WASHINGTON, Oct. 14.—Northern New York's pride, the famed Fourth Armored Division, spearheaded the Third Army advance across France, smashing 400 enemy tanks, capturing 15,000 and knocking out 1,500 miscellaneous vehicles at a relatively low cost to itself, the War Department revealed today in lifting the cloak of secrecy that has masked the division's activities since it left the United States.

In its lightning advance under Major General John S. Wood, who took command of the unit shortly before it left Pine Camp where it was formed and trained for sixteen months, the fighting Fourth destroyed the Nazi 77th, 91st and 243rd Infantry Divisions, wiped out the Nazi 6th Paratroop Division and liquidated the 281st Cavalry Battalion.

The Americans wiped out 350 German tanks, many of them Mark V Panthers, in two solid weeks of unattended armored fighting. In addition, it was credited with destroying 140 large artillery pieces.

Major Joseph Kirchheimer, who served with the Fourth as an army ground force observer, gave a graphic picture of the Fourth's toughness in an interview at the War Department yesterday after returning from France.

It will thrill all of Northern New York to know that the Germans regarded the men of the Fourth as "Supermen."

The reaction of a German colonel of SS troops is typical. The Nazi officer captured by the Fourth near Leomonscourt when the division broke into the German rear areas across the Moselle River, said, "Having been a commander of army units in Russia, covering an area of approximately 1,500 miles, I must admit that the American troops are not only equipped with the best of material, but what strikes me especially is the excellence of organization under which these men now function. I would be pleased to know the commander of this particular division and I am sure that it must be a part of General Patton's Third Army. General Patton is for the American Army what Rommel stands for in the German Army, but to know the commander of the armored division would explain to me how this army managed to achieve such speed of advance, which in many instances, caught us completely unprepared."

The Germans, in broadcasts, described the Fourth as "The American Elite Fourth Armored Division," soon used less complimentary terms in describing its men as ruthless fighters. To the German troops, it was the "Fourth Panzer."

Northern New York residents who recall April 15, 1941, when the division was activated at Pine Camp, will be thrilled at this reputation of the Fourth. In 1941 the unit lacked tanks, guns and just about everything, as those who remember the old vintage tanks with which it first trained knew full well.

That it's 16 months at Pine Camp paid dividends is fully realized by the revelation that once turned loose in France, the unit forced crossing of the Sccione, Meurthe, Meuse, Yonne, Sarthe, Seine, Loire, Loire, Moselle and Meuse Rivers, any one of which would have been a tough tactical problem alone.

After crossing the Moselle, north and south of Nancy, the division met and repulsed the heaviest tank attacks in the battle of France. In Brittany the unit is known as the "Liberators of Brittany."

The unit served as a part of Lt. General George S. Patton's Third Army as organized in Great Britain before the invasion. Those who recall the witness of the men when they left northern New York surely had doubts that they wore "Patton's boys."

Jumping off from Raids, Normandy, on 27 July, after an intense air and infantry attack on the enemy front, the division cut off the Brittany peninsula in ten days, days of lightning movements and fighting that oublitshed the Nazis.

The unit raced through Perlicre, took Coutances and Sarlatty, captured the key city of Avranches after savage fighting, plunged into Brittany to march alone 125 miles to contain Rennes and capture Vannes on the south coast of France. The division took Nantes and contained Lorient, the Nazi submarine base, in a move that trapped thousands of Nazis.
From Brittany, the unit turned east and dashed 153 miles in two nights and a day with Combat Command "A" capturing Orleans. As a result, Paris was outflanked from the south.

Assembled on 21 August in the vicinity of Orleans, the Fourth resumed its drive and dashed to Sens where the garrison was caught unprepared and enormous quantities of supplies captured by Combat Command "A". Quickly securing the city, "CC" moved across the Yonne River, destroying an SS brigade on the outskirts of Villeneuve. Meanwhile "CCB", moving to the south, captured Courcay and moved on Montargis from the east.

The division then fought its way across the Seine at Troyes, on 26 August in fierce fighting, never giving the enemy rest. Attacking Troyes, the unit fought under heavy enemy fire but destroyed 60 per cent of the 1st SS brigade in the battle.

Three days later, the division had made three crossings of the Marne and captured Vitry-la-Française, Chaumont-sur-Marne, St. Didier and Limay fell rapidly. A light tank company driving through torrential rains at 60 miles an hour took Commercy, captured the bridge across the Lens and seized the high ground to the east.

Meanwhile, Combat Command "B", on 11 September, supported by doughboys of the 39th Infantry Division, burst across the Moselle routing Nazis ordered to hold the line all winter. While the massive Moselle bridgehead was being consolidated, the unit fought off some of the heaviest German attacks of the war. For two weeks up to 22 September, the unit threw back Mark IV, Mark V and Mark VI with heavy losses to the enemy.

The commander of the Fourth Armored Division whom the German colonel wanted to meet, but did not, is Major General John Wood. The broad-shouldered general, who is 56 (born 11 January 1888), has been soldiering since he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1912. General Wood, who was born in Arkansas and whose home is now Narberth, Pa., has commanded the Fourth Armored Division since 13 June 1942. He won the Distinguished Service Cross at Coutances, where he personally led his troops into the city. He also holds the Silver Star and the Bronze Star Medals.

General Wood, who was graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1907, played football during his college days. He also plays a fast game of tennis. The general, who wears his wide-lensed sunglasses, rain or shine, does not hesitate to salute any of his men first, regardless of rank, and many a Fourth Armored tanker has found it hard to beat the Old Man to the draw.

In his outstanding employment of armor, General Wood has been assisted by his Combat Commanders, Brigadier General Holmes E. Dargor, XI (born 26 June 1894), of Union, New Jersey, and Colonel Bruce C. Clarke (born in Adams N.Y. 29 April 1901) of Syracuse, New York. General Dargor has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action at Avranches while Colonel Clarke has been awarded the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters during the campaign of Western Europe.

In addition to the two Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver Stars have been awarded to 185 members of the division for gallantry in action and 406 men have been presented with the Bronze Star for heroic action and meritorious service. Artillery observer liaison pilots of the division have been awarded twelve Air Medals and 15 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

Last April fifteenth, on the third anniversary of the division's activation, General Wood told his men they were veterans ready to close with the enemy. Although the division was then in England and had not yet been in combat, he men were veterans in bearing and discipline as the result of their long intensive training. From the deep snows of the Canadian border, the Fourth Armored Division has maneuvered in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee, to California desert, the plains of Texas and the downs of England.

After sixteen months at Pine Camp, the division left New York on 30 Sept 1942, to maneuver in Tennessee until the middle of November 1942. The division's next move took it to California Desert Training Center where base camps were established at Freds and Needles. After training there six months, the un-traveled division arrived at Camp Bowie, Texas, 3 June 1943, where it maneuvered during the summer until alerted for overseas duty. The division hit the Lone Star State early in December for the east coast and-departed overseas.

In England the division continued training for six months until it landed in France the week of July 12, 1944, it began fighting two days later.