

HEADQUARTERS
601st TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 753 US Army

1 April 1945

SUBJECT: Report of Operations
15- 31 March 1945

TO : Commanding General, 3rd Infantry Division,
APO #3, U. S. Army.



(a) SUMMARY OF OUR OPERATIONS:

During this period the Battalion supported the Third Infantry Division with direct fire, on the assault and breaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE, the crossing of the RHINE RIVER and the pursuit of the enemy into greater GERMANY. On 14 March 1945 the Battalion moved from its training area with the Division to a position in the vicinity of ETTING (Q593485) from which to begin the new offensive. On 15 March 1945 each company moved with its respective Regiment to a forward assembly area in preparation for the attack on the SIEGFRIED LINE: "A" Company with the 7th Infantry Regiment; "B" Company with the 15th Infantry Regiment; "C" Company with the 30th Infantry Regiment and Reconnaissance Company with the 30th Infantry Regiment. During the first day of this offensive the Battalion was held up considerably by extensive fields of non-metallic mines. Three destroyers of the Battalion were disabled by mines on roads that had previously been reported cleared by the Engineers. However, once these mine belts had been crossed the destroyers were able to give the Infantry close support at all times. During the assault on the SIEGFRIED LINE the destroyers supported the Infantry with close-in direct fire on pillboxes, machine gun nests, and gun emplacements. Many small pillboxes and machine gun emplacements were completely destroyed by this devastating fire; although the 90mm gun has little physical effect on the large forts it had a tremendous psychological effect on the personnel and caused the enemy to surrender in droves.

Once the SIEGFRIED LINE had been breached, all organized enemy resistance before the 3rd Infantry Division collapsed and the Battalion moved with the Division to the approaches of the RHINE VALLEY where it assembled in preparation for the crossing of the RHINE RIVER. On the 26th of March 1945 the Division forced a crossing of the RHINE RIVER in the vicinity of WORMS. At this time the companies of the Battalion moved to direct fire positions on the bank of the River and gave their respective Regiments direct fire on known enemy positions and observation posts. Upon completion of the bridges over the River the companies moved to their regimental areas and supported them in the attack due EAST into greater GERMANY.

After crossing the RHINE RIVER all organized resistance WEST of the RHINE had apparently collapsed and only small pockets of

resistance WEST of the RHINE could be found. During this time the guns of the Battalion followed along with the Infantry giving direct fire support on any enemy strong points or road blocks that was holding up the advance of the troops. Little firing was done at this time because available targets were few and insignificant and generally taken care of by the Infantry.

(b) ENEMY OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD.

On the 15th of March the Battalion again entered the line with the 3rd Infantry Division south of ZWEIBRUCKEN in the Seventh Army's attack on the Siegfried Lines. The front in this sector had been static for three months and the enemy had taken advantage of the interval to strengthen his defenses with well-placed minefields and further entrenchments, which, with the belts of concrete "dragons" teeth and the system of pillboxes constructed previously, formed a very strong line. These positions were defended stubbornly by a comparatively light enemy force. The attack toward ZWEIBRUCKEN proceeded rather slowly once the actual fortifications were reached, but after the Third Army made a thrust south to KAISERSLAUTERN at the defenders rear they attempted to withdraw. By then it was too late and the racing columns of friendly armor and infantry from both south and north swiftly cut them off from retreat back across the RHINE. The force thus captured had apparently counted largely in the defensive plans of the German High Command and as a consequence they had very little to oppose the Allied crossing of the RHINE and the attack EAST from there. The enemy withdrew his very sparse force through the Odenwald fighting a few scattered delaying actions enroute and this procedure was continuing at the end of the period.

Regarding the enemy action directly affecting this Battalion, in the initial phase the attack on the border fortification of the SIEGFRIED LINES the minefields immobilized three of our destroyers and proved the most effective means the enemy had of hindering the advance of our armor. In addition to this enemy artillery succeeded in disabling two of our tank destroyers. Due to the dearth of enemy armor they did not attempt any direct engagement with our M-36's. During the latter part of the period one of our armed reconnaissance cars (M-8) while spearheading the advance was trapped by an enemy tank and immobilized.

