

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS
605TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 339 US ARMY

4 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report.

TO : COMMANDING GENERAL, Ninth Army, APO 339.
(Thru Channels)

At beginning of the period the 605th TD Bn, assigned to the Ninth U.S. Army, was attached to the 17th U.S. Airborne Division. The Battalion had crossed the Rhine in the land tail of the 17th Abn. Div. in the operation VARSITY; and had linked up with the division in the vicinity of WESSEL, Germany. It had furnished anti-tank defences to the three Combat Teams of the 17th Abn Div. on their offensive inland and on 1st April was in direct fire positions along the line HALTERN, HAUS-~~WESSEL~~, DULMEN, APPLEHAUSEN, and ALBASTEN. The division front at this time was some 14,000 Meters wide. The mission of the division was to hold the Rhine bridgehead along this line to allow the striking force of the 9th U.S. Army to build up and pass through this bridgehead. The mission of the battalion was to provide the Division front with protection against counterattack by tanks and self-propelled guns. This mission was accomplished by making plateau strong points of each inhabited area and covering the gaps between by fire. Each of the gun companies was attached to a combat team of the division. It is felt that this mission would have been more successfully accomplished if all units had remained under control of the battalion.

On 1st and 2nd April the 605th TD Bn with its companies attached to the combat teams of the division supported the division in the capture of MUNSTER. Because of the characteristics of the towed gun the unit was unable to furnish any direct fire support. The companies were moved into town with the assaulting infantry as a morale factor rather than as direct support weapons. Because of this they were exposed to fire unnecessarily and far out of proportion to the support they were able to furnish. Combat in cities is not a favorable mission for the towed weapons.

On the night of 2-3 April the 1st Bn platoon then attached to Co A which was attached to the 194th GI Inf Regt. was given the mission of reconnoitering a large wooded area N of Munster which showed evidence of enemy activity. The platoon reported an estimated 2000 enemy personnel well equipped with 8 88mm guns, a Sherman tank, 2 Churchill tanks, and several SP guns entrenched in good defensive positions. Able and Baker companies were ordered into direct fire positions around the perimeter of the woods to engage any armor that ventured out. One Bn of the 513th Para Inf made a night attack in the area supported by XIII Corps artillery and after a vicious fight the fanatical defenders were subdued. The TD usage on this operation was correct.

S E C R E T

After the capture of Munster the battalion established road blocks to defend the town against counter-attack while the full weight of the 9th Army offensive was unleashed. When the danger of attack in the Munster area was obviated by the success of XIX and XIII Corps offensive, the 17th Abn Div was moved from Munster to relieve the 79th Inf Div in the DINSLAKEN area on the "RHUR POCKET". The 605th TD Bn accompanied the division on this move.

Initial positions on the Rhur Pocket were taken up in the Marlich, Bettrop areas along the Schaffantakanal. Companies fired harassing and destructive fires from direct fire positions N of the canal on enemy installations S of the canal. The battalion supported the active defense along this line and was successful in destroying numerous enemy OP's, troop concentrations, and installations across the canal. This was a correct use of towed TD's.

The battalion also supported the assaulting regiments of the division on their offensives which resulted in the capture of ESSEN, MUELHEM, and DUISBURG. The major assistance was furnished by the Reconnaissance platoons that maintained contact with German elements when they withdrew S of the Rhur. The Reconnaissance platoons captured intact the bridge across the Rhur at Mulheim, pushed across and seized the bridgehead across the Rhur on the Duisburg sector. They captured numerous German prisoners including the Army Group Commander, Generaloberst JOSEPH HARPE, CG of the 5th Panzer Army.

After the clearing of this pocket of resistance, the battalion reinforced the 17th Abn Div. in its mission of establishing order and Military Government in its sector by maintaining units in mobile reserve to move on call to suppress any disturbances.

On 28th April the battalion was given the mission of protecting all bridges across the Rhine in the 9th Army sector by providing security from both banks against such threats as floating mines, swimming saboteurs, parachute troop attack, and attack from underwater or surface river craft. (See Field Order No 6, 605th TD Bn) The battalion accomplished the relief of 807th TD Bn at 171800 April.

