

## U.S. 3rd ARMORED DIVISION

**NORMANDY 1944**

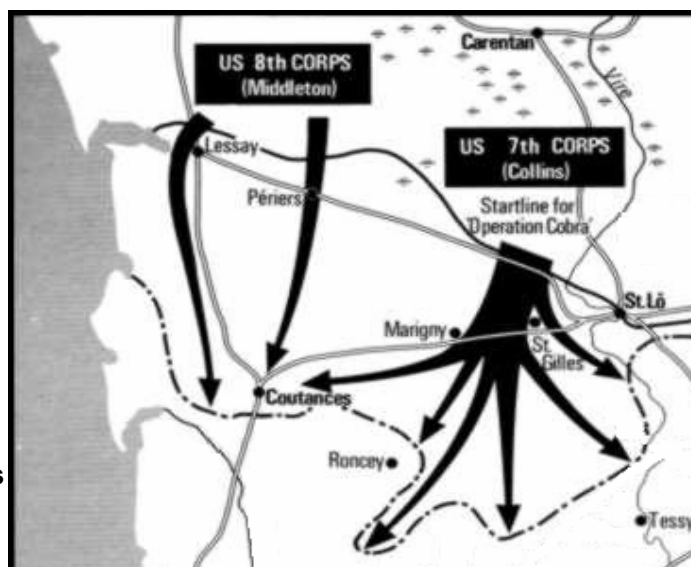


Staff Sergeant Lafayette "Lafe" Pool was typical of many of the fine tankers produced by the U.S. Army during World War II. Pool joined the 3rd Battalion, 32nd Armored Regiment in January of 1942. He was a tank commander who drove his men and himself hard and trained his crew rigorously to prepare for combat.

Wilbert "Baby" Richards was the driver and Bert "Schoolboy" Close, just seventeen years old, the bow machine gunner.

Given the choice of prison on a manslaughter charge or service in the Army, Del "Jailbird" Boggs became Pool's loader. Willis "Groundhog" Oller was the gunner. Pool said of Oller "He could shoot the eyebrows off a gnat at 1500 yards."

Pool, his crew, and their Sherman tank named "IN THE MOOD" (a popular song of the time) made a deadly team. Landing in Normandy in June, 1944 their unit fought its first engagement near St. Lo with the crew of "IN THE MOOD" riding point for 3rd Armored's Task Force Y during **OPERATION COBRA**, the Normandy Breakout. Following an intense "carpet bombing" by the USAAF and supporting attacks by Infantry, US Armored forces ripped through the German lines.



*Operation Cobra, the breakout from Bocage Country*



*3rd Armored Sherman tanks in battle*

During fighting at The Falaise Gap in August of 1944 Pool was, as usual, right up front. Lt. Col. Walter B. Richardson, commanding Task Force Y, heard Pool say over the radio *"Ain't got the heart to kill um."* meaning, of course, the retreating Germans. Then a rattle of machinegun fire was heard over the radio followed by Pool's drawl *"They fired at us! Now watch those bastards run. Give it to 'em Close."* and the bow machine gun opened up. Pool and his crew fought all night, and when they once again led the armored column out the next day, the ground in front of their position was littered with enemy dead.

During 83 days together in combat in France, Belgium and Germany, Pool and his tank crew were credited with destroying 258 enemy vehicles including tanks, self-propelled guns, and armored cars. He and his crew killed over 1,000 enemy soldiers and took over 250 prisoners making them one of the most successful Allied tank crews in the ETO. It didn't come cheaply. In his last battle, on September 19, 1944, near Stolberg, Germany, Pool was blown from the turret of his tank from a double-hit by German shells and was severely wounded.



*Hedgerow Cutters helped 3 AD improve mobility*



**S/Sgt. Lafayette Pool**

Highly decorated but no longer capable of front line service after losing a leg to his wound in combat, Pool returned to the States to train the next generation of US Tankers and served for many years in the post-war Army.





## **Item Company, 32nd Armored Regiment**

**3rd Armored Division, Normandy, 1944**

*US Confident Trained Tank Company - COBRA - 1495 pts*

**Company Headquarters - 165 pts**

CO's M4 Sherman Tank with Hedgerow Cutter  
2iC's M4 Sherman Tank with Bulldozer Blade  
M32 Armored Tank Recovery Vehicle

**Combat Platoons - 665 pts**

Sgt Pool's Tank Platoon with 4 x M4 Sherman (76mm) Tanks with Hedgerow Cutters

Tank Platoon with 4 x M4 Sherman Tanks with Hedgerow Cutters

**Support Platoons - 435 pts**

Armored Rifle Platoon with 6 x Rifle Teams, 5 x Bazooka Teams,  
1 x 60mm Light Mortar Team, 2 x Light Machine Gun Teams,  
2 x M3 Halftracks with .50 caliber AAMG, and 3 x M3 Halftracks with .30 caliber AAMG

Armored Field Artillery Battery with Carbine Team, Staff Team  
M2 Halftrack with .50 caliber AAMG, M2 Halftrack with .30 caliber AAMG  
Observer M4 Sherman Tank, and 3 x M7 Priest 105mm Self Propelled Howitzers

**Air Support - 230 pts**

L4 Grasshopper Aerial Observation Post

Priority Air P-47 Thunderbolt Fighter-Bombers