One of the main deterrents to the advance of our TD's in this present campaign has been the crossings of the RHINE and MAIN Rivers. The Germans exploited these natural obstacles to the utmost by blowing up the bridges. It was then necessary to ferry the armor across until bridges were constructed. This was a slow and tedious process slowing up the advance of the Infantry due to the lack of supporting armor in the interim of crossing.

(c) SITUATION AT END OF PERIOD.

The Battalion was in support of the 3rd Infantry Division with each company in support of its respective Regiment. All companies had crossed the MAIN River at Worth (N025340) and were supporting their Regiments on a drive Northeast toward Lehr (N314465). No strong organized resistance had been met and the tank destroyers of the Battalion moved along with the Infantry giving direct fire support.





on small pockets of enemy resistance.

(d) STATUE OF PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL.

At the beginning of the period the Battalion was eighteen men understrength. The day prior to the beginning of the period nineteen general reinforcements, enlisted men, were received. Excluding two medical aid men, these men were all Armored Force trainees sent from the states two weeks before. Although none of these men were basically trained in the operation of tank destroyers, they were all young and alert and seemed to have the proper spirit and will to fight. It is thought that they will become good crew men with experience. Two new TD officers were also assigned to the Battalion during this period bringing the officers strength to T/O, but the four additional authorized overstrength has not been reached although requisitions have been submitted. At the close of the period the Battalion was thirty-five men understrength - the difference being due to men hospitalized for sickness and battle casualties. This unit is in great need of these men, having three destroyers temporarily immobilized due to lack of trained crews. Most of the above casualties and hospitalized men are destroyer crew men. This shortage of personnel has been requisitioned and all possible means are being exploited to expedite the procurement of these men as soon as possible.

Prior to the present operation the Battalion received the new M-36 tank destroyer in place of the M-10 tank destroyer, and went into combat with this weapon for the first time on 15 March 1945. During this period 3 tank destroyers were disabled by mines and 2 by artillery fire, but only 2 were totally lost. These tank destroyers were replaced almost immediately and the ones damaged have been repaired and are now in operation.

(e) COMMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED.

1. During the training period carried in the first 2 weeks of the month a number of experiments were carried on which may be of interest to other units.

(a) The success of using sand bags on tanks as a protection against bazooka fire was tested. The front of a Tiger Royal tank was sandbagged (1 sandbag thick) and a German Panzerfaust was fired against the sandbags. The resultant effect was a hole burned into the armor approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. The Panzerfaust was again exploded on the frontal plate of the tank with out the protection of sandbags and a hole approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide and $6\frac{1}{2}$ " deep was burned into the armour plate.

(b) The 90mm gun was tested by firing at a Tiger Royal tank at a range of 1000 yards both frontally and from the flank. Six rounds were fired at the front plate, all rounds ricocheted off gouging out large pieces of metal. Six rounds were then fired from the flank at 1000 yards and shots penetrated both the turret and the hull. These rounds fired were the normal APCBD shell with muzzle velocity of 2750 f/s.

(c) A test of direct-firing at night using both searchlights and 60mm flares was carried on during the training period. The use of

searchlights for night firing was found to be impractical while the flares proved to be the ideal medium. Since the searchlight must seek a certain amount of defilade for its own protection the only light received on the target area is reflected light which doesn't give the gunner sufficient light to adjust his sights. The flare however, bursting directly over the impact area, provides enough illumination to fire at the target. When the Infantry Regiments of the 3rd Infantry Division crossed the RHINE the flare method on night firing as used by one company with excellent success. Enemy observation towers 800 yards from the guns and enemy held houses 1000 yards from the guns were either completely destroyed or rendered untenable.

(d) It is highly recommended by this organization that larger allotments of ammunition be allocated to TD Battalions during training periods so that new and improved methods of firing may be tried out before the unit moves back into combat.

2. In the assault of the SIEGFRIED LINE the HVAP shell was tested against pillboxes and found to be very successful. It was found that two or three rounds of high velocity ammunition had the same effect as 6 or 8 rounds of normal velocity ammunition. However the extreme shortage of this type of ammunition made it impossible to use it as desired. Consequently during the firing on pillboxes the HS (delay fuse) was used and proved to be the second best type of ammunition available for this mission.



