

SECRET

SECRET

: Auth: Ltr 5th Arm. Div.
: Date: 1 April 1945
: Init:

HEADQUARTERS
628th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)
APO 339, U. S. Army

1 April 1945

SUBJECT: Report of After Action Against Enemy - Month of March

TO : Commanding General, Hq. 5th Armored Division, APO 255, U. S. Army

**A. Campaign of Northern France
Campaign of Germany**

B. Losses in action were as follows:

(1) Personnel

a. Killed in Action

T/Sgt. Nicholas (NMI) Van Handel, 32154638, KIA in Ger, 3 Mar 45
T/5 Floyd J. Robinson, 32046621, KIA in Ger, 3 Mar 45
Pfc Michael H. Welsh, 32161359, KIA in Ger, 4 Mar 45
Pvt. Thomas W. Bowman, 34371875, SWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45, DOW 15 Mar 45
Pfc Cecil (NMI) Wilson, 34707801, KIA in Ger, 15 Mar 45
T/5 Jesse A. Pannell, 34425825, KIA in Ger, 15 Mar 45

b. Wounded and Injured Men in Action

T/4 William D. Wendelken, 32046691, LWA in Ger, 3 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
2nd Lt. Floyd M. Springer, O-1823081, LWA in Ger, 3 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
2nd Lt. Everett W. Winchester, O-1823531, LWA in Ger, 3 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
Pfc William W. LaPage, 33160635, LWA in Ger, 3 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
1st Lt. Seymour (NMI) Feldman, O-1821990, LWA in Ger, 5 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
T/5 William (NMI) Wejtyksyn, 32081268, LWA in Ger, 7 Mar 45, (Rem Dy)
Pfc Kenneth O. Youngs, 20318855, LWA in Ger, 10 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)
Cpl. Earl (NMI) Daniel, 34425555, SWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45 (Evacuated)
Pfc Jacob (NMI) Goodman, 32084795, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45 (Evacuated)
T/4 Harvey H. Sharpe, 34386062, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45, (Evacuated)
Pfc Abe J. Anvil, Jr. 35214074, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45, (Evacuated)
Pfc Grever C. Holland, Jr. 34402415, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45 (Evacuated)
Pfc O. J. Walker, 34386255, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45 (Evacuated)
Cpl. Peter (NMI) Jacquinto, 20315219, LWA in Ger, 15 Mar 45 (Rem Dy)

cc. Missing in Action - none

d. Captured - none

(2) Vehicular

One (1) 2½ ton 6 x 6 destroyed on 15 March 1945 when entire load of ammunition exploded.

SECRET

SECRET**C. Commanding Officers were:**

- (1) Battalion Commander: William J. Gallagher, Lt. Col., F. A., O-384952, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (2) Hq. Company Commander: Daniel L. Thomas, Capt., F. A., O-422582, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (3) Company "A" Commander: James H. Lloyd, Capt., F. A., O-409817, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (4) Company "B" Commander: Frank E. Hirt, Jr. 1st Lt., AUS-TD, O-1822008, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (5) Company "C" Commander: Robert G. Jones, Capt., AUS-TD, O-1822013, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (6) Ren. Company Commander: David (NMI) Doerr, 1st Lt., AUS-TD, O-1821835, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.
- (7) Medical Detachment: Francis T. England, Capt., M.C., O-1683058, from 0001 hours 1 March 45 to 2400 hours 31 March 45.

