

HEADQUARTERS
656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
AFC 230

1 March 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D.C.
(Attention: Historical Section)
(Thru Channels).



1. In compliance with AR 345-105, 18 November 1929, as changed by Change 4 dated 10 August 1944, the After Action Report of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion for the period 17-28 February 1945 is forwarded herewith.

For the commanding officer:

Victor A. Stefanowicz
VICTOR A. STEFANOWICZ
Captain S-2
(Historian)

HEADQUARTERS
656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230

5 March 1945

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Section I

1. Campaign (Current Campaign in Western Europe).
2. Map References: Michelin Carte #3 GSGS 4507, Sheet 20
GSGS 4040 Sheet 92 Sheet 80
3. Unit and Commanders of Troops:
 - Bn CO - Lt Col John C. Meador
 - Hq Co CO - Capt Archie S. Benegar
 - Rcn Co CO - Capt Thomas J. Hanifen
 - A Co CO - Capt David V. Cleary
 - B Co CO - Capt Charles D. Driscoll
 - C Co CO - Capt Richard H. Tuggle



Section II

Statistical Data

a. Personnel Losses:

Date	KIA		DOI		WIA		MIA		CAPT		NBC	
	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM
17 Feb 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

b. Personnel Replacements:

Date	O	EM
17 Feb 45	0	0
18	0	0
19	0	0
20	0	0
21	0	0
22	0	0

Date	O	EM
23 Feb 45	0	0
24	0	0
25	0	0
26	0	0
27	0	7
28	0	0

c. PW taken - None



d. Vehicular Losses:

										:Trailers		
	1/2-T	3/4-T	1 1/2-T	2 1/2-T	10-T	M-8	M-18	M-20	M-32	1-T	M-10	1/2-T
Feb 45												
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

e. Vehicular Replacements:

										:Trailers		
	1/2-T	3/4-T	1 1/2-T	2 1/2-T	10-T	M-8	M-18	M-20	M-32	1-T	M-10	1/2-T
Feb 45												
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

f. Ammunition Expended:

*260 76mm HE 37mm Canister

*Ammunition expended at practice firing at DOCHAMP VP459838.

Section III

The battalion closed in SPRIMONT, Belgium K530140, 171820 Feb 45. Quarters for officers and EM had been arranged for by the Advance Detachment. Upon completion of 1st echelon maintenance and the feeding of the personnel, officers and EM were conducted to their quarters by guides of the advance detachment. The next three days, 18-20 Feb 45, were spent in maintenance of the vehicles and cleaning of personal arms, clothing and equipment.

During the period 20-27 Feb 45 the Battalion Commander, Bn Executive, Staff and Special Staff officers visited the 644 TD Bn at SCALICH, Germany, K460455 for the purpose of orientation. Company officers also visited the 644 TD Bn, 899th and 692nd TD Battalions for the same reason.

The battalion G-3 made arrangements for the personnel of the 656th TD Bn to fire small arms, 37 and 76mm guns. It was felt that since the battalion personnel had not fired for over two months and since the 76mm guns had not been fired since receipt, preliminary firing of the weapons would prove a great training aid.

At 0800A 25 Feb 45 C Company with 2nd reconnaissance Platoon attached left for the range at DOCHAMP, Belgium R459838. The road march was conducted in a tactical manner with the reconnaissance Platoon leading. C Company closed into DOCHAMP at 1200A hrs 25 Feb 45. The remainder of the day was spent in preparation for the next day's firing. Several destroyed vehicles were pulled on the range as targets. C Company began firing at 0930A 26 Feb 45 and completed at 1200A hrs. A total of 130 rds of HE were fired. Rifles, 30 and 50 caliber machine guns were also fired by the security and Company Headquarters sections. Reconnaissance Platoon fired 30 rds of 37mm canister, rifles, 30 and 50 caliber machine guns. C Company left the range at 1300A hrs and returned to the battalion area at SPRIMONT 1445A 26 Feb 45.

Company B with the 1st platoon attached left SPRIMONT for DOCHAMP 0800A hrs 26 Feb 45 and arrived at the range at 1225A hrs. The remainder of the day was spent in preparation for the next day's firing. Additional destroyed vehicles were pulled to the range as targets. At 0945A hrs 26 Feb 45 B Company began firing. A total of 130 rds of HE ammunition was fired. Rifles, carbines, 30 and 50 caliber machine guns were also fired. The 1st reconnaissance platoon fired 30 rds of 37mm canister, carbines, rifles, 30 and 50 caliber machine guns were also fired. Firing was completed at 1200A hrs 27 Feb 45. B Company left DOCHAMP at 1230A hrs and closed in on SPRIMONT R530140 271425A March 45.

