

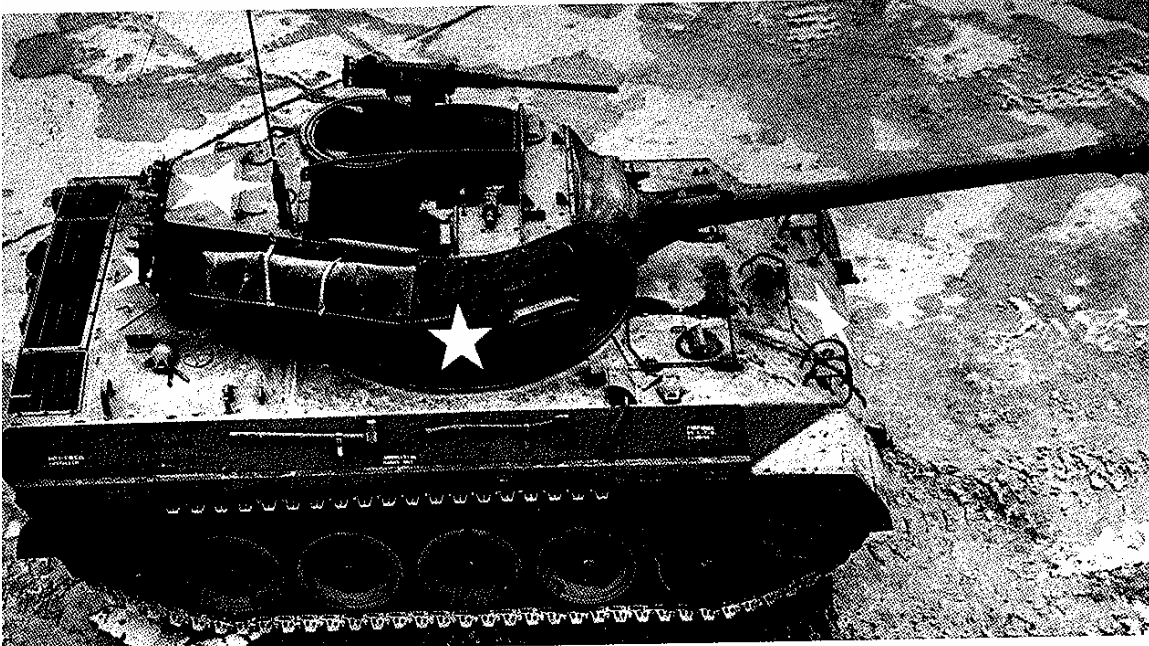
“HELL ON WHEELS” US 2nd Armored Division

Mike Pfanenstiel

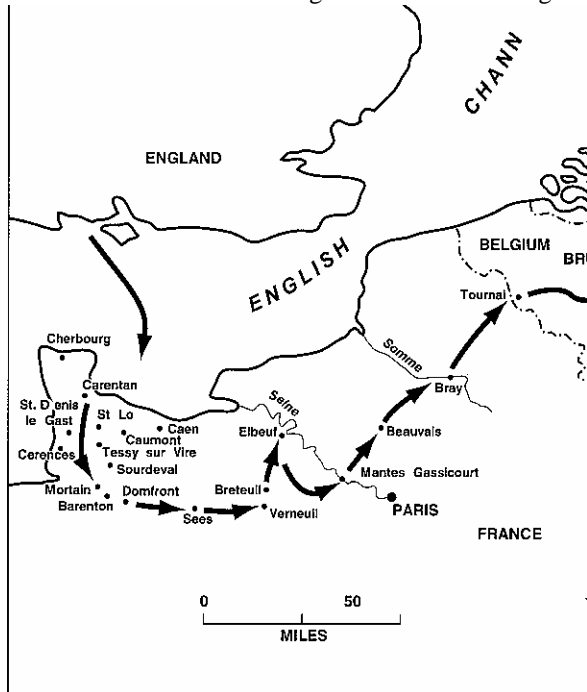
The first elements of the 2nd Armored Division landed in Normandy on June 12, 1944 and immediately reinforced the 101st Airborne holding Carentan against the counterattack by the 17th SS. The Germans were not expecting armor and suffered a bloody repulse; they gave the division a new nickname “Roosevelt’s Butchers” because during the action 800 German soldiers were killed while the Americans only lost 4 tanks and a dozen men.



The rest of the division was on the continent by July 2nd and was contained due to the hedgerows in this part of France. Bulldozer blades were outfitted to several Sherman’s, but this was a slow process to move through the hedgerows. Sergeant Curtis Culin proposed his idea to lift them out of the way with steel mounted to the front of the tanks. This was much faster. Some of the Sherman’s started arriving with a 76mm gun, but this had mixed reviews since the gun had difficulty penetrating the front of a Panther or Tiger.



On June 30th, the 2nd Armor was part of XIX Corps operating southwest of Bayeux and fought 2nd Panzer. Hell on Wheels was next facing 2nd SS Panzer during the attacks near St. Lo.



My Order of Battle is based Operation Cobra (July 26th to July 31st, 1944). The 2nd Armored Division was commanded by Major General Edward H. Brooks who took command in April of 1944 until he was promoted in September 12th, 1944. Combat Command A (CCA) was commanded by Brigadier General Maurice Rose. CCA consisted of the following:

- CO Brigadier General Maurice Rose; HQ CCA
- 66th Armored Regiment; 22nd Regimental Combat Team; 14th Armored Field Artillery;
- Cos A, C, and E of 17th Armored Engineer BN; 702nd Tank Destroyer BN (SP);
- Co A, 48th Armored Medium BN; Battery D, 195th AAA (AW) BN (SP)