

copy

HEADQUARTERS 644th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

SUBJECT: Monthly Report of Operation

To: The Adjutant General
US Army
Washington, D.C.

1. After 1 August 1944, the 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to the 8th Infantry Division, advanced to the south with the leading forces of the division, reaching RENNES on 4 August 44. During this movement, Co "AQ" was attached to CT 13, performing security missions in the forward area of the division sector. Contact with the enemy was slight; scattered pockets of German troops constituted the only resistance met by any elements of the battalion.

2. From 4 August 44 to 13 August 44, the battalion less Co "C" after 8 August 44, held positions in the vicinity of RENNES, prepared to meet an attack by armor from the south. Co "A" remained attached to the 13th Infantry Regiment until 12 August 44 to 9 August 44. On 8 August 44, Co "C" was attached to the 121st Infantry Regiment, and moved to the north for the attack on DINARD. Reconnaissance Company conducted reconnaissance within a ten-mile radius of RENNES and performed three (3) division reconnaissance missions to the south and east.

3. From 13 August 44 to 18 August 44, the battalion accompanied the 8th Division in movement as follows: From RENNES to a position southeast of DINAN. From DINAN to GUINCAMP. From GUINCAMP to an assembly area north of BREST. Co "C" returned to battalion control on 16 August 44 after the defeat of enemy forces in the DINARD area. Three (3) M-10's of Co "C" were hit by 88mm direct fire, one (1) being destroyed and the other two (2) damaged but recovered. three (3) EM of Co "C" were killed and five (5) were injured. Co "BA" was attached to one battalion of the 28th Infantry Regiment in a task force which reduced an enemy position on CAPE FREHEL and then moved to the vicinity of BREST. Co "B" was attached to the 28th Infantry Regiment on 16 August 44, Reconnaissance Company performed a division reconnaissance mission northwest of ST BRIEUC. The battalion, less Co "A", arrived in an area southwest of LESNEVEN on 18 Aug 44 and began preparations for attack on the German garrison at BREST.

4. Prior to the attack on BREST, Reconnaissance company, operating under division orders, patrolled the right flank of the division twice engaging enemy patrols in the vicinity of ST REMEN. On 21 August 44, Co "B" was released from attachment to the 13th Infantry Regiment and the 28th Infantry Regiment respectively, on 25 August 44. Co "C" was later relieved from attachment to the 28th Infantry Regiment and attached to the 121st Infantry Regiment in the line on 31 Aug 44. Companies "B" and "C" performed close support missions for the infantry while Co "A" acted in close support of the main attack and also in operations against minor pockets of enemy in fortified positions along the coast to the west of BREST. The platoon leader, 2nd Platoon, Co "C", was captured while on a foot patrol on 26 Aug 44.

5. The attached casualty report shows personnel losses for month and the attached S-4 report lists major items of equipment lost or destroyed. A running account of battalion activity appears in the attached copy of the Unit Journal (from which inconsequential entries have been deleted) and its supporting documents.

For the Commanding Officer:

HARRY L. GODSHALL, JR.
Captain, FA
S-3

Date 3 August 1944

NO. 1

TO: Co "B", "C", Rcn

1. a. Pockets of enemy resistance continue in division forward sector and to southwest of our present position. Report that groups are amalgamating for organized resistance have been received. Panzer division reported in vicinity of 2393 or SW thereof.

b. Division is now moving to vicinity of Argouges 2496.

2. 644 TD Bn less Co "A" and rear CP will move after 1800 upon 10 minute notice on route and to position shown on overlay.

3. a. Quartering parties have left and are preparing areas.

b. Order of march: "C", CP, remaining elements of Rcn, "B". Co "C" will furnish adv guard to precede Bn by 5 minutes. Co "B" will furnish rear guard, Rcn Co will furnish left flank guard to travel on route shown on overlay. 10 mph.

c. Co's may infiltrate additional advance details in not to exceed two vehicles per party.

d. Reports to higher Hq are to be made by Comm O.

