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**HEADQUARTERS
656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U. S. ARMY**

19 April 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 1-31 March 1945 is forwarded herewith.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

2 Incls.

1. After Action Report 656 TD Bn.
2. Maps.

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HEADQUARTERS
656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U. S. Army

2 April 1945

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Section I

1. Campaign (Current campaign in western Europe)
2. Map references:- GSGS 4507, Sheets 20, 40, 60, 61, 80, 81, 100, 101; GSGS 4416, Sheets Q3, R2, R3, S2, S3.
3. Unit and commanders of troops:-

Bn CO - Lt Col John C. Meador
 Hq Co CO - Capt Archie S. Benegar
 Recon Co CO - 2nd Lt Joseph W. Clark
 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	
	C	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM
1 Mar 45	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
15	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
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	2
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

Personnel Losses (Cont'd)

Date	KIA		DOI		WIA		MIA		CAPT		NBC	
	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM
23 Mar 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
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	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

b. Personnel replacements:-

Date	O	EM	Date	O	EM	Date	O	EM
1 Mar 45	0	0	12 Mar 45	0	0	23 Mar 45	0	0
2	0	0	13	0	0	24	0	0
3	0	0	14	0	0	25	0	0
4	0	0	15	0	0	26	0	0
5	0	0	16	0	0	27	0	0
6	0	0	17	0	0	28	0	0
7	0	0	18	0	6	29	0	0
8	0	0	19	0	0	30	0	0
9	0	0	20	0	0	31	0	0
10	1	19	21	0	0			
11	0	0	22	0	0			

c. PWs Taken - 398 Actual Count
200 Additional (Estimated)

d. Vehicular Replacements:

Date	74-T		3/4		1/2		2/2		10-T		M-8		M-18		M-20		M-32		M-36		Trailers		
	1-T	M10	74-T																				
Mar 45																							
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: C Company did not receive one M-18 replacement. Company turned in 10 M-18s and received 12 M-36s in return.

e. Vehicular Losses:

Date	74-T		3/4		1/2		2/2		10-T		M-8		M-18		M-20		M-32		M-36		Trailers		
	1-T	M10	74-T																				
Mar 45																							
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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e. Vehicular Losses (Cont'd)

	74-T	3/4	142	242	16-T	M-8	M-18	M-20	M-32	M-36	Trailers			
											1-T	M-10	44	
Mar 45														
26	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

f. Ammunition Expended:

<u>76mm HE</u>	<u>76mm APC</u>	<u>76mm HVAP</u>	<u>90mm HE</u>
433	72	12	15

Section III

The organization for combat of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion at 010001A March 1945 was as follows: 656th TD Bn attached to 9th Armored Division, Company A with the 3rd Rcn Platoon, attached to Combat Command A; Company C with the 2nd Rcn Platoon, attached to Combat Command B; Company B with the 1st Rcn Platoon, Headquarters Company and the company headquarters of Reconnaissance Company remained under battalion control. The Battalion CP and all the elements under its control was attached to CCR.

In order to maintain close liaison between the Commanding General of the 9th Armored Division and the Commanding Officer of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the command group of this organization was divided into two elements, the Battalion Forward CP which moved with the Division Forward CP and the Battalion Rear CP which remained with Headquarters Company. The Forward CP Group was comprised of the Battalion Commander, S-3, S-2, Communications Officer and the CO of Reconnaissance Company while the Rear CP Group consisted of the Battalion Executive, S-4 and S-1.

At 010001A March 1945 the Bn CP was located at GEY, Germany, (Fo71399) having moved there the previous day from SPRIMONT, Belgium (K530140). Wire communication was established with 9th Armored Division upon arrival at GEY. The Liaison Officer of this organization with the 9th Armored Division reported to the Bn Forward CP completing the physical link between the two headquarters. In order to maintain close contact with the companies the Battalion Commander left the CP at 011000A March 1945 to visit the Command Post of Combat Command B and the command post of C Company. The Bn CO returned to the Forward CP in the afternoon of the same day. At 011445A the Bn Adjutant visited the Bn Forward CP and reported that Headquarters Company and the Battalion Rear CP were located at FRIESENROTH, Germany (F902351). It was learned at this time that an M-18 destroyer that the Bn was short could not be drawn at this time since there was no authority for its procurement. The Bn CO visited the Division CP 1915A and returned at 2000A.

Upon completion of the road march from SPRIMONT, Belgium, 35
A Company went into an assembly area in vicinity of DROVE,

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Germany, (K1437) in preparation of supporting the attack of CCA towards WOLLERSHEIM (F1730). After establishing the Company CP at DROVE, the company commander reported to the CO of the Combat Command where he was informed that the 1st Platoon would be attached to the 60th Armored Infantry Bn, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons would remain under the company commander's control and would constitute the antitank reserve of the Combat Command. Upon the company commander's return to the Company CP the Company commander informed the platoon leaders of the platoon attachments. The 1st platoon leader reported to the CO 60th Armd Inf Bn at 010200 March 1945 and was given the order to be ready to move at 0530A to vicinity of BERG. This move was made. The remainder of the company remained in position throughout the day. There was no enemy activity in vicinity of the company's positions.

B Company closed in at FRIESENROTH, Germany (K3334) 282230A March 1945 and took up defensive positions with fields of fire to the S and SE. At this time B Company's mission was to reach FRIESENROTH and await further orders for commitment. At 011830A March 1945 information was received at the company CP that enemy tanks were in an unknown location to the S and SE of FRIESENROTH. The Recon Platoon attached to Company B was given the mission of reconnoitering the road network and possible tank assembly areas to the S and SE of the company positions. The mission was duly executed but no tanks were found. The company remained in its location for the remainder of the day.

Company C arrived at SOLLER, Germany, (F1837) at 010130A March 1945. Under cover of darkness at 0200A the three platoons moved into direct fire positions. At the first light of dawn the gun commanders of the 2nd and 3rd guns of the 2nd Platoon moved their guns to positions affording better field of fire. The company commander of Company C upon visiting the CP of Combat Command B was informed that his company would form the AT reserve of the Combat command.

At 020950A March 1945 a telephone message was received from Liaison Officer No 1 that the Bn Forward CP would move with Division Forward CP from GEY to SOLLER (K177380) at 1400A. Later the time of movement was changed to 1600A hours. The Bn CO and S-3 left the Bn CP to visit A and C Companies and did not return until the CP opened in the new location at SOLLER. At 1600A the Bn CP closed at GEY and under the command of the Bn S-2 moved with the Division CP to SOLLER. Shortly after opening of the CP at SOLLER at 1730A the Bn CO and S-3 arrived. Information accumulated during the visits was plotted on the Situation and Operations Maps. Routine visits by the Liaison Officer were made during the day.

