

No II

FROM: 010001 JULY 44
TO : 312400 JULY 44

UNIT : 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion
PLACE : FRANCE, 482559
TIME : 021400 AUGUST 44

MAPS: FRANCE 1/25,000

1 JULY 44

Previously prepared positions were held throughout the period until 1423 at which time elements of the 821st TD Battalion began relieving elements of this unit by platoons. Upon being relieved units moved to a position of readiness near 555710. Reconnaissance for routes to and areas in the sector of the 30th Infantry Division was immediately commenced in preparation for possible reassignment to that unit. Unit suffered 3 casualties from battle exhaustion.

2 JULY 44

The last platoon of "A" Company closed into a position of readiness at 0045, earlier movement having been prevented by heavy small arms, mortar and shell fire. Unit remained through the entire period in the position of readiness performing maintenance, personal vehicular and weapons, and resting up. Unit suffered 3 casualties 2 accidental and 1 battle exhaustion.

3 JULY 44

Unit remained in the 29th Division reserve in a position of readiness until 1920 at which time on VOGG, XIX Corps, Battalion was detached from the 29th Division Artillery control, unit by immediate motor march moved to previously selected, prepared and surveyed indirect fire positions, Companies "B" and "C" closing by 2200 hours and Company "A" closing at 2245 hours, "C" Company being at 674759, "B" Company at 567747 and "A" Company at 436829 with Battalion CP at 509754. No change of location was made for the rear echelon.

4 JULY 44

Battalion remained in indirect fire position for entire period during which time all companies were registered. "B" Company fired 31 rounds at an enemy battery and all companies fire a 4th of July salute for a total of 230 rounds HE.

5 JULY 44

There were no changes of positions throughout the above period during which time "A" Company fired five (5) concentrations, "B" Company seven (7) concentrations and "C" Company five (5) concentrations for a total of 271 rounds upon Division designated targets.

6 JULY 44

Companies continued indirect fire missions as follows: "A" company 5, "B" Company 6; "C" Company 4 for a total of 307 rounds fired and Reconnaissance platoon moved at 1530 from its position of readiness at Battalion CP to an area near 436829 closing at 2015 hours at which time it was attached to "A" Company.

7 JULY 44

H minus 42 unit started preparation fires and between H minus 20 and H plus 60 preparation missions were accomplished with "A" Company firing 9 concentrations, "B" firing 9 and "C" Company firing 4 concentrations for a total of 1094 rounds. Subsequent to that time additional concentrations were fired on call from 30th Division Arty. As soon as the river crossing had been established by the 117th Infantry the 1st Recon platoon crossed the VIRE river in the sector of the 117th Infantry and after locating gun positions the 1st and 2nd platoons of "C" Company were moved into position astride the main Highway between 480748 and 500746, "C" Company CP being located at 561746 from which location Lt. Col. STANLEY DETMER controlled the employment of units as they crossed the VIRE river until the establishment of the Battalion CP W of said river. Areas occupied by units of "C" Company were not cleared of enemy at time of occupation and the afternoon of the 7th July it was necessary to call upon one Company of the 117th Inf. Reg. to counter-attack to relieve one gun surrounded by the enemy, after attempts to do so by the 1st Recon platoon resulted in failure. A Company behind the 2nd Recon platoon crossed the VIRE canal in the sector of the 180th cavalry group, and after locating gun positions the 3rd platoon "A" Company occupied positions N of (ST JEAN DE DAYE) the 2nd platoon near 469774 with the 1st platoon N of the VIRE canal at 476789. Late in the evening "B" Company moved to a position of readiness at 528742 with the Battalion CP being established at 529740. Unit suffered two accidental casualties.

8 JULY 44

At 0200 the 3rd platoon "C" Company crossed the VIRE river going into a position of readiness in Company CP at 501746. During the early morning hours between gaps in friendly Infantry lines an enemy group, estimated to be the size of a platoon, made a counter-attack and was repulsed by the 1st and 3rd platoons and CP group of "C" Company. In the early evening 3rd platoon "C" Company occupied direct fire positions, immediately S of "C" Company CP. Small enemy detachments bypassed by the 120th Infantry prevented movement S of St. JEAN DE DAYE although the 1st platoon occupied positions at St. JEAN DE DAYE late on the 8th where it was secured by the 2nd Reconnaissance platoon which had suffered several vehicular casualties during the period by enemy shelling. At 2300 the 1st platoon "B" Company left its position of readiness to cross the VIRE river and by about 2400 had occupied positions at 470745.