WILLIAM R. HARRISON
Major, F.A.,
Commanding



OPERATIONS REPORT

ANNEX No. 1

1 April 1945

SUMMARY OF DAMAGE INFLICTED ON ENEMY

PERIOD: 1 Mar - 31 Mar 1945

	A Co	B Co	C Co	Rcn Co	Total
Tanks and SP's	5	2	1		8
Probables					
Armored Cars & Half Tracks		2	1		3
Machine Guns			3		3
Artillery and AT Guns	5	1	4	5	15
Prisoners of War	7	20	40	305	372
Infantry Killed		40	10		50
Pill Boxes (RB)	11	25	6		42
Trucks and Cars			6		6
Miscellaneous	3 Flkwgns	1 Flk-	1 Flk-		5 Flkwgas
	1 40mm AA wagon	wagon	wagon		1 40mm AA Gun
		1 rocket	1 motre		1 rocket gun
		gun	cycle		1 motrcyl
			1 person+		1 pers carrier
			inel carre		
			tier		

Reduced and neutralized by held strong points and enemy held houses, killed and wounded unknown number of ey. Assisted Inf in the capture of 300 ey Inf and in destroying column of vehicles.

CASUALTIES INCURRED BY 601st TD BN

PERIOD: 1 - 31 March 1945

	A Co	B Co	C Co	Rcn Co	Hq Co	Total
Officers-----KIA	0	0	0	0	0	0
WIA	2	1	0	0	0	3
Enlisted Men--KIA	2	0	0	0	0	2
WIA	10	6	0	3	0	19
M-36's KO'd-burnt or not repairable	2	0	0	0	0	2

For the BATTALION COMMANDER:

Fredrick C. Miner
 FREDERICK C. MINER
 Major, F.A.,
 Bn S-3



SUMMARY OF EVENTS
14-31 March 45

ANNEX # 2

MARCH 14

Entire Battalion moved to assembly area vic of Etting (Q593485) in preparation of supporting the 3rd Infantry Division in the assault and destruction of the SIEGFRIED LINE.

MARCH 15

"A" Company in support of the 7th Inf moved to forward assembly area vic RIMLING (Q663554) awaiting clearance of mine fields to move in support of Inf; "B" Company in support of 15th Inf in assembly area at Q573416 in reserve with its Regiment; "C" Company in support of 30th Inf moved to forward assembly area in preparation of attack of EPPING-URBACH (Q695572); Ren Company moved to forward assembly area vic Q670535 awaiting orders to move out and screen right flank of 30th Inf Regt.

MARCH 16

"A" Company in support of 7th Inf supported Regt on the attack of UTWEILLER (Q683585), ERCHING (Q655570), and MEDELSHEIM (Q659607), KO'd 1 enemy flakwagon, 3 enemy tanks, and 1 enemy SP gun; "B" Company in support of 15th Inf Regt supported Inf on attack of ORMERSVILLER (Q702596) and VOLMUNSTER (Q725583); "C" Company in support of 30th Inf supported Inf on attack of WEISKIRCH (Q715568) and EPPING-URBACH (Q695572) fired at enemy strong points and machine gun nests killing and wounding an unknown number of enemy, also KO'd enemy 88mm AT gun; "Ren" Company released of support 30th Inf placed in support of 15th Inf carrying on mission of screening right flank of Regt and running contact patrols to 106th Cav Gp on right flank.

MARCH 17

"A" Company in support of 7th Inf supported Regt on attack of HORNBAACH (Q733653), and ALTHEIM (Q692638); "B" Company in support of 15th Inf supported Inf on attack of WINDHOF (Q752625) and OHRENTHAL (Q765634); "C" Company in support of 30th Inf assembled in reserve with its Regt awaiting orders; "Ren" Company in support of 15th Inf screening right flank of Regt, establishing road blocks, and running contact patrols to 106th Cav Gp on Regt right flank.

