

Unclassified per Ltr, Hq 83d Div, 4 May 45.

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HEADQUARTERS
643D TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 339, U. S. ARMY

1 May 1945



319.1/401

SUBJECT: After Action Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C. (Thru channels).

1. In compliance with the provisions of AR 745, After Action Report, this organization, for the month of April, 1945, is submitted herewith.

BURLE R. FARR
Lt. Colonel, Cavalry
Commanding.

1 Incl:
After Action Rpt.
(In triplicate)

319.1/401 1st Ind. HPC/rwf
HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 83, U. S. Army. 16 May 1945.

TO: Commanding General, XIII Corps, APO 289, U. S. Army.
(Attention: Adjutant General)

Forwarded.

For the Commanding General:

N. P. COWDEN,
Major, AGD.
Adjutant General.

1 Incl: n/c

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

÷ 643 ÷

Tank Destroyer Battalion

APRIL 1945

HIT



HARD



THE FIRST T.D.'S

"ON THE RHINE"

"ACROSS THE ELBE"

C O N T E N T S

- I OPERATIONS
- II BATTLE LESSONS
- III TROOP LIST
- IV ROSTER OF COMMANDER AND STAFF
- V BATTALION COMMAND POSTS
- VI AWARDS
- VII LOSSES
- VIII APPENDICES

Unit Journal
Reports of Tank Destroyer Operations
S-3 Reports
Sketch Map -- Daily Progress of Units



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DRIVE TO THE ELBE



At the beginning of the period, the battalion was attached to the 83rd Inf Div and the gun companies were further attached to the RCT's as indicated in III "Troop List". The battalion was located vicinity LUDLINGHAUSEN, GERMANY. The battalion (-) moved as shown in V "Battalion Command Posts," maintaining close communication with division headquarters, supervising the tactical employment of the gun companies by the various RCT's, and administering and supplying the units. This battalion was the first TD unit to cross the ELBE RIVER and was the only TD's across the ELBE RIVER at the close of the period. In this period, units of the battalion destroyed 30 major items of enemy equipment, captured 705 PW's and lost, due to enemy action, 7 major items of equipment. At the close of the period, the battalion CP was located at CALBE, GERMANY with the gun companies deployed on the perimeter of the ELBE RIVER bridgehead.

Throughout the period, Company A has been attached to the 329 RCT. On 1 April, the company was located at BECKUM, GERMANY and assisted the second battalion of the 329th in clearing the regimental sector to the LIPPE RIVER. From this point through the establishment of the bridgehead across the ELBE RIVER, the company materially aided the advance of the 329 RCT not only by aggressive combat action but also by transporting a good portion of the infantry, supplementing the transportation available to the infantry. The company played a big part in entering and clearing BARKY, GERMANY due to their aggressiveness and tremendous fire power. The platoons were ferried across the ELBE RIVER as quickly as possible and assisted the 329 RCT in establishing the bridgehead and thereafter maintaining the defense of the central sector.

At the beginning of the period Company B moved to the vicinity of BADERSLOH, GERMANY and was attached to the 330 RCT. Subsequent attachments of Company B are as shown in III "Troop List". Upon attachment to the 113th Cavalry, Company B played an effective role in clearing the passes through the mountains East of BAD LIPPSPRINGE, GERMANY. The Company materially assisted the 113th Cavalry in the enlarging the bridgehead across the WESER RIVER, and destroyed one M4 V and 3 AT guns in one day in the vicinity of ESCHERSHAUSEN, GERMANY. When the 113th Cavalry was ordered to protect the right flank of the division vicinity of the HANZ MOUNTAINS, the company assisted by establishing road blocks and participating in the clearing of the area vicinity WEHNIGERODE, GERMANY. At this time, the company was ordered to join the 329th RCT to assist in the holding of the ELBE RIVER bridgehead and moved a distance of approximately 70 miles to join the 329th RCT within 3 hours. After crossing the ELBE RIVER, the company assisted in the defense of the Northern sector and was instrumental in repelling the strongest counterattack against the bridgehead on April 16th.

At the opening of the period Company C was attached to the 331 RCT and moved to vicinity of AHLEN, GERMANY. In the drive to the ELBE RIVER the company was attached as shown in III "Troop List". While located in vicinity of AHLEN, GERMANY, the company was instrumental in forcing of the crossing of the LIPPE RIVER into the city of HAMM, GERMANY. The company aided the advance of the 331 RCT and overcame considerable opposition in clearing the regimental zone up to the WESER RIVER. The 3rd Platoon of Company C remained with the 331 RCT and aided the RCT in crossing the WESER RIVER at FOLLE, GERMANY and in clearing the city of HOLZMINDEN, GERMANY. Throughout the whole drive, this company, like the others, assisted the infantry in their rapid advance by carrying up to 25 men on a destroyer. The 3rd Platoon was the first TD's to cross the ELBE RIVER. After crossing the ELBE RIVER, the company assisted the 331 RCT in establishing and holding the Southern sector of the bridgehead. In a period of 2 days on the bridgehead, the company destroyed 2 tanks, one SP gun and one Half-Track.

The reconnaissance platoons of the reconnaissance company were attached as shown in III "Troop List". They did yeoman services in assisting the advance of the division. They were employed not only in their primary role as TD reconnaissance but more often in the role of straight reconnaissance for the RCT. The 3rd Platoon was among the first troops to enter HAMM, GERMANY and was used as regimental reconnaissance in the advance of the 331 RCT. The 1st Platoon reconnoitered the entire zone of the leading battalion of the 329 RCT from HORN, GERMANY to DANKY, GERMANY. At the close of the period, the 2nd Platoon was engaged in reconnaissance Northeast of ZERBST, GERMANY and in one mission, the platoon captured 5 Officers and 125 MM. The company has been credited with being the first to enter and secure many of the towns in the division zone.

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BATTLE LESSONS

CLOSE-IN DEFENSE In a rapid advance, it is not possible to check every place the enemy might use to conceal himself. Since the TD's are extremely vulnerable to enemy infantry, particularly the panzerfaust, it has been necessary to provide for increased alertness. The German, whether he is a member of the panzerfaust platoon or a member of a regular infantry unit, employs his panzerfaust immediately adjacent to roads or other avenues of approach. He uses deep foxholes or trenches and can, by crouching, avoid easy detection. He generally waits until a portion of the column has moved by before taking any action. In order to combat this, we require that each vehicle have two men particularly alert and observing to the immediate flanks. One man observes to the front and flanks while the other man observes to the rear and flanks. When moving in column each destroyer is, therefore, covered by at least two other destroyers. At a halt, no matter how temporary, dismantled security is established immediately and all possible positions that the enemy might use in the vicinity are investigated.

TROOP-CARRIERS It is possible, in emergencies to carry up to 25 men on an M-18 in addition to its regular crew. By loading the infantry on the destroyers as well as other vehicles of the platoon, it is possible for one TD platoon to transport approximately one company of infantry. The 83d Inf Div has made full use of this means of transportation very successfully in the drive to the Elbe River.

SAND BAGS The value of sand-bagging the outside of the destroyers has been demonstrated again. In two cases, a destroyer was fired on by a panzerfaust. The effect of the panzerfaust was nullified by the sand-bagging.

COMMUNICATIONS The communications of the TD platoon has been changed so as to have in addition to the communication with the company, communication with the artillery liaison plane, the tanks, and the infantry. This enables the platoon to play its part more effectively. One SCR-610 in the platoon has one channel on the company frequency and one channel on the artillery liaison plane frequency. All other SCR-610's have one channel on the company frequency and one channel on the tank frequency. SCR-300's were borrowed from the infantry and are carried in the platoon leader's vehicle.



