

HEADQUARTERS 805TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 464, United States Army

Battalion History, 1 December - 31 December 1943

- 1 December - 18th Brigade issued thru Field Artillery Battalions a schedule of fires, to start at 1730, in preparation for an attack in X Corps (Br.) sector. Registration, purposely delayed until today, proved impossible by cub. At 1600 Battalion suggested registration by direct laying on the monastery on Camine, which was done in short order with good results at a range of 8000 yards for "C" Company. All companies opened fire as planned, "A" and "B" at 1730, "C" at 1810. At 1915 firing was cancelled, X Corps having postponed their attack. 1220 rounds were fired.
- 2 - A bronze stop on the elevating rack of the M5 gun prevents elevations above 551 mils. To obtain maximum table ranges we have been digging trails below the wheels. Today the Ordnance experimentally removed 4 stops in "C".
"C" registered by air O.P., using platoon volleys. Schedule for tonight's firing, starting at 1630, superimposed X Corps' postponed preparation on that of the II Corps. Trail shifts were necessary between nearly all missions. 6747 rounds were fired in this preparation, including a few missions during the morning of the 3rd.
- 3 - Early reports indicate initial objectives on Camine hill were gained with little resistance. "B" and "C" initiate forward reconnaissance.
- 4 - 936 Field Artillery and "B" Company having located positions North of Mignane, began extrication at 1500. 11 guns required winching. Prime movers had to be winched in to winching distance.
- 5 - 0600 - "B" closed in position at 985124.
- 6 - Attempts to register "B" by air O.P. failed. II Corps antitank Officer reports project to convert M42 H.E. to smoke temporarily suspended. 936 has reports that enemy patrols penetrate to Mignane nightly. Battalion Commander ordered 1 platoon, Reconnaissance, attached to "B" for local security.
- 7 - Over 12,000 rounds expended to date.
- 8 - 0730 - Long range machine gun and mortar fire fall in "B" Company area. Some Italians, who have relieved U. S. troops on Lunge, are withdrawing.
0845 - It becomes evident that Italians are withdrawing in considerable disorder. Captain Hamlet requests his prime movers.
1100 - "B" prime movers assembled 1/2 mile in rear of "B" guns.
1200 - Small arms fire dwindles. It appears Italians now reorganized. However, 2nd Reconnaissance platoon ordered up. Reconnaissance Officer is now with "B" Company.
II Corps Artillery Officer ordered 6 jeeps attached to 1st Armored

Division Artillery. (A few days later 4 more were ordered).

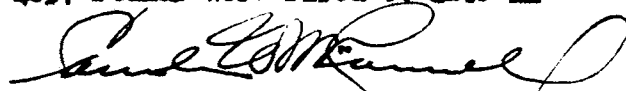
- 9 December - Brigade orders return to basic load ammunition. "B" returns prime movers to bivouac.
- 10 - Commanding officer investigates reason why 936 has been unable to register "B"; results: observer and P.D.C. not using same target, first platoon computed shifts incorrectly.
- 11, 12 - "C" reconnoiters airplane area, ordered to leave night 13 December.
- 13 - "C" begins extrication.
0920 - A telephone message from Corps Artillery Officer, through Brigade, stated Battalion would revert to VI Corps at 2400.
0930 - Battalion Commander telephoned VI Corps for instructions.
0950 - S-3 departs for VI Corps.
1130 - Corps phones to effect that Battalion would assembly in present bivouac; would eventually replace 776 Tank Destroyer Battalion with 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division, when 776's present positions were out of range. Several days were contemplated.
1145 - "C" ordered to return to bivouac.
1155 - "A" ordered back 14 December.
During the day Reconnaissance officer was establishing an O.R. on Retundo. He was allowed to continue.
1900 - S-3 returns from Corps with added information that date was expected to be about 21st.
- 14 - 0930 - Forward O.R. closed and returned to bivouac, leaving liaison officer with Brigade.
1100 - Battalion Commander departed to visit 776 Tank Destroyer Battalion and 2nd S.I.M. He learned that 776 was about out of range now. Commanding General, 2nd S.I.M. Artillery, left method of employment up to Battalion Commander.
1700 - Battalion Commander returned, ordered Reconnaissance officer to return at once, "B" and Reconnaissance platoons to return on 15th. He made plans for reconnoissance of the Colli area on the 15th by S-3, Company Commanders and Headquarters Commandant; he also ordered the Battalion Commander's party to establish an advance O.R. with 776 Tank Destroyer Battalion at Colli on 15 December. "A" had closed in bivouac during the day.
- 15 - Reconnoissance made as planned. The advance O.R. opened at 1300 at H 116327, East of Colli. Again there was a tie-up by Movement Control. Battalion executive officer obtained permission to move "B" Company thru II Corps, but I Corps failed to tell VI Corps. This was to perturb VI Corps at a later date. "B" closed in bivouac about 1900.
Thus ended our tour with the 18th Brigade. The Battalion fired 15,282 rounds in 14 days, over half of it on the 3rd. It was the Battalion's first effort in the Italian campaign, and its first combat experience—almost its first experience—as artillery. It was our first employment and the first in the European Theatre, of 45 3" gun. All concerned are completely sold on the gun, on the 2 1/2 ton truck as its prime mover, and on the efficacy of employing Tank Destroyers as artillery. Much was learned by our attachment to the Battalions of the Brigade, especially from the 937th.

The companies were accepted as part of the Battalions, who advanced the training and employed as their own our computers, VCO's, HCO's, etc.

- 16 December - S-3 selected assembly areas in 2nd D.I.M. sector. Battalion Executive submitted formal request to VI Corps for clearance to move into 2nd D.I.M. sector. G-3 denied the permission, informing Liaison Officer we were moving too much without orders, including the move out of II Corps.
- 17 - The Battalion Commander visited Corps Artillery officer about 1200 hours and learned that action already taken was in line with Corps plans, that orders were being issued to move 805 to 2nd D.I.M. at once. Accordingly, arrangements were made whereby Battalion Executive Officer radioed to Liaison Officer at Corps the locations of assembly areas, Liaison Officer obtained and radioed back the movement orders. Move was approved for the time requested; 25 vehicle march units at 1/2-hour intervals beginning at 180900.
- 18 - The Battalion moved as planned, closing at 1200; Liaison was established with 2nd D.I.M. Battalion Field Order #1 was issued. Battalion Commander and Commanding officer, Company "B", selected positions vicinity Rocchetta. "B" was ordered to occupy tonight. Arrangements were made with Battery "A", 3rd, First Observation Battalion, for survey. "B" was in position at 1800. This quick move was made to take advantage of untrodden territory, the road having just been cleared today.
- 19 - S-3 visited A.D. (Division Artillery) 2nd D.I.M. with fire capabilities chart, based on proposed positions; learned that "A" and "C" need not occupy until ordered by Commanding General, 2nd D.I.M. 0900 - Lt. Leykey and party, with 3 mules borrowed from French A.D., left to establish an O.P. on Hill 1017; he accomplished this by 1800.
- 20 - 1510 - 2nd D.I.M. orders "A" and "C" into position.
1520 - Battalion repeats the order.
1700 - Due to heavy rain and treacherous mud on mountain trails, which caused the overturning of one gun, the Battalion Commander delayed "C"'s occupation until daylight.
2000 - Received first mission from 2nd D.I.M.; harassing fire during the night; assigned to "B".
- 21 - "A" has 6 guns in position. First platoon must be winched over a hill by night. The position is under enemy observation. Second platoon has a difficult mule path to a comparatively good position.
1/15 - Abandoned attempt to register "B" from O.P.; poor visibility limited view of target. Arrangements were made for a cub but other missions preceded.
"B" and "C" fired harassing missions without registration. Lt. Lewin, "C", has located himself by inspection and resection, and put in a company survey. A team from First Observation Battalion has been surveying "A".
- 22 - Received survey data for 2nd platoon "A" from First Observation. 2nd D.I.M. reports Frisener of war interrogation reveals that our fire last night caused casualties among two companies behind Mainarde,

and prevented food arriving at Blackhouse on Mainarde (Hill 1478).

- 23 December - "B" and "C" registered by O.P. on a ridge whose exact chart location is doubtful. (98675-31625) Air O.P., 17th Field Artillery, adjusted "C" on 96775-31855. This adjustment confirms the inaccuracy of our first registration. O.P. abandoned.
- 24 - Harrassing schedules.
- 25 - "A" was registered on Mainarde from an O.P. in Scapeli. Unreliable—due to short range and great elevation of base point.
- 26 - Fired scheduled fires in support of an attack by 8 R.T.M. Two platoons of "A" included in harrassing schedule tonight.
- 27 - Continued scheduled fires for 8 R.T.M. attack. Fired our first Battalion concentration, 32 guns, 6 volleys, on a Battery at G 979399 on 2nd D.I.M. request. "A" turned in our first shellrep in this sector: 5 rounds, 170 mm, not very close.
- 28 - Battalion Commander looked for a position for 3rd platoon of "A", settled on Scapeli.
- 29 - Continued harrassing schedules.
- 30 - Lt. Hoffman established an O.P. on Mainarde between Infantry lines and Outpost lines. Again mules were used. "A" obtained an accurate registration by Lt. Hoffman on a cemetery North of Cardito.
- 31 - "B" registered by Hoffman. "C" failed to complete because of visibility.
Thus the Battalion closed 1943 firing harrassing mission for 2nd Division Infanterie Marocain. 4837 rounds were fired to date in this sector.



CAMDEN R. MCCONNELL,
Lt. Col., F. A.,
Commanding

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Annex #1, SI Journal & Roster of Officers.

Annex #2, Operations Journal

VI Corps A.T.O. (Rec'd)

VI Corps, 18th Brigade G-3 Reports (Rec'd)

VI Corps, F.C.C. Reports (Rec'd)

18th Brigade Schedule of Fire (Rec'd)

Annex #3, 2nd D.I.M. Field Orders (Rec'd)

G-2 & 3 Reports submitted

VI Corps & 18th Brigade G-2 (Rec'd)