D. Attachments and Assignments were:

- (1) Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, and Ren. Company Hq. were under Division Artillery control.
- (2) Company "A" plus attached Ren. platoon were attached to GCA with the platoons further attached as follows: 1A with 46th Armd. Infantry; 2A attached to 34th Tank Battalion; 3A remained in reserve under company control. Company "A" remained attached to GCA until 11 March 45, at which time it reverted back to Battalion control. The company was attached to GCA again on 29 March 45.
- (3) Company "B" plus attached Ren. platoon was attached to GCB with the entire company under one centralized command. Company "B" remained attached to GCB until 11 March 45, at which time it reverted back to Battalion control. The company was again attached to GCB on 29 March 45.
- (4) Company "C" plus attached Ren. platoon was attached to GCR with the platoons further attached as follows: 1C attached to Task Force of Company "B", 10th Tank Battalion and the 47th Infantry; 2C was attached to Company "A", 10th Tank Battalion; 3C was attached to Task Force of 34th Tank Battalion. Company "C" remained attached to GCR until 10 March 45, at which time the company reverted to Battalion control. The company remained under Battalion control until 29 March 45, at which time it was attached to GCR.

E. Movements, Boundaries and Command Posts

(See attached overlay)

SECRET

F. Ammunition Expenditures and Losses:

(1) Direct Fire

- a. HE - 60 rds.
- b. APCBDF - 14 rds.

(2) Indirect Fire

- a. HE - 4821 rds.

(3) Losses

a. 79 rds. of HE were lost due to the burning of an ammunition truck caused by accidental explosion.

G. Unit's Operations for the Period:

Due to the fact that the companies were attached to the combat commands the Battalion, as a whole, was not given an objective. Battalion Headquarters remained under Division Artillery control and coordinated and assisted the detached companies in so far as was possible. Objectives were assigned by the respective combat commands and plans of attack given by oral orders to the company commanders.

On 1 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company and Ren. Company Headquarters were located at Rath, Germany (021805). Company "A" plus the attached Ren. platoon were attached to GCA and were in an assembly position in the vicinity of Rath, Germany (023810), with the mission of attacking north. Company "B" plus the attached Ren. platoon was attached to GCB and was disposed as follows: 1B and 2B were in an assembly position in the vicinity of Gilholland, Germany (031230); 3B was with Task Force Dickenson occupying road blocks on the west edge of Rheydt, Germany (090844) on the Rheindalen-Rheydt highway. Later, during the same day, 2B moved to road block position in the vicinity of Vonn, Germany (060900). Company "C" plus the Ren. platoon was attached to GCR and was located southeast of Hottorf, Germany (005680) from which point they moved to an assembly position in the vicinity of Rheindalen, Germany (038849).

On 2 March 45, the Battalion CP, plus Headquarters Company and Ren. Company Headquarters moved to the vicinity of Beckert, Germany (053944). Company "A" continued on the mission with GCA moving in the attack on Krefeld, Germany (180040) with the company providing road blocks. There was no direct contact with the enemy. Company "B" plus Ren. platoon attached to GCB moved to an assembly position in the vicinity of Wolfsittard, Germany (030870). Company "C" plus the attached Ren. platoon remained in the bivouac area $\frac{1}{2}$ mile northwest of Rheindalen, Germany.

On 3 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, and Ren. Company Headquarters moved to the vicinity of Anrath, Germany (105993). Company "A" plus the attached Ren. platoon were attached to GCA performing road blocks in the attack on Krefeld, Germany, fired four (4) rds. APO and 30 rds. HE on possible Observation Posts and church steeples. Company "B" remained in bivouac in the vicinity of Wolfsittard,

SECRET

Germany. Company "C" attached to CCR moved on verbal orders with CCR in the attack on Repelen, Germany, (218219) with the final objective being Orsey, Germany (272255).

On 4 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, and Ren. Company Headquarters moved to Vluynhelle, Germany. Company "A" with Ren. platoon, attached to OGA, moved to the vicinity of St. Hubert, Germany, (105102) and set up road blocks; 1A located in vicinity of Tonisberg, Germany, (145142); 2A located in vicinity of Schephyzen, Germany, (109169); 3A located in the vicinity of Hals, Germany, (143104). Company "B" plus the Ren. platoon, was attached to GCB and moved to the vicinity of Klixdorf, Germany, (063071) and began screening the local civilian population. Company "C", plus Ren. platoon, was attached to CCR with the platoons further attached as follows: 1C attached to Company "B", 10th Tank Battalion and 47th Infantry; 2B and 2B were attached to the 10th Tank Battalion. CCR was assigned the mission of taking Repelen, Germany. 10 rds. of HE were fired upon various strong points.