9 JULY 44

An enemy 88 shell scored a direct hit on the sight and sight mount on one of the 3 guns, 1st platoon "b" Company, putting it out of action, but causing no casualties. Between 0430 and 0530 the 2nd and 3rd platoons "B" Company were moved W of the VIRE river, taking up direct fire position in the vicinity of 473747. The Battalion CP moved to 499744 closing at 0830. Upon Division orders to concentrate all guns possible in the vicinity of 470720-460740-470746, to meet possible enemy counter-attack, from the vicinity of ST. JEAN DE DAYE, units of "A" Company were concentrated in the vicinity of 470745 on the road leading to LE DESERT with one unit on the N & S highway leading to ST. LO from positions at 470743 "B" Company moved to meet the counter-attack assuming positions S of above coordinates and generally astride the road while "C" Company took up positions astride and E of the N and S ST LO highway near 470730. During the counter-attack retreating 117th Infantry soldiers reported enemy tanks following them and with visibility poor, 3rd Army tanks moved N along said highway firing machine guns and 75mm guns. One gun 1st platoon "C" Company knocked out two U.S. medium tanks, receiving in turn damage to one 3" gun which put it out of operation for approximately 24 hours, one death to a member of the 1st Recon platoon and several casualties to "C" Company crew members. Later the two forward "C" Company platoons, two "B" Company platoons and one "A" Company platoon were forced to withdraw to secondary positions, the "A" Company platoon leaving all guns and vehicles in place, shortly thereafter all units were able to recoup approximately their original positions wherewith the aid of the 1st and 2nd Reconnaissance platoons a defensive position was organized along Inf. lines and the position held for the balance of the day. Two prisoners were taken being the first captured by this unit and the first German to be positively identified as being killed by this organization was shot by Pvt. HOLLIDAY. Unit suffered 14 casualties, 4 accidental and 10 shrapnel.

10 JULY 44

Battalion CP moved to a new area at 477740, "a" Company made slight adjustments in its position to cover any tank threat from the SW, "B" Company established positions N and S of 460730 while "C" Company had two platoons near 468734 and one platoon at 475712, "B" and "C" Company supporting the 120th and 119th Inf. Regiments respectively. 1st Recon platoon provided close in support for the 3rd platoon of "C" Company 1st Reconnaissance platoon also secured important information concerning enemy Battery positions which information proved to be of great value to G-2 Higher Headquarters. Unit suffered two accidental casualties.

11 JULY 44

Battalion CP moved to 486738, "B" and "C" Companies remained approximately the same with "A" Company moving to the vicinity of 476730 1st Reconnaissance platoon continued its close support of the 3rd platoon "C" Company and its platoon leader, 1st Lt. THOMPSON L. RANNEY, together with RM from his unit knocked out one MK tank at 462706 with a bazooka captured its crew of two and turned them over to a PQ station. The 2nd Reconnaissance platoon established and maintained outposts on the W and exposed flank of the Battalion and Division. A German radio was found by "C" Company which was sent to Higher Headquarters.

12 JULY 44

Between 6800 and 1000 hours there was a general shifting of platoons W, SW and 3 to create a solid defensive line and for the closer support of the Infantry Battalions. Extensive Reconnaissance was maintained to determine from line locations of Infantry units and continuous attempts were made to occupy positions at HTS VENTS BELLE LANDE and the river CROSSINS S and E of BELLE LANDE but small arms and artillery fire made this impossible. Unit suffered 14 casualties: 2 killed, 10 shrapnel and 2 accidental.

13 JULY 44

Because of failure of Infantry units to make expected progress and because of the unsettled conditions behind our lines it was impossible to make any of the planned moves with the exceptions of the movement of one platoon, "B" Company, to a position near 467699 and one section, 3rd platoon "C" Company, to 482707. Recon for new positions and the location of Infantry front lines was continuous as was the preparation of alternate gun positions.

14 JULY 44

With passing of the threat to Division N flank the Division released units in that area making it possible to move one platoon of "B" Company to a new position on a Division W flank and a second platoon to centrally located positions to move in any direction to counter an armored thrust. A position in the neighborhood of 474688 VENTS was occupied. An anti-tank warning OP was established by the 1st Recon platoon in the neighborhood of 474688 and because of enemy direct fire it was necessary to move the 2nd platoon of "C" Company from its direct fire position to a position of readiness in the vicinity of LE CHENEE. Unit suffered 2 shrapnel casualties.

15 JULY 44

Two platoons "A" Company took positions near 450702, 1st platoon "B" Company at 467715 and 1st section "C" Company at 457694. Reconnaissance for gun positions, routes and front lines was continuous. At 2300 because of heavy mortar and shell fire it was necessary for the one section 3rd platoon "C" Company to vacate its position on the high ground of NE of HTS VENTS and return to its old location.

16 JULY 44

Receipt of instructions to furnish close support to the 120th Inf. Regt. coordinating with reinforcing the regimental 57mm guns required no immediate change of positions. However, by 1320 the 3rd platoon of "B" Company had moved into a new position at 456687. At 1910 Bn CP closed into its new area at 477713. After extensive reconneitering and the creation of a covered route of approach by the blowing of the gaps in hedges, further positions for close support were developed, and the 2nd platoon "B" Company was instructed to move by infiltration to 456684. The 3rd Recon platoon, under its Lt. CUNNINGHAM, was established this date by drawing on KP's and rear echelon for required personnel, its initial assignment being to cover the movements of the 119th Inf. Regt.

17 JULY 44

No new direct fire positions were taken up during the period. However, several units because of enemy fire moved into covered positions of readiness, bazooka tank hunting teams were established by the three Recon platoons and twice during the period, upon receipt of a tank warning, six key road features were occupied by the teams, no tanks were sighted or located. 1st Lt. LEON NEEL, 1st platoon "B" Company received shrapnel wounds, while on a reconnaissance mission requiring ten days to two weeks hospitalisation.

18 JULY 44

Under FO 11, 30th Infantry Division, "A" and "C" Companies were placed on indirect fire mission under 30th Div. Arty control, while "B" Company remained on its primary mission of furnishing protection to Division against tank attack. After area assignments had been changed twice by Higher Headquarters, "A" Company finally occupied positions E and W of 475696 with its CP at 474700 while "C" Company occupied its position E and W of 473693 with its CP at 472697. At 2130 Battalion CP closed at its old location and unit opened at its new location at 2200 at 477694. Indirect fire positions were prepared and "A" and "C" Companies were ready for registration the morning of the 19th. In addition to "B" Company one officer and the security sections from "A" and "C" continued to reconnoiter and prepare direct fire positions. Reconnaissance platoons continued their attack warning net, tank hunting bazooka mission and blew such hedges and hedgerows in the preparation of direct positions as requested by companies.

19 JULY 44

With the exception of the movement of the rear Echelon to 480702 and "B" Company CP to 462695, no other action of major importance occurred. Period was spent in the continued reconnaissance and development of direct fire positions, the improvement of indirect fire positions and the cleaning up of men and equipment. The required inspection for unauthorized small arms was started.

20 JULY 44

No change for period. Only activity consists in improvement of positions, personal maintenance and the development of additional direct fire positions. Tec IV VALENTINE was the unit's first booby trap victim.

21 JULY 44

"A" and "C" Companies fired three concentrations on Division assigned interdiction type targets for a total of 252 rounds each. Sixteen replacements were received and one previous evacuated casualty rejoined unit. No other change for period.

22 JULY 44

No Change.

23 JULY 44

No Change.

24 JULY 44

Unit was ready to fire its preparation fire by "A" and "C" Companies, had withdrawn its Reconnaissance platoon behind the bomb protection lines and was ready to move South in close support of the 30th Inf. Division upon receipt of orders when all attack plans were cancelled. No casualties were suffered by this unit by the Air bombardment of the U.S. Air Force, although bombs did bracket some positions and several close calls resulted.

25 JULY 44

The start of the period found "B" Company in direct fire positions with "A" and "C" Companies engaged in their secondary Mission. During the attack by the Ninth Air Force as a result of bomb action one quarter ton truck of the 1st Recon Platoon was destroyed and one casualty inflicted required evacuation. "C" Company fired 40 rounds HE before it was called out of its primary mission after which "A" Company continued on its secondary mission firing C concentrations for a total of 518 rounds on Division assigned interdiction type targets. One target of opportunity, mortar position, was fired consuming 72rds. Upon the start of the movement forward by the 30th Division, the 1st platoon "B" Company was moved to its prepared position covering 452678 with the 2nd and 3rd platoons remaining at 457688 and 456683. At 1430 the 1st platoon "C" Company moved to positions at 460676 closing shortly thereafter at 655672 while the 2nd platoon took up positions near 458670. Heavy artillery fire was experienced by all forward positions and further movement forward was prevented. The three Recon Platoons maintained continuous reconnaissance for the location of friendly front line and new direct fire positions. Units suffered three battle casualties requiring evacuation, one being 1st Lt BURTON, 3rd platoon "B" Company and two accidental casualties. Unit quietly celebrated its second anniversary today but a noisier and more entertaining one will be held at a more appropriate time and place.

26 JULY 44

"A" Company's mission remained the same and it fired six interdiction concentrations for a total of 433 rounds. Its platoon precision registration was extremely successful requiring only two rounds Smoke and ten rounds of HE. A difference of only 50 yards was found between Smoke and HE shells. Other than reconnaissance no movements were made by "C" Company during the period with the exception of the 1st platoon which moved to 459866 at 2215. Three new positions were established and occupied by "B" Company with the 1st platoon at 436656, 2nd platoon at 447671 and 3rd platoon at 434758 and 439659. Unit suffered 3 casualties; 2 accidental and 3 shrapnel.

27 JULY 44

After the progress made by the Infantry Units during the latter hours of the 26th, it was necessary for all elements to displace forward. Movements were as follows; 3rd platoon "C" Company at 0900 to 447641, 1st Platoon "B" Company 1300 to 446618, and Platoon "B" Company 1300 to 442636, 2nd Platoon "C" Company at 1330 to 466624; Battalion CP at 1515 to 463633; "B" Company to position of readiness at 445816 at 1530; "B" Company CP at 1440 to 445617, 1st Platoon "C" Company at 1530 to 463622; "C" Company CP to 467626 at approximately the same time; "A" Company to indirect fire positions in the vicinity of 471635 at 1745 with CP at 468642; 1st platoon "B" Company at 1800 to 450596; 3rd platoon "C" Company moved to position of readiness near 462602, Lt RANEY, 1st Recon Platoon Leader, and his

platoon Sgt captured 20 German prisoners turning them over to Division Provost Marshal. Battalion suffered five casualties requiring evacuation during the period, one occurring at Battalion CP.

28 JULY 44

To meet a possible thrust of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, "A" and "B" Companies were ordered to positions directly behind the 120th Infantry Regiment for which purpose "A" Company was released from its secondary mission. Immediate Reconnaissance was started and by 0800 hours "B" Company had closed into positions at 485548-480559-596557 with "A" Company at 0900 hours closing into positions at 478560-482560-489984 at the same time "A" Company CP moving to 482560. At 0830 2nd platoon "C" Company and the Company CP moved to 497584 and 590574 respectively. At 1200 hours 30th Infantry Division and the 823rd TD Battalion were released from attachment to the VII Corps and attached to the XIX Corps. To meet a possible counter-attack "A" Company was directed to furnish close support to the 120th Infantry Regiment and to do so moved by 1830 hours to positions at 505555-512557. "B" Company was given the mission of the close support of the 117th Infantry Regiment and about 1900 hours moved the 3rd platoon to 485542 but enemy action and the withdrawal of friendly troops required its withdrawal at 2200 hours to 481557 where it went into a position of readiness. The 1st and 3rd platoon "C" Company moved to reinforcing positions at 456556 closing at 2100 hours while "B" Company at 1520 moved 1st CP to 477571. Battalion CP opened at its new area at 482559 at 2100 hours. Unit suffered 3 casualties and two German prisoners were taken.

29 JULY 44

At 100 hours 2nd platoon "C" Company occupied direct fire positions at 487553 being followed at 1330 and 1404 by the 1st and 3rd platoon "C" Company which went into positions at 491539 and 487553. 3rd platoon "B" Company reoccupied its position at 486541 at 130 and 1515 one section 2nd platoon "B" Company moved to 486532, "C" Company CP at 1630 moved to 487553. Two casualties were suffered, 1 by small arms fire of German patrol and the second by a motorcycle accident.

30 JULY 44

After two enemy air attacks which caused two deaths 1 "C" Company and 1st Recon platoon, together with ten casualties, C B Companies, B O Company, a relatively quiet day was spent. Since little progress was made by the 119th and 117th Infantry Regiments no changes were made by "B" or "C" Companies. However, because of displacements South of the 120th Infantry Regiment "A" Company at 1910 moved its 1st platoon to 505549 and at 1720 the 2nd platoon to 453645, "B" Company CP at 1450 was moved to 483555. At 2130 one gun 3rd platoon "C" Company occupied direct fire position where it could fire upon a church steeple at 304314 which was being used as an enemy CP. Three rounds of CPA were fired which created large holes through the upper part of the steeple all three shells exploding in the interior of the building. This was followed by four rounds of HE, each of which increased the size of the hole throwing debris in all directions. It is believed that no one remained alive in that portion of the steeple.

31 JULY 44

Lt BARRON and one of the 3rd platoon "C" Company's gun returned to its direct fire position and between 0600 and 0645 three rounds of CPA and twenty rounds HE at the church steeple at 504514. Upon the completion of the firing all that remained of the visible portion of the steeple was parts of the steel frame work.

It was no longer of any value to the enemy HE and OP. There was no change in any of the dispositions of their units, but reconnaissance front line positions and new positions was continued. 1st Recon platoon suffered another casualty from shell fragments. No damage or casualties resulted from the early morning air-attack. This unit suffered 2 shrapnel casualties and one from exhaustion.

DETTMER
Lt. Col.,

OFFICIAL:

LOHSE
3-3