4. Rear will move forward at discretion of Exec O.



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Date 5 August 1944

NO. Page 1

TO: Rear GP Hq Co.

5. Miscellaneous

a. On 5 August use of transportation will be held to a minimum and every effort made to service all vehicles and weapons.

b. As of 1200 each day beginning 4 August 1944, all organizations assigned or attached to this Headquarters will submit by telephone, messenger or radio, to A.C. of S., G-4, prior to 1800 a daily report on captured, destroyed or lost materiel listing the following materiel.

a. Captured or destroyed

- 1- Tanks, Mark III and Mark IV
- 2- Tanks, Mark VI
- 3- Artillery, 75mm and over
- 4- Vehicles, total all type

b. Unit losses

- 1- Tank, light
- 2- Tank, medium
- 3- Artillery 75mm and over
- 4- Vehicles, total all types

(Excerpt from 8th Division Adm O #18, 4 Aug 44

644th Tank Destroyer Bn
Rennes, France
070800 August 1944

Map: France, 1/100,000

1. **MISSION:** See Annex No. 1, No. 2, and Overlay attached.
 2. **CONTACT ESTABLISHED:** a. (1) A Lt Colonel of Tanks, 4th Armored Division, Vicinity of MESSAG (90882).
(2) Commanding Officer, I & R Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment at MESSAG.
b. Members of French Underground at GUICHEN (912561), BAIN DE BRETAGNE (991237), BOURG DES COMPTES (975576), and MESSAG.
 3. **INFORMATION COLLECTED:** a. (1) From Lt Colonel of Tanks, 4th Armored Division - That his offer to assist Commanding Officer, 13th Infantry Regiment in the action at STE ANNE (860118) (See 3a (2) (a) below) had been declined.
(2) From I & R Platoon Commander, 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment at MESSAG.
(a) That Co "I", 13th Infantry Regiment (-), reinforced, then (approximately 061600 August '44) was engaging enemy force, estimated strength 1200 in vicinity of STE ANNE.
(b) That withdrawal from above engagement had been ordered by Commanding Officer, 13th Infantry Regiment.
(c) That Commanding Officer, 13th Infantry Regiment had received wound in arm in the above engagement.
b. The French Underground.
(1) German Force in the vicinity of BOURG DES COMPTES withdrew at 1900 hours on 5 August '44 (Verified to the extent that no forces were found by our reconnaissance to be occupying that area the afternoon of 6 August 1944).
(2) An enemy OP is operative in the vicinity of BOURG DES COMPTES (Discounted - Intensive reconnaissance in vicinity revealed nothing).
(3) That a sizeable force existed in the FORET DE TEILLAY (085165) (Discounted - Intensive reconnaissance revealed no enemy to be present).
- c. From Reconnaissance performed by this unit:
- (1) Zones 1 and 2 unoccupied by enemy forces.
 - (2) FORET DE TEILLAY is unoccupied by any enemy force.