At 020800A March 1945 the company commander of Company A reported to the CP of CCA. The following attachments were made at that time, 1st Platoon would remain in support of the 60th Armd Inf Bn, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons would support the 310th ⁶

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Infantry Regiment in the attack on WOLLERSHEIM (F1730). The 2nd Platoon was put in direct support of the 3rd Bn 310th Inf and the 3rd Platoon in direct support of the 2nd Bn, 310th Inf. Strong resistance was encountered after the jump off at 020900A March 1945. The town of WOLLERSHEIM fell to the attacking forces by 1700A and the attack was carried on to LANGENDORF (F2031). The 2nd Platoon, Company A, in conjunction with Co I, 3rd Bn, 310th Inf captured the town of LANGENDORF by 2000A hours. In this engagement 12 prisoners were taken by the 2nd Platoon. The TD Platoon in the attack on LANGENDORF was employed in the following manner: From a range of 800 to 1000 yards the destroyers fired HE shells into the buildings of the town under attack. After this preparation, the supported Infantry moved in and took the town. A total of 26 rounds of HE ammunition were expended during the LANGENDORF operation.

The 1st and 3rd Platoons did not engage in any fire fight during the period 012400A to 022400A March 1945. In order to keep close to the three TD Platoons the Company CP at 022100A March 1945 moved to THUIR (F150331).

Company B remained under battalion control during the period 012400A to 022400A March 1945. The company remained in position in vicinity of FRIESENROTH until 2030A when a move was undertaken for displacement to NIDENEAU (F168329). B Company arrived at NIDENEAU 2330A and moved into firing positions.

At 020130A March 1945 the CO Company C reported to CCB CP as requested. The CO Company C was directed to move his company to the vicinity of DI TERNICH (F245386). Upon his return to the company CP, the company commander directed his company rear CP to remain at SOLLER. The remaining three platoons departed from SOLLER at 0230A hours and arrived at DISTERNICH at 0300A. Direct fire positions were taken with fields of fire to the E. Since the positions were subjected to intermittent artillery fire all personnel dug fox holes. At about 0900A C Company suffered its first casualty when a gun crew member received a slight neck wound from enemy SP artillery fire. The suspected location of the SP gun was taken under fire by the 1st gun of the 2nd Section of the 3rd Platoon. Five rounds of HE were fired. The results of the firing were not investigated but the SP artillery fire stopped. At 021100A March 1945 Company C commander was put in command of a Task Force consisting of his own company, Company D, 14th Tank Bn, assault gun platoon, mortar platoon and one platoon of AA. This task force constituted the reserve of Combat Command B. The task force was not committed as such and was disbanded 030200 March 1945. The 1st Prisoner was taken by C Company when a German Ordnance Lieutenant surrendered to the company mail clerk and a company headquarters section driver at 2300A. The prisoner was turned over to an MP. The Company rear CP moved from SOLLER to VETTWEISS (F197385) at 020900 March 1945.

Effective 022400A March 1945 Battalion Headquarters and Hq Company were relieved from CCR control and placed under control of Division Headquarters. One M-18 was received 031020A March 37

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1945 and delivered to A Company. This brought the total number of destroyers to 36. Visits to A and C Companies were made by the Bn CO and the Bn S-2. Visits to the Bn CF were made by the Bn Executive Officer and the Bn Surgeon. At 1530 the Bn Liaison Officer reported the location of B Company was to be at KEMPERHOF (F202359).

At 030800A March 1945 Combat Command A and the 310th Inf Regt launched an attack from LANGENDORF (F2031) in a SE direction towards MERZENICH (F2231). Light enemy opposition was encountered and by 1030A MERZENICH fell to our forces. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons of Company A, 656th TD Bn, supported this attack and aided materially in the town's capture. The tactics employed were the same as previously mentioned. Sporadic artillery, mortar and small arms fire was directed at the tank destroyers. During this engagement a gun commander of the 3rd Platoon received injuries from mortar fire and was evacuated to an aid station and then to the 13th Hospital. At 1500A the 2nd Platoon assisted in the taking of FLOREN. In the action against MERZENICH and FLOREN 30 rounds of HE and 10 rounds of APC were fired. The 1st Platoon remained attached to the 60th Armd Inf Bn which was in CCA reserve at WOLLERSHEIM (F174308). The company CP left THUIR (F150331) and arrived at WOLLERSHEIM (F174308) at 1300A.

Since CCR remained in reserve for 9th Armd Division, Company B participated in no action but advanced with its Combat Command when the Division reserve moved forward. At 030010A March 1945 B Company was directed to move to VETTWEIS (F197386). The movement was duly executed and the company closed on VETTWEISS 0210A. Positions in this town were occupied until 1650 when the company was directed to KEMPERHOF (F202359). B Company moved and occupied positions in vicinity of KEMPERHOF with field of fire to the E and SE. The positions at KEMPERHOF were occupied until 041330A March 1945. In all movements of B Company the attached 1st Rcn Platoon executed the necessary road reconnaissance and secured the area in which the company had taken firing positions.

At 030200A March 1945 the company commander of C Company was informed that the Task Force he commanded had been disbanded. Combat Command B continued its attack towards FRIESHEIM (F3240). The mission of C Company upon disbandment of the Task Force was to provide the AT reserve for Combat Command B. In its drive to the E, Combat Command B was not confronted with any armored threats therefore, Company C took up positions to the rear of CCBs forward elements. At 030800A March 1945 Company C moved from DISTERNICH to FREISHEIM (F3240). The company entered FREISHEIM at 1000A. Platoon positions were reconnoitered and then occupied. All tank approaches were covered by at least one section of TDs. The attached Rcn Platoon performed the road reconnaissance from DISTERNICH to FREISHEIM and then moved into a rendezvous position in woods (F338418). The company commander in anticipating further movements to the E gave the Rcn Platoon a mission of

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reconnoitering roads to WEIDERSWIET (F368403) and BLIESHEIM (F355430). Upon completion of its mission the Recon Platoon reported enemy mines along the road to WEIDERSWIET. This information was furnished to the Combat Command Headquarters. The company CP moved from WEILERAUF D' EBENE (F274390) to FREIGHNIM at 1500A.

At 040455A March 1945 a telephone call from 9th Armd Div summoned the Bn CO to the Div CP. Upon his return the Bn CO stated that the Bn Fwd CP would move to ZULPICH (R192352) some time in the afternoon of the same day. With the arrival of the Bn Executive Officer at the Bn Fwd CP the Bn CO, Bn Executive, S-3 and Motor Officer met in a conference. It was decided to unite the rear and forward CPs into one unit. The Bn Executive was informed to plan on moving the Bn rear CP and Hq Co to ZULPICH at some time in the afternoon. A quartering party under the CO of Recon Co left for ZULPICH to arrange for quarters. The Bn Executive also made a trip to ZULPICH for the same reason. The customary visits to the companies were made by the Bn CO and staff officers. The Bn Fwd CP closed at 041400A March 1945 and proceeded to move with the Division Fwd CP to ZULPICH. The column moved slowly. This was caused by the road bottleneck at ZULPICH. The Bn Fwd CP opened at ZULPICH 2025A. Hq Co and the Bn rear CP moved to ZULPICH by infiltration. Hq Co movement began at 1200A and was completed at 1715A. At ZULPICH all elements under battalion control were centrally located and controlled from one CP.

