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HEADQUARTERS
629TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U.S. ARMY

3 February 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.
(Thru: Channels)

1. Transmitted herewith is After Action Report for this organization for the month of January 1945.



GLENN COLE
Lt. Col., Inf (TD)
Commanding

Incls:

- 1 - After Action Report for month of January 1945
- 1 - Battalion Journal for month of January 1945
- 1 - Journal File for month of January 1945

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After Action Report, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion for month of January 1945

1. Enemy:

a. Units in Contact:

On January 1st the front lines were approximately 5688 to 6093. Elements of four divisions were present along the front, from north to south: 9th SS Panzer Division, 560th Volksgrenadier Division, 89th Volksgrenadier Regiment of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division. On January 4th two new units, the 27th and 48th Volksgrenadier Regiments of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division made their appearance on the front. On January 5th, 6th and 7th no contact was made with the enemy. Units in contact on January 8th were the 19th and 20th Panzer Grenadier Regiments of the 9th Panzer Division, the 9th SS Panzer Recon Battalion and the 89th Volksgrenadier Regiment of 12th Volksgrenadier Division. New identifications revealed the presence of the 751st Regiment of the 326th Volksgrenadier Division. Front lines on the 10th of January - South of Regne and Bihain (640843) (657838) (664850) (690848). On January 11th a new unit, the 1st Battalion of the 27th Volksgrenadier Regiment, was identified and on January 12th the 53rd Nebelwerfer Regiment of the 4th Nebelwerfer Brigade was identified in our sector. On January 15th the 409th Volksgrenadier Artillery Battalion was identified. Front lines were East of Honyez and west of Bovigny (7082), West of Courtil (7081). On January 20th there was no change of units in contact and the front lines were East of Cierriux, East of Bovigny and East of Courtil. From January 21st to February 1st there was no contact with the enemy.

b. Reserves:

During the first part of the period the 10th SS Panzer Division, 11th SS Panzer Division and 15th Panzer Grenadier Division were available for employment on our sector of the front. On January 10th uncommitted elements of the 9th SS Panzer Division were used by the enemy to reinforce his lines in the Petite Langlir (6583) area. No contact since January 7th was made with the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions. They remained unlocated in the buldge and could be employed as reserves. On January 12th the 1st SS Panzer Division was identified in front of our area in readiness for committment. Elements of the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division were identified on our left flank on January 16th and the remaining elements of this unit could be used for immediate reserves in our area. On January 18th the presence of the 11th Panzer Division on the 3rd Army front was definitely confirmed, eliminating the possibility of this Division being employed as reserve in our sector

c. Enemy Activity:

From the 1st to the 5th of January opposition to our advances consisted mainly of small arms, mortar and artillery fire. On January 8th the enemy employed tanks and SP guns and defended from buildings which he used as strong points. Artillery fire was placed on villages and road junctions which our troops were compelled to use. In the Bihain and Petite Langlir sector the enemy resorted to offensive tactics counterattacking frequently with tanks and infantry.

The enemy maintained strong resistance on January 11th in the Petite Langlir and Bihain area using tanks, artillery and SP and AT guns. Roads leading to our advance elements were subjected to heavy artillery shelling. There was

c. Enemy Activity: (cont'd)

continued use of mines along our roads of advance and on road blocks. On January 15th the enemy kept up his defensive action by counterattacking with tank and infantry teams. On January 16th our Tank Destroyers encountered anti-tank and mortar fire in Honyelez and could not travel on the road leading into this town except at night as enemy direct fire weapons had it covered. Enemy also placed heavy mortar and artillery interdiction fire on this road. Eleven of our tank destroyers were damaged by enemy action during this period.

d. Strength and Morale:

Throughout the operation elements of the Divisions opposing us were equal to approximately one to two regiments of Volksgrenadier troops and Engineer and Panzer Grenadier forces. From the 8th of January until the close of the operation the enemy had one to two companies of tanks spread along the front.

Enemy morale was good at the beginning of the period but declined towards the close of the period.

e. Capabilities:

(a) To defend high ground using dug-in positions and houses as strong points thereby delaying our advance.

(b) To counterattack with approximately 1 company of infantry and a platoon of tanks. However, due to the well placed artillery fire of the 83rd Division Artillery the counter attacks were almost always broken up before even getting under way. On January 11th the enemy assembled in woods southeast of Bihain and launched an attack at 0830 against our lines in Bihain. Slight penetrations were made but the attack was contained by 0930A.

