

[REDACTED]

HEADQUARTERS
643D TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 654, U. S. ARMY

10 January 1945

314.7

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy Reports, After.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, ²⁵17, D. C. (Thru channels).

1. Complying with War 10, AR 345-105, the following information is submitted for the period 20-31 December 1944:

- a. Unit: 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion.
- b. No change in organization. See Appendix I for attachments. *-4101/*
- c. Battalion less Company A (two platoons) and less two reconnaissance platoons of Headquarters Company, left permanent station at Fontainebleau, France with a strength of twenty eight officers and five hundred eighty eight enlisted men. Of these, one officer and thirteen enlisted men were left behind to guard the quarters. Total of twenty seven officers and five hundred seventy five actually left for combat. Of these there were twenty seven officers and five hundred seventy three enlisted men assigned of which twenty one men are missing in action and six wounded and hospitalized. Twelve men were hospitalized for causes other than wounds.
- d. No permanent station. See Appendix I for bivouacs and camps.
- e. See Appendix I.
- f. No official name received by this headquarters.
- g. Battle to repel German attack. For actions see Appendix I.
- h. Commanding Officer: Lt Colonel Burlle R. Farr, O 291 786.
- i. Losses--See Appendix II.
- j. None
- k. None
- l. Copies of Unit Journal for period attached as Appendix III.

Burlle R. Farr
BURLLE R. FARR
Lt. Colonel, Cavalry
Commanding

3 Incls:

- Incl # 1-Appendix I
- Incl # 2-Appendix II
- Incl # 3-Appendix III

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APPENDIX I

Narrative 20-31 December 1944

The unit was quartered in a Chateaux at Fluery in Biere, near Fontainebleau, France. Unit was assigned to Ground Force Replacement System and engaged in training reinforcements. The Commanding Officer, Lt. Colonel Durille R. Farr, was called by 9th Replacement Depot shortly before 200400 and ordered to alert the unit for movement by motor to Belgium. Approximate time of departure, 1130 hours.

Unit moved out on verbal orders of Colonel Chase, Ground Force Replacement System. Battalion, preceded by the Battalion Executive, Major Ira M.F. Gaulke as advance officer and Battalion S-1, 1st Lt Randall A. Miller, with a quartering party, moved out about 201100. Destination was Namur, Belgium and orders would be received from Colonel White, G-3 of Advance Section, Communications Zone. Battalion main body closed in Namur at 2400 and straggler vehicles closed about 210630.

Unit was ordered to proceed to Pilot, Belgium and receive orders from XVIII Corps. Enroute to Pilot the unit was intercepted by a Military Police unit at Huy, Belgium and directed to Rheims, France by order of Commanding General, Oise Base Section. Order was verified by telephone by Lt Gaylord of Company B. Column changed direction and proceeded south towards Rheims. Battalion S-3, Major Ralph W. Lang, preceded column to Rheims where he was informed that the order was in error. He intercepted the column south of Rocroi, France and the unit proceeded back, escorted by an MP officer from First U. S. Army.

About 220400 a 1/4 Ton 4x4 driven by Major Lang with Lt Colonel Farr as an occupant, went off the road into the Meuse River north of Givet, Belgium. The vehicle and contents were lost but both occupants were rescued.

Telephone contact was made with First U. S. Army from the MP station at Dinant, Belgium, and the unit proceeded to Bonal where the dispositions were made as shown in Appendix III. The Headquarters and rear echelon billeted in Lanhay, Belgium and were attached to 3rd Armored Division.

On the morning of the 23rd, two guns of the 3rd Platoon of Company "A" returned to Lanhay and the gun sergeants reported an attack by enemy paratroopers and infantry had overrun their positions, some men had been killed or captured and they thought the platoon leader and platoon sergeant were among them. The two guns were sent back under Lt McCarty to go into position and two platoons of paratroopers were sent down by the 3rd Armored Division to drive out the enemy.

The Headquarters and rear echelon moved to Noiseaux, Belgium and spent the night of 23 December.

