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HEADQUARTERS
628th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)
APO 403, U. S. Army

23 October 1944

SUBJECT: Report After Action Against Enemy - Month of September 1944.

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

1. Campaign of Western Europe.

2. Commanding Officers were:

a. Battalion Commander: William J. Gallagher, Major, F.A., O-384952, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

b. Hq. Company Commander: Daniel L. Thomas, Captain, FA, O-422582, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

c. Company "A" Commander: James H. Lloyd, Captain, F.A., O-409317, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

d. Company "B" Commander: Paul L. McPherran, Captain, F.A.? O-317706, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

e. Company "C" Commander: Hal A. Burgess, Jr., Captain, F.A., O-1168588, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 until relieved of above assignment about 0800 hours 27 Sept. 1944 and assigned as Battalion S-3. Robert G. Jones, 1st. Lt. AUS-TD, O-1822013, relieved of assignment as Platoon Leader, Company "B" and assigned as Company Commander, Company "C" from about 0800 hours 27 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

f. Rcn. Company Commander: Douglas H. Ketchum, Captain, F.A. O-405209, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 until relieved due to Battle Fatigue of above assignment about 0800 hours 18 September 1944. David (NMI) Doerr, 1st. Lt., O-1821835, relieved of assignment as Company Executive Officer, Reconnaissance Company, and assigned as Company Commander, Reconnaissance Company, from about 0800 hours 18 September 1944 to 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

g. Medical Detachment: Francis T. England, Captain, M.C., O-1683058, from 0001 hours 1 September 1944 until 2400 hours 30 September 1944.

3. Losses in action were as follows:

a. Killed in action:

(1) Edward (NMI) Mickacinich, PFC, F.A.? 33035715, Company "B", KIA as result of accidental discharge of M-1 rifle by Pvt Propecki while in bivouac area. Investigation showed LOD status due to accident not the fault of Pvt. Propecki. Killed 6 September 1944 about 1600 hours.

(2) William (NMI) Nicholson, PFC, F.A.? 33161356, Rcn. C., KIA about 2300 hours 15 September 1944 by enemy shell fire while observing at O.P. in vicinity of Stockigt Germany.

(3) John (NMI) Kalis, Sergeant, F.A.? 36015718, Company "B" KIA about 1300 hours 17 September 1944 by enemy mortar fire while attempting to evacuate his vehicle to a safe position near Stocken, Germany.

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- (4) William Boswell, T/4, F.A.? 34173763, Headquarters Company, KIA about 1630 hours 19 September 1944 by enemy artillery fire while sitting in rear of Communications #/4 ton truck during withdrawal from Germany to Lumburg in the vicinity of Wallendorf, Germany.
- (5) Gerald W. Joner, Sergeant, F.A.? 39396408, Rcn. Co. KIA about 1500 hours 19 September 1944 by enemy artillery fire while in bivouac area in vicinity of Niedersiegen, Germany.
- (6) Earl V. Ward, PFC, F.A., 34071761, Company "C" KIA about 1700 hours 19 September 1944 by direct enemy 88 mm fire while maintaining a MG position. Enemy fire prevented the evacuation or hasty burial of this man's body located approximately 1000-yds. NW of Hommerdingen, Germany.
- (7) Willie B. Greene, Pvt., F.A.? 34371005, Company "C" KIA about 1700 hours., 19 September 1944 by direct enemy 88mm fire while maintaining a MG position. Enemy fire prevented the evacuation or hasty burial of this mans body located approximately 1000 yards NW of Hommerdingen, Germany.
- (8) John P. Loncaric, Pvt., F.A. 33161105, Rcn. Co., SWA in vicinity of Stockem, Germany by enemy artillery fire; evacuated to hospital and subsequently died of wounds same date.
- (9) James A. McClintock, Jr., PFC. F.A.A., 34386127, Company "B", KIA about 2300 hours 21 September 1944 as result of enemy mortar fire in vicinity of Bigelbach, Lux.
- (10) Earl F. Higley, PFC, F.A. 33161283, Company "C", KIA, about 2400 hrs 23 September 1944 as a result of enemy mortar fire, in vicinity of Horsdorf, Lux.
- (11) John A. Hydu, Cpl. F.A. 33028902, Company "C", KIA about 2400 hours 23 September 1944. As result of enemy mortar fire vicinity of Horsdorf, Lux.