The battalion was relieved from attachment to 17th Abn Div at 221200 and attached to 79th Inf Div via Gerther. 466th Para FA Bn relieved Bn of responsibility for Rhine River Bridges. At this time the 79th Inf Div was engaged in Military Government functions in the Rhur industrial area to include Dortmund. 605th TD Bn was attached to Div Arty with the mission of reinforcing Organic Field Artillery Battalions in their mission of screening and separating displaced persons in zone. The Bn established road blocks and flushed out wooded areas in the division zone. PW's were turned in to PW cages. Displaced persons were turned in to DP Camps.

S E C R E T

At 261300B the battalion received orders to make preparations for a move to the East at 271400B. The battalion was relieved from attachment to the 79th Inf Div and was atchd to the XVIII Corps (Abn) at Nelsen, Germany. Battalion moved by motor on 28 April to Schwemlitz, Germany and was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division on arrival at 281830B. 29 April was spent on motor and gun maintenance and preparation for Elbe River crossing. Recon Platoons crossed Elbe River on D Day 30 April on LVT's with mission of reinforcing 82nd Airborne Division Reconnaissance. At close of period remainder of battalion was in assembly area awaiting orders to cross river to support the 82nd Abn Div in establishment of bridgehead and attack to E and NE.

O. Buchwald
W. P. BUCHWALD,
Lt. Col. 605th TD Bn
Commanding.

ANNEXES:

S-3 Journal - Record of Events.
Field Order No 6. 20 April.
Field Order No 7. 30 April.

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**H E A D Q U A R T E R S
605TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
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4 May 1945

RECORD OF EVENTS

1 April to 30 April

011700 Able Co moved vic Kanthaus to new location vic Losbeck.
011545 Baker Co moved from vic Applehausen to vic Albachten.
011700 2nd Ron Plt relieved from A Co., Atchd to B Co.
011730 2nd Ron Plt reported to CO Baker Co.
011745 Baker Co arrived Albachten (856695).
021025 CP closed Hahfern for new location vic Applehausen.
021100 CP Sp opened vic Applehausen.
021650 CP Sp closed Applehausen for new Fwd CP.
021735 CP Sp opened vic Munster (900702).
021300 B Co relieved from 513th CT reverted to En control.
021300 2nd Ron relieved from B Co and Atchd to C Co.
021300 C Co moved vic Munster.
021840 Rear Echelon closed Haltern.
021945 Rear Echelon arrived vic Munster
031330 Baker Co Alerted for movement.
031345 Baker Co Atchd to 513th CT vic Munster.
031330 3rd Plt "C" Co Atchd to "B" Co and 513th CT.
041600 CO reports to CG 17th Abn Div.
041630 CO returns to CP vic Munster.
041330 3rd Plt "C" Co reverted to Co control.
041110 2nd Ron relieved from "C" Co.
041320 Baker Co moved to assembly area (890740).
041700 Charlie Co w/elements of 507th CT Atchd to 11th Cav Sp
for special mission N of Munster.
050130 Charlie Co relieved of Attachment to 11th Cav Sp.
042215 En relieved Attachment 17th Abn Div in present position as
of 042200H, Atchd to XIII Corps Arty effective same time
and date.
051030 Received O.I. No. 6, 17th Abn Hq's rescinding Attachment to
17th Abn, ordered to move En (-) to Dinslaken, Germany.
Day of departure, present date, hour not given. Unit in
assembly area ready to comply W/OI No 6.
051200 2nd Ron Plt reverted to En control, returned to vic of CP
in Munster (050630) Able Co reld of Attachment to 194th CT.)
051500 Baker Co departed vic Munster to new positions vic Hamborn.
052100 Baker Co arrived new location vic Hamborn (331229).
051945 En (-) departed vic Munster.