On 5 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, and Ren. Company Headquarters remained unchanged. Companies "A" and "B" remained the same as the previous day. Company "C" continued supporting CCR on tactical mission.

On 6 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A" and "B" remained unchanged. Company "C" in its support of CCR knocked out five (5) General Purpose Vehicles, one (1) enemy anti-tank gun and took thirty-three (33) Prisoners of War during the attack on Repelen, Germany, and Orsey, Germany. 2C set up a road block in the vicinity of Repelen, Germany, (215222); 3C set up a road block in the vicinity of Rheinkamp, Germany, (228231); 1C supported the Task Force attacking Orsey, Germany.

On 7 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A" and "B" remained unchanged. Company "C", plus Ren. platoon, attached to CCR maintained 2C and 3C in road block positions; 1C set up road block in the vicinity of Orsey, Germany, (268254) and captured four (4) Prisoners of War.

On 8 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A", "B" and "C" remained unchanged.

On 9 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A" and "B" remained unchanged. Company "C" was detached from CCR and placed under Division Artillery control for indirect firing. Company "C" fired six (6) harassing concentrations totalling 300 rds.

On 10 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A", "B" and "C" remained unchanged. Company "C" fired one (1) registration of 11 rds. and five (5) harassing concentrations totalling 300 rds.

On 11 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Company "C" remained unchanged. Company "C" in indirect fire position fired seven (7) harassing concentrations totalling 380 rds. Companies "A" and "B" reverted back to Battalion control but remained in their respective bivouac areas.

On 12 March 45, the Battalion CP, under Division Artillery control, together with Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, moved to the vicinity

SECRET

SECRET

of Schwenheim, Germany, (219984). The companies moved into indirect firing positions as follows: Company "A" located in vicinity of (238988); Company "B" located in the vicinity of (238954); Company "C" located in the vicinity of (259012). The Battalion CP, operating as FCG under Division Artillery control, began firing indirect fires. Company "C" fired six (6) concentrations totalling 300 rds.

From the period including 13 March 45 to 29 March 45, the Battalion operating under Division Artillery control fired indirect fires. Company "A" fired three (3) registrations of 20 rds., two (2) TOT's totalling 36 rds., and nineteen (19) harassing concentrations totalling 840 rds. On 16 March 45, Company "A" was pulled out of the indirect firing position. Prior to moving out, the company was hit by counter-battery fire. Two (2) EM were KIA and eight (8) EM were WIA. The company moved to an assembly position in the vicinity of Bosingheven, Germany, and performed maintenance and training until 29 March 45 when the company was assigned to CGA for a tactical mission. Company "B" fired three (3) registrations of 50 rds., four (4) TOT's totalling 77 rds., and 246 harassing concentrations totalling 1507 rds. On 29 March 45, the company was attached to CCB for tactical operations. Company "C" fired one (1) registration of five (5) rds., four (4) TOT's totalling 77 rds., and 247 harassing concentrations totalling 1528 rds. On 29 March 45, the company was attached to CCR for tactical operations.

On 29 March 45, the Companies "A", "B" and "C" were attached to Combat Commands "A", "B" and "R" respectively for future operations. The Battalion Headquarters remained under Division Artillery control with no change in location. Company "A" moved to join CGA in the vicinity of Huls, Germany, (148084); Company "B" moved to join CCB in the vicinity of Vorst, Germany, (085013); Company "C" moved to join CCR in the vicinity of St. Tonis, Germany, (135032).

On 30 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters, and Companies "A", "B" and "C" remained the same.

On 31 March 45, the Battalion CP, Headquarters Company, Ren. Company Headquarters moved to the vicinity of Netteln, Germany, (P2735682). The companies attached to their respective combat commands moved to assembly positions east of Munster, Germany, (P29574).