APPENDIX I (Cont'd)

The morning of the 24th the unit prepared to move, but did not leave until around 1400 and spent the night in Viller Ste Gertrude, Belgium. No accurate news was heard of any of the gun companies except that Company "C" was around Marche, Belgium, Company "B" around Soy, Belgium and had one tank to its credit, and the two platoons of Company "A" were south of Manhay, Belgium.

About 250700 December, Pvt Campagna, radio operator for Lt McCarty, came in and told a story of a terrific fight in Manhay and how he managed to escape on foot and make his way to headquarters. The story was not verified.

The headquarters and rear echelon moved to Tours, Belgium where Lt McCarty and 28 men reported in. They had lost all but one gun and half track but no more men, and had been relieved from their attachment.

On 26 December the Headquarters and rear echelon proceeded to vicinity of Barveaux, Belgium, where Company "B" joined, and this part of the battalion moved to Les Avins, Belgium and occupied billets. Two guns of Company "B" were still out on a mission. Unit was relieved from attachment XVIII Corps and attached to VII Corps. One platoon of company "A" and the two remaining guns of Company "B", were withdrawn at night and returned to Les Avins about 270300.

Reports from platoons involved showed casualties of 2 EM killed, 21 EM missing, 6 EM wounded as a result of the operations around Manhay and Soy. Of these figures 4 of the missing were subsequently located and returned to duty.

The period 27-31 December, Company "A" Guarded a bridge over the Meuse River at Andennes, Belgium with one platoon, and the other guarded VII Corps. Company "B" manned guns at critical cross roads. Company "C" remained in the vicinity of Marche, Belgium protecting rear installations. The period closed without further incident of note. CP remained at Les Avins.

BIVOUACS FOR PERIOD 20-31 December 1944

20 - 21 December	Namur, Belgium
21 - 22 December	Enroute to combat
22 - 23 December	Manhay, Belgium
23 - 24 December	Noiseaux, Belgium
24 - 25 December	Ville Ste Gertrude, Belgium
25 - 26 December	Tours, Belgium
26 - 31 December	Les Avins, Belgium

APPENDIX II

HEADQUARTERS
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Battle Casualties for period 20 December 1944 to 2400, 31 December 1944, incl.

KILLED IN ACTION

Gendron, Henry L.	Pvt	31 073 569	23 Dec 44
Lorenti, Joseph F.	Pvt	20 132 413	25 Dec 44

MISSING IN ACTION

Perreault, Emile J.	Pvt	32661741	24 Dec 44
Kreft, Edgar R.	Pvt	36865406	24 Dec 44
Smith, John J.	Pvt	20133269	24 Dec 44
Sosenko, Alex M	Pvt	35520226	24 Dec 44
Stitt, Joseph C.	Pvt	31373442	24 Dec 44
Tector, Thomas W	Pvt	36864640	24 Dec 44
Giordano, Joseph S	Sgt	20133245	24 Dec 44
Martinelli, Frank W	Sgt	20133221	24 Dec 44
Donahue, George V	Sgt	11065587	24 Dec 44
Ackerman, Frank W	Tec 5	32276237	24 Dec 44
DeFoster, Anthony J	Tec 5	32038173	24 Dec 44
Kowalinski, Frank J	Pfc	35537513	24 Dec 44
Bertch, John F	Pvt	35233303	24 Dec 44
Brill, Willard G	Pvt	32971161	24 Dec 44
Carothers, Charles J	Pvt	33163160	24 Dec 44
Carpenter, Wilson W	Pvt	37073465	24 Dec 44
Clanton, John A	Pvt	37073420	24 Dec 44
Como, Michael J	Pvt	32641443	24 Dec 44
Marick, Virgil V	rvt	35764232	24 Dec 44
Ferri, Anthony J	Pvt	20132405	24 Dec 44
Fiorillo, Arthur A	rvt	32688563	24 Dec 44

WOUNDED IN ACTION (HOSPITALIZED)

Caldwell, Quentin A	S/Sgt	20132375	23 Dec 44
Hoffman, Robert H	Pvt	32640912	23 Dec 44
McClurg, Victor M	Pvt	35557925	23 Dec 44
Repak, Frank J.	Pfc	33163258	23 Dec 44
Day, James J	Cpl	32622095	23 Dec 44
Caldwell, George H	S/Sgt	20132369	24 Dec 44

APPENDIX: II