MARCH 18

"A" Company in support of 7th Inf supported Inf on attack of ALTHORNBAACH (Q738672), RIMSCHWEILLER (Q735688) and the assault of the SIEGFRIED LINE placing assault fire on enemy pillboxes and bunkers; "B" Co in support of 15th Inf supported Regt on attack of DIETRICHINGEN (Q766656) (KO'd 2 ey half-tracks), and the assault of the SIEGFRIED LINE firing at enemy pillboxes and MG nests; "C" Company in support of 30th Inf, two plts in reserve with their respective Bns, 2nd plt supported 2nd Bn 30th Inf on attack of high ground SE of RIMSCHWEILLER, KO'd 1 enemy half-track and killed and wounded unknown number of enemy; "RCn" Company in support of 15th Inf, screening right flank of Regt and running contact patrols to 106th Cav Gp on right flank.

MARCH 19

"A" Co in support of 7th Inf supported Inf on attack of SIEGFRIED LINE with assault fire, KO'd 7 enemy pillboxes and killed and wounded unknown no of enemy; "B" Company in support of 15th Inf supported Inf on attack of the SIEGFRIED LINE with assault fire, KO'd 12 enemy pillboxes and 1 enemy AT Gun; "C" Company in support of 30th Inf with two plts in reserve with

pective Bns, 2nd plt in support of 2nd Bn 30th Inf on assault of SIEGFRIED LINE, KO'd 1 enemy tank and killed or wounded many enemy inf; "Ren" Co. in support of 15th Inf screened right flank of Regt and ran contact patrols to 106th Cav Gp on Div right flank.



MARCH 20

"A" Co in support of 7th Inf sup Inf on assault and destruction of SIEGFRIED LINE, each platoon in sup of its respective Bn, KO'd 3 AT guns, 4 enemy pillboxes, and 2 flakwagons, also killed or wounded unknown number of enemy; "B" Co in support of 15th Inf sup Inf on assault and destruction of SIEGFRIED LINE, KO'd 8 enemy pillboxes and killed or wounded unknown number of enemy; "C" Co in support of 30th Inf, supported Inf on assault and destruction of SIEGFRIED LINE KO'd 5 enemy pillboxes, 1 MG nest and killed or wounded innumerable enemy inf; "Ren Co" in support of 15th Inf screened right flank of Regt and ran contact patrols to 100th Inf Div on 15th Inf right flank.

MARCH 21

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf supported Regt on breakthrough of SIEGFRIED LINE, clearing up by-passed resistance and attack and capture of ZWIEBRUCKEN (Q730720), KO'd 2 enemy AT guns; "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf Regt on breakthrough of SIEGFRIED LINE, clearing up by-passed resistance and attack and capture of GONTWIG (Q777722), KO'd 5 enemy pillboxes and killed over 20 enemy; "C" Co in support of 30th Inf supported Regt on breakthrough of SIEGFRIED LINE, clearing up of by-passed resistance, and attack and capture of ZWIEBRUCKEN, KO'd 3 AT guns, 1 pillbox, 1 personnel carrier, and captured 4 PW's; "Ren" Co in support of 15th Inf released of screening mission for Regt. Co now assembling in reserve.

MARCH 22

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf supported Regt on attack of MASSWEILER (Q85074) HONEINOD (Q905765), and THALEISCHWEILER (Q883739); "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf supported Inf on attack of WINDSBERG (Q850681) and THAL (Q885733) KO'd enemy SP and assisted Inf in destroying column vehicles and capture of 300 PW's; "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf marched with Regt to KAISERSLAUTERN; "Ren" Co in support of 15th Inf supported Regt on its advance with screening patrols on both flanks.

MARCH 23

"A" Co in support of 7th Inf moved with Regt to assembly area (R235945), awaiting orders; "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf moved to BAD DURKHEIM (R295958), awaiting orders; "C" Co in support of 30th Inf supported Inf on advance to KIERNKARLBACH (R300030) and BOBENHEIM (R305045); "Ren" Co in Div sup placed on mission of 24 hour patrol of streets of KAISERSLAUTERN.

MARCH 24

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, assembled at M226038 awaiting orders to move to forward assembly area on the RHINE; "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf, moved to forward assembly area on RHINE via M425100; "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf assembled at M205020 awaiting orders to move to forward assembly area on the RHINE; "Ren" Co continued mission of patrolling streets of KAISERSLAUTERN.