On all the tactical missions during the month of March, the plans and objectives were accomplished. There were no enemy tanks encountered during the month. For the most part, anti-tank fire was received and this latter was from 88mm anti-tank guns used for ground defense. The weather was ideal during the month. The men showed no physical fatigue. Under fire, they were calm, cool and collected and showed no signs of being battle leery.

H. Comments

Section I - Personnel Matters

(1) Morale and Discipline

Morale was excellent during the month of March, 45. The tactical operations were such that casualties were few with the exception of Company "A" which had



SECRET

SECRET

Two enlisted men killed and eight enlisted men wounded, the result of enemy artillery which landed in the 1st platoon area on 15 March 45. With the exception of the first ten days, the tactical situation during the month of March was such that fairly comfortable billets could be obtained and enjoyed. Movies were held on a nightly schedule in the Battalion Headquarters area while located both in Vluyt, Germany, and Schwenheim, Germany. For the first time since 11 December 1944, Paris quotas were received by the Battalion totalling three (3) officers and fifteen (15) enlisted men. Two (2) quotas totalling three (3) officers and forty (40) enlisted men for Heerlen, Holland; two (2) quotas totalling one (1) officer and six (6) enlisted men for Brussels, Belgium; two (2) quotas totalling one (1) officer and four (4) enlisted men for Great Britain. This was the largest quota of passes received by this Battalion in any one month since entering combat in August 1944, and while fully earned, was both appreciated and enjoyed by the officers and enlisted men concerned. Two (2) enlisted men having thirty-two (32) months overseas service were also returned to the United States on thirty (30) day furloughs during the month.

Discipline during March 1945, in general was good, but for the first time since December 1944, it was necessary to hold Special Courts Martials. One (1) man was found guilty of the charge of fraternizing with civilians, and four (4) men were found guilty of wrongfully mailing pilfered articles. Action against three (3) officer censors was also taken under 104th A. W. for approving the sending of such packages through the postal system. It is felt, however, that having shown by prompt court martial action that this headquarters will not permit the excitement of the tactical situation to relax standards of discipline, that sufficient precedent has been established to fully discourage other members of this command from such action in the future.

(2) Reinforcements

During the month of March 1945, twenty-seven (27) battle casualties, all enlisted men, were suffered of which six (6) were KIA, two (2) were SWA, and nineteen (19) were LWA. However, of these latter nineteen (19) LWA only four were actually evacuated to a hospital; fifteen returned to duty after treatment at an aid station. There were also fifteen (15) ^{non} battle casualties during the month all of which were evacuated to a hospital. However, four (4) of this latter group returned as casuals during the same month. Against these net losses of twenty-seven (27) enlisted men during the month of March, a total of eleven (11) reinforcements were received from the 18th Reinforcement Depot in addition to eleven (11) casuals who returned through the reinforcement system. Of the eleven (11) reinforcements, seven (7) had an SSN classification B1, two (2) 605, two (2) 745. AGCT scores were distributed as follows: one (1) group II, five (5) group III, five (5) group IV. Six (6) of these new men were formerly Air Corps trained, the other five (5) were TD trained. All had received a six (6) weeks infantry training course prior to overseas shipment. Most of these new men had been in the army less than one year, and had left the United States less than one month prior to being assigned to this organization. Experience is too short at this time to indicate how these men will work out. However, their preliminary impression is good; the AGCT scores indicate that the men will successfully absorb further training, and every indication would lead to the belief that the eleven (11) men will be entirely satisfactory. The names of the eleven (11) men and the companies to which they have been assigned are as follows:



SECRET

SECRET

T/5 Robert A. Baumester, ASN #35724244, Company "A"
 Pfc Oren L. Andersen, ASN #37029694, Company "A"
 Pfc David E. Kyle, ASN #35537202, Company "A"
 Pfc Vernon (NMI) Lamb, ASN #37174820, Company "C"
 Pfc Andrew J. Leske, ASN #36476313, Company "A"
 Pfc Leslie K. Lerts, ASN #37412774, Company "A"
 Pvt. Stanley J. Kwick, ASN #32935111, Company "C"
 Pvt. Gerald K. Linton, ASN #37534378, Company "A"
 Pvt. Arthur N. Marlett, ASN #32583794, Company "A"
 Pvt. Frank T. Nelson, ASN #39932738, Company "A"
 Pvt. Johnny H. Weeks, ASN #18098652, Company "C"

(3) Awards and Decorations

During March 1945, the Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, awarded and presented Silver Star Medals to two (2) officers and five (5) enlisted men and Bronze Star Medals to three (3) officers, one (1) warrant officer, and nine (9) enlisted men. The Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, also presented one (1) Silver Star Medal and one (1) Bronze Star Medal to enlisted men awarded by the Commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division. Of these awards two (2) Silver Star Medals for enlisted men were awarded posthumously while the Bronze Star Medal for one (1) officer and one (1) enlisted man were awarded posthumously. The above awards were made to the following officers and enlisted men:

Silver Star

S/Sgt. Gilbert N. Moser, ASN #33161309, Company "B", per G.O. #21, Hq. 82nd A/B Div dtd 24 Feb. 45

Bronze Star

Sgt. Patrick F. Fennetti, ASN #33161165, Company "B", per G.O. #24, Hq. 82nd A/B Div dtd 1 Mar 45

Silver Star

The following named officers and enlisted men were awarded the Silver Star per G.O. #11, Hq. 5th Arm'd Div dtd 29 Mar 45:

1st Lt. Roland A. Subank, AUS-TD, ASN #O-1824156, Company "B"
 1st Lt. Frank E. Hurt, Jr., AUS-TD, ASN #O-1822008, Company "B"
 S/Sgt. Daniel W. Scanlon, ASN #32085727, Company "C"
 Sgt. Stanley Z. Basak, ASN #36527462, Company "C"
 Sgt. Wendall A. Chamberlain, ASN #33496549, Company "C"
 *Sgt. Lawrence W. Elmore, ASN #20315803, Company "B"
 Cpl. Bobby C. Bush, ASN #34822784, Company "C"
 *T/5 William J. Walters, ASN #34386105, Company "B"
 Pfc George W. Dignan, ASN #33161259, Reconnaissance Company

Bronze Star

The following named officers and enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star per G.O. #11, Hq. 5th Arm'd Div dtd 29 Mar 45:

SECRET

SECRET

WOJG Frank E. Gerlach, USA, ASN #W2129445, Headquarters Co.
 Capt. Joseph F. Bayer, AUS-TD, ASN #O-1821958, Headquarters Co.
 1st Lt. Herbert A. Pratte, AUS-TD, ASN #O-1822723, Company "C"
 *1st Lt. Ben J. Smith, AUS-TD, ASN #O-1824384, Company "G"
 2nd Lt. Robert J. Jeyce, AUS-Td, ASN #O-1824871, Ren. Company
 T/Sgt. Marnil (NMI) Allred, ASN #34110586, Company "B"
 T/Sgt. Ernest L. Kirschbaum, ASN #20314008, Headquarters Co.
 S/Sgt. Dominic A. Temburkini, ASN #36526787, Company "C"
 *Sgt. George A. DeLia, ASN #33161296, Company "B"
 Sgt. Doyle E. Swilley, ASN #36014268, Company "A"
 T/4 Rene J. Webster, Jr., ASN #34030165, Headquarters Co.
 Cpl. Jack T. Crawford, ASN #34374336, Company "C"
 Cpl. George T. O'Brien, ASN #20319623, Company "A"
 Cpl. Joseph L. Glsbeck, ASN #36527218, Company "A"
 Pvt. Glenn C. Souders, ASN #5754765, Headquarters Co.