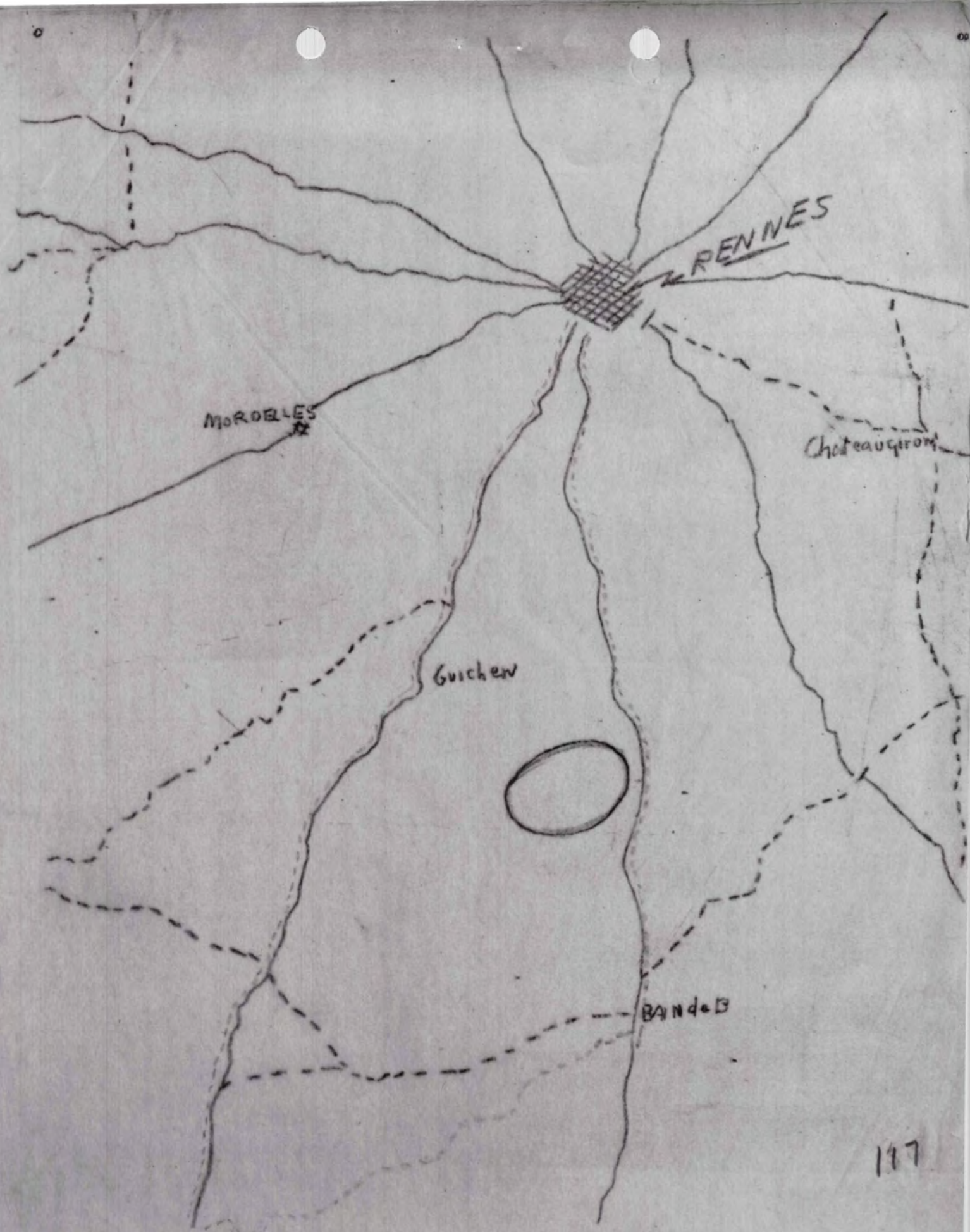
7 August '44

(3) No OP exists in area of BOURG DES COMPTES.

(4) An excellent OP for the VILLAINNE VALLEY exists at GUICHEN.
The OP is unoccupied but is well prepared for use.

4. OTHER MATTERS: Four (4) German Prisoners were captured by our Reconnaissance Units operating in Zone 1.

SPERDIN F GRAHAM, JR
Lt Colonel, Inf
Commanding



HEADQUARTERS 64TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 436, US Army
8 August 1944FIELD ORDER
UNNUMBERED

MAPS: FRANCE 1/250,000

1. a. ENEMY SITUATION

- (1) Continuing to resist at ST MALO, but not expected to hold out today.
- (2) Re-captured MORTAIN (Lost it again, see below). Employing elements of four (4) panzer divisions.
- (3) Reconnaissance and French report indicate possible concentration of one panzer and two infantry divisions in NANTES, could act as follows:
 - a. Against LAVAL
 - b. Against RENNES
 - c. Against 4th Armored Division lines of communication
 - d. Any combination of above.
- (4) Enemy ships docked at ST NAZAIRE