MARCH 25

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, entire Co moved to forward assembly area at M442042 awaiting orders for RHINE crossing; "B" Co in sup 15th Inf, entire Co assembled in forward assembly area awaiting orders for RHINE crossing; "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf entire Co moved to forward assembly area at M378115 awaiting orders for RHINE crossing; "Ren" Co in Div reserve, entire company assembled in forward assembly area at M424073 awaiting orders for RHINE crossing.



"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, 1st platoon moved into direct fire positions on bank of RHINE and fired 195 rds HE in sup of Regt river crossing, 2nd and 3rd plts assembled awaiting completion of bridge to cross RHINE river and sup Regt "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf assembled awaiting orders to cross RHINE river; "C" Co in support of 30th Inf, 1st 2nd plts moved to direct fire positions on bank of RHINE and supported Inf on river crossing with direct fire; "Rcn" Co each plt in sup of its respective Regt provided communication between Bn and Regt. CP.

MARCH 27

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, Co crossed RHINE river and sup infantry on attack of SCHONAU (M539048) and SANDHOFEN (M562050); "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf Co moved across RHINE river, each platoon joining its Bn and supported on attack through LAMPERTHEIMER WOODS; "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf crossed RHINE river and supported Inf on attack E to LORSCH (M589174); "Rcn" Co in sup of 30th Inf crossed RHINE river and supported Regt by screening and blocking on flanks as Regt pushed Eastward from LORSCH.

MARCH 28

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, as Regt was relieved by elements of 44th Div, Co assembled at LORSCH in reserve with Regt; "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf sup Regt on attack of ey strong points and roadblocks in vicinity HEMSBACH (M665105) and BONSWEHIER (M708132); "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf sup Regt on attack to KINSCHHAUSE and LINDENFELS; "Rcn" Co in sup of 30th Inf ran motorized patrols on both flanks of Regt during the advance.

MARCH 29

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf marched to LAUTERN (M708252) then each platoon moved out in sup of its respective Bn on attack toward STIENBACH (M910215), "B" Co in support of 15th Inf supported Regt on advance to RIMEBACH (M744120), FURTH (M760172), and KRUMBACH (M779193); "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf sup Regt on attack of BRENSBACH (M820310) and NUMLING GRUMBACH (M900308), KO'd 3 light vehicles, 1 flakwagon, 1 motorcycle, capt. 14 PWs and killed or wounded unknown number of ey personnel; "Rcn" Co in sup of 30th Inf ran ren patrols in front and on flanks of Regt during advance, captured 3 ey 105mm How, 2 75mm AT guns, and 10 PWs.

MARCH 30

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, sup Regt on advance to STEINBACH (M905215) ZELL (M905255) and VIELBRUNN (M980245); "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf moved to reserve position via HAINGRUND (M980298) awaiting completion of MAIN River bridge; "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf sup Regt on attack of SECMAUER (M993325) and WORTH (M025340) fired 98 rds HE and 65 rds APC, KO'd 1 enemy tank, 1 multi-barreled rocket gun, 1 flakwagon, and killed a known 10 enemy, Co now awaiting completion of MAIN river bridge to cross river and sup Regt; "Rcn" Co in sup of 30th Inf sup Inf on advance to WORTH screening flank of Regt, Co now assembled awaiting order to cross MAIN river.

MARCH 31

"A" Co in sup of 7th Inf, sup Regt on advance to TRENNFORT (N038318) and BAUDENBACH (N038282), KO'd 1 ey Dual 40mm AA Gun, Co crossed MAIN river and moved to sup Regt on advance; "B" Co in sup of 15th Inf moved across MAIN river and sup Inf on advance to ROLLBACH (N088313); "C" Co in sup of 30th Inf moved across MAIN river and took up reserve positions in ERLDENBACH (N028354) with Regt "Rcn" Co released of sup of 30th Inf placed in sup of 15th Inf now patrolling on Regt right flank via ESCHAU (N095358), SHIPPACH (N055375) and running contact patrols to 45th Inf Div element on Div left flank.