TOTAL KIA - SEPTEMBER - 11 EM

b. Wounded and Injured men in Action:

- (1) Ursin (NMI) Trahan, Sgt., 34071765, F.A. Co. "C", LIA, Evac.
- (2) David D. Agnew, Pvt., 34121058, F.A. Rcn. Co., SWA, Evac.
- (3) Marion T. Rogers, Pvt. 34371258, F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA., EVAC
- (4) Wellington E. Brundage, Pvt., 36400080, F.A., Co. "B", SWA, Evac.
- (5) Robert E. Reese, T/5 36400276, F.A. Hq. Co., LIA, Evac.
- (6) James E. Smith, PFC, 34452026, F.A. Co. C., LWA. Evac.
- (7) Charles W. Lamoreaux, PFC., 20316365, F.A. Rcn. Co. LWA. Duty.
- (8) James A. Feltman, T/5., 34425719, F.A. Co. "C" LWA. Evac.
- (9) Regis J. Murphy, PFC, 33161319, F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA. Evac.
- (10) Thomas J. McCann, Jr., 33161402, MG, Med. Det., LWA. Evac.
- (11) Frederick E. Paul, Pvt., 31086804 F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA. Evac.
- (12) Guy W Johnson, Pvt. 33152841, F.A., Rcn. Co., LWA, Ret. to Duty.
- (13) Leo F. McCartney, Cpl. 13067212, F.A., Co. "B", LWA., Evac.
- (14) Henry J. Maslowski, PFC., 32065202, Co. "B", LWA., Evac.
- (15) Alfred B. Ames, Pvt. 36400216, F.A., Co. "B", LWA., Evac.
- (16) Michael, A. Kull, Jr., Sgt. 32071095, F.A. Co. "B" LWA., Evac
- (17) Gilbert L. Kluska, Pvt. 36527691, F.A. Co. "C", LWA., Evac.
- (18) Louis H. Ritchie, Jr. Pvt. 33050384, F.A. Hq. Co., LWA., Evac.
- (19) Martin E. Kilmer., Pvt. 20315649, F.A. Hq. Co., SWA., Evac.
- (20) Dudley W. Carter., Cpl. 36330222, F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA., Evac.
- (21) George A. Gross, Pvt., 13067055, F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA., Evac.
- (22) Robert W. Herman, Pvt., 35232267, F.A. Co, "C" LWA., Ret. to Dy.
- (23) Chester C. Singleton, Cpl. 36506943., F.A. Co. "C", LWA, Ret. to Dy.
- (24) Floyd (NMI) Davidson, T/5., 34404247, MC., Med. Det. LWA, Evac.
- (25) Thomas E. Cappelotti, PFC, 33161230, F.A. Rcn. Co., LWA, Evac.
- (26) Louis P. Matchinsky, Cpl. 36400125, F.A. Co. "B" LWA. Evac.
- (27) William J. Yaker, PFC. 32046692, F.A. Co. "B" LIA, Evac.
- (28) 1st. Lt. Pete (NMI) Watzal, O-1824257, Co. "A" AUS, T.D. LWA, Evac



