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HEADQUARTERS  
638th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
APO 339, c/o P.M.  
New York, New York

1 Nov-44 74-30-ARR45

1 May 1945

SUBJECT: History of Operations for April 1945.

TO : The Adjutant General, War Department, Washington 25, D.C.

THRU : Commanding General, 84th Infantry Division.

1. Authority: Par 10, AR 345-105.

2. Introduction.

- a. Lt Col HAROLD L. DAVIS, O 359 292, FA, Commanding.  
Major JAMES D. MC CULLOUGH, O 227 185, FA, Executive.  
Major DICKSON G. HIPP, O 297 133, FA, S - 3.  
Captain RECTOR PARKS, O 306 740, FA, S - 2.  
Captain JOHN L. ROBERTS, O 1168882, FA, S - 4.  
1st Lt FREDRICK A. KLEWIN, O 1 822 585, FA, S - 1.  
Captain RONALD C. HARMON, O 249 645, Inf, Comdg Hq Co.  
Captain DONAL I. MEDLEY, O 397 029, FA, Comdg Co A.  
Captain ALONZO J. GOLDEN, O 393 003, FA, Comdg Co B.  
Captain ROBERT R. KLINE, O 1 167 072, FA, Comdg Co C.  
1st Lt ROBERT E. PARKER, O 1 822 610, FA, Comdg Rcn Co.  
Captain ARTHUR FORST, O 419 121, MC, Bn Surgeon.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. Period Covered: 1 April to 30 April 1945.
- d. Maps used during period: Germany 1:25000 4505, 4506, 4605, 4606.  
Central Europe 1:100000 Essen P2, P3, N3, 4, 5, 6, N5, 6. Germany  
1:250000 K2, 3, 50, 51, 52, 53. L50, 51, 52, 53. M50, 51, 52, 53,  
54, N52, 53.

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3. Narrative.

a. Operations.

(1) Company A.

1-30 April 45: On 1 April the company was attached to the 333rd Inf Regt 84th Infantry Division in assembly position vicinity of Kaldenhausen, Germany moved to Wesel, Germany where they crossed the Rhine and continued advance to Uhlenberg, Germany with the mission of supporting the advance of the regiment.

On 3 April each TD Platoon was assigned to its respective infantry battalion. Company moved to vicinity of Marienfeld, Germany.

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On 4 April the company moved to Bielefeld, Germany where contact was made with the enemy. Heavy sniper and MG fire was silenced by .50 cal machine guns from destroyers of the 1st platoon. 1st and 2nd platoons passed on through town. 3rd platoon remained with 3rd Inf Bn to assist in mopping up and clearing the town of snipers.

On 5 April company closed in Salzuflen, Germany less 3rd platoon meeting light resistance.

On 6 April company made preparations for Weser River crossings. 3rd platoon and 3rd Inf Bn rejoined regiment.

On 7 April crossed Weser River at Minden, Germany and went into assembly positions vicinity south of Buckeburge, Germany.

On 8 April enroute to Hannover, Germany 2nd platoon in vicinity of Lundein, Germany knocked out 2 MG nests and 2 panzerfaust teams. Lost one destroyer due to panzerfaust fire and one due to mechanical failure. At this same position enemy roadblock was reduced and German AT guns withdrew from TD fire. Combat team proceeded unopposed until reaching Weetzen, Germany where 2nd platoon drew heavy fire from 88mm anti-tank guns. During period 2 EM were killed in action and 6 EM and 1 officer were wounded in action.

