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HEADQUARTERS
808th Tank Destroyer Battalion

AFQ 403
2 January 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Reports
Against the Enemy

From: 1 December 1944
To : 31 December 1944

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

- SECTION I - SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.
SECTION II - INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, USE OF SECTIONS, ETC.
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SECTION I. SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.

1. 1 December 1944. On 1 December 1944 Battalion was relieved of attachment to 80th Division Artillery. Battalion reverted to battalion control with mission of AMezd defense and commenced relieving 610th TD Battalion on line. Prior to being relieved of attachment to 80th Division Artillery fired 331 rounds HE indirect fire on 10 missions.
2. 2 - 3 December 1944. Completed relief of 610th TD Bn, providing AMezd defense in 80th Division sector. Captured 9 prisoners during period.
3. 4 December 1944. On 4 December 1944 the battalion supported an attack of the 318th Infantry to seize the high ground N and E of PFARRERSVILLER. The night of 3 - 4 December 16 3" guns from A and B Companies were put in position on the high ground W and SW of PFARRERSVILLER with the help of light tanks of the 702d Tk Bn. 12 Cal .50 MG's from B and C companies were also dug in to deliver supporting fires. The battalion and each company established OP's and a forward observer team from each A and B Companies, equipped with SCR 610 radio, was attached to the attacking infantry. Fires were scheduled and coordinated by the 314th FA Bn, the D/S Bn. Overlay of concentrations issued by Division Artillery was used by all units to designate targets and locations. A 15-minute preparation was fired (direct fire) from H-15 to H Hour by the 3" guns and a 30-minute preparation from H-15 to H+15 by the 50's. Thereafter targets of opportunity were fired on call. Requests for fire were radioed from OP's and observers to a forward CP and cleared immediately by telephone (direct line) with the Arty. In one instance approximately 25 Germans were observed retreating over a hill. Our guns could not fire on the target and our observer called for and adjusted Arty fire with excellent results. Information as to the progress of the attack and advanced elements was forwarded immediately to the Arty which relayed it to CT and Division Headquarters. Because of our communications such information reached the Division CT considerably ahead of reports from their own units. A total of 897 rounds HE and 55 rounds APC, and 4500 rounds of Cal .50 were fired.
4. 5 - 6 December 1944. Companies provided AMezd defense in Division sector, one company in support of each CT; "A" Co with 318th, "B" Co with 319th, and "C" Co with 317th. Captured 2 prisoners.

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5. 7 - 16 December 1944. On 7 December 1944 the battalion was released from its mission of AT defense and ordered into rest area, each company being quartered with a CT: "A" Co at MERLBACH with 319th, "B" Co at NIEDERHOMBURG with 313th, and "C" Co at ST AVOLD with 317th. The Battalion CP remained at ST AVOLD. It was the first time the battalion had been off the line and out of contact with the enemy for 72 days. The period was devoted to rest, rehabilitation of personnel, and maintenance of weapons and equipment. All MG's and small arms in the battalion were test-fired and training in assault of a fortified area was conducted with the CT's. On 11 December one section of A Company took up AMczd positions to protect an exposed position vic MERLBACH. A different section alternated on the positions each day. On 11 and 12 December "C" Company test-fired the SHELL, ILLUMINATING, 3" MK 24, NAVY(MOD 1).

6. 17 - 23 December 1944. On 17 December the 80th Division issued orders for the Div and attached units to march to assembly area vic BINNING prepared to take up positions on South flank of 3d Army. The companies marched with the CT's, the CP and Hq Co with Div Hqs. "C" Co closed in area on 17 December remainder of Bn on 18 December. Distance from ST AVOLD to BINNING, 39 miles. "A" and "B" Companies reconnoitered areas and "A" Company occupied AMczd positions on 19 December. Div issued orders for Div and attached units to move North in vic LUXEMBOURG. Again the companies marched with CT's, CP and Hq Company with Div Hqs. Left evening of 19th, arriving morning of 20 December, a distance of 119 miles. Both marches were made without incident. On the 20th companies occupied AT positions in accordance with Reserve Battle Position Plan of Division. On the 21st on VOGG XII Corps battalion relieved of attachment to 80th Division and attached to 5th Infantry Division and 5th Division Artillery: "A" Company in support 2d Inf Regt in mobile reserve, "B" Company in support 11th Inf Regt, "C" Co attached 10th Inf Regt which was attached to 4th Inf Div. All companies occupied AMczd positions in Regimental sectors. 1st Ron attached to "B" Co and 2d Ron attached "C" Co. 10th Inf attacked supported by "C" Company.