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060910 Able Co arrived new location vic Hamborn (322228).
060840 CP Gp and Rear Echelon arrived new location vic Marxloh.
060840 Able Co remained in Bn Res assembly area, co
~~060840~~ Baker Co Atchd to 513th Inf Regt. assembly area prepared
to move 8 under Regt control.
051415 Baker Co moved from assembly area, occupied AF positions
vic Hamborn.
050825 Charlie Co moved to 513th Regt's assembly area.
05e730 Charlie Co departed assembly area under 507th Regt control.
060730 Charlie Co arrived in vic Bettrep.
060840 1st and 2nd Ron Plts located in vic of CP in Marxloh.
072200 Bn Atchd to 17th Abn Div located in Marxloh (324236).
Able Co vic Hamborn (332217), in Bn Res.
072100 Baker Co Atchd to 513th Para Inf Regt vic Hamborn (332217).
072100 Charlie Co Atchd to 507th GT located in Bettrep. Fired
157 rds Harrassing fire.
082100 Bn Atchd to 17th Abn Div located in Marxloh.
081630 1st and 3rd Plts in Regt Res. under Baker Co control.
081500 1st and 3rd Plts Charlie Co in Defensive position vic Bettrep
082400 1st Plt Charlie Co crossed Rhein Herne Kanal, located vic
(0230) and (487220) captured eight PW's.
091145 2nd Plt Charlie Co crossed Rhein Herne Kanal vic (483221).
091500 2nd Ron Atchd to Baker Co.
091400 CP Gp moved to new position vic Bettrep.
091515 CP Gp moved new CP vic Bettrep (437258).
091600 Able Co moved to new location vic Bettrep.
091650 Able Co arrived new assembly position vic Bettrep (430258).
091230 2 KM's Charlie Co believed captured with jeep and code.
100200 1st Plt B Co arrived assembly area (341229).
101345 Baker Co CP moved to Sterkade.
101413 Baker Co CP arrived in Sterkade (303248).
101800 Charlie Co Atchd to 507th GT moved to attack Essen.
101730 1st Ron Plt Atchd to Charlie Co.
110725 Charlie Co in Essen moving to attack Malheim.
111000 CO visits Charlie Co CP in Essen.
111100 CO returns to CP in Bettrep.
111000 Hq Co moved from Marxloh to new location
111045 Hq Co arrived new location vic Bettrep.
111645 Col. Hart Div AFO visits CP in Bettrep.
121000 CP Gp closed Bettrep for new location.
121000 Able Co closed Bettrep for new location.
121100 CP Gp and Able Co arrived vic Malheim (406144)
121300 Able Co Atchd to 507th Regt 1st Bn.
121300 Able Co relieved Charlie Co at (415142) 1 Plt per Bn.
1st to A, 2nd to B, 3rd to C.
121300 Bn Atchd to 507th Inf Regt VOOB 17th Abn Div
121300 Baker Co rel'd from 513th Inf., Atchd to 507th Regt.
121300 Charlie Co w/1st Ron Plt Atchd to 507th Regt. 2nd Bn.
Relieved by Able Co.