b. Friendly SITUATION

- (1) Re-captured MORTAIN (see above). 135 German Tanks destroyed by Thunderbolts and other means.
- (2) Pressing Germans at ST MALO (See above)
- (3) Leading elements of 6th Armored Division at Brest. Main body 49 miles north of LORIENT.
- (4) Fifth Armored Division at ANGERS on LOIRE RIVER
- (5) Fourth Armored Division at VARNES nearing LORIENT
- (6) XV Corps passed LAVAL nearing LEMANS
- (7) XX Corps became operative today on south flank of XV Corps. Contains at least one French armored division.
- (8) One bazooka with each rifle platoon throughout 8th Division.

2. MISSION:

- a. 8th Division may meet enemy attack on RENNES from south.

- (1) Obstacles to west
- (2) SEICHE RIVER may be crossed dry east of 0145
- (3) Good natural positions in this area

- b. Division may move to:

- (1) ST NAZAIRE - two days
- (2) NANTES - two days
- (3) LORIENT - three days
- (4) BREST - 4 days

3. The following training will be stressed, tactical situation permitted:

- (1) Drill, courtesy and saluting
- (2) Physical hardening
- (3) Sea on training for all members of crews.

4. Administrative - No change

5. C.P. CO 64th TD Bn - 058564

By Order of CO

MARLOW E. LEBRON
Capt, TA, S-3

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HEADQUARTERS 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

9 August 1944

MEMORANDUM:

TO : S-2, 8th Inf Div Arty
APO #8
U. S. Army

Map: France, 1/25,000, Sheet 25/10 SE, PLEURTIUT

1. Upon visit to positions of Co "C", 644th TD Bn 1000 - 1400 this date, following information was collected by writer (sources are indicated):

a. Information verified (may be accepted as fact): (1) One battalion (reported as 2d or 3d) has lost contact with 121st Regiment after a morning counter attack by the enemy. It is estimated as occupying a goose-egg 1000 yards across in the vicinity of 7507. Enemy elements are known to be south, east and north of it. It is receiving considerable light artillery and mortar fire. (Source: Co C, 644th TD Bn, from Regt'l CO).

(2) Co "C" elements are disposed with one (1) platoon (2d) with right flank infantry battalion and one (1) platoon (3d) with left flank battalion. 1st platoon is in reserve. All infantry battalions are committed. Latest position of platoons (1400): 2d - 7705; 3d - 768049. Platoons have made no contact, fired no rounds, are being held with a general mission in cover positions until tanks or em- placement targets are designated by infantry. Some mortar and 88 fire received. (single gun and two concentrations described as battery volleys). Sporadic rifle fire was received (1000 - 1400). No casualties to TD's. Infantry front line about six hundred (600) yards forward at 1400. (Source: observation by writer).

(3) Friendly artillery firing at least twenty (20) rounds for one from enemy. No counter battery observed. Mortar batteries at 767047 fired all morning with out counter battery. Enemy LMG's active in about four (4) positions only, firing inter- mittently. Other small arms fire very infrequently. Enemy artillery is firing only harrassing missions. No heavy artillery or coast guns fired between 1000 and 1400. No enemy AAA on MLR south of PLEURTIUT is operating. Our air OP is over front line. (Source: Observation by writer).

b. Unverified information: (1) Five(5) medium tanks in PLEURTIUT this morning or last night, of which three (3) were knocked out; may be SP guns (Source: CPL troops, front line troops).

(2) Seven (7) light or medium tanks in PLEURTIUT, one (1) on fire in main street at 1200 (Source: Front line infantry).

(3) Tank or SP gun on roving mission, direct & indirect during night and morning on forward slope S of PLEURTIUT. (Source: Front line infantry).

Memorandum: Cont'd

9 August 1944

(4) Deep concrete and earthwork emplacements in and four hundred (400) yards to South of PLEURTIUT. (Capt FREEMAN to Lt STEVENSON, 644th TD Bn; front line infantry).