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- (29) Nunzio Rappa, T/5, 32154293, Co. "A", F.A., LWA., Evac.
 (30) Clyde A. Sauls, PFC, 34080421, Co. "A", F.A., LWA., Evac.
 (31) Mike (NMI) Lawka, Sg. Sgt., 32071083, Co. "A" F.A. LWA. Evac.
 (32) Victor P. Gamma, Pvt. 20315054, F.A. Co. "C" LWA., Evac.
 (33) Harold W. Taylor, PFC., 34386172, F.A., Co. "C" LWA. Ret. to Dy.
 (34) Arthur B. Stancil, T/5, 34385839, F.A., Co. "C" LWA. Evac.
 (35) Thomas E. Walker, Sgt., 13058812, F.A., Co. "C" SWA. Evac.
 (36) William C. Miller, Pvt. 32634104, F.A., Co. "C" LWA. Evac.
 (37) Romeo M. Mariano, PFC., 31097884, F.A., Co., C, LWA. Evac.
 (38) Walter (NMI) Kieler, PFC., 33161388, F.A., Co., C, LWA Evac.
 (39) Joseph P. Louisa, Cpl. 33161275, F.A., Co. "B" LWA, Ret. to Dy.
 (40) Nicholas J. Valenti, T/5., 32113989, F.A., C. "B" LWA Ret. to Dy.
 (41) Joe (NMI) Walls, Pvt. 34045078., F.A. Hq. "Co", LIA, Ret. To Dy.
 (42) Sam F. Koschignano, PFC, 35280429, MG, Med Det, LWA, Ret. to Dy.
 (43) Edward (NMI) VanVleit, Sgt, 32154572, F.A., Co. "C" LWA, Ret to Dy.
 (44) Albert H. Greh, PFC, 33161401, F.A. Rcn. Co. LWA., Evac.
 (45) Theodore (NMI) Spalte, PFC, 32065342, F.A. Co. "B" LWA, Ret, to Dy.
 (46) David F. Downs, Pvt. 33016328, F.A., Hq. Co., LWA., Ret. to Dy.
 (47) Spencer C. Smith, PFC, 34386190, F.A., Co. "A" LWA, Evac.
 (48) Edward V. Jahoda, 1st. Lt. 0-1822012, AUS-T.D. Hq. Co., LWA. Ret. to Dy.

TOTAL SWA - SEPTEMBER -	0 Off.	4 EM
" LWA - SEPTEMBER -	2 Off.	38 EM
" LIA - SEPTEMBER -	0 Off.	4 EM



c. Missing in Action during month of September 1944:

- (1). Joseph W. Aretz, Pvt. 33161034, F.A., Co. "B" MIA, 18 September 1944, in vicinity of Stocken, Germany.
 (2). Everett (NMI) Bartlebaugh, PFC, 13067316, F.A., Co. Rcn., MIA, 23 September 1944 in vicinity of Bigelbach, Luxemburg.

d. No known captured during month of September, however, it is possible that Pfc Everett NMI, Bartlebaugh, 13067316, Rcn, Co., shown as MIA above may have been captured in view of the fact that he and a Forward Observer (Officer), together with a radio operator from the 400th FA Bn., were known to have been ambushed by an enemy patrol while maintaining a Forward O.P. in the vicinity of Bigelbach, Lux. A member of Co. "B" who was with this group escaped when the enemy patrol opened fire. After securing reinforcements this man returned to the same location where blood stains were noted, however there was no indication of what happened to the other three members.

4. Battles:

a. This Battalion was principally concerned with the disposition and character of enemy forces withdrawing from France, Belgium and Luxembourg and the organization of German Defense of the Siegfried Line. At no time did the Battalion operate as a unit, but for the biggest portion of the month of September this organization was attached as follows: One company with CCB of the 5th Armored Division and two companies with CCR of the 5th Armored Division, with whom the unit breached the Siegfried Line in the vicinity of Wallendorf. The troops contacted, in the German retreat north from the Paris area, were generally assortment of mixed units composed of Security Battalions, GAF units which has fought as Infantry, plus conglomerate Panzer, SS and Wehrmacht Units badly mauled in France. They fought stubbornly in rear guard actions, but little armor was encountered in this phase and the principal wish of the enemy troops was to reach the safety of German soil at any cost. Upon reaching the Luxembourg-German border and the Siegfried Line a definite increase in the morale and fighting spirit of all the troops was encountered. Panzers, SS and Wehrmacht Infantry troops engaged by us on enemy soil fought aggressively, fiercely and with stubborn courage and surprising resourcefulness in the face of heavy losses. Nor unit identification,