Section II - Intelligence Matters

(1) Enemy Action

The enemy forces opposing our troops in early March constituted an inefficient group of troops lacking sufficient numbers or equipment to delay our advances. The main obstacles confronting us consisted of the drainage system of the flat country consisting of ditches, supplemented by numerous anti-tank ditches and occasional mine fields. Enemy anti-tank guns were, for the most part, 88mm guns dug in with excellent fields of fire covering anti-tank ditches, road blocks, mine fields, approaches and highways. Enemy air elements were scarce but reconnaissance planes were heard throughout the area with occasional strafing, but not of our units. Enemy armor was limited and our tank destroyers engaged no tanks. Enemy artillery fire was sporadic and consisted mainly of harassing and interdiction fires. It is believed that the concentrations laid down on the first platoon of Company "A" on 15 March 45 was counter-battery fire from information possibly furnished the enemy by civilians in the area. In no other case was enemy information or possible reconnaissance effectively employed against us.

(2) Enemy Material and Personnel Losses

The following losses were inflicted by this Battalion on the enemy during the month of March:

- 1 self-propelled 75mm gun
- 1 reconnaissance vehicle
- 5 general purpose vehicles
- 1 88mm anti-tank gun
- 4 observation posts in buildings destroyed
- 50 prisoners of war captured
- 18 of enemy known killed



Section III - Operations

The first week of March found this unit with the 5th Armored Division in its sweep from the Reer to the Rhine river. The firing companies were attached to

* posthumously awarded

SECRET

SECRET

the combat commands, this being necessitated by the fact that the Division employing its combat commands on different and sometimes simultaneous missions. No special problems arose during this march to the Rhine. SCR506 radio for communication between this headquarters and the firing companies was successful. Companies were given flank-guard and anti-tank defense missions. Several general purpose vehicles and towed guns of the enemy were knocked out with no losses in men or material to the firing companies. At the conclusion of the Rhineland campaign, the entire Battalion was employed on indirect fire missions, firing at marshalling yards, important road intersections, and built-up areas across the Rhine. Survey and registration were provided for this unit by Division Artillery. During the period of this mission, which lasted until 29 March 45, this headquarters under the guidance of Division Artillery acted as a Field Artillery Group Headquarters in assigning missions and targets to the firing companies. Operations during the month of March were again notable for the close cooperation between the elements of this command and the Division Artillery and Combat Commands. It is the earnest desire of the officers and men of this unit that it will in time become an organic part of its parent Division, the 5th Armored.

Section IV - Supply and Maintenance Matters

During the month of March, turret tops were completed on the M-36s of this Battalion. Ten (10) M-20s were exchanged for ten (10) M-2 half-tracks. As of this date no vehicles in this Battalion are deadlined. Throughout the month first and second echelon maintenance was performed.

Supply operations for the month were normal with supplies from the various services of supply being quite stable. The Medical Detachment and the Reconnaissance Company of this Battalion were further reorganized by changes in applicable tables of Organization and Equipment. Preliminary paper work was accomplished with some equipment being drawn relative to the changes described. Critical shortages which still exist as of this date are as follows: 4 ea Trailer, Ammunition, M10, 1 ea Ambulance, 3/4 ton, 7 ea Compass, M6 and 1 ea Tool Set, Battalion Crew, M1CA1.

There was some difficulty in obtaining vitally needed ammunition, 90mm type, from the Ammunition Supply Points.

Section - V - Civilian

The civilian population constituted a great nuisance to our men as there was no Military Government in the area initially. Hence, our men were frequently asked for passes by civilians and the inconsistency of regulations enforced in adjoining areas resulted in confusion among the people. Their attitude was consistently cooperative in direct dealings with our men. Once they were properly informed, inhabitants obeyed all regulations. However, it is believed that considerable information returned across the Rhine through civilian channels.

On one occasion, our wire was deliberately sabotaged by clever scraping and retaping of the wire in such a manner as to resemble a lineman's splice and yet causing the entire circuit to be shorted. On one other occasion our lineman reported signs of wire-tapping by unknown parties.

SECRET

SECRET

The terrain was in general flat and often boggy but the road net was excellent and our units achieved fair mobility.

WILLIAM J. GALLAGHER
Lt. Col., F. A.,
Commanding



SECRET