letter. Please bring you membership dues currant.

SEND DUES TO:

WWII Tank Destroyer Society
c/o Col. Bob French
165 Landing Lane, Suite 25
Dadeville, AL 36853

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Kevin Graham for giving us the ability to help out the 704th T.D.

A BIG WELCOME TO THE NEW 704TH MEMBERS:

John B. Benneian (President of the 704th)
Laura Wilson
Frank Sweeters
Alan Dinowski
Gene L. Carrozza
Ralph Lazzaro
Donald Fox
Roger Shaddick

ALSO A BIG WELCOME TO:

Samuel R. Johnson (Executive Director of the Military Museum of Southern New England)

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

Ken LeLacheur
35 Gibson Rd
Milford, CT 06461-2117
(203) 283-0520



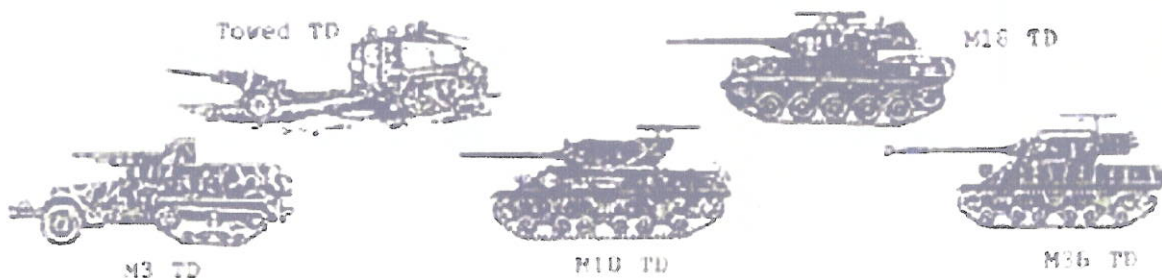
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"ROLL TD'S ROLL"

WINTER 2008



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Ben Saveikoul
Minghof 13
6367BL Voerendaal
The Netherlands

WWII Tank Destroyer Society
Ken Lelacheur V.P.
35 Gibson Road
Milford CT 06461-2117