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tions and composition of enemy troops refer to report of G-2, 5th Armored Division S-2, 5th Armored Division Artillery and the S-2's of CCB and CCR.

b. The primary disposition and character of prepared enemy defense encountered was the well known Seigfried line, and which sufficient technical data is available elsewhere. However, from OP's overlooking the Seigfried Line it was apparent that the enemy had only partially occupied it by 10 September to 12 September 1944 and had not yet emplaced weapons or finished entrenchments, improvement of position and camouflage of pillboxes and strong points which had been unattended prior to that time. Our OP's in vicinity of Ammeldingen, observed German soldiers in the act cutting natural camouflage, digging entrenchments and even pitching camp and cooking under scant cover of orchard trees. They were unaware of the closeness of our OP's. No large caliber guns of even A-T caliber were observed to be mounted in the embrasures of the pillboxes at this time. After our artillery bombardment of 12 September 1944, and not return fire was experienced whatever. 3 inch gun direct fire from massed M-10's was employed against the permanent fortifications of the Seigfried Line. It was observed that normal A.P. shells had little effect against concrete, especially when covered with earth. At ranges over 1000 yards, 3 inch fire did little more than blast away the camouflage. No appreciable damage to the pillboxes was observed even at 500 yards range. If embrasures were hit with either AP or HE, few occupants were injured or killed and the enemy reoccupied pillboxes when our bombardment was over.

c. Natural obstacles encountered were mainly the river and steep banks which the enemy had made use of in planning his fortifications.

d. During the month of September this unit encountered no enemy mines or minefields.

e. The enemy used demolitions to demolish river bridges at Wallendorf, Reisdorf and Niedersgagen.

f. The disposition of enemy force and changes during engagements varied in the front of the units as attached to the Combat Commands and all is contained as such in the S-2 summaries of these units. This unit was principally concerned with the armored counter-attack and is covered below under armor artillery subparagraphs.

(1) Air. No enemy air action against elements of this Battalion.

(2) Armor. The enemy showed great versatility in his employment of tanks both as armor and as artillery. They were always aggressively and skillfully employed but were consistently out-manuevered by our destroyers and knocked out. It was found that our 3-inch gun could knock out Mark V and VI tanks at extreme ranges of 2000-3000 yards. See attached Battle Experience report of 1st Lt. Robert C. Jones of Company "B" whose platoon knocked out six Mark VI tanks with one gun in a space of 30 minutes. The 2nd. gun of this platoon knocked out one tank at a range of 3200 yards. See also attached Battle Experience comments of 1st Lt. Seymour Feldman of Company "C" who also knocked out Mark VI tanks from a range of 2200 yards. Enemy armor was extremely bold and aggressive at all times but enemy tank crews on several occasions would evacuate their tank after one hit from our 3-inch gun and take cover leaving the tank an easy mark for our gunners. The enemy employed larger amounts of armor than ever before, often counter-attacking with massed tanks and infantry. As many as 12 tanks were employed against company "B" this unit and elements of a 10th Tank Battalion married company in one attack. The enemy was observed to recover knocked out vehicles and use immobilized tanks dug in as pillboxes or removing turrets of same for installation in fortifications, Enemy tanks will withdraw if they encounter 3-inch gun fire.

(3) German artillery employment was skillfull throughout and effective. It was the opinion of officers and men of this Battalion that German artillery fire is effectively surveyed in and date computed for effective concentrations and interdiction fire on every road, ford, crossroad, town, field, woods or other terrain feature in the sector north of Wallendorf.