7. 24 - 31 December 1944. On order of XII Corps battalion (less Co C) relieved of attachment 5th Inf Div and attached to 2d Cav Gp (Task Force Reed) with mission of protecting right flank of Corps along MOSELLE RIVER between KONTZ and WASSERBILLIG (approx.). "C" Co remained attached to 5th Inf Div. "A" and "B" Companies assigned sectors of defense in sectors of 2d and 42d Cav Sqdn respectively. Positions reconnoitered and positions occupied on 24 December, one Plat of each company taking up indirect positions under fire control responsibility of 276th Armored FA Bn initially. Alternate positions were reconnoitered and dug with help of engineers bulldozers, each company preparing, at least two alternate positions per Plat per gun. 1st Ron Plat, attached to "B" Co operated armored parachute troop patrol; 2d Ron Plat attached to "A" Co, manning OP's and providing security. On 29 December, "C" Co relieved of attachment to 5th Inf Div and returned to Bn control. With the 5th Div it had provided AMczd defense within Div sector. On return to Bn "C" Co occupied indirect fire positions under fire control responsibility of 255th FA Bn, which relieved 276th FA Bn. Reserve Plat of "A" Co released from indirect fire mission. "B" Co reserve Plat remained in indirect fire position. During period a total of 508 rounds HE were fired on 7 registrations and 14 missions.

SECTION II. INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, USE OF SECTIONS, ETC.

1. On 2 December 1944 information was desired on the road net, wooded area, and possible tank barriers North and Northeast of ST AVOLD. At this time the left flank of the Division was very much exposed with little AMczd defense in this area. 1st Rcn Plat was assigned the mission to reconnoiter this area. Reconnaissance was completed by 1300 hours. No barriers were found in that area.

2. On 4 December 1944 enemy tanks were reported to be in the area mentioned above. Both Rcn Plats were sent into this area to establish observation posts and contact the units of the 2d Cav Gp and Ranger Battalion on our left. Plats reported negative information on the tanks and found no evidence of tanks being in the area. For the next two days units from both Rcn Plats kept close liaison with the units on our left. Reports were given daily to the S-2 by 1800 hours.

3. From 7 December to 21 December both Plats were inactive and stayed with the rear echelon of the battalion.

4. On 21 December 1944 1st Rcn Plat was assigned the mission to make a route reconnaissance of the road running West and Southwest from LUXEMBOURG for a radius of 5 miles. 2d Rcn Plat had the same mission, only to the East and Southeast. Reports were turned in by 1500 hours. 1st Plat was then attached to "B" Company, 2d Plat attached to "C" Company.

5. On the night of 23 December 1st Rcn Plat was assigned the mission to run an armored patrol over the network of roads around JUNGLIJSTER. It had been reported that para-troopers were dropped in that area. Patrol ceased after 0600 hours 24 December.

6. On 24 December 1944 1st Rcn returned to "B" Co which had moved to the vicinity of DALHEIM, and set up a para-trooper warning system in that area, working with "C" Troop of the 42nd Cav, Sq, Mczd. 1st Plat continued on this mission until the end of this period. The 2d Rcn Plat was relieved from attachment with "C" Co and attached to "A" Co. Plat established observation posts and added to AMczd defense by digging in M-8's. Plat on same mission at end of period.

INSTRUCTIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

During the rest period at ST AVOLD the S-2 plus personnel from the 1st Rcn Plat gave instructions and demonstrations to gun companies on the use of explosive to aid in the digging of fox holes and gun positions. Experiments showed the explosive to be very useful and could be used when the situation permitted.

MAPS FOR PERIOD

There was an ample supply of all types of maps of the area South of LUXEMBOURG. When the battalion moved to LUXEMBOURG 1:100,000 maps were all that were available. One week after arriving here 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 maps were available. The 1:25,000 maps were impossible to put together accurately. 1:10,500 uncontrolled mosaic of the MOSELLE R was issued, reaching from WASSERBILLEG to RUSTROFF. 46

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CODES FOR THE PERIOD

While working with the 80th Div the Div map code and geographical code were used. When relieved from 80th Div, S-2 Section made its own geographical code.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PERIOD

- (1) Division G-2 reports.
- (2) Corps G-2 reports.
- (3) Division Engineers.
- (4) Reconnaissance Platoons.
- (5) Gun Companies.

SECTION III. LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURE, PROBLEMS.