On 9 April company received orders to move to Gr Munzel, Germany, simultaneously the recovery vehicle, crippled 2 1/2 ton truck, and M-8 from attached Rcn platoon were to be evacuated to the rear. These vehicles were ambushed in woods near Egsdorf, Germany by approximately 100 enemy infantry and 1 Tiger Royal tank. Two Rcn platoon 1/2 ton vehicles were dispatched to find missing vehicles were also captured in same ambush making a total of 18 men KIA. Near the town of Weetzen, Germany northwest of Hannover, Germany. On 10 April 1st and 2nd TD platoons assisted respective infantry battalions in capture of Hannover, Germany. By 1700 platoons rallied in vic of Mevenfeld, Germany to make preparations for attack to east. On 11 April Company A moved to vicinity of Gr Burgwedel, Germany where road blocks were setup in defense of town. On 12 April company moved to Opperhausen, Germany clearing houses and woods of light resistance. On same date 3rd platoon assisted in screening mission on left flank of combat team's advance. On 13 April company moved to Wittingen, Germany against light to medium resistance. On 14 April Co A assisted in attack and capture of Salzwedel and Arendsee, Germany. 1st Platoon destroyed 5 rocket guns in woods vicinity west of Salzwedel, Germany. 2nd platoon knocked out 2 Nebelwerfers and one personnel carrier with trailer vicinity Steinhorst, Germany. Tank recovery crew set afire house containing snipers in vicinity of Wienhausen capturing 9 PW's. 3rd platoon fired at German TD getting hits but vehicle was able to move out of range. Hq platoon captured 9 PW's vic Kuhfeld, Germany. 1st platoon captured Deutsch and set up defense of town. 2nd platoon assisted in reduction of Lindenburg, Germany and completed defense installations for the town. 3rd platoon moved into Harpe, Germany and co Hq moved to Jaeggel, Germany. On 15 April 3rd platoon captured 9 PW's vicinity Gollensdorf, Germany. On 16 April company relieved attachment to 333rd infantry regiment and reverted to battalion control. Company moved to Gr Garz, Germany. 1st platoon remained in position vicinity Deutsch, Germany. 1st Rcn plat relieved of attachment and reverted to company control. On 17 April entire company moved to Lindenberg, Germany where road blocks were established and maintained. On 19 April 3rd platoon attached to 3rd Infantry vicinity Kurden, Germany. On 20 April 3rd platoon moved from Gr Garz, Germany to Gr Holzhausen, Germany. On 21 April 3rd platoon moved to vicinity of Arend See, Germany from which they attacked NE to take Kapern, Germany. On 23 April 3rd platoon moved to Ziemendorf, Germany and on to Aulosen, Germany. On 24 April 3rd platoon moved to vicinity of Wittenberge, Germany and fired on 2 Block-houses at west end of bridge on the Elbe River.

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An estimated 45 enemy k... in operation. 3rd platoon... attachment to 333rd Infantry Regiment and reverted to Company control. On 27 April Company security sections used to patrol assigned area West of Salzwedel, Germany for military activity, ammo dumps, ordnance equipment, hospitals, airfields. On 28 April Reconnaissance patrols captured 10 PW's. On 29 April screening of civilians in assigned area resulted in capture of 2 PW's.

(2) Company B.