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...harrassed constantly for the entire 5 to 9 day stay of our units in Germany. ...station and battery concentrations were fired by them and their methods of fire direction and use of forward observation was superior in all phases of employment. It is the opinion of all personnel of this Battalion that returning civilian refugees to towns in vicinity of our troops contained forward observers who directed fire against us.

(4). Tabulation of enemy losses inflicted by this Battalion during month of September is as follows:

<u>Tanks and SP Guns</u>	<u>Enemy Materiel Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Pz. Kw. VI	9	5
Pz. Kw. V	6	0
Pz. Kw. IV	5	0
Unidentified	6	0
Armd. Car w/20 mm gun.	2	0
<u>Transport</u>		
Armd. Pers. Carrier	9	0
Cmd. Cars (Sedan Type)	7	0
Gen. Purpose (1 to 3 tons)	18	0
Motorcycles	2	0
<u>Towed Guns</u>		
88 mm.	7	0
40 mm.	0	0
<u>Enemy Installations</u>		
Pillboxes		53
OP's	9	0
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		
MG (emplacements)	16	0
Mortar Positions	7	0
<u>Officers</u>		<u>Enemy Personnel</u>
Killed	7	
Captured	9	
<u>Enlisted Men</u>		
Killed	520	
Captured	196	



(5) Prisoners of War -- relatively few were taken by this Battalion. See tabulations in (4) above.

g. Elements affecting action.

(1) Enemy information was very good regarding all phases of our operations in Germany because German OP's supplemented by an efficiently organized underground civilian source of information enabled them to follow our moves with ease and drop artillery fire on our positions at will. Enemy reconnaissance, especially OP's and patrols were well employed and very effective.

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(2) The civilians of Germany are extremely hostile and treacherous as encountered by units of this Battalion in the Wallendorf, Cruchten, Hommerdingen, Halsdorf, Stockem area. It is believed throughout all ranks of this organization that refugees returning to their homes were and will be a potential source of artillery observers and enemy agents. They are not to be trusted even in the slightest and the presence of enemy civilians in our area may well have operated considerably to our detriment.

(3) Nature of terrain. In the Wallendorf, Beisdorf, Cruchten, Halsdorf, Stockem area is hilly with many forests and streams affording good OP's and natural cover and concealment advantageous to defending forces. It is heavily fortified at the border but fortifications are believed to be virtually nil in the Halsdorf-Stockem locality where only an occasional isolated pillbox or field fortifications was encountered.

h. Action.

(1) Unit attached to 5th Armored Division throughout the month.

(2) Unit mission remained A-T defense and indirect fire support. Unit provided direct fire support on pillboxes in support of assault on Seigfried Line defenses. One platoon gave direct fire support to an infantry battalion in an attack. Companies fired indirect fire missions and performed road block missions.

(3) No special weapons were used. M-10's were the primary weapons.

(4) Radio communication was used throughout. Intervening distances between combat commands were smaller and radio communication operated very satisfactorily. Messenger service was used to supplement the radio communication.

(5) No supporting units.

(6) No bayonets, flame throwers were used by this unit.

(7) The first part of the month supplies had to be hauled around 135 miles one way. This partially immobilized the service elements of the Battalion due to too many trucks on the road hauling Class I and III supplies. Later in the month Class III supplies became critical. The latter part of the month a new T/O & E was placed in effect by orders from 1st U. S. Army. Very few of the initial shortages had been received by the end of the month. When the additional vehicles are received it will locate some of the hardship on transportation. Transportation now being one of the big problems. Some items of ordnance were hard to replace, i.e. Launchers, rocket, 2.36". Replacements on M-10 and T-2 Recovery vehicles were slow.