1. Logistics.

a. Ammunition expended from 1 December to 31 December inclusive:

3" H.E.	1,361 rounds
3" H.E. (Reduced charge)	375 "
3" Illuminating	11 "
3" APC	56 "
.50 Cal. M.G.	17,625 "
.30 Cal. M.G.	20,250 "
.30 Cal Rifle	1,344 "
.45 Cal. Ball	12,500 "
TNT	200 lbs
Caps, Blasting, #8	100
Primer cord	300
Fuze, Bickford	50 ft.

b. Gasoline expended during the period: 18,730 gallons.

c. Rations consumed during the period:

"10 in 1"	6,400	37%
"B"	17,030	73%
1 Reserve "C"	940	121%
1 Reserve "10 in 1"	0	0%

d. Vehicles and primary weapons replaced during period: None.

e. Total number of socks turned in for washing and return: 5520 pair.

2. Procedure.

a. General.

- (1) Battalion S-4 remained a member of the forward C.P.
- (2) Company Supply Sergeants worked in Rear Echelon with Battalion Supply making frequent visits to companies.

- (3) The communications officer controlled all items of signal equipment requisitioned. Companies requested supplies from him. He consolidated and worked with battalion supply crew in procurement and distribution.
- (4) Supply problems, Battalion Supply Points, changes in policy, or new supply requirements were sent to the companies on administrative messages.

b. Class I.

- (1) Battalion Supply continued to request rations from Division Quartermaster, when attached to a Division, or from Army Class I Supply Point when not attached, using the strength of companies reported on Morning Reports.
- (2) Battalion Supply drew rations from Division or Army Class I Supply Point and delivered them to the companies at the Battalion Rear Echelon.
- (3) On Christmas Day a full "B" ration, with turkey, was fed to the battalion.
- (4) A weekly P.X. ration was picked up each Sunday based on a request submitted to Division Class I on Thursday of each week. After detachment from Division this report was submitted on Friday of each week to Army Class I Supply Point.

c. Class II.

- (1) Battalion Supply accepted informal requisitions from companies. Company Supply Sergeants kept a record of individuals or of platoons, to which requisitioned items should be sent upon receipt.
- (2) Battalion edited, consolidated, and forwarded requisitions and in event items were not received on initial request, back-ordered for the companies.
- (3) While the battalion was in a rest period, each man's clothing and equipment was checked and shortages requisitioned with the result that every man, with few exceptions, is now completely clothed and equipped.
- (4) During this period a complete issue of high-neck sweaters was made in the battalion, 700 early in the period, the balance later.

d. Class III.

- (1) Daily Reports of gasoline on hand were made to Division G-4 while the organization was attached. When one company moved separately from the battalion, the Regimental S-4 of the supported unit furnished the company with gasoline. In all other cases, can for can exchange was carried out within the battalion.

e. Class IV.

- (1) Demolitions were requisitioned and received for use during rest period on demonstrations showing how to dig gun positions quickly using TNT and Primer Cord.

f. Class V.

- (1) Basic ammunition load was maintained at all times. Headquarters Company personnel and vehicles maintained the Train Supply and each line company drew the required amount from the Battalion Reserve in 1 1/2-ton trucks. Where it seemed feasible to send ammunition forward to the companies, this was accomplished.

g. Miscellaneous:

(1) Motor vehicular maintenance.

- (a) Thousand and six-thousand-mile checks were performed as normal when in a static situation; when in movement they were completed at first opportunity. During the rest period all prime movers were pulled in and given a thorough check.
- (b) Company motor maintenance crews travelled with the companies throughout the period.
- (c) A mechanic from Battalion Maintenance was kept with the forward CP to keep constant check on the CP vehicles. Any mechanical deficiencies he could not repair were sent to the rear echelon.

(2) Evacuation.

- (a) Vehicular evacuation was handled by the Battalion wrecker crew when Company Maintenance could not evacuate.
- (b) Deceased were evacuated through combat teams which units were supporting.
- (c) Prisoners were evacuated to combat team P.W. enclosures.

(3) Duffle bags were moved forward as required to make them easily accessible to troops. Duffle bags of men killed in action were inventoried and personal effects forwarded to Q.M. Effects.

(4) Upon receipt of instructions from Third U.S. Army the men in this battalion were required to carry the following items of CWS equipment when moving forward of Division Rear Boundary line:

- 1 ea Mask, gas
- 2 ea Covers, protective
- 1 ea Tube, ointment, protective
- 1 ea Tube, BAL, eye ointment
- 4 ea Eyeshields
- 2 ea Detector, sleeve...