1 - 30 April 1945: On 1 April Company B reinforced by 2nd Rcn Plat was attached to the 334th Infantry Regiment combat team and prepared for movement across the Rhine River. Company moved from Kapellen, Germany to vicinity of Heiden, Germany a distance of 62 miles. On 3 April company furnished anti-tank support for 334th Infantry Regiment and moved to Tilbeck, Germany. On 4 April Company moved to Bad Oeynhausen, Germany supporting regiment in zone of advance. On 5 April Company B moved approximately 32 miles to vic of Boesnell, Germany with attached Rcn Plat performing reconnaissance for 3rd Infantry Battalion. On 6 April made preparations for movement across the Weser River. On 7 April made uneventful crossing of Weser River and continued movement east against light resistance. On 8 April travelled approximately 23 miles to vicinity of Rocke, Germany, the second platoon capturing 8 PW's enroute. Destroyed one German Mk III tank, one halftrack, and captured 8 PW's vicinity of Haverssen, Germany. German machine gun nest eliminated by .76 mm gun fire with 5 Germans dead as result. 2nd Plat also destroyed completely two well camouflaged 88 mm flak gun emplacements and captured 150 PW's in clearing the nearby woods. On 9 April Company B assisted 334th Infantry Regiment Combat team in capture of Hannover, Germany. 1st Plat destroyed enemy Rcn vehicle and captured 6 PW's vicinity of Gr Nenndorf, Germany. Company moved to Ricklingen, Germany then to Meyenfeld, Germany. 3rd TD Platoon shot d wn FW 190 by .50 cal machine gun fire from destroyers which attempted to strafe column. The TD Platoons reverted to Company control and went into regimental reserve in vicinity of Engelbassel, Germany. On 11 April Company moved to Burgdorf, Germany with 3 TD platoons attached to their respective Infantry Battalions. On 12 April Company moved to Hanigsen, to Brackel, and to Muden, Germany. In vicinity of Brackel, Germany Sgt Osborne and Pvt lcl Remanszka of the 1st Plat led a squad of 6 infantrymen into woods and captured 14 PW's and destroyed 2 tanks by bazooka fire, phosphorous grenades, and gasoline. 2nd Platoon captured 5 PW's vicinity of Betzel, Germany and 62 more in the dense woods near the edge of town. 13 April Company moved to vicinity of Radenbeck where a task force of TD's, Rcn vehicles and infantry were assigned mission of mopping up bypassed areas. Golden's Task Force accomplished their mission and returned to regimental control at 2230. 14 April Company B moved to vicinity of Beetzendorf, Germany where they captured 7 PW's and continued 33 miles farther closing in at Wohlenberg, Germany at 1930. 15 April 3rd TD platoon .50 cal MG fire from destroyers brought down a FW 190 at 1700. On 16 April company relieved of attachment to 334th Infantry Regiment but was reattached to 2nd Battalion 334th Infantry later in the day and moved approximately 11 miles to Harpe, Germany. 17 April 2nd Rcn Plat was relieved of attachment to Company B and reverted to Company control. Gun platoons reconnoitered for defensive positions to repel enemy armored threat from north and northwest. On 19 April 1st TD platoon attached to Company C 3rd Platoon provided AT defense for 84th Inf Div CP at Priemern, Germany. On 21 April company less 1st and 3rd platoons moved to Schmarsau, Germany and thence to Schletau, Germany becoming Division Reserve. On 22 April Company B was assigned mission of guarding roads running west out of Schletau, Germany against enemy armor. On 25 April unit was relieved of attachment to 2nd Battalion 334th Infantry Regiment and reverted to Battalion control. Travelled approximately 7 miles to Kaulitz, Germany where 1st Platoon had already assembled after being relieved from Company C. On 27 April Company engaged in reconnaissance patrolling in assigned area for military activity, ammo dumps, ordnance equipment, hospitals, and airfields.

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28 April Third Platoon to provide defense for 84th Inf Division Command Post. Reconnaissance patrols captured 3 PW's. 29 April Area patrolling in assigned zone resulted in capture of 4 PW's.

**(3) Company C.**

1 - 30 April 1945: On 1 April Company C from assembly positions in Homberg moved to Gr Reken where they were attached to the 335th Infantry Regiment with the mission of supporting the advance of the regiment in the Rhine River crossing at Wesel, time 1545A hours. 2 April each Tank Destroyer platoon was attached to an infantry battalion within the regiment. Regiment moved to Senden with the TD platoons in support of their respective battalions. 3 April regiment jumped off for Walbeck at 1900 with the TD platoons furnishing close AT support for infantry advance. 4 April company moved to Ban Oyenhausen, 5 April Company C made a 57 mile march to Haverstadt. Reconnoitered for firing positions across the Weser River after the company had moved on to Minden. At 0710 on the 6 April first contact was made with the enemy since crossing the Rhine. 2nd Platoon, commanded by 1st Lt Royce Adams took under fire a 14 car flak train consisting of three 128 mm guns, 4 quadruple 20 mm AA guns, ammunition cars, and living quarters. Train complete with gun crews was destroyed by the platoons anti-tank fire. At 2100 the company made an uneventful crossing of the Weser and closed in assembly positions on opposite side with their respective infantry battalions. 7 April on east side of Weser opposite Minden the 2nd Platoon engaged a German armored column destroying three personnel carriers and one armored car. The 1st platoon eliminated an enemy CP from same vicinity and the 3rd platoon captured 28 PW's in clearing the woods in their sector. 8 April 1st platoon supported the 1st Bn 335th Infantry in attack on Buskeburge. Fifty calibre fire from destroyers over the heads of the advancing infantry silenced enemy infantry fire from buildings causing surrender of 128 PW's. 9 April Company C as a unit spearheaded combat team into Kirchwehen meeting no opposition. 10 April 1st and 2nd platoons supported attack of 1st and 2nd battalions in attack on Hannover. Resistance was light to medium. 1st Lt Joseph E. Harkness and party while on a reconnaissance for gun positions came under heavy burp gun fire. After first making certain of the safety of his party Lt Harkness proceeded to reduce the threat alone. Encountering the burp gun crews, Lt Harkness eliminated one team with pistol fire after which the others fled. 10 April company assembled at Burgdorf and reverted to battalion control. 12 April Company C was placed in 84th Inf Division reserve. 14 April company moved to Ummern and then to Beetsendorf. 16 April 3rd platoon was attached to XIII Corps for AT defense of Corps CP. 17 April Company C moved to Lindenburg. 19 April Company C with 1st Platoon of Company B attached gave 335th Inf AT support in clearing out enemy pocket vicinity of Schnackenburg on the Elbe River. At 1920 company moved to vicinity of Nonchau. 20 April company moved to Troningen providing AT support in regimental zone of advance to North. 21 April the TD platoons were again assigned to their respective Infantry battalions for AT support. First platoon moved to town of Gorleben with infantry and aided attack by knocking out panzerfaust teams, machine gun nests, and enemy CP's. Also knocked out enemy flak wagon observed firing on friendly troops. 23 April 1st section 1st platoon and 2nd section 2nd platoon assigned mission of clearing woods in vicinity of northeast of Rostock with following results: 15 enemy dead including 7 officers, 1 radio station, demolished, military headquarters CP destroyed, 5 MG nests knocked out, 3 combination panzerfaust and burp gun teams wiped out, 1 dug in water platnamd 3 motorcycles destroyed, 45 enemy

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PW's captured, recovery of great amount of American material captured previous day. 24 April Company relieved of attachment to 335th Infantry Regiment and reverted back to Battalion control. On 27 April engaged in reconnaissance patrolling in assigned area for military activity, ammunition dumps, ordnance equipment, hospitals, air-fields etc. 28 April pricing and patrolling of assigned area netted 3 PW's. 29 April screening of civilians revealed 3 PW's.

(4) Reconnaissance Company.

1 - 30 April 1945: On 1 April 1st platoon attached to Co A, 2nd platoon attached to Company B, 3rd platoon attached to Company C. Pioneer and Headquarters platoons prepared for movement across Rhine River from vicinity Burckhausen, Germany. On 3 April Company less Rcn platoons moved to Senden, Germany where they were placed in 84th Infantry Division Reserve. 2nd Platoon was given mission of spearheading 334th Infantry Regiment combat team vicinity of Herden to Boefenolle, Germany. On 4 April Hq and Pioneer Platoons moved to vicinity of Harendorf, Germany. 2nd Rcn Plat was assigned mission of being point in 3rd Infantry Battalion attack on Hensford, Germany. After clearing Beelen, Germany platoon swung north reaching the Ems River to find the bridges blown. Reconnaissance revealed bridge intact southeast of Harswinkel, Germany which was secured for infantry crossing. On reaching Hensford, Germany a new mission of securing the bridge intact where autobahn crossed Weser River was assigned, but on arrival at scene the bridge had already been blown by the enemy. A nearby railroad bridge afforded a means for foot troops to cross but not vehicles. On 5 April Company less Rcn platoons moved to vicinity of Bad Oeynhausen, Germany. Regimental Commander assigned 2nd Rcn platoons to reconnoiter west of Weser and north of Bad Oeynhausen, Germany to vicinity of 335th Infantry Regiment bridgehead south of Minden, Germany. Platoon was fired on by 88 mm guns from across the river. One M-3 armored car was hit repeatedly by 88 mm shells and the crew of four enlisted men were killed. Artillery fired was so intense that the regimental Commander cancelled the mission. On 6 April, 2nd Plat crossed Weser River at Minden, Germany and encountered intense sniper fire from vicinity of Rocke, Germany. Platoon dismounted as Infantry to aid in capture of Burkeburge, Germany and finally ferreted out a large enemy column near the Weser-Elbe Canal. On 7 April, Hq Section operated as relay station between advance elements of this battalion and captured 11 PW's. On 8 April, Rcn Co less Rcn Platoons moved to Stadthagen, Germany where Hq Plat again acted as relay station. Captured 4 PW's and killed 1 enemy. 2nd Platoon reduced road block vic of Bad Hensdorf, Germany capturing 35 PW's. 1000 yards farther another road block defended by 3 half tracks and enemy infantry was reduced with the aid of infantry mortar fire. Near the approach to the autobahn and enemy ambush was discovered containing 16, 88 mm AT-AA guns well dug in and camouflaged, which was neutralized. On 9 April Hq and Pioneer platoons moved to vicinity of Gunger, Germany where pioneer platoon laid hasty mine field and established, and maintained road blocks. On 10 April Company less Rcn platoons moved to vicinity Harenburg, Germany. On 11 April Hq and Pioneer platoons moved to vicinity of Burgdorf, Germany. 3rd Rcn Platoon relieved of attachment to Co C and reverted to Company control. After fall of Hannover, Germany, 2nd Platoon spearheaded 334th Infantry Regiment combat team in attack on Altwassbuchen, Germany where reconnaissance revealed several flak guns which were promptly knocked out by tanks. At Kirchorst, Germany the platoon liberated approximately 500 PW's from allied nations. At Burgdorf, Germany several SS panzer PW's were taken by surprise & captured. Platoon then moved to Sortensen, Germany. On 12 April the 2nd Platoon took the town of Haarigsen, Germany and freed a Major of the 11th Cav Group who had been captured a few days previous. Entering Wathingen, Germany the 2nd platoon was hit by heavy sniper and machine gun fire from both flanks. One M-3 armored car was knocked out by 2 enemy SP guns without loss of personnel.

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Moving on approximately 500 yds the Germans started a counterattack supported by SP Guns. Platoon dismounted as infantry and supported by their own MG's repelled the attack forcing the enemy to withdraw. 14 April Headquarters platoon and Pioneer platoon moved to Ummern and finally closed vicinity of Beetzendorf. 15 April Company less Rcn platoons moved to Genzien. 16 April 1st and 2nd platoons relieved from attachment to their respective gun companies and reverted to company control. 17 April Rcn Company moved to Lindenbergl and thence on to Deutsch. The three Rcn platoons reconnoitered roads between Ziemendorf and Wahrenberg. 18 April Rcn platoons screened 84th Inf Division left flank from Arendsee to Wahrenberg capturing 1 Officer and 12 EM PW's. 19 April 2nd and 3rd platoons and pioneer platoon engaged in patrolling north flank of Division from Arendsee to Elbe River. Outpost at Bomenzien manned by Pioneer platoon was attacked by enemy patrol of estimated at 6 men. Two rounds of panzerfaust fire at 75 yards knocked out an M-20 armored car utility, injuring 3 men. 1st platoon relieved outpost and maintained combat patrol for rest of night. 20 April company patrolled north flank of XIII Corps and captured 5 PW's. 21 April company moved to Tobringen and patrolled left flank of 335th Inf Regiment capturing 11 PW's. 24 April company relieved of patrol and returned to battalion assembly area vicinity Kaulitz capturing 1 PW. 27 April engaged in reconnaissance, patrolling in assigned area for military activity, ammunition dumps, ordnance equipment, hospitals, airfields, etc. 28 April screening of citizens in small towns of assigned area revealed 10 PW's. 29 April reconnaissance patrol captured 2 PW's.

b. Enemy forces.

In the campaign from the Rhine River to the Elbe River the terrains mostly were of the rolling open, to flat type, well drained, passable, and well suited for armor. The ground was sufficiently firm to permit cross country movement of vehicles although sporadic patches of woods often hid enemy troops in bypassed areas and at times temporarily canalized our movements. Between the Rhine and the Elbe there were 4 major water barriers namely the Ems and Weser Rivers and the Dortmund-Ems and Weser-Elbe Canals which acted only as nuisance value as none of these held up the advance for any period of time. Enemy resistance varied from very little to fanatical "fight-to-the-death type". No definite divisions could be identified as such because as the enemy withdrew he gobbled up any and all troops and materiel he could lay hands on whether they were assigned to his command or not. Defensive measures employed were mostly road blocks covered by flak guns, tank ditches and isolated infantry trenches in open fields near adjoining woods. Mines were used very little by the enemy in his hasty retreat. Strongest points of resistance were at the water barriers where the enemy put up his strongest defenses along the Elbe. The most peculiar trait of the enemy in this operation was the orders given the enlisted men by their officers to discard their uniforms for civilian clothes and return to their homes when capture was eminent. This was not only true in the Wehrmacht, but also in the SS Elite troops. Air activity of the enemy consisted of strafing and bombing attacks along with the usual nightly reconnaissance missions. Attacks were not in force and were of a harassing nature rather than a tactical threat.

4. Annexes.

a. Personnel.

(1) Reinforcements

Hq CG: 3 EM MOS 531; 1 EM MOS 345.

Co A: 1 Officer MOS 1222  
 2 EM - 531; 1 EM - 605; 1 EM - 345; 1 EM - 776.  
 Co B: 1 EM - MOS 813; 3 EM - 531; 1 EM MOS 345.  
 Co C: 5 EM MOS 531; 1 EM MOS 585; 1 EM MOS 745; 1 EM MOS 648.  
 Ren Co: 3 EM MOS 531; 1 EM MOS 745; 1 EM MOS 652; 1 EM MOS 605.

- (2) 10 EM killed; 1 - Died of Wounds; 11 EM Wounded.
- (3) 664 PW's captured.
- (4) Awards - See Inclosures.

b. Supply and Evacuation.

(1) Ordnance:

- 2 - Car, Armored, light, M8 Replaced.
- 2 - Carriage, motor, 76mm, M 18 "
- 1 Truck, 2 1/2 ton, 6x6 "
- 2 - Truck, 1/2 ton, 4x4 "
- 2 - Truck, 1/2 ton, 4x4 Not Replaced
- 1 - Trailer, 1/2 ton, 2 Wheel, Cargo "
- 3 - Gun, Machine, Cal .50, HB Flex, M2 Replaced
- 2 - Rifle, US, Cal. .30 M1 "
- 3 - Carbine, Cal., .30 M1 "
- 2 - Carbine, Cal., .30 M1 Not Replaced
- 3 - Pistol, US, Cal .45, M1911A1 Replaced
- 2 - Pistol, US., Cal .45, M1911A1 Not Replaced
- 5 - Holster Pistol, Cal. 45, M1911 (Leather) Not Replaced
- 1 - Mount, MG, M36 Not Replaced
- 1 - Carriage, MG Mount, For M18 Replaced by being repaired
- 1 - Tool set Armorers, TD Bn. Not Replaced
- 2 - Mount, MG, M 48 "
- 2 - Watch, Wrist, 15 Jewel "
- 3 - Tool set, General Mechanics "
- 5 - Binoculars, M 17 Replaced
- 8 - Binoculars, M 17 Not Replaced
- 10 - Knife, Bayonet, M4 w/scabbard, M8A1 Not Replaced
- 1 - Telescope, observation, M 48 Not Replaced
- 1 - Circle, Aiming, M1 "

(2) Engineer

- 1 - Command post & fire direction set, No 1 Not Replaced

(3) Quartermaster:

- 4 - Outfit cooking, one-burner Not Replaced
- 1 - Tool set, carpenters, Set No. 2 "
- 1 - Screen, latrine, complete, w/pins and poles Not Replaced

- (4) 1 - m Wire, W-130, on Drum, Dr. - 8. Not Replaced
- 5 - Tool Equipment, TE - 33 "
- 4 - Radio Set, SCR-608 "
- 1 - Radio Set, SCR-506 Replaced
- 3 - Radio Set, Scr-610 Not Replaced

c. Enemy material destroyed during month of April 1945.

- 2 AA Guns
- 4 Personnel Carriers
- 1 Mark III Tank
- 2 Box cars loaded w/ammunition
- 1 Armored vehicle
- 1 Light vehicle

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7 Machine Gun nests  
1 Halftrack  
4 Flak Gun emplacement  
2 SP 88 mm Guns  
2 Nebelwerfers  
1 Truck  
7 Houses burned down  
1 Dug in water plant

2 Panzerfaust nests  
1 Reconnaissance vehicle  
2 FW 190  
5 Rocket Guns  
3 Motorcycles  
1 Flak wagon  
1 Radio Station (OP)

4 - Incls:

- Incl 1 - Award of Meritorious Service Unit  
Plaque to Hq Co.  
Incl 2 - Award Silver Star Medal to 1st Lt Herkness.  
Incl 3 - Award Silver Star Medal to S Sgt Kash (Posthumous)  
Incl 4 - One Unit Journal.

*Harold L. Davis*

HAROLD L. DAVIS  
Lt Col., FA  
Commanding

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