



Leon Hopton (courtesy E. G. McConnell).

* Leon Hopton describes his close call at Honskirch:

We had tanks in a column, I was in the fifth or sixth tank. As we went down, the Germans started firing. At that time of year the grounds were muddy. You couldn't drive a tank across it because it would bog down. We had to stay on the road. All of a sudden the Germans started hitting every other tank, working their way down. You can hear the guys in the tanks that had been hit on the intercom. In the meantime, the Germans worked their way up the column, the tank in front of me got hit, and Pop Gates's tank got hit. He was coming up the column trying to tell us to back out of there. Well, I wasn't hit. I had a little trailer on the back, pulling a little extra ammo. I broke that up by going back and forth, keeping a moving target. They missed me and finally I was the last tank that wasn't hit so I maneuvered back. Ford was my tank commander. We got back into the next town. There was a tank destroyer outfit picking up the wounded. In the meantime, old Motel Johnson, who was a commander of one of the assault guns, he took off, him and Hometown Hall, the gunner. They fired everything they had so they started shooting the smoke. That's all they had left. That's what saved the guys in the ditches coming back up.⁴

**Author Commentary by:
Joe W. Wilson Jr.**

11. The Hot Spot at

Sergeant Emery G. Thomas saw three wounded comrades from another tank exposed in the open terrain. After Thomas and his crew dismounted their burning tank, he courageously led a few men to the wounded while under mortar and machine gun fire. They dragged the casualties to safety and administered first aid. Then Thomas personally carried a seriously wounded man to the aid station and returned to help evacuate the others.