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130800 CP Gp and Rear Echelon moved from Mulheim to new location.
130830 CP Gp and Rear Echelon arrived via Bredeneu.
131800 Ron Plts relieved from attachment to Gun Co's.
140700 Bn (-) Reld from Attachment to 507th CT and Atchd to 194th CT.
Able Co Atchd to 1st Bn vic (338148)
Baker Co Atchd to 2nd Bn vic (405133)
Charlie Co Atchd to 507th Regt vic Ulmenhof (308143).
140800 Charlie Co moved from Essen to new location.
140930 Charlie Co arrived vic Ulmenhof.
141300 Bn CP Gp, Rear Echelon and Ron Plts arrived vic Mulheim
(404144)
141633 Baker Co moved to new location in Mulheim.
141740 Baker Co arrived new location in Mulheim (405133)
141530 Col Hart, Corp ATO visits CP in Mulheim.
141800 Co Cmdrs meeting.
150930 Bn Cmdr Visits Co's positions.
151400 Col Nelson 17th Abn Div visits CP in Mulheim.
160600 Ron Plts relieved Inf Ron elements.
170630 Ron Plts captured Generaloberst JOSEPH HARPE, CG 5th Panzer
Army.
181700 Ron Plts relieved from patrolling mission, referred to Bn cont
control.
181700 Bn Relvd from 194th G11 Inf Regt and Atchd to 17th Abn Div
VOOG. Bn to relieve 807th TD Bn of its mission of Guard-
ing Rhine River Bridges in 9th Army Zone.
181700 All Companies under Bn control in Div Res vic Mulheim.
190730 Quartering parts departs CP for Marxloh.
190755 Able Co departed Duisberg for new location vic Budberg.
190817 Baker Co departed Mulheim for new location vic Baerl.
190830 Charlie Co departed Ulmendof for new location in Orsoy.
190830 CP Gp and Rear Echelon departed Mulheim.
190955 Able Co arrived vic Budberg (235274).
191000 CP Gp and Rear Echelon arrive Marxloh (328235)
191037 Baker Co arrived Baerl (262222).
191145 Charlie Co arrived Orsoy (271255).
191320 S-3 visits Co's and Atchd units.
191300 Relief of 807th TD Bn completed. Bn assumed responsibility
of guarding Rhine R Bridges.
201000 CO and S-3 visits A and C Co's, also atchd units of 464th
FA Bn. PO No 6 delivered to same.
200900 Charlie Co moved from assembly area to new location vic
Wehofen (325258).
201200 Charlie Co arrived new location in Wehofen.
201400 Major Galgann, S-3 45th AAA Gp visits CP.
211230 Rec'd VOOG 17th Abn Div. Reld from Div as of 221200. Prepare
to move E.

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211140 All units notified of Detachment and movement alert to E.
Upon relief will assemble in Co assembly position.

212400 Units continuing defense of sectors.

211500 Lt Col Booth 466th FABn Frcht. and Co CO's visit CP and
are oriented on Defense of Rhine Bridges and will relieve
units at designated time.

221200 Bn relieved Atachment to 17th Abn Div.

221200 B n Atchd to 79th Inf Div.

221500 Co Cmdrs meeting.

221500 S-3 Briefs Co Cmdrs on move to Brambauer.

230700 Adv Ron and Route Markers cross IP.

230800 CP Gp closes Marxloh. Crossed IP.

230815 Charlie Co crosses IP.

230830 Able Co crosses IP.

230845 Baker Co crosses IP!

231015 CP Gp opens via Brambauer (797355) Atchd 79th Div Arty.

231025 Charlie Co closes via Waltrp (778363) Atchd 904th PA Bn

231200 Able Co closes via (564414) Atchd 312th PA Bn.

231215 Baker Co closes via Herten (553316) Atchd 311th PA Bn.

240730 CP Gp left Brambauer for Fwd CP via Malt (549390).

240820 CP Gp arrived via Malt. Contacted Ron O and Able Co.
Units screened DP's and area, turned DP's over to 79th Div.

241400 Fwd CP closed via Malt, returned to former location.

241420 CP Gp arrived Brambauer.

241400 Ron Plts Reld upon completion of mission.

250830 CO leaves in inspect companies.

251300 Unit continues screening action with 79th Div Arty.

261030 Bn received notice of probable move to Uelsen.

261145 Co's alerted for possible movement.

271400 Bn reld from 79th Inf Div CG XVI Corp.

271400 Bn Atchd to XEIII Corps.

271500 Received TWX 239, ordering Bn to move on 28th April to vic
Uelsen. (X9189).

280745 Ron Plts Cross IP, Brambauer HJ 795332.

280800 Able Co cross IP,

280805 Baker Co cross IP.

280810 Charlie Co cross IP.

280815 Hq Co cross IP.

281820 Bn closed in new CP via Schwenlits (029967).

281820 Bn Atchd to 82nd Abn Div upon arrival CG XVIII Corp.

281930 Co Cmdrs report to CP.

291630 Unit alerted to move via Div assembly area.

291700 Co Cmdrs report to CP.

291830 CP Gp moved to new location via (018201).

292000 Bn (-Rear Echelon) arrived Div assembly area via (018201)

300800 Rear Echelon moved out to new location.

300915 Rear Echelon joins Bn in vic (018201).

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