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HEADQUARTERS 6TH TANK DESTROYER GROUP
APO 339, US ARMY

1 May 1945

Subject: After Action Report.

To : The Adjutant General
War Department
Washington, 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

1. In compliance with provisions of paragraph 10, AR 345-105, "After Action Report" for the calender month of April 1945 is submitted herewith.

For the Commanding Officer:

Albert Davis
ALBERT DAVIS
2d Lt, Inf.
Ass't Adj.

1 Incl.
"After Action Report"

314.81

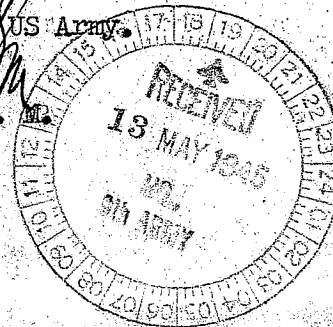
1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS XIII CORPS, APO 463, US Army, 11 May 1945.

TO: Commanding General, Ninth US Army, APO 339, US Army.

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HEADQUARTERS 6TH TANK DESTROYER GROUP
APO 339, U.S. ARMY

CLASSIFICATION
CANCELLED

Period: 1 - 30 April 45
Place : Klotze, Germany
Coord : Y3253
Date : 1 May 45

AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Memorandum, Capt 440
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 20 June 46

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Maps: Central Europe
GSGS Series No. 4416
Scale 1/100,000

I. HISTORICAL DATA

1. Assignments and attachments during period.
 - a. Hq & Hq Co, 6th TD Gp is assigned to Ninth United States Army, attached to XIII Corps, and attached for operations to XIII Corps Artillery.
2. Operational functions.
 - a. Commanding Officer, Hq & Hq Co, 6th TD Gp served on the staff of the Corps Artillery Commander as the Antitank Officer. The Antitank Section was formed using the S-2 and S-3 staff sections of the Group.
 - b. Commanding Officer, Hq & Hq Co, 6th TD Gp served on the staff of the Corps G-3, as the Security Officer. The Security Section was formed using the personnel of the antitank section to perform this work in addition to their antitank work.
 - c. Hq & Hq Co, 6th TD Gp operated a phantom radio liaison service between Corps Headquarters and elements of the 5th Armored Division. This radio group was formed using radio vehicles of the group, radio communications personnel of the group plus 2 radio operators on special duty from 4th Signal Battalion and 2 liaison officers of the group plus 2 liaison officers on special duty from the divisions.
 - d. Hq Co, 6th TD Gp operated a mess for enlisted men under the control of the Headquarters Commandant, XIII Corps. The mess section was formed from mess personnel of the Group Headquarters Company under immediate command of the Company Commander.
3. Operational movements.
 - a. The unit moved with Headquarters, XIII Corps as follows:

| <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>COORDINATES</u> | <u>GP OPENED</u> | <u>GP CLOSED</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Viersen | F0595 | | 010845A Apr 45 |
| Heiden | A4459 | 011340A | 050630B Apr 45 |
| Warendorf | B1172 | 051500B | 070930B Apr 45 |
| Herford | B6592 | 071400B | 100930B Apr 45 |
| Stadthagen | X0115 | 101500B | 130930B Apr 45 |
| Lehrte | X5222 | 131400B | 150930B Apr 45 |
| Klotze | Y3253 | 151400B | |

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4. Status of Officer Personnel.

| <u>OFFICER</u> | <u>UNIT ASSIGNMENT</u> | <u>ADDITIONAL DUTIES</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Col F.T. Searcy | Commanding Officer | XIII Corps Antitank Officer XIII Corps Security Officer | |
| Lt Col N.F. Hein | Executive Officer | | DS Br Staff Sch |
| Maj Truman Alford | S-4 | XIII Corps Club Officer | SD XIII Corps |
| * Maj M.B. Johnson <i>Exec</i> | S-2 | Ass't Corps Security Officer | SD XIII Corps |
| Maj R.H. Newbury | S-3 | Ass't Corps Antitank Officer | SD XIII Corps |
| Capt Paul J. Ellis | I & E Ass't S-3 | Ass't Corps Conference Room Officer | SD XIII Corps |
| Capt G.B. Kirkpatrick | Com O & Hq Comdt | | |
| 1st Lt T.M. Cook | Ass't S-3 | Phantom Ln O | SD XIII Corps |
| 1st Lt David Saltman | Ln O, Ass't S-2 | Phantom Ln O | SD XIII Corps |
| 1st Lt R.L. Martin | | Ass't Corps SSO | DS XIII Corps |
| 1st Lt R.W. Sullivan Jr | | | DS NUSA |
| 2d Lt Albert Davis | Ass't S-1, Ath & Rec O | | |
| Capt R.B. Richardson | Chaplain | | DS NUSA |
| Capt D.L. Pfeilschifter | Chaplain | | SD XIII Corps |
| Capt R.J. Arendt | Dental Officer | | SD XIII Corps |
| Capt Michael Balistrella | Dental Officer | | DS 625 Med Ctr Co |

5. Personnel Strength

- a. Casualties - None
- b. Replacements received - None
- c. Personnel on DS - 6 officers, 12 EM
- d. Awards and Decorations - None

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II. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS.