(5) 4000 - 7000 troops in static positions, well dug in between PLEURTIUT front and DINARD -ST MALO shoreline (Source: CO, Co "C", 644th TD Bn).

(6) '88 fire coming from LE MINIHIC (7907) and from NW of PLEURTIUT line. (Writer's estimate; Co "C", 2d Platoon Leader; Platoon Leader of reserve Platoon of left flank rifle Co).

(7) House at 779061 is enemy OP and has AT or FA guns emplaced nearby. (83d Div Rcn Troop CO to 2d Platoon Ldr, Co "C", 644th TD Bn).

(8) Coast Artillery Gun is firing into friendly front lines. (Source: Front line infantry; unendorsed report from unidentified element of 121st Regiment to 2d Platoon Ldr, Co "C", 644th TD Bn).

For the Commanding Officer:

HARLOW F LENON
Captain, FA
S-3

SECRET

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HQ VIII CORPS
G-3 Section
9 August 1944

TO: CG 83 INF DIV CO 712 TK BN
CG 8 INF DIV CO 644 TD BN

Initials: RVG

TELETYPE

SECRET

OPN PRIORITY

EFFECTIVE 082400B CO C, 644 TD BN ATTACHED TO 83 INF DIV. PURSUANT TO VOCC
TUSA 712 TK BN WILL REMAIN UNDER PRESENT ATTACHMENT TO THE 90 INF DIV AND WILL
NOT REPEAT NOT BE ATTACHED TO THE 83 INF DIV.

MIDDLETON
CG VIII CORPS

INFO COPY TO:
Tr Movement
Journal

SECRET

Division Commanders Conference 0930 on 10 August 1944.

1. 4th Armored Rcn elements (strength unknown) in NANTERS.
2. We will continue anticipatory planning for attack from South.
3. Co "A" (less Platoon) and Co "B" returns to Bn control at Noon this date.
4. Rcn mission to DURVAL spoken about - the tanks will reconnoiter so as to arrive at DURVAL at 2230 and we so as to arrive there at 0600. Both reconnaissance elements will render reports at above times and return unless, in our case fog makes air activity impossible or for other reason. Air planes (Cubs) are reconnoitering 2/3 of distance to NANTERS. Negative information so far.
5. As part of anticipatory defense of RUNNERS planning the Engineers are preparing materials for Bridge Destruction and mine laying bridges at (93-44) (01-45) (03-44) (06-44) and (93-45) will be destroyed on order of Div Cmr.
6. Maj WILLIAMS, Assistant AT Officer will work with Arty in future. He will keep map of all guns viz - TD, AT and Arty with their fire possibilities indicated. He will at all times know Anti Mechanized dispositions.
7. Positions in area of CHANTIER and vicinity of (0147) are interesting to the Division Commander. We should be able to reach these positions in 30 and 50 minutes respectively with road priority.
8. B and A will be moved to new positions when ready. B will have indirect fire positions and A will stress being ready for rapid movement to meet tank thrusts.
9. Certain areas will be closed to all troops for purpose of inabling Arty to register. More on this later.
10. Lt Col GIBSON, G-2, directed reconnaissance of FORET DE RENNES this afternoon - enemy is believed in that area.

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 436, US Army
10 August 1944

SUBJECT: Report on Rcn of FORET DE RENNES

TO : CO, 644 TD Bn

1. Mission: To Rcn FORET DE RENNES and immediate vicinity to determine presence of germans in that area (see overlay attached)
 - a. Plan to company:
 1. To Rcn area by a system of dismounted patrols and to cover all passable roads by a patrol of one rcn section.
 2. CP put at MI*FORET (114617)
2. Action taken:
 - a. This plan carried out
 - b. 1. CO, Rcn Co made contact with Free French at LITRE, 114644 and at LOGE GAUDIER, 100598
 2. One Free Frenchman acted as guide for CO Rcn Co.
3. Information
 - a. From unit: area is clear
 - b. From French:
 1. All suspect enemy passing SE from FORET DE RENNES thru immediate vicinity CHATEAU D'ESCURES (122590)
 2. Various reports indicate flares (signals) are released and shots fired between 2300-0330 hrs (E) on some days. This action coincides with appearance of german planes over the area.
 3. These activities occur not only over area in question but also over FORET DE SEVAILLES and FORET DE CHEVRE.
 4. The French have not found germans in either their day or night patrols
 5. The French civilians have usual reports of creaking fences hammering on doors at dead of night and barking dogs.
4. Recommend:
 - a. Matter be dropped or (b) and entire infantry battalion go thru the forest arm in arm