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TROOP LIST - 1-30 April

Co A (attd 329 RCT)
Attd 1st Flat Rcn Co

Co B (attd 330 RCT)
Attd 2nd Flat Rcn Co

Co C (attd 331 RCT)
Attd 3rd Flat Rcn Co

Rcn Co

Hqs Co

Changes in Mission and Attachments Within Battalion During Month

031300 Apr - Co B rel'd attachment 330 RCT and attd 113 Cav Gp (TFB).

081130 Apr - Co C (-3rd Flat) rel'd attachment 331 RCT and attd 330 RCT.

092100 Apr - 3rd Flat Co C rel'd attachment 331 RCT and rejoined Co C which was previously attd to 330 RCT.

111530 Apr - Co C rel'd attachment 330 RCT and attd 331 RCT.

131020 Apr - 1st Flat, Rcn Co, rel'd attachment Co A.

141700 Apr - Co B rel'd attachment 113 Cav Gp and attd 329 RCT.

161600 Apr - Co B rel'd attachment 329 RCT and attd OOR, 2nd Armd Div.

171615 Apr - 3rd Flat, Rcn Co rel'd attachment Co C.

191500 Apr - Co B rel'd attachment OOR, 2nd Armd Div and attd to 320 RCT.

211015 Apr - Co B rel'd attachment 320 RCT and attd to 330 RCT.

231200 Apr - 2nd Flat, Rcn Co rel'd attachment to Co B and attd to Co A.

30 Apr - 2nd Flat, Rcn Co rel'd attachment to Co A, 3rd Flat, Rcn Co attd to Co A.



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BATTALION COMMANDER	Farr, Burlie R., Lt Col (1 April to 30 April)	O-291786
BATTALION EXECUTIVE	Gaulke, Ira M.F., Maj (1 April to 30 April)	O-214191
S - 1	Miller, Randall A., 1st Lt (1 April to 30 April)	O-1822299
S - 2	Robbins, Lewis, P., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-301308
S - 3	Lang, Ralph W., Maj (1 April to 30 April)	O-348944
S - 4	Burgin, Alexander M., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-409923
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Postiglione, Michael, 1st Lt (1 April to 30 April)	O-1822453
MOTOR OFFICER	Sunderland, David M., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-454945
BATTALION SURGEON	Fornwalt, George R., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-511138
HEADQUARTERS COMPANY COMMANDING OFFICER	Kresky, Howard S., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-599487
RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY COMMANDING OFFICER	Peterson, James M., 1st Lt (1 April to 30 April)	O-1822448
COMPANY A COMMANDING OFFICER	Ward, Thomas W., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-1188969
COMPANY B COMMANDING OFFICER	Colt, John B., Capt (1 April to 30 April)	O-1185600
COMPANY C COMMANDING OFFICER	McNabb, Howard S., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	O-1822289

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010001	to	011000	--	Vie Luninghausen, Germany
011200	to	011800	--	Walstedde, Germany
011930	to	031615	--	Beckum, Germany
031810	to	041545	--	Delbruk, Germany
041700	to	051730	--	Bad Lippspringe Germany
052015	to	071230	--	Steinheim, Germany
071345	to	081100	--	Elbrinzen, Germany
081545	to	101100	--	Scharfeldendorf, Germany
101215	to	101830	--	Gr. Freden, Germany
102100	to	111915	--	Langelshelm, Germany
112130	to	121515	--	Heudeber, Germany
121745	to	131330	--	Gochstedt, Germany
131515	to	302400	--	Calbe, Germany

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SILVER STARS

BRONZE STARS

Headquarters Company

3

Company "A"

Company "B"

Company "C"

3

16

Reconnaissance Company

3

Medical Detachment

1



APRIL BATTLE CASUALTIES

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>NEC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>REINF & RTD</u>
Headquarters Company	0	0	0	4	4	8
Company "A"	2	4	0	7	13	7
Company "B"	2	6	0	6	14	13
Company "C"	2	5	0	9	16	8
Reconnaissance Company	6	10	0	7	23	14
Medical Detachment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	25	0	33	70	50

ENEMY LOSSES

	<u>MK VI</u>	<u>MK V</u>	<u>MK IV</u>	<u>SP GUNS</u>	<u>AA GUNS</u>	<u>LOCO-MOTIVE</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>GUNS AT</u>	<u>GUNS ARTY</u>	<u>MG</u>	<u>ME 109</u>	<u>PW's</u>
Headquarters Company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Company "A"	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	2	1	1	237
Company "B"	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0
Company "C"	0	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	260
Reconnaissance Company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	203
Total	1	2	4	3	1	1	8	3	2	2	2	705