1. Antitank Staff Section

a. During the period all units of the Corps were involved in fast-moving operations from the Rhine to Elbe Rivers. Coordination of the Antitank means of the Corps was limited to daily contact with most of the Tank Destroyer Battalions of the Corps.

b. The coordination accomplished the following specific results:

- (1) Continuous knowledge of the enemy armored elements in contact with Corps units.
- (2) Continuous knowledge of Tank Destroyer unit disposition in the Corps zone.
- (3) Provided a sound foundation for any recommendation for decision to shift Tank Destroyer units in the Corps.
- (4) Provided Tank Destroyer units with advance information on the movements of supply and service installations.
- (5) Coordinated with Corps supply to provide quick battle loss replacements.

c. Comments.

- (1) During a fast-moving offensive operation, all units operated in the form of combat commands, combat teams and task forces. Coordination of the dispositions of antitank and tank destroyer units in forming a cohesive antitank gun strength throughout the Corps zone is no longer practical at Corps staff level, the dispositions are entirely dependent on the employment and movement of those various battle groupments.
- (2) However, staff coordination at Corps level, rather than becoming a non-entity under such operational circumstances, continues to be a problem requiring the presence of an antitank staff section in a Corps Headquarters. This problem becomes one of recommendation for decision to shift tank destroyer units between divisions and Corps separate units and one of supply assistance between the far-flung tank destroyer units and the supply agencies of Corps. The Infantry antitank elements are not a part of this problem but become a similar problem to the division antitank officer.
- (3) This work of the antitank section must be accomplished by continual personal contact by the staff with the tank destroyer units of the Corps. More than ever it cannot be accomplished by reading reports which are always late, by answering the telephone which is rarely in contact, or by using the radio which is crowded by command traffic.

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2. Security Staff Section.

a. The need for coordination of security measures in a Corps rear area varies in importance to the type of operation in which the Corps is involved, but it is believed that the need will exist to some extent at all times in any Corps zone of combat operations. In the past offensive operations from the Rhine to Elbe rivers the need progressed from cool to hot, as the Corps forces advanced farther and farther away from the bridgehead zone into distinctly enemy territory. The enemy policy by intent or necessity of leaving sizeable portions of their forces in position to stay and fight or be by-passed resulted in the presence of ever-increasing numbers of enemy resistance groups in the Corps rear area; their policy also included the commitment of battle groups, both large and small and with or without armor, in rear areas to harass and disrupt lines of communication and supply.

b. The Rhine-Elbe offensive operations in contrast to previous operations in Holland and Western Germany clearly emphasized the fact that any policy laid down for securing the rear area of a Corps must be sufficiently general in scope to permit wide flexibility in execution. This contrast occurred because of the wide variance in such pertinent factors as the tactical mission, the zone of action, the area of responsibility, the available combat troops, etc.

3. Phantom Radio Service.

a. It is an established fact that up-to-date information on the progress of leading elements in an offensive operation is important to all command levels from low to high. The rapid advance of armored forces in a large scale breakthrough operation creates a greater need for up-to-date information, but, at the same time, normal channels of communications become slower and more difficult. The phantom radio service was formed to provide radio contact direct from Corps Headquarters to the liaison officers at the armored division CP and with each of the combat commands of the division. The service had the mission of providing situation reports on location and progress of the leading armored elements.

b. The personnel of the group used in forming this radio service, although trained for such work in their assigned duties in the unit, had not been performing work for a period of 6 months comparable to their training. In addition a portion of the group so trained had been dissipated on other duties so the group personnel were necessarily augmented by officers and radio operators from other units. Such a formation does not provide the close-knit network of liaison teams necessary for successful communications over hilly terrain and long distances.

c. Although reasonably successful it is believed that a unit not diverted by other attendant missions or dispersed in personnel strength could operate such a service in a more efficient and successful manner.

4. Enlisted Men's Mess.

a. The unit headquarters company moved with the Corps Headquarters and placed in operation a mess for enlisted men in the immediate area of the headquarters. This mess supplemented the regular mess operated by the Corps Headquarters.

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This mess supplemented the regular mess operated by the Corps Headquarters Company by feeding miscellaneous detachments and visiting enlisted personnel which normally are present at such a headquarters during combat operations without their own mess facilities.

b. This mess handled an average strength of 122 men per day during the period.

III. COMMENTS ON EMPLOYMENT.

1. A tactical group headquarters and headquarters company of such a specialized nature as a tank destroyer group must anticipate a great variety of jobs during operations in a combat theatre - especially jobs for which they cannot have trained for since group employment of tank destroyer battalions in combat has rarely occurred in the European Theatre of Operations. To show the extent of such variety, the following is a list of missions performed by this unit during its operations in the ETO:

a. Trained three (3) tank destroyer battalions for a field artillery roll as a secondary mission.

b. Operated, with an attached personnel strength of 15,000 troops, an invasion marshalling area and embarkation area in the United Kingdom.

c. Commanded a group of combat units consisting of a tank destroyer battalion, an infantry battalion, an engineer combat battalion, a field artillery battery, an engineer light pontoon company and a medical collecting company as a part of a task force of brigade size.

d. Operated a rest center for troops from Corps units.

e. Performed the functions listed in par 2, sec I above of this report.

2. A tactical group headquarters and headquarters company is fitted to successfully perform a great variety of missions as long as it is employed as an integral unit. But it is believed that such success cannot be assured or be expected at all times when the unit is not functioning as an integral unit.

FRANK T. SEARCY
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

OFFICIAL:

Russell H. Newbury
RUSSELL H. NEWBURY
Major, Infantry
Operations Officer

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