/s/ Nelson C Works, Jr
Capt, FA
CommandingDistributionCG, 8th Inf Div Att G-2
Information copy to CG,
8th Inf Div Att AT officer

Date 18 August 1944

NO. FOR Pg 1

Map: France 1/50000 Sheets 5G3, 5G4, 5G5 and 5G6

1. a. Enemy forces estimated at 1500-5000 occupy DINARD (760130) and positions to South. Front lines generally 700080 - 755071 - 725065. Enemy positions fortified, artillery active.

b. Friendly front lines held by CT of 8th Div and elements of 82 Div are south of and parallel to those of the enemy. 3d Bn 121st Inf Div surrounded by enemy. Friendly artillery superiority and air mastery

2. a. On 15 Aug 44 the 8th Inf Div plus attached troops less CT 121 move to assembly positions shown on attached overlay.

b. The 644 TD Bn will move as part of the 8th Inf Div.

3. a. First march unit will leave present bivouac area at 0953 and following route "A" shown on attached overlay will cross IP at 1053 and enter assembly area at 1315.

b. Order of March

1- Fwd CP group and one Rcn Pln

2- Company "A" less 2d Pln

3- Company "B"

4- Rcn Co less elements provided for above.

c. Route of March to crossing of IP will be 10 miles per hour, thereafter speed will be 15 miles in the hour.

d. Distance between vehicles 75 yards. Between march units 2 1/2 minutes minutes.

e. Halt at 1200 for 10 minutes. Halt in place.

f. In accordance with 8th Div Memo "SOP for Motor Movements" drivers will be briefed on following subjects prior to move.

(1) No. and Cmor of March unit

(2) No. and Cmr of Serial

(3) The route

(4) Destination

(5) Location of IP

(6) Approx time when march unit will cross IP

(7) Rate of march (MPH)

(8) Interventricular distance

(9) Time and duration of halts

(10) Type of vehicle proceeding driver in column

g. Quarters parties from Co "A", "B", Fwd CP will report to CO, Rcn Co at Rcn Company CP at 0715 prepared to move.

h. Prior to departure each unit will be responsible for the establishment of liaison with the unit proceeding.

1. Movement of Rear CP descretion of Bn Ex O.

5. a. Radio net will open 0900

b. Time check at 0930

By order of Lt Col GRAHAM

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No. Page 1

Date 13 Aug 64

TO: CO Co "A" & "B"

1. Reconnoiter for and select direct fire positions for your companies (Co "A" will be less 2d Platoon) in the quarter circle shown on overlay. Submit overlay with positions and fields of fire shown. Do not occupy until order is given.

CO 644 TD Bn 1650
HFI Capt FA
S-3

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15 August 1944

13 August 1944 relieved 2nd Platoon attached to 2nd Battalion 121 Infantry at 762076. At 1500 C-10 was hit by 88mm and caused slight damage to vehicle - no casualties. Moved forward with Infantry and destroyed 20mm gun with 3" at 1830 at 765085 also sprayed hedges with .50 caliber-- Because of snipers harassing troops. This was done by C-11.

14 August 1944 moved forward with Infantry at 0930 at 761094 in support of tanks. Tanks advance through streets. TD's covered side streets at 764122.

15 August 1944 remained in town while Infantry went forward to take Peninsula. Peninsula surrendered at 1100. All enemy resistance ceased.

RAYMOND F. KILGALