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TDs

*File
30th Div*

HEADQUARTERS
803D TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U. S. Army

12 October, 1944.

SUBJECT: Documentation of Siegfried Line.

TO : Commanding General, XIX Corps, APO 270, U. S. Army.

DOCUMENTATION OF SIEGFRIED LINE

1. Two (2) companies of the Battalion were used in the assault of the formidable Siegfried Line. To facilitate closer cooperation and faster employment, one company, was put in close support of each of the assaulting infantry regiments. Contrary to normal Tank Destroyer tactics the company was broken down and a platoon was placed in close support of each infantry battalion. This variance from normal doctrine is essential when TD's are employed on a tank mission. The infantry must have immediate direct fire support. It is emphasized the Tank Destroyer company when used in its proper role can contribute considerably toward destroying the numerous enemy counter-attacks. It should never be used to seek-out enemy tanks that are not definitely located. Only through wise decisions of the TD platoon leaders can these seeking out missions be avoided as friendly infantry commanders are frequently requesting such missions from us.

2. "B" Company, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion in support of 119th Infantry Regiment. In the vicinity west of Rimburg on 2 October, 1944, the 119th Infantry Regiment, with one company of the 743rd Tank Battalion and Company "B" 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion in close support pushed off on the attack against the Siegfried Line. Each platoon was equipped with a 300 series radio borrowed from the infantry battalion whom they were supporting. This net was composed of the Battalion Commander, the company commanders and the TD platoon leader. The primary mission was direct fire on pillboxes which come, in most cases, from the company commander. (All pillboxes encountered were in pairs, mutually supporting. The TD platoon was employed with two (2) guns firing, one into each of the pillbox embrasures and the other two guns overwatching. This pinned down the enemy personnel and allowed our infantry to infiltrate to the blind side. When in position to make final assault, infantry would call by radio for fire to be lifted. In a few cases the fire from the M10 would drive the enemy out of his position, however these were believed to be inexperienced troops. Unless the M10 could get into position to fire into the embrasure its usefulness in the reduction of the pillbox was useless. No amount of fire from the 3" inch gun could penetrate the thickness of these defenses.) After the M.L.R. had been penetrated the majority of missions were destruction of OP's, machine guns and personnel strongpoints.

Documentation of Siegfried Line Cont'd.

Equipment destroyed (period 2 - 9 October, 1944) "B" Company 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion:

Machine guns - - - - -	4
Pillboxes (neutralized) - - - - -	9
OP's - - - - -	9
Mark V tank - - - - -	2
Mortars - - - - -	2
Personnel killed - - - - -	40
PW's - - - - -	40

Own Losses:

M10's (two are repairable) - - - - -	3
Officers KIA - - - - -	1
Officers WIA - - - - -	3
Enlisted men KIA - - - - -	3
Enlisted men WIA - - - - -	12

3. "C" Company 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion in support of 117th Infantry Regiment.

In the vicinity of Scherpenseel (K829601) on 2 October, 1944, the 117th Infantry Regiment with one company of the 743rd Tank Battalion and Company "C" 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion in close support pushed off on attack against the Siegfried Line.

Prior to the initial jump-off, all platoons fired on all possible enemy observation posts with 50% H.E. and 50% A.P. to deny the enemy the use of same during initial stages of the attack. Three hundred (300) rounds of ammunition were expended on this mission. No other direct fire support was possible during the first phases of the attack due to the inability to secure satisfactory firing positions. Our support actually consisted of establishing a strong anti-tank defense within the initial breach of the line.

The attack succeeded in breaching the Siegfried line in the vicinity of Palenberg (K855595) and establishing a bridgehead across the Wurm river (K849599). This bridgehead enabled the third platoon of Company "C" 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion to cross the river and move into defensive positions within the 1st battalion 117th infantry regiment perimeter defense just South of Palenberg. This crossing and movement was accomplished only after extensive mine clearance and reconnaissance of positions under heavy enemy artillery fire. The first platoon Company "C" 803rd T. D. Bn. was successful in moving into positions just east of the bridge crossing in order to protect it from enemy counter-attack and to offer close support of the 2nd battalion 117th Infantry Regiment which was in defensive positions in this vicinity.

On the morning of the 3rd October, 1944, the 2nd battalion 117th Infantry Regiment received strong enemy counter-attacks from the North of Palenberg and the 1st platoon Company "C" assisted in repelling these attacks by 3"inch H.E. and .50 caliber machine gun fire. This type of support was given twice during day and contributed considerably in smashing these attacks.

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Documentation of Siegfried Line Cont'd.

As the attack progressed and the town of Ubach was taken, all three platoons were moved to the vicinity of the town to establish a strong anti-tank defense in this sector. The movement into Ubach by our platoons and the subsequent occupation and defense of this town for the next two (2) days was accomplished under the most intense enemy artillery that our troops ever experienced. (Described as worse than our experience at St. Lo) Due to the fact that our gun crews are protected by a certain amount of armor, we were able to accomplish this anti-tank mission with few casualties whereas all towed guns were unable to move.

No anti-tank ditches, dragons teeth, or other heavily constructed anti-tank obstacles were encountered in our sector.

The one enemy pillbox this company had an opportunity to fire on was quickly neutralized but not destroyed by a few rounds of H.E.

The enemy dug-in anti-tank guns, roving tanks, heavy artillery and stubborn infantry constituted much more of a problem than did any of the permanent emplacements of the Siegfried Line. These above mentioned enemy activities still constitute a problem toward rapid advances in this sector.

Equipment destroyed (period 2 - 9 October, 1944) "C" Company, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion:

OP's - - - - -	5
Pillboxes (neutralized) - - - - -	1
Machine guns - - - - -	1
Personnel killed - - - - -	8
PW's - - - - -	8

Own Losses:

MLO's - - - - -	0
Officers KIA - - - - -	0
Officers WIA - - - - -	0
Enlisted men KIA - - - - -	2
Enlisted men WIA - - - - -	0

Charles W. Goodwin
CHARLES W. GOODWIN,
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Commanding.