

HEADQUARTERS 50TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 464, United States Army.

805-11

Battalion History, March 1 - March 31, 1944

- 1 - 5 A period of rest and recreation, maintenance and training, all considerably hampered by wet weather. Four enlisted men were returned to United States on rotations; 1 Sq., 1 Med. Det., 1 B & 1 C,
- 6 14th Division issued an order for movement to S. Georgio, near Benevento. S-1 reconnoitered assigned area; reported agruous most difficult. As Division had ordered 40 trucks to move Infantry Regiments on 8th and 9th, Battalion Commander requested and was granted permission to move on 10th, after Infantry move. Ten men, Company "A", injured in accidental explosion of anti-tank grenades; 2 seriously wounded, 8 lightly wounded.
- 8, 9 Transported Infantry to S. Georgio.
- 10 1200 (Approx.) - Unknown to Battalion Commander, S-1 at S. Georgio was informed by a Staff Officer, II Corps, Battalion was to embark for Anzio on 11 March.
1400 - Battalion marched from Alife in column 1 hour 50 minutes long.
1530 - S-1 met column between Maddaloni and Caserta; Battalion Executive pulled it into a nearby field.
1600 - Messenger met Battalion Commander west of Caserta with copy, Fifth Army Radio No. 7888, 09 March.
A few minutes later Battalion Commander met S-1, in town enroute for the required assembly area. He conferred with Corps Staff Officer in Maddaloni, returned to the contemporaneous assembly area, dispatched S-3 to confer with Ferry Control, Naples. The 30 vehicles authorized in addition to prime movers and personnel to make trip were selected; Headquarters Commandant, Captain Swanson, was detailed to command rear detachment. S-3 returned from Naples with loading instructions and movement clearances, was detailed to precede column to Staging Area, arrange loading details.
- 11 0630 - Battalion, less rear detachment, marched on Naples.
0830 - Battalion closed Texas Staging Area, Bagnoli, Naples. Lts. Halser and Barlow detailed as TQM's on LST's 199 and 412 respectively.
1045 - Started loading.
1700 - Completed loading; Battalion O.P. on 412.
1715 - Shoved off. Thus 26 hours after Battalion was alerted for shipment, it was afloat.
- 12 0800 - Arrived Anzio after rough but uneventful trip.
0845 - Completed disembarkation, putting Battalion on beachhead less than 40 hours after being alerted. A heavy downpour prevented enemy air interference, though S-1 was lightly wounded by shell fragment about 1030.
1000 - Battalion Commander reported to General Kenny, VI Corps, Antitank Officer. Battalion less "C" was attached to First Special Service Force; "C" to 3rd Div.
1130 - "C" was released and moved to assembly area selected by 501 Tank Destroyer Battalion.
1630 - Battalion closed in assembly area selected by Battalion Commander at

094276 in F38F Sector. Battalion Commander had conferred with F38F and Commanding Officer, 69th A.F.A. Battalion, looked at position areas recommended by latter.

- 13 Battalion Commander, 3-3, Company Commanders made reconnaissance. Battalion Forward C.P. opened at 0942160. Rear remains in assembly area. Companies occupied positions after dark, "B" and 3rd platoon, "A", in indirect fire positions, 7 guns of "A" replaced "C", 894, in direct fire positions along Canale Mussolini, with one gun on canal bank and one across canal in Borgo Sabotino.
- 14 A-3 and B-2 and 3, 6 gun batteries, were registered by 69's sub. F38F issued F.O. #20, for attack on D-day. Battalion stocked 450 rounds per gun.
1515 - Brigadier General Ramey, VI Corps Antitank Officer, visited C.P.
1730 - Lt. Col. Eschenburg, 3-3, F38F, visited.
- 15 0001 - 0500 - Fired harassing missions. Battalion Commander and Col. Marshall, 1st Regiment, F38F, reconnoitered 1st Regiment Sector. Fired night harassing missions, including 480 rounds on an Italian C.P. NW of Littoria.
- 16 "B" and A-2 fired 1550 rounds night harassing--a bit heavy. Lt. Henderson, Boyd, "C", went to hospital sick; Lt. Barlow, Sen., was lent to them. Enemy patrols active early evening.
- 17 Carruthers, Battalion Executive, promoted to Major, and Henderson, Boyd and Ralph, to First Lieutenants. Mr. Weber and Personnel Section arrived on Beachhead. Lt. Col. Tardy, 601 TD, phoned, complimented good work being done by Lt. Walker and "C". Fired 650 harassing rounds.
- 18 At 1300 we started the preparation for tomorrow's diversionary attack. By 1400 it elicited some counterbattery, about 20 rounds 170 mm scattered about "B", though a few knocked out En. C.P. Near Eschenburg caught one at 2100. At 1915 the operation was called off, after we had fired 3550 rounds. Capt. Derossier, 3-2, having transferred to 3 Div., was succeeded by Capt. Hoerger, 3-1, and Lt. Manning, recently returned from F88, became 3-1
- 19 Our last remaining alien soldiers were naturalized in Nettuno. 3-2 paid official visits to 894 and 701 TD Battalions.
- 20 Lt. Walker, Commanding "C", visited. Since daylight movement in his sector is prohibited, this was an all-day visit. He reports Lowin's platoon disabled a tank by indirect fire.
- 21 A's PM in Borgo Sabotino lightly damaged by a mine. No casualties.
- 22 The gradual relief of 3 Div. by 34 Div. will eventually place "C" under another Battalion, probably 701. Bridge 5 comes under 88F, but we made a deal with 601 whereby 2 guns, "C" Company, remain at Bridge 5, under our tactical control.
- 23 Capt. Swanson, Headquarters Commandant, arrived from Near Eschenburg, Caserta, and spent the night. Near C.P. had a couple more 170 mts. This is becoming

routine. Thompson, from GP in Barge Sabotage schoolhouse, adjusted "B" on a mine laying party.

24 Three 2nd Lieutenants were attached for training; their assignment remains the Replacement Depot. GP adjusted "B" on power house, obtaining direct hits which routed enemy, whereupon Company fired for effect. Battalion Commander adjusted one of A's forward guns on a house at 3700 yards with APC, with almost all direct hits. This was an attempt to detonate mines believed in the house. The gun was then adjusted on a gun position seen to harbor 3 enemy. Hits were obtained and one enemy routed. The gun drew counterbattery, about 20 rounds, 170 mm. No damage. Camouflage net ignited by muzzle blast, helped disclose the position. The gun was moved after dark.

25 69th FA Battalion, to break the monotony, arranged a TGF on Littoria at 1415. No observed effect. GP adjusted on powerhouse and others in vicinity, but routed no Jerry's.

26 A dull Sunday.

27 "C" reports setting afire 2 tanks by indirect fire at 12,500 yards each on first volley (Lavin's platoon) and staff car on third volley. In latter case, car was observed daily at 1430 on a scheduled run. They adjusted and laid for him.
Lt. Kirk, with Maintenance platoon arrived on Beachhead.

28 Fired on a dugout and houses, and on trucks by air GP. Good coverage but no observed effect. Initiated use of Meteorological Data. Battalion will compute them and issue to companies as a E-change.

29 34 Div. completed relief of 3 Div. and took command of the sector at 0900 yesterday; Company "C", therefore, comes under their control, but remains attached to 601 SB.
Battalion Commander visited and conferred with Company Commander and 601 Battalion Commander relative new dispositions.
C's two guns at Bridge #5, now in SB Sector, were replaced by one of "A" last night. All "C" guns will go into direct fire positions tonight.
At 1515 an air raid in force cost the enemy 11 aircraft, 8 to AA and 3 to fighters.

"B" fired one observed mission for a cub; good coverage but no observed damage.

Perdi Dolan, "A", got 5 years for AMOL.

About 2130 "B" was showered with AP bombs, without casualties.

30 6 Enlisted men, two "A", two "B", and two "C" sent to Rest Center, Caserta. Authorized 1 % every four days. Two enlisted men from "A" and two from "C" departed for home under Notation Program.

31 Uneventful, except for some harassing missions.

Battalion's initial allotment of vehicles for shipment to Beachhead, in addition to guns and PM's, was 30. Company Headquarters was allotted 6.

2 M-20's, 2 1/2 tons, 2 jeeps. Battalion brought communication and office half-tracks, 2 jeeps, 3 M-20's, ambulance, wrecker, 2 1/2 ts, 1 motorcycle. The biggest need was for more jeeps, more radios. The motorcycle rendered person's services. To date, 4 kitchens, Battalion maintenance, 3-4 vehicles, a few jeeps and motorcycles have arrived. With a few more radios, jeep or dismantled, Battalion will be self-sufficient. The kitchens are a luxury, the trucks are reserve PIs.

2 and A-2 are firing indirect. All other guns are in AF positions. A-4 fired indirect 17 days, knocked out 3 tanks, 1 Volkswagen, was effective on other targets. C's CP is extremely active, has adjusted 24 Div. Arty., other TD's, mortars. Battalion, including "C", has fired 11,838 each; some are over 2000, the book life. Indications are that they are good for 3,000; this may be attributed to excellent care. Supply channels, higher Headquarters, say air tubes are on the way; tactical channels say we may go self-propelled.

Morale is high, especially among the units firing; discipline is at a new peak. Except for a brief period following arrival, men and officers have continued to go to Rest Centers.

Steps are being taken to expand the training and physical conditioning program.



GARDNER W. McCONNELL,
Lt. Col., F. A.,
Commanding

- 2 Items. -
Account #1, 2-1 Journal and Officers' Roster
Operations Journal
2-3 Reports Submitted

Account #2, Field Orders, F33F
G-2 Reports Received
G-3 Reports Received