(c) To attack with some of his reserve divisions through our sector to gain possession of the Manhay - Grandmenil road net. The terrain was quite favorable to an operation of this type but the lack of supplies, mainly gasoline for his armor and vehicles, plus the constant threat of our units breaking through near the beginning of the bulge prevented the enemy from taking the initiative in this direction.

(d) Establish road blocks, lay mines and employ artillery and mortar fire to hinder our forward movement. Very little enemy patrol activity was prevalent during the period.

(a) and (d) were only capabilities that the enemy employed to any extent.

a. Period 1 January 1945 to 7 January 1945: Hoy (P402900)-Grandmenil (P525900)-Manhay (P530900)-Tri-le-Cheslaing (P550930). Period 8 January 1945 to 22 January 1945: front lines run Grandmenil-Manhay-Tri-le-Cheslaing, thence south and southeast progressively to a line Honyelez (P705860)-Bovigny (P705840)-Courtill (P699830) and point 3 kilometers southwest of Courtill, Belgium. Period 23 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 the battalion was not in contact with enemy.

b. Period 1 January 1945 to 7 January 1945: Bn CP--P396003. Co A - Co CP 451910; 1A 449910; 2A 395870; 3A 520900; attached Recon Plat 451910. Co B--Co CP 396922; 1B 423882; 2B 406883; attached Recon Plat 396922. Co C--Co CP 538949; 1C 533915; 2C 548914; 3C 535932; attached Recon Plat 538949. Recon Plat 538949. Recon Co--399006. Period 7 January 1945 to 22 January 1945: Bn CP--P613920. Co A--Co CP 618890; 1A 615889; 2A 623895; 3A 631877; attached Recon Plat 618890. Co B--CP 550911; 1B 545917; 2B 605903; 3B 546916; attached Recon Plat 550911. Co C--CP 603903; 1C 614891; 2C 595905; 3C 603903; attached Recon Plat 603903. Then south and southeast as attack progressed. Period 23 January 1945 to 30 January 1945 entire battalion in assembly position vicinity Deux Rys, Belgium (P488958). 31 January 1945 unit moved to assembly position vicinity Ligneuville, Belgium; Bn CP at P799945; Co A- 806984; Co B- 805993; Co C 779006; Recon Co 807985; Hq Co 777007.

c. Not applicable.

d. During period 1 January 1945 to 7 January 1945 battalion was relieved of attachment to the 75th Inf Div and XVIII AB Corps and attached to the VII Corps and subsequently to the 83rd Inf Div. Unit moved to regimental assembly areas for subsequent attack to south. Co A was attached to 329th Inf Regt, Co C to the 331st Inf Regt and Co B temporarily in division reserve. Period 8 January 1945 to 22 January 1945-- In the early part of the period severe fighting occurred vicinity Bihain (635850), Petite Langlir (650850), and woods to east of last point. Enemy armor and infantry attacked our lines. At Bihain Co C aided materially in stopping the attack in this vicinity by destroying enemy tanks and dispersing balance. At Petite Langlir Co A put direct fire on a building behind which an enemy tank was in position, holding up our advance. Tank withdrew, but no visible damage inflicted. During this time losses by enemy action and mechanical failure resulted in platoons of Co B being attached to 329th Inf Regt and 331st Inf Regt. 1st Platoon of Co B supporting the 331st Inf attack south through Langlir fired on suspected tank and infantry concentration along edge of woods, resulting in great loss to enemy. Attacking to the southeast through the woods little resistance was met until reaching the towns of Honyelez (705860), Bovigny (705840), Courtill (699830). The enemy, holding high ground to the front and flank, placed direct fire on these positions, resulting in some loss to us. Advance continued on to Rogery (735855) and Beho (754825) when units on flank caught up to our advance. Co C located south of Courtill shot up enemy infantry strongpoints and broke up several tank-infantry counterattacks. On 22-23 January 1945 unit was relieved by elements of 638th TD Bn as infantry elements were being relieved by 84th Inf Div. During the period 23 January 1945 to 30 January 1945 all units were engaged primarily in maintenance of equipment and training of drivers and gunners for TD's. On

2. Own Situation:

d. (cont'd)

30 January 1945 unit moved to assembly position vicinity of Ligneuville and became a part of the XVIII Corps, and was alerted for movement to 82d Airborne Division area to become operational with them.

e. Combat efficiency is considered very satisfactory due to loss of personnel and run down condition of combat vehicles.

f. During period 1 January 1945 to 7 January 1945 units were relieved and made several night marches until closed in regimental and battalion assembly areas. During period 8 January 1945 to 22 January 1945 the following enemy materiel were destroyed or captured: Six (6) Mark V tanks, four (4) Mark IV tanks, two (2) half-tracks, three (3) general purpose vehicles, one (1) 20mm flak gun, two (2) 88mm antitank guns, six (6) strongpoints, six (6) houses used as defended positions, five (5) machine gun nests, and took five (5) prisoners of war; also killed an undetermined number of enemy. During period 23 January 1945 to 30 January 1945 unit trained sufficient drivers and gunners to complete the crews for all thirty-six (36) TD's. However, ordnance could not repair or replace all vehicles prior to recommitment. All vehicles in unit were completely checked by mechanics for 2nd and 3rd echelon maintenance. Those found deficient were repaired or sent to ordnance. Period 30 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 unit prepared to reenter combat.

3. Administration:

During period covered by report administration was processed through the following higher headquarters to which this battalion has been attached.

75th Infantry Division -- 1 to 2 January 1945
 83rd Infantry Division -- 2 to 31 January 1945

Authorized strength and status at beginning and end of period:

	Auth. Strength		Strength		Net Increase		Net Decrease					
	as of 1 Jan 45	as of 31 Jan 45	as of 1 Jan 45	as of 31 Jan 45	O	WO	O	WO				
Hq & Hq Co	13	13	1	111	13	1	109	-	-	2		
Recon Co	7	-	110	5	-	111	6	-	108	3		
Co "A"	6	-	124	4	-	117	4	-	112	5		
Co "B"	6	-	124	4	-	106	5	-	115	-		
Co "C"	6	-	124	6	-	123	7	-	118	5		
Med Det	1	-	15	1	-	15	1	-	15	-		
Bn TOTAL	39	2	667	35	1	535	36	1	577	2	-	6

(For breakdown of gains and losses of personnel see Casualty, Replacement and Prisoner Aides) (attached)

Personnel requisitions dated 13 January 1945 for one (1) officer (2d Lt. Lester R. Smith - only - formerly assigned this unit, wounded and evacuated) and thirty-three (33) enlisted men; and 17 January 1945 for fifteen (15) enlisted men submitted through 1st U.S. Army.

Following reinforcements received through 3d Replacement Depot:

enlisted details - 13 (applied against (or not applied against) unit requisitions)
 enlisted reinforcements 27 (applied against unit requisitions)

Following unit requisitions have not been filled:

Unit req no. 2, 13 January 1945 for 2d Lt. Lester R. Smith (only)
 Unit req no. 3, 17 January 1945 for 15 enlisted men.

Following named enlisted men received battlefield appointments as 2d Lts:

M/Sgt Carl J. DePancis ASN 33041502
 S/Sgt Chester T. Yachna ASN 33023476
 S/Sgt John J. Barsic ASN 20321554

S/Sgt Thomas R. Donovan recommended for battlefield appointment as 2d Lt.
 1st Lt. Anthony G. Covatta recommended for battlefield promotion to Captain.

After Action Report, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion for month of January 1945 (cont'd)

3. Administration: (cont'd)

Awards and Decorations made through period:

<u>RANK</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>AWARD</u>	<u>GENERAL ORDER</u>
1st Lt	Anthony G. Belak	0-1175639	Bronze Star	Sec I, GO 3, 83d Inf Div dated 13 January 1945
1st Lt	Horace W. Lamb	0-1824330	Bronze Star	" " "
S/Sgt	Chester T. Yachna	33023476	Bronze Star	" " "
Cpl	James H. Kohns	35582249	Silver Star	Sec I, GO 5, 83d Inf Div dated 18 January 1945
T/5	James D. McDevitt, Jr.	35720640	Silver Star	" " "
T/4	George Makinson	32306262	Bronze Star	Sec III, GO 5, 83d Inf Div dated 18 January 1945
Cpl	John R. Aprilante	32633083	Silver Star (Posthumously)	Sec I, GO 9, 83d Inf Div dated 23 January 1945
Sgt	Joseph A. Blatnik	33036419	"	" " "
T/5	James H. Leitzler	33117505	"	" " "
Cpl	Homer D. Renager	34580598	"	" " "
Sgt	Edward F. Tomas	33415769	"	" " "
Pfc	Laul C. Barber	11085693	"	" " "
Pfc	George C. Laringer	35683706	"	" " "
T/5	Victor Mahoney	33036222	Silver Star	Sec II, GO 9, 83d Inf Div dated 23 January 1945
T/4	Henry E. Johns	33036258	"	" " "
Pfc	Vincent DeFalco, Sr.	31148360	"	" " "
Pvt.	Walter F. Saumenig	33008995	"	" " "
Pfc	Thomas K. McCreery	37422184	"	" " "
Sgt	Lawrence Loeffler	33036008	Bronze Star	Sec III, GO 9, 83d Inf Div dated 23 January 1945
Sgt	James W. Richardson, Jr	34154276	"	" " "
Sgt	James P. Jordan	12036247	Bronze Star	Sec III, GO 16, 83d Inf Div dated 30 January 1945
S/Sgt	Jethro H. Piland	33041696	"	" " "
Sgt	Alfred J. Lipin	33201739	Bronze Star	Sec II, GO 16, 83d Inf Div dated 30 January 1945
Lt Col	Glenn Cole	0-19917	Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star	General Order, 83d Inf Div dated 30 January 1945

Commanding Officers During Period Covered by Report:

Bn Cmdr	Lt. Col. Glenn Cole, Inf.
CO Hq CO	Capt. Francis H. Dobbins, FA
CO Ren Co	Capt Harry L. Harris, FA
CO Co A	Capt Charles M. Grimshaw, Inf.
CO Co B	Capt Edwin H. Stewart, FA
CO Co C	1st Lt. Anthony G. Covatta, AUS
CO Med Det	Capt Domenico A. Savoia, M.C.

After Action Report, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion for month of January 1945 (cont'd)

3. Administration: (cont'd)

CASUALTY, REPLACEMENT AND PRISONER OF WAR ANNEX

DAY	WIA	KIA	LIA	N.B.	P.W.	REPLACEMENTS
1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	1	0	0
4	0	0	0	1	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	3	0	10
8	0	0	0	2	0	0
9	1	0	0	0	0	0
10	3	0	0	1	0	3
11	3	2	0	1	0	0
12	0	0	0	1	0	0
13	0	0	0	2	0	0
14	1	0	0	1	0	1
15	0	0	0	1	0	0
16	4	0	0	5	0	1
17	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	13
19	1	0	0	1	0	1
20	0	0	0	1	0	1
21	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	1	0	1
23	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	3	0	8
25	1	0	0	1	0	2
26	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	0	0	0	1	0	1
31	0	0	0	3	0	0
TOTAL	14	2	0	31	0	42

During the month of January this organization drew all supplies through the 83rd Infantry Division with the exception of Ordnance items. All controlled and major items were drawn on VII Corps allocations as follows: Six (6) Carriages, Motor, 3" Gun, M10 were drawn on VII Corps Allocations as replacements for combat losses; one (1) Truck, 4ton, 4X4 which was drawn on VII Corps Allocation as replacement for one (1) Truck, 4ton, 4X4 which was evacuated by 559th Ordnance Company. All other Ordnance items were drawn from the 559th Ordnance Company. One (1) Car, armored, Utility, M20 was drawn on First Army allocation. This vehicle was allocated due to changes in T/E. Basic loads of Class I, III and V supplies were kept on hand at all times. Roads were generally good although covered with snow and ice.

After Action Report, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion, for month of January 1945 (cont'd)

4. GENERAL:

During this period the battalion experienced an exceedingly large number of mechanical failures with the M-10 Destroyer. Throughout the entire period there were always from five to eight destroyers in **ordnance** for repairs due to mechanical failures. In many cases the repairs accomplished by ordnance were unsatisfactory as the destroyers were unable to make the trip from ordnance back to the battalion without breaking down. It is believed that most of the difficulty is due to the fact that the destroyers have seen approximately seven months of continuous combat service and to the fact that Army has no working schedule whereby Tank Destroyer Battalions are brought back and given a thorough periodic ordnance refit. There are also indications that there is a lack of parts which hampers repair by ordnance units.



GLENN COLE
Lt. Col., Inf (TD)
Commanding