Upon receipt of a telephone call from G-3, 9th Armored Division, the Battalion Commander left the Bn CP at 1935A hrs 27 Feb 45. A meeting of all Bn officers was called for 2100A hrs. At 2107A hrs the Bn Commander returned to the Bn CP. The Bn alerted to move in four hrs. A Company with the 3rd Recon Plat and one section of pioneers was attached to Combat Command A & B Company with the 1st Recon Plat attached remained under Bn control. C Company with the 2nd Recon Plat and one section of pioneers was attached to CC B.

The remainder of Recon (Co, Hq and Hq Co personnel remained under battalion control. Lt Benson, Pioneer Platoon Leader was attached as liaison officer for C Company. Lt Wilke, Recon Co Executive was attached to A Company as Liaison Officer; Lt Turner Bn Liaison officer was attached to B Company as Liaison Officer.

The forward Bn CP closed at SPRIMONT at 281000A hrs and moved to join the 9th Armored Division forward CP for the move to the front lines. The mission of the Bn forward CP was remain in close proximity to the Division CP for the purpose of liaison. A high overcast remained throughout the day during the march to GEY, Germany P008399. The condition of the roads over the entire route varied from good to fair enabling the march unit to travel at the prescribed speed. There was no enemy air or ground interference during the march. The Bn CP closed in GEY at 2000A hrs 28 Feb 45. This organizational first combat CP was set up in an abandoned house. wire communication between the Bn Forward and



and Division CP was completed at 2300A hrs.

The Battalion near CP and Headquarters Company moved from SPRIMONT Belgium at 1528A hrs, 28 Feb 45 with Combat Command Reserve of the 9th Armored Division. The mission of the Battalion near CP was to coordinate the Headquarters Company services with the gun companies. The mission of Headquarters Company was to move with the Battalion near CP and to furnish the Forward Battalion CP and the gun companies with supply and maintenance services. No enemy action was experienced either by Headquarters Company or by the near CP group during the road march from SPRIMONT to FRIESEN RATH Germany, K913344. Headquarters Company with the battalion near CP closed in on FRIESEN RATH at 2155A hrs, 28 February 1945.

A Company with one Reconnaissance Platoon was attached to Combat Command A, 9th Armored Division per verbal order of the CG and confirmed in writing by FO 3, 9th Armored Division dated 28 February 1945. A Company's mission was to march by motor convoy from SPRIMONT Belgium to an assembly area at DROVE Germany F1337. In addition, A Company was to act as the AT reserve for Combat Command A when the CG attacked in the morning. No enemy action was encountered during the road march or movement into the assembly area. The conditions of the roads were fair to good. A high overcast prevailed throughout the day. A Company closed at the assembly area at 2300A hrs 28 February 1945.

Company B with one reconnaissance platoon remained under battalion control. The mission of Company B was to march by motor convoy from SPRIMONT Belgium to KORNELIMUNSTER Germany, K904377 and remain there to await further orders. B Company departed from SPRIMONT Belgium on the 28th of February 1945 and arrived at KORNELIMUNSTER Germany on the same day. No enemy action was encountered during the motor march. The company completed its road march in an excellent manner.

C Company with one reconnaissance platoon was attached to Combat Command B per verbal order of the Commanding General, 9th Armored Division. This attachment was later confirmed by FO 3, 9th Armored Division. C Company departed from SPRIMONT Belgium at 0645A 28 February 1945. Company C's mission was to move from SPRIMONT Belgium to an assembly area in the vicinity of SOLLER Germany, F168388 and act as the AT reserve for the Combat Command when the Combat Command attacked in the morning. Conditions of the roads were fair to good. A high overcast remained throughout the day. No enemy action was encountered during the motor march or movement in the assembly area. The company closed on SOLLER Germany at 0130A hrs 1 March 1945.

SECTION IV

Since this organization has not seen any combat action at this date no comments can be made in regards to combat adaptability of equipment found in this battalion. In the past month this battalion has covered over 500 miles in road marches. The outstanding point of these marches is the excellent manner in which the M-18 Tank Destroyer has performed. At the close of a days march, in all cases, all destroyers closed with their respective march units. In several instances one or two M-18s dropped out of the march columns. The causes of these "drop outs" were simple mechanical failures, never of a such serious nature as to warrant extensive repairs. These "drop outs" generally, rejoined their march units when the column stopped to rest and performed maintenance.

The performance of the M-8 and M-20 while satisfactory on hard roads is only fair on muddy roads and on cross-country runs. This is particularly true in inclement weather. Both the M-8 and M-20 have a tendency to skid on muddy hard surface roads and bog down in crossing fields. The inability of these vehicles to perform well over muddy fields can be somewhat improved by the addition of traction chains. Even with this addition the vehicles are not entirely satisfactory for all operations. Mechanically these vehicles stand up well.

The remaining wheeled vehicles performed well with an outstanding performance by the 3/4-ton weapons carrier. This vehicle performs well on all types of roads and in cross-country operations in all types of weather.

John C. Meador
JOHN C. MEADOR
Lt Col, Inf (TD)
Commanding