3. Supply problems.

a. Line companies were hampered in preparation of "10 in 1" ration by shortage of 57 Outfit, cooking, 1 burner in battalion.

b. Following shortages at the close of this period demonstrate the extreme care which the Maintenance Platoon had to exercise in order to "keep 'em rolling".

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SHORT</u>
600 x 16 tires	24
600 x 16 Tubes	8
325 x 20 Tube	2
Acid Core solder	10 lb
Hot Patches	1,000
Cold Patches	500
Half-track, winch cable	12
Seal Beam Units, 1-ton	6
Seal Beam Units, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton	6
Hose, f/ $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton (radiator)	18 ft.
Charger, battery, 2d Echelon Set # 2	1

SECTION IV. PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION (S-1)

1. Replacements.

a. During the period of this report the Battalion has drawn a total of three replacements and twenty-six men returned to duty from hospital.

b. The battalion has had one (1) man killed, seven (7) men wounded, forty (40) sick in hospital, and lost thirty-five men to the infantry (5% of T/O strength).

c. As of 31 December 1944 the Battalion was fifty-three (53) men under T/O strength. Requisitions for these men have been turned in to XII Corps.

2. Special Service.

a. From 7 December 1944 to 17 December 1944 the Battalion was ordered into a rest period with the 80th Infantry Division in the vicinity of ST AVOLD, FRANCE. During this period all the men were given bathing facilities, shown motion pictures, read and wrote letters.

b. During the month the Battalion sent nine (9) enlisted men and one (1) officer on forty-eight hour passes to Paris, while attached to 80th Infantry Division, and thirteen (13) enlisted men and two (2) officers to Nancy, France, on four-day passes, allotted through the 2d Cavalry Group, to which the Battalion has been attached since 24 December 1944.

c. On 12 December 1944 one Red Cross Clubmobile, "Memphis", visited the battalion for one day. Each company was allotted a portion of the time available.

3. Medals. During the month sixty-four (64) recommendations for the Bronze Star Medal were submitted to higher headquarters, of which three (3) were for heroic service, and sixty-one for meritorious service. One enlisted man of those

submitted for heroic service was awarded the Soldier's Medal instead of the Bronze Star. Six enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service, and forty officers and enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service during the period.

4. Graves Registration. Men killed continued to be evacuated through the combat teams to which attached.

5. Personnel Administration. The Personnel Section continued to operate with 80th Infantry Division rear echelon until the Battalion was relieved from attachment thereto. Since that date the Personnel Section has operated with the Battalion's own rear echelon.

SECTION V. COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Aiming Data Chart. The Aiming Data Chart showing sight diagram and range lines for APC, HE, and HVAP were pasted on the shields of all guns and coated with shellac. The paper could not be made entirely impervious to weather and the shield was usually covered with mud. Accordingly we painted an abbreviated scale on the left side of the mantlet with white letters, 1 1/2 inch in size, thus:

<u>APC</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>HV</u>
8	9	13
16	18	23

By interpolation the gunner can readily approximate the other ranges. The chart has been pasted in the gun chest.

2. Shell, Illuminating, 3", Mk 24, Navy (Mod. 1). On 11 and 12 December the Battalion testfired the illuminating shell. The test confirmed all information we had received on the Shell. The following comments may be of interest;

- a. The fuze may be set with the fuze wrench for the CPT105 fuze or hand fuze setter for the 105 MM How (Setter, fuze, hand mechanical, M17).
- b. The wind affects the descent of the flare materially (blowing it as far as 300 yards). Accordingly, allowance should be made therefore.
- c. It is difficult to obtain bursts closer than 1000 yards to the gun. In all cases where ranges less than 1000 yards were used, the burst and area of illumination still appeared to be approximately 1000 yards.
- d. Most effective area of illumination appears to be about 600 yards in diameter.
- e. Period of effective illumination; 20 to 30 seconds.
- f. Best illumination is obtained from bursts at 1100 to 1500 feet.

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3. On occasions we have obtained assistance in putting guns in position from the Tank Battalion attached to the Division. Light tanks will successfully negotiate muddy and difficult terrain towing a 3" gun, making otherwise inaccessible positions available.

4. Recently in a stabilized situation covering a broad front we have been able to employ engineer bulldozers to assist in digging gun positions. At least two alternate positions have been prepared for each gun of each Pltn.

5. Basic ammunition loads have been changed so that S-4 carries 400 additional rounds HE in train and each half-track carries an additional 18 rounds HE.

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