

Tank Company A Holds Frontline Duty Record

By Cpl. Don Bowers
Combat Correspondent

WITH 25TH DIV, Korea—

"Always Able" company is what men of this 89th Tank Battalion unit have been dubbed by troops of the three American divisions and three other UN forces they have fought with in Korea.

Holding the highest frontline duty record of any tank outfit in Korea, the Tropic Lightning tankers have supported every regiment of the 25th, the American 1st Cavalry and 24th Divisions, the British 29th Brigade, the Turkish Brigade and the Australian Regiment.

The A Company tankers have been off the line only eight days since entering the Korean action last August 2 on the Pusan perimeter. This week, the count stood at 176 days of actual combat duty, broken only by an eight-day rest at Anju in November.

"Those eight days of 'rest' were spent lubricating the

tanks and making repairs we never had a chance to do," quipped Sgt. Kenneth Stinker of Detroit, a driver.

Spearheading the UN breakthrough out of Masan, the veteran tankers' four days and nights drive into Riri, a distance of some 165 miles, is believed to be the longest continuous tank drive of the war.

"We averaged one hour of sleep a night on that one," said SFC Neill Hintz, Algona, Iowa, a tank commander.

They drove north from the 38th parallel with the 1st Cavalry, linked up with the British in a push up the west coast, then rejoined the 25th to fill a gap in the central sector. In the ensuing retreat, they fought with rear guard infantrymen. They were the last ones back across the 38th, protecting engineers blowing the last bridges. One artistic member erected the ironically humorous sign:

"You are now crossing the 38th parallel, southeast of the

were spent lubricating the

STARS STRIPES

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"You are now crossing the 38th parallel, courtesy of the 28th and 29th Chinese Armies." Now they are among the lead elements in the renewed drive northward. Sgt. Joseph Gallo-way, veteran World War II gunner from Owensboro, Ky., said:

"I guess they just overlooked us when it came to relief. Many times, the regiment we were supporting would be relieved, and we'd remain to support the fresh outfit."

Despite their long, hard service, esprit de corps runs high in the company. Capt. Herbert A. Brannon, the commander, declared: "The 89th is the best tank battalion in Korea, and Company A is the best in the 89th."

Sgt. Lewis Fisher of Manchester, Ky., another driver, bragged: "Don't forget, when you mention the 89th mention Able company; it IS the 89th."