The leading elements of Combat Command A, plus the attached 3rd Bn, 310th Inf, crossed the line of departure 041400A March 1945 in an attack to the E with BUSKIRCHEN (F2230) as the objective. Enemy opposition was light and the forward elements of the 80th Armd Inf Bn reached the outskirts of the Combat Command objective at 1930A. The 3rd Bn 310th Inf cleared the city. In its drive to the E and S the 80th Armd Inf Bn was supported by the 1st Platoon Company A. The 3rd Bn, 310th Inf, was supported by the 3rd Platoon, Company A. While supporting the attack the platoon leader of the 1st Platoon was hit by shrapnel in the left chest. The 1st Platoon was advancing towards BUSKIRCHEN under intermittent shell and mortar fire, when an enemy shell hit approximately 25 yards away from the leading destroyer wounding the platoon leader. The casualty was sustained in an open field 1/2 miles SE of FRAJENBERG (F315317) and was evacuated by the 9th Armd aid men at 1800A. The platoon under the Platoon Sgts command continued its advance towards BUSKIRCHEN and occupied positions on the Western outskirts at 2030A. The following day the platoon leader of the Recon Platoon took command of the 1st Platoon. The 2nd Platoon took up defensive positions in the vicinity of NAMMENICH (F259328) where the company CP was located. A total of 20 rounds HE were expended by the 1st Platoon in supporting the attack on BUSKIRCHEN. The company rear CP moved from WOLLERSHEIM to NAMMENICH (F259328) arriving at 2000A.



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At 041230A March 1945 Company B was directed to move from KEMPERHOF to BESSENICH (F238354). The company cleared KEMPERHOF 1230A and reached BESSENICH 1430A. Direct fire positions were taken in an open field. Since no cover was available, fox holes were dug. These positions were occupied for four days. The mission of the company during that period was to remain as the AT reserve for CCR. Since CCR itself was in Division reserve B Company had not had action against the enemy. B Company remained at BESSENICH until 070715A March 1945.

At 030800A March 1945 C Company received orders to move to WEILER AUF D' EBENE (F275387). The company departed from FREISHEIM (F319400) 0830A and moved along the route FREISHEIM, BORR (F301381) SCHEUREN (F288382), WEILER AUF D' EBENE. The 2nd Rcm Platoon moved at the head of the company column and marked the route. C Company closed at WEILER AUF D' EBENE at 1230A and remained in billets in the SW part of town for the remainder of the day.

The 5th of March marked the first day of functioning of the CP Group as one unit. The Bn CO learned at the Division CP that a new Bn Fwd CP Group would accompany the Division Fwd CP. The new Bn CP Group would consist of the Bn CO, one additional officer and several enlisted men. This plan was to go into effect on the next displacement of the Division. Plans were made to have a Liaison Officer accompany the Bn CO and four enlisted men from message center. At 050928A March 1945 a representative from 8th TD Group arrived to coordinate the activities of this battalion and other TD organizations in the III Corps. Plans were also discussed in regards to establishing an Intelligence radio net. The Bn CO made a visit to EUSKERCHEN and A Company. The Bn CO returned to the Bn CP at 1455A. Other routine visits were made by the Bn staff officers to the Gun Companies.

On 050001A March 1945 A Company was disposed in the following manner: Company Hq attached to 19th Tank Bn at NEMMENICH (F259329); 1st and 3rd Platoons at EUSKIRCHEN (F3329); 1st Platoon attached to 60th Armd Inf Bn; 3rd Platoon attached to 3rd Bn, 310th Inf and the 2nd Platoon in position at NEMMENICH. At 0730 CCA jumped off attacking to the East. After crossing the ERFT Canal elements of the 310th Inf attacked ROITZHEIM (F3427). Heavy resistance was encountered from the enemy within the town and in ground fortification on the outskirts. The 3rd Platoon of A Company supported elements of the 3rd Bn, 310th Inf, in this attack. Tactics of the supporting TDs were the same as previously mentioned. After the TDs had expended 40 rounds of HE, the Infantry advanced into town. The enemy launched two counter-attacks but both were driven back. ROITZHEIM was finally cleared at 1930A. The 3rd Platoon then moved into the town and took up defensive firing positions with fields of fire to the East. Elements of the 2nd Bn, 310th Inf, at 1300A attacked in the direction of WEIDERSHEIM and CUCHENHEIM (F3528). Heavy resistance was also encountered in this sector. The 2nd Platoon, Company A, gave close support to the attacking Inf and by 40

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1830A both towns were taken. In the attack on CUCHENHEIM contact was lost between the supporting TDs and the attacking Infantry. After firing a 25 round preparation into the town the 2nd Platoon advanced towards the objective but could not find any infantry. The platoon nevertheless entered the town cleared out some snipers and then took up positions. The 1st Platoon remained at EUSKERCHEN throughout the day. In order to keep close contact with the platoon the company CP left NEMMENICH at 1600A and arrived at EUSKERCHEN at 1800A.

B Company remained at BESSENICH (F238354) 5 March 1945.

CCB reverted to Division control 050600A March 1945 and attacked across the ERFT CANAL in an Easterly direction. Enemy resistance was light and the town of LUDENDORF (F405300) was taken at 2200A. At 1730A C Company attached to CCB was given the order to move to KLEINBULLESHEIM (F368309). The company moved out of WEILER AUF D' EBENE (F274389) at 1920A proceeding to NIEDEBERG (F318378). Since there was high overcast and no moon the road march over the road was extremely difficult. At 2030A the company commander halted the column and summoned the platoon leaders to his vehicle. The platoon leader and his driver of the 2nd Platoon while proceeding to the head of the company column was injured by a 242-ton truck towing a gun. The towed gun ran over the platoon leader and his driver. The platoon leader's collar bone was broken while the driver suffered internal injuries. Both men were evacuated to the Combat Command's Aid Station. The company closed at KLEINBULLESHEIM 060100A March 1945 and moved into positions with field of fire to the NE and E.

The Bn CO and party left the Bn CP at 061050A March 1945 to report to Division CP to fill his new assignment as the Division ATO. The Bn Executive Officer assumed responsibility for the functioning of the rear CP Group, Headquarters Company and Rcn Headquarters Section. Future moves were to be made by all elements as one unit. A representative from 8th TD Group visited the Bn CP with additional information in regards to the proposed Group Intelligence Net. The 656th TD Bn reported into the net at 1930A. At 1116 the CP was alerted for movement to EUSKIRCHEN (F3330). Preparations for movement were immediately undertaken and at 1230A the Bn CP closed at ZULPICH (F233333). A quartering party under the command of Rcn Co CO left ZULPICH at 1100 hours and met the CP Group on arrival at the outskirts of EUSKIRCHEN. The Bn CP opened at EUSKIRCHEN at 061500A March 1945. During the day the Bn Motor Officer, Bn Surgeon and the Bn S-4 visited the gun companies.