(8) During the month of September the Company Aid Men evacuated casualties through the 112th Infantry Bn. Aid Station and the 75th Medical Collecting Company. During the time that the aid men were evacuating through the 112th Infantry Aid Station, the aid station was located approximately 2 miles from the front which was found to be the best method of evacuating. Supplies were adequate. No shortages of any items noted. Supplies were obtained by requisitions submitted through the Battalion S-4.

(9) Casualties: Types of Casualties handled by Company Aid Men for the month of September are as follows:

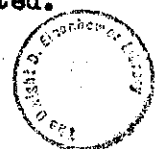
<u>Battle Casualties</u>						<u>Non-Battle Casualties</u>		
<u>Extremities</u>			<u>Head & Neck</u>			<u>Chest & Abdomen</u>		
<u>Sl.</u>	<u>Severe</u>	<u>Dead</u>	<u>Sl.</u>	<u>Severe</u>	<u>Dead</u>	<u>Sl.</u>	<u>Severe</u>	<u>Dead</u>
23	4	0	3	0	2	5.	3	9

1 Gastroenteritis
2 G.S.W. self inflicted.
2 Battle Fatigue.
7 Disease.

5. Summation.

a. Again the inadequacy of the present mount of the .50 cal. MG on the M-10 has manifested itself, particularly when it was desired to fire this weapon against ground troops. Again, from actual combat experience, it is pointed out that a ring mount, or co axially mounted .50 cal. MG are highly desirable. Also with the weather becoming increasingly colder, the limitations of the hand-cranked turret become more and more evident


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Tank Destroyers must have a power operated turret because even when the lightest of lubricants are used on the turret ring, it is almost impossible to turn the turret, manually, during cold weather.

b. As in August, operations as a Battalion or under Battalion control were not performed at any time. Companies were usually attached to the separate Combat Commands. Again this was necessary, for the Germans continued to employ their tanks piecemeal in delaying actions and as dug-in guns, and in such numbers as not to warrant the use of an entire T-D Battalion against them. At one time or another, each of the companies supported elements of the Division Artillery in harassing and interdiction firing. In the operations in Germany, 15th September to 30th September, the Battalion less one Company, was attached to CCR. In the assault against the Siegfried Line, the firing companies worked in close cooperation with CCR infantry and tanks. However, it was found that none of the 3-inch types of ammunition on hand, HE, AP, APC, APCBDF could satisfactorily penetrate the concrete fortifications of the line. The new T4 (block-buster type) ammunition was then not available. However, in the case of the steel doors the APCBDF would make a satisfactory penetration and in many cases blow the door open, making it possible for more rounds to be poured into the opening thus made. Also in the operations in Germany during this period, it was learned that even the much vaunted German Tiger tank can be knocked out by the 3-inch gun by a direct frontal shot, even at ranges up to 1500 yards, and that the crews of the Tiger tanks are loathe to close with Tank Destroyers or American Tanks. Those unit we met have either abandoned their tanks as soon as the tank was hit or turned tail and fled, presenting a lush target in the guise of the retreating rear end of the Tiger Tank. As in August, elements of this unit were used as direct support weapons against enemy ground personnel, profitably, resulting in approximately 520, enemy casualties when engaged in missions of this character. In conclusion, the multiple uses to which a Tank Destroyer Battalion can be put, were evidenced in that during September this unit was used in A-T defense, road blocks, flank defense, in direct assault against fortified positions and pillboxes, in direct fire on enemy ground personnel and to provide reinforcing fires in indirect fire with elements of Division Artillery. When more than one company was attached to a Combat Command, the Battalion Commander and his staff acted in an advisory capacity to the Combat Commander as regards suitable missions for tank destroyers. When the Battalion was split between the three Combat Commands, the Battalion Commander and his staff (attached to Division Artillery) made daily inspections of the firing companies in the line, with a view to observing operations and ironing out any difficulties or differences which might have arisen between the Company Commanders and the Combat Commands.


WILLIAM J. GALLAGHER,
Major, F.A.,
Commanding.

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