After consolidating its positions E of ODENDORF (F3928) CCA launched an attack at 0700A to the E with RHEINBACH as the objective. The 1st and 2nd Platoons of Company A supported the attack. Resistance encountered was strong. Elements from the attacking force were diverted N to attack OBERDREES (F2227). The 2nd Platoon supported this attack against strong enemy resistance. Enemy mortar and artillery fire was extremely heavy. 4

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The 2nd Platoon advanced on the town in close proximity to the supported Infantry. At 1000A with the attack well under way the 3rd destroyer of the 2nd Platoon became immobilized due to a faulty generator. The destroyer commander and his crew while under constant artillery and mortar fire continued firing into the town until the enemy was driven back. The Infantry took the town at 1200A. A total of 41 rounds HE were fired. An unknown number of enemy were killed and an unknown number of enemy homes damaged. The 2nd Platoon continued the support during the attack on RHEINBACH. Firing as they advanced the 2nd Platoon entered RHEINBACH 1400A. The supported Inf took the town at 1320A. The platoon then moved to the E end of town and formed a road block commanding the road intersection at (F351254). A total of 74 rounds of HE were expended. The 1st Platoon moved from BUSKIRCHEN to ODENDORF (F398280). The company CP moved from BUSKIRCHEN leaving the town at 1700A and arriving at OBERDREBS 061800A March 1945.

There was no change in B Company's disposition or attachment.

C Company remained in KLEINBULLESHEIM (F358309) until 06-0730A March 1945. At that time the company commander was given the order to displace his company to LIEDENDORF (F406299). Since CCB was advancing against the enemy with only slight resistance, Company C attached to CCB was kept in close proximity to the combat elements of the Combat Command but not committed to action. The Company Commander of the Company decided to keep his CP at KLEINBULLESHEIM and moved his company as directed to LUDENDORF. The company less CP departed from KLEINBULLESHEIM at 060815A March 1945 and arrived at LUDENDORF at 1200A. The platoons immediately moved into firing positions. CCBs elements kept on advancing against light resistance and at 2400A the company commander was summoned to the Combat Command CP.

Routine staff activities were performed during the period 070001 to 072400A March 1945. The Bn motor officer visited the companies. The outstanding event of the day was the receipt of the news that the LUDENDORF BRIDGE over the RHINE RIVER was captured intact. This information was brought to the Bn CP by the Bn CO when he visited the Bn CP at 1820A. It was further disclosed that the 9th Armd Div was to move to MECKENHEIM (F49-5255).

CCA continued the attack to the SE after taking BOLINGEN (F5319); the attack continued to the high ground N of BAD-NEUENAHR (F5716). The attack on BAD NEUENAHR got under way at 071200A March 1945. The town was heavily defended with Inf, SP guns and tanks. The 3rd Platoon while supporting elements of the 3rd Bn, 310th Inf in the attack on BAD NEUENAHR was under constant artillery and small arms and mortar fire. At approximately 1600A the first gun of the 3rd Platoon received a mortar hit on the rear of the turret. The platoon sergeant and one gunner were killed and two other crew members injured. The remaining TDs of the 3rd Platoon continued the attack. The town was taken at 1630A. 42 rounds of HE were fired. Three prisoners were taken and an estimated 25 enemy were killed. The disabled destroyer was evacuated to BOLINGEN and turned in to Ordnance. The 1st Platoon of A Company sup- 42

ported elements of the 60th Armd Inf Bn in the attack from RHEINBACK to BAD NEUENAH. The supported Inf advanced against light opposition consisting mostly of small arms and SP artillery fire. A column of enemy was sighted E of BOLINGEN and immediately attacked. In this engagement one 50mm AT gun was destroyed by the 1st Platoon. The platoon then advanced in the direction of BAD NEUENAH. During this advance a 20mm enemy AA installation consisting of 5 AA guns was fired on and overrun near LANTER SHAFEN (F555175). One man was injured by small arms fire at Bolingen. Presumed to be sniper fire. The 2nd Platoon was moved from RHEINBACH to HEIMERSHEIM. The road march was uneventful and the platoon closed at HEIMERSHEIM. A Company's CP moved from OBERDREES (F421274) to BOLINGEN (F537-189). The company CP opened at BOLINGEN at 071320A March 1945.

At 070715A March 1945 the commanding officer Company B received verbal orders to move his company from BESSENICH to LUDENDORF (F406299). Company B departed from BESSENICH and after an uneventful road march reached LUDENDORF at 1020A. B Company constituted the AT reserve of CCR. During the road march the 1st Rcn Plat attached to Company B preceded the gun company in its road march and secured the town upon arrival at its destination. B Company remained at LUDENDORF until 11 March 1945. The stay at LUDENDORF was uneventful with the exception of the capture of one prisoner by a Rcn Plat guard during the night of 11 March 1945. The prisoner was dressed in civilian clothes with his army uniform underneath. Upon questioning the prisoner revealed that he deserted his unit to return to his home which was nearby. The following morning 12 March 1945 the prisoner was turned over to the MP detachment for conduct to the PWE.

Upon reporting to the Combat Command CP the Company Commander Company C was informed that he would move his company to STADT MECKENHEIM (F495225). The following attachments were made: 1st Plat attached to 52nd Armd Inf Bn; 2nd and 3rd Platoons attached to 1st Bn, 310th Inf. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons and the 1st Bn 310th Inf constituted the reserve of CCB. The company commander returned to his company and moved out towards STADT MECKENHEIM. The attached 2nd Rcn Plat was given the mission of securing the road. While the route taken led through territory controlled by the enemy no resistance or opposition was met and the three platoons arrived at STADT MECKENHEIM at 07-0530A March 1945. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons took up positions in the NW sector of town while the 1st Plat continued the march to ADENDORF (F525242) in support of the 52nd Armd Inf Bn. The 52nd Armd Inf Bn continued its advance towards SINZIG (F655165) with the 1st Plat, Company C, in support. While advancing towards the objective along the BAD NEUENAH - BADENDORF road, the column was taken under enemy mortar fire in the vicinity of HEPPINGEN (F595170). The advance was held up. Upon request by the supported Inf a suspected OP, a church steeple at (F595-170) was taken under fire. The first round hit the tower. Two additional rounds were fired before the steeple toppled. With the destruction of the steeple the mortar fire ceased and the

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advance continued. The platoon leader of the 1st Plat led his platoon in a quarter ton. Upon rounding a bend in the road in the vicinity of (F608167) the platoon leader ran into a small enemy half-track. The target was immediately taken under fire with a 430 cal machine gun at a range of about 100 yards. Three enemy soldiers leaped out of the half-track. The platoon leader tossed a grenade into the vehicle as he passed by. Two of the three enemy ran into the path of the 1st destroyer and were killed by the tracks. The 1st Plat also destroyed 3 enemy machine gun nests in subsequent actions. The objective was reached and taken by 1600A. The 1st Plat expended 7 rounds of APC and 17 rounds HE.

At 0730A the company commander sent the security sergeant back to KLEINBULLESHEIM to bring the company CP forward to STADT MECKENHEIM. The CP Group left KLEINBULLESHEIM at 0930A and arrived at its destination 071500A March 1945. At 1930A the company commander was ordered to advance his company to SINZIG. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons departed from STADT MECKENHEIM towards SINZIG. While on the road the company commander received a radio message to report to the CP of the 14th Tank Bn. Upon reporting the company commander was informed that he was attached to the 14th Tank Bn and that he would proceed to REMAGEN (F644200). This information was conveyed to the two platoons which proceeded to REMAGEN. The 1st Plat reverted to company control and the platoon leader reported to the CO at 2400A. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons arrived at REMAGEN at 2300 and secured billets for the night.

At 081048A March 1945 the 2nd Plat Leader Company B reported to the Bn CP stating in effect that B Company was relieved from assignment to CCR and had reverted to Bn control. A message from the CO was received to move the Bn CP and Hq Co to ELSDORF (F484220) or ALTENDORF (F490218). Upon receiving this information the Bn S-3 ordered liaison established with B Company. A quartering party consisting of the Adjutant, and Hq Co CO and several enlisted men were dispatched to the above mentioned towns for billets. The Bn Executive Officer left the Bn CP at 0815A to make a tour of the companies. While in the vicinity of STADT MECKENHEIM the Bn Executive reported to the CO. Upon his return the Bn Executive informed the Bn S-3 that it was impossible to move the CP and rear echelon because of the traffic conditions. The Bn S-2 was told to report to the Bn CO and give the latest disposition of the companies and then report to Division G-4 for road clearance. The instructions were carried out by the S-2 and upon returning to the Bn CP the S-2 reported that road clearance could not be secured for the present. Plans were made to send the Bn S-4 to check with the G-4 for road clearance on the following day.

After the capture of the LUDENDORF BRIDGE the 310th (-) changed the direction of the attack to the South widening the bridgehead. The 1st Plat, Company A, remained in SINZIG (F655164) forming a road block on the road running parallel to the RHINE RIVER. The 2nd Plat outposted HEIMERSHEIM. The

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3rd Platoon remained in BAD NEUENAHR (F580166) as an AT defense against any enemy armored counter-attack from the South. The company CP departed from BOLINGEN (F538188) 1400A and arrived at BAD NEUENAHR 1510A.

B Company remained at LUDENDORF (F405300) during the period 080001A March 1945 to 082400A March 1945. No change in disposition or attachments.

At 080025A March 1945 a runner for the 14th Tank Bn summoned C Company Commander to the CP of the 14th Tank Bn. Instructions were received that C Company would cross the LUDENDORF BRIDGE as soon as possible. Upon his return the Company CO conveyed the information to the Platoon Leader of the 3rd Platoon and the acting platoon leader of the 2nd Plat. Both Platoons were to be attached to the 14th Tank Bn upon reaching the far shore. At 0230A the 2nd Plat reached the bridge and since it was extremely dark an engineer guide led the destroyers onto the bridge. The bridge itself was under intermittent artillery, enemy AA and automatic small arms fire. Since the planking on the bridge was barely wide enough to contain the destroyers, the progress across the bridge was extremely slow. When about 3/4 of the way across the leading destroyer of the 2nd Platoon broke through planking laid over a previously made shell hole. This breakthrough immobilized the destroyer and halted all traffic on the bridge. The acting platoon leader directed the extrication of the immobilized destroyer which was finally pulled on to solid footing at 0530A. The acting platoon leader then directed several of his platoon's men in aiding the Engineers to plank over the hole. The 2nd Plat resumed its march across the bridge and upon crossing at 0600A the acting platoon leader reported to the CO, Company A, 14th Tank Bn, for instructions in regards to employment. A road block was set up on the ERPEL LINZ road 500 yards E of ERPEL. This road block was maintained until about 081630A when the acting platoon leader received instructions to take his platoon to ERPEL (F 645205) and report to the company CP. While occupying the road block position the destroyer fired on enemy aircraft attacking the bridge. Some small arms fire was received from the high ground to the N and E but no casualties were sustained. Upon reporting to the Company CP the acting platoon leader was informed that he would support the attack of the 27th Armd Inf Bn in the direction of UNKEL (F634224). At 082300A March 1945 the 2nd Plat left ERPEL in the direction of UNKEL. After crossing the 3rd Platoon took up roadblock positions on the NW edge of ERPEL commanding the ERPEL-UNKEL highway. At 0800A a river boat came around the bend in the river traveling upstream. The platoon leader of the 3rd Plat identified a man in a German uniform on the boat and ordered the first gun of the platoon to open fire. Due to trees in the line of fire the first gun could not fire, and so the second gun of the 3rd Plat took the boat under fire. The gun hit the boat with the first round but since APC was fired the shell exploded in the water after passing through the boat's superstructure. Nevertheless, a white flag was run up by the boat. The second round used was HE and with a lower sight picture a hit below the water line was secured. The third shot

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hit home and "the Germans raised everything they had that was white". One Naval Officer and one soldier came ashore and were taken prisoners. The boat settled and an engineer boat went out to get the remaining prisoners. Six prisoners were brought ashore. The Platoon remained in the road block position until about 1800A when the platoon leader was directed to report to the Company CP. The 3rd Plat was given the mission of direct support of the 311th Inf in the attack to the North in enlarging the bridgehead. The platoon leader reconnoitered for gun positions at the intersection of the UNKEL-RHEINBREITBACH roads (F639217). At 2330A the platoon leader received word that the 311th Inf attack was being held up by enemy machine gun fire. Taking two destroyers the platoon leader left for the location of the enemy machine guns.

After completing its action at SINZIG the 1st Platoon reported to REMAGEN where it crossed the bridge at 081300A March 1945. The 1st Plat was under company control and was assigned the mission of setting up a road block on the ORSBERG-ERPEL road. The 1st Plat remained there for the remainder of the day. Enemy planes attacking the bridge were taken under fire. The Company CP moved from STADT MECKENHEIM to REMAGEN. The CP departed from STADT MECKENHEIM at 1230A and arrived at REMAGEN at 1745A. An artillery and an air attack was received by the CP Group at 1800A and before having time to disperse its vehicles and an M-20 received a hit and began to burn. The ammunition in the burning vehicle began exploding from the heat of the fire. An M-20 parked close to the one on fire began to burn. The second M-20 had attached to it an M-10 trailer full of 76mm ammunition. A driver from Company Hq section got into the second M-20 and drove it to the far edge of the field where he extinguished the fire. Intermittent shelling was received during the remainder of the day.

The following changes in A Company's order of battle were made 9 March 1945: 1st Plat relieved from attachment to 60th Armd Inf Bn, reverted to company control; 2nd Plat, relieved from attachment to 2nd Bn, 310th Inf, and reverted to company control; 3rd Plat relieved from attachment to the 3rd Bn, 310th Inf, and reverted to company control; Company CP relieved from attachment to 14th Tank Bn and reverted to CCA control. There was no change in location in any of the platoon positions or in the location of the company CP.

B Company having reverted to battalion control as of 082400A March 1945 remained in place. However, upon being alerted for movement to ERSDORF (F484220) a billeting detail was sent forward to secure billets. Time was spent on motor maintenance and the maintenance of arms and equipment

While supporting the attack of the 27th Armd Inf Bn along the ERPEL-UNKEL road, the S-2, 27th Armd Inf Bn, sent for the platoon sergeant, then acting platoon leader, requesting him to temporarily support a company of Inf from the 311th Regt which ran into machine guns in the town of UNKEL (F636229). The actg platoon leader reported to the CP where he received instructions to proceed down the road until he met a guide. This was done and the guide led the platoon sergeant to the street where the machine guns were emplaced. Two guns were moved into position

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The night was extremely dark as there was no moon and the sky was overcast. Upon pulling into position the destroyers began receiving automatic small arms fire. The enemy small arms tracer fire was coming up so it was presumed that the machine guns were in the cellars of the houses. The platoon sergeant could not get permission to fire HE into the suspected machine gun emplacements as it was suspected that there were several injured friendly troops on the street. Both guns began firing APC into the houses suspected of containing the machine gun positions. Later on several Inf men crept down the street and set off phosphorus grenades. The phosphorus grenades revealed that the street was clear of friendly troops. The platoon sergeant was then granted permission to use HE. However both guns jammed and the .50 cal machine guns were brought into use. The .50 cal machine guns were fired until all ammunition was exhausted. Three of the suspected five machine gun nests were neutralized. Just about the time the .50 cal machine gun ammunition gave out the 3rd Plat destroyer came up and continued the fight. At about 0320A the platoon sergeant, 2nd Plat, reported back to the CP of the 311th Inf and reported the situation. Upon completion of this mission the 2nd Plat moved into UNKEL and occupied billets. A total of 24 rounds of APC were expended. Unknown number of enemy were killed. The 2nd Plat remained in UNKEL until 0820A when the acting platoon leader received instructions to move back to UNKEL. The platoon spent the remainder of the day at UNKEL.

After being given the mission of supporting the attack of the 3rd Bn, 311th Inf, to the N the platoon leader reported to the Regimental CP where he was given an additional mission of setting up a road block. The position was occupied at 082030. The town of UNKEL was under attack and the supported Inf could not make any advances against enemy machine guns located in buildings. At 090010 the platoon leader was requested to reduce strong points in the town of UNKEL. Taking his platoon the platoon leader led the destroyers to firing positions. Upon his arrival at the scene the 3rd Plat leader learned that the 2nd Plat just finished firing a mission in the same location but was forced to withdraw due to mechanical trouble with the guns. The 3rd Plat took up the fight firing both HE and APC into the buildings housing the enemy machine guns. The ready rack of the destroyer was fired at a range of 15 feet. The flash of the gun completely blinded the entire crew. As one destroyer pulled back to cover the second destroyer moved into a firing position. The first destroyer then reloaded its ready rack. The 3rd destroyer sprayed the buildings with .50 cal machine gun fire. All three destroyers were under small arms fire. Even with this close direct HV fire the enemy would not abandon his position. The destroyers withdrew from the fight during the remaining hours of darkness and resumed the action at daylight. Additional rounds of HE were fired. Eighty enemy prisoners were forced out of one street and a total of 200 out of the town. No casualties were suffered in the platoon in this engagement. A total of 108 rounds of ammunition were expended. Three machine gun emplacements destroyed, a number of houses destroyed or set on fire. At the completion of this mission and 47

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after the Inf cleared the town the 3rd Plat advanced to RHEIN-BREITBACH (F643244). The platoon closed at RHEINBREITBACH at 1030A hours. The 1st Plat remained in its original position. Enemy air activity over the bridge was intense. The 1st Plat expended 8000 rounds of .50 cal machine gun ammunition firing on the attacking planes. The Company CP moved from REMAGEN and crossed the RHINE RIVER to ERPEL at 1330A. While crossing the bridge enemy aircraft attacked with bombs. AA guns were manned and fired. No bomb hits were made on the bridge.

The outstanding event of the 10th of March 1945 was the receipt of reenforcements. The battalion received as its first reinforcements 1 officer, 1 Staff Sgt, 1 Cpl, and 17 Pvts. The personnel were brought to the Bn CP by the Personnel Officer at 101743A March 1945. The officer replacement was a former member of this organization. The Bn S-3 after an absence of one day returned to the Bn CP. Since the S-3 went across the RHINE R he had some difficulty in returning. Road clearance to move the Bn CP, Hq Co and B Company could not be had this day. The company commander of B Company arrived at the Bn CP to coordinate movement of his company once road clearance was received. CO Company B returned to his company at 1400A.

A Company's disposition at 100001 March 1945 was as follows: 1st Plat at SINZIG (F655164); 2nd Plat at HEIMERSHEIM (F603163); 3rd Plat and Company Hq at BAD NEUENAHR (F577166). The mission of the company during this period was to provide AT defense on the S flank of the Corps boundary against any enemy armored counter-attack from the South. With the advancement of the V Corps front to the W bank of the RHINE R, the threat of an enemy counter-attack was nullified. The 2nd Plat of A Company at 0930 moved from HEIMERSHEIM to BAD NEUENAHR. There was no other activity during the remainder of the day.

No change in B Company's attachment or disposition occurred during the period 100001A to 102400A March 1945.

There were no unusual activities in C Company during the period 100001A to 102400A March 1945. The location of the company elements were as follows: 1st, 2nd Platoons and Company CP at ERPEL (F646205); 3rd Plat at RHEINBREITBACH (F643244). The 3rd Plat remained in that position for three days. There was a considerable amount of air activity over the bridge but no bombs fell in the vicinity of any company installations. Enemy planes were taken under .50 cal machine gun fire.

The new officer replacement visited the Bn CO at BAD NEUENAHR and upon his return to the Bn CP informed the Executive Officer that he was assigned to C Company. Road clearance was finally received to move Hq and the Bn CP, Hq and B Company to BAD NEUENAHR. B Company CO reported to the Bn CP and was given the time of departure for his organization and the route. The Bn CP closed at EUSKERCHEN 101745A March 1945 and opened at BAD NEUENAHR 1910A hours of the same day. Hq Co and the Rcn Hq Co section preceded the CP in the movement. Upon arrival at BAD NEUENAHR

the Bn CO met the Bn Executive and S-3 and informed them that the Division CP was located in the same town. The Bn CO then checked the company billets and returned to the Division CP.

Upon reporting to the CP of CCA the CO A Company was relieved of attachment to CCA and attached to CCB. At 111445A March 1945 A Company was alerted to move across the RHINE R. No destination was given at that time except that the company CO was to report to CO 899th TD Bn for disposition. Since two platoons, 2nd and 3rd were at BAD NEUENAHR it was necessary to move the 1st into a position where it could join the remainder of the company. The 3rd Rcn Plat was at that time with the 1st Plat at SINZIG. An order was dispatched to the 1st Plat to join the company at HEP-PINGEN (F595170) for the march to REMAGEN. The Company Hq, 2nd and 3rd Platoons left BAD NEUENAHR at 1700A. The 1st Plat and the 3rd Rcn Platoons joined the company at the designated spot as scheduled. While on the march to REMAGEN, the company column was strafed by enemy planes. The .50 cal MGs fired on the plane with no immediate results. There were no casualties in the company from the strafing attack. Due to the congested traffic conditions the rate of march was slow with constant stops. The leading elements of A Company crossed the LUDENDORF BRIDGE at 112400 March 1945.

B Company remained in position at LUDENDORF (F405299) for four days operationally inactive. At 111154A March 1945 B Company CO received the order to move to BAD NEUENAHR and assemble there with Bn Hq and Hq Co. The company departed from LUDENDORF 1815A and after a difficult road march reached its destination 120130 March 1945. The road march was made difficult by the travel over secondary and tertiary country roads during the hours of darkness.

The Company CP and the 1st Plat C Company remained in ERPEL during the period 110001A to 112400A March 1945. Enemy air activity was in evidence most of the day and was taken under fire by the company CP installation and the .50 cal MGs of the 1st Plat. The 52nd Armd Inf Bn was given a mission to relieve elements of the 395th Inf at DALTENBERG (F676174). The 2nd Plat left ERPEL in support of the 52nd Armd Inf Bn at 1820A and arrived at DALTENBERG at 2130A. Upon reaching the destination guns were moved into firing positions with field of fire to the N and NE. The town was shelled by the enemy throughout the night but no casualties or damage to equipment was sustained. The 1st Plat C Company moved to BRUCKHAUSEN (F659226).

Routine staff functions carried on at the Bn CP during the period 120001 to 122300A March 1945. The ATO Officer III Corps and a representative from the 8th TD Group visited the Bn CP as well. Visits to the company CPs were made by the S-4, motor and medical officers. The CO of Rcn Co was evacuated to the 9th Armd Div clearing station on account of illness.

Upon crossing the RHINE R at 120130A March 1945 the company commander A Company assembled his company in ERPEL and reported

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to the CO 899th TD Bn for instructions. The company then moved to HOSBACH (F664203) where the company CP was set up. The 1st and 2nd Platoons moved to OHLENBERG (F678212) deepening the defenses of the 899th TD Bn. The 3rd Plat moved to OCKENFELS (F672189). These positions were maintained throughout the day. There was no enemy ground activity although enemy air activity was quite extensive.

B Company closed at BAD NEUENAUHR at 120130A March 1945 completing its road march from LUDENDORF. The vehicles were dispersed in open fields and the men moved into their billets. At daybreak all vehicles were draped with shrimp nets. The remainder of the day was spent performing maintenance on vehicles and arms.

The 1st Plat of C Company remained in firing position at BRUCKHAUSEN throughout the day. The position occupied covered the RJ at the NE end of town against any armored attacks. The platoon sergeant then acting platoon leader reported at 120800A March 1945 to the CP of 27th Armd Inf Bn for further instructions. Orders were given for the platoons return to UNKEL under the platoon sergeant's control and await the arrival of the 27th Armd Inf Bn. At 1400A the 2nd Plat was relieved from assignment to the 27th Armd Inf Bn and reverted to company control. The platoon sergeant upon arriving at the Co CP was told to move his platoon to BRUCKHAUSEN (F659226) and take up firing positions on the NE sector of town. The Company CO accompanied the platoon sergeant to his positions. Upon the arrival of the platoon at BRUCKHAUSEN the platoon command was assumed by the officer replacement. The 3rd Plat of Company C remained in the road block position in the vicinity of RHEINBREITBACH.

The CO, 8th TD Group, was given command of TD battalions under Corps control. In anticipation of attachment to the III Corps and in turn reassignment to the 8th TD Group, the Bn CO visited the Group CP for a conference on employment of this organization. The Bn less A and C Companies was alerted for movement across the RHINE R. Arrangements for road clearance to move the battalion was to be made by the III Corps. In anticipation of the move a billeting party was organized to move across the RHINE on the morning of 14 March 1945. It was anticipated that A and B Companies would revert to battalion control when the Bn CP crossed the river. The Bn CO visited the Bn CP and informed the S-3 to anticipate making plans for the employment of the battalion. Routine visits to companies were made by the Bn S-2, S-4 and Motor Officer.

Due to the crowded conditions at KASBACH the Company CP of Co A moved to OCKENFELS 13 March 1945. An enemy counter-attack was expected from the East. The 2nd Plat was moved to LINZ and occupied positions covering the RJ at F691199) since only three guns were available for the 2nd Plat a section of the 3rd Plat was moved to LINZ (F670186). One section of the 3rd Plat remained at OCKENFELS (F673200). The 1st Plat maintained positions at OHLENBERG (F678212). There was no enemy 50

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ground activity in the vicinity of the position occupied by A Company's platoons. The air activity was quite intense. Enemy planes were engaged by .50 cal MGs but no direct results can be attributed to the fire.

B Company remained at BAD NEUENAHN during the period 130001A to 132400A March 1945. Routine company function carried on.

The attached 2nd Rcn Plat was divided into two sections; 1st section attached to 3rd TD Plat, 2nd section attached to the 1st Plat. The 311th Inf maintained its attack towards the East. The 2nd Rcn section was given the mission of maintaining contact between the advancing Inf and the 3rd TD Plat. Moving towards the East the Rcn element was fired upon by enemy Inf at F691242. The fire was returned. One enemy was observed to be hit. This action was reported to the supported Inf. A patrol was sent out to clean up this pocket of resistance but the enemy withdrew. An OP was established by the Rcn element at F646233 but no enemy activity was reported. There was no enemy activity of the 1st Platoons' gun positions at BRUCKHAUSEN. The 2nd Plat, C Company maintained its position in the NE sector of BRUCKHAUSEN. There was no enemy active during the 13th of March 1945.

At about 1000A the 3rd Plat was attached to the 311th Inf to support its advance to the North. The attached Rcn element reconnoitered a route up to the forest line around HONNEF (F6427). The 3rd Plat left its road block position of RHEINBREITBACH and assembled on the Spart of HONNEF awaiting the advance. The advance however did not materialize. At 1900A the platoon was relieved from its attachment to the 311th Inf and returned to its original position. This position was maintained until the following day.

In anticipating the movement across the RHINE R the Bn CP sent the S-1 and a billeting party to reconnoiter for billets in the vicinity of UNKEL (F633225). The billeting party left BAD NEUENAHN 140927A March 1945. A verbal order was received at 1010A that the 656 TD Bn would be attached temporarily to the 8th TD Group for operational control. A confirmatory written order was to be published later. All companies would revert to Bn control and the Bn would be given missions in the Corps sector. The Bn CO confirmed this order at 1200A. The Bn CO, S-3 and the Liaison Officer No 1 left for the 8th TD Group to confer with the Group commander. At 1419 in response to a telephone call the Bn S-2 reported to G-4 III Corps and received road clearance to move the Bn CP, Hq and B Companies and the Rcn detachment. No destination was given. The column was to have moved across the bridge over the S pontoon bridge. A representative from the 8th TD Group was to have met the head of the Bn column upon crossing the river. The Bn CP closed at 1419A at BAD NEUENAHN. Order of march for the move: 1st Rcn Plat, B Company, Bn CP and Hq Co. The Bn crossed the RHINE R on both bridges. B Company crossed on the North bridge while the remainder of the battalion crossed on the South bridge. The Bn then proceeded to UNKEL where it assembled and awaited the arrival of the Group

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representative. At 1930 the Bn CO arrived and directed the Bn to move and occupy billets in RHEINBREITBACH (F633256). The Bn CP opened at 142000A March 1945. Hq Co occupied billets in the vicinity of the Bn CP. B Company moved North and went into position in the vicinity (F632260). A and B Companies reverted to Bn control as of 141100A March 1945. A Company was put in support of Company B, 899 TD Bn, deepening the AT defenses in the 9th Inf Div sector. C Company was to remain in place and deepen the AT defense in the 78th Div sector. B Company was alerted to move at a moments notice to relieve Company C. The 656 TD Bn constituted 1/2 of the AT reserve in the III Corps sector. Orders for employment of the 656 TD Bn from 8th TD Group were that the Bn was to support the action of the 78th Inf with one company and support the action of the 9th Inf Div with one company. One company was to be kept in reserve ready to move to any part of the Corps sector upon the Group Commanders order.

An enemy counter-attack formed in the 9th Inf Div sector on the morning of 14 March 1945. In order to block the avenue of approach towards the bridge against an armored break-through the 1st Plat Company A upon the request of the CO, 899 TD Bn, was moved from OHLENBERG (F6721) to support the 2nd Plat at LINZ (F6819). The counter-attack was repulsed and the Inf advanced to the East. At 1200A the company commander received the order that A Company was under battalion control attached to the 899 TD Bn. The 1st Plat was alerted to move to HARGARTEN (F7120). A daylight reconnaissance of the route to the position was made by the platoon leader. The Platoon moved out at 2300A and under the cover of darkness occupied position at HARGARTEN at 142330A March 1945. The 2nd Plat remained at LINZ (F672186). The 3rd Plat moved to positions in ST KATHARINEN.

B Company performed normal duties on the morning of 14 March 1945. At about 1245A one man was killed and another injured when a grenade accidentally discharged in the pocket of the man who was killed. At 1420A the company was alerted to move with the Bn elements across the RHINE RY. The company moved out at 1530A and closed at an assembly area in the vicinity of RHEINBREITBACH. B Company was alerted to move at a moments notice to relieve C Company, however, the company remained in its position until the following day.

C Company reverted to company control at 1100A 14 March 1945, C Company was given the mission of supporting the attack of the 78th Inf Div. The 1st and 2nd Platoons were put in direct support of the 309th Inf Regt while the 3rd Plat remained in support of the 311th Inf Regt. A warning order to move was sent to the 2nd and 1st Platoons. The objective of the 309th Inf Regt was the high ground in the vicinity of HIMBURG (F695281). The order to move to HIMBURG was received at 1800A. Upon receiving that order the 1st and 2nd platoon leaders and the Rcn Plat attached went forward to reconnoiter routes of approach to this area. No suitable roads were found on which to move the platoons that night. Roads were blocked with vehicles

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that had bogged down. A trail was found but at that time it was being used by the Medical detachment of the 309th Inf for evacuation purposes. Another trail was found. Upon completion the reconnaissance platoon leader returned to their platoons and moved out towards their destination. The trail used was hardly wide enough to accommodate a destroyer and since the ground was soft, traction was difficult. The platoons moved along the trail with the 3rd Plat leading. It was decided that this route could not be used to reach HIMBURG. At 142300A March 1945 the platoons were ordered to assemble at RHEINBREITBACH until the road through HONNEF to HIMBURG became opened. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons reached RHEINBREITBACH 2345A.

The Bn CP displaced from F633256 to F641249 at 151130A March 1945. Upon occupation of the new CP plans were drawn up for the employment of the battalion. Based upon a conference between the Bn CO and the CO 309th Inf the following plan was put into effect: Elements of the 656 TD Bn would support the advance of the 309th Inf until the platoons of B and C Company could occupy positions on high ground covering the REICHAUTO-BAHN highway. This plan was put into effect. C Company was to support the attack of the 309th until the desired positions were cleared of enemy troops. Company B would remain in rendezvous in vicinity of F688288 until such time as B Company's position could be occupied. A Company would remain in support of Company B 899 TD Bn until such time as A Company's position could be occupied. The plan was put into effect. The CO 899 TD Bn upon request of the CO 78th Div requested one platoon to support the 2nd Bn, 310th Inf in its attack to the East. After discussing this request with the Bn CO, 2nd Plat Company B was ordered to render direct support to the 2nd Bn, 310th Inf. The Bn S-3 left the CP at 1438A for B and C Companies to discuss the details of the plan. The Bn CO at 1810A left for 8th TD Group to confer with the CO, 8th TD Group on future employment of the battalion.

The 9th Inf Div continued the advance to the East. As the advance positions occupied by Company B 899 TD Bn became vacant platoons of A Company moved into the vacated positions in order to keep close to the supported TD elements. The 1st Plat Company A remained in position at HARGARTEN (F710206) and the 2nd Plat remained in position at LINZ (F677188) during the 15th of March 1945. The 3rd Plat moved from LINZ (F678189) to ST KATHARINEN (F231212). There was no enemy activity in A Company's platoon areas.

Upon arrival of the Bn S-3 at B Company's rendezvous area the company commander and the Bn S-3 discussed the plan as it pertained to B Company. At the departure of the Bn S-3 B Company left its assembly area at 151515A March 1945 to move into position. The company moved out with the 1st Plat leading followed by the 3rd Plat with the 2nd bringing up the tail of the column. The 1st Rcn Plat secured the route. The 1st Plat reached its assigned area at ROTTBITZE (F700225) at 151930A March 1945. Upon reaching its destination the platoon took up positions covering the roads leading into the town. The 1st Platoon's leader established liaison with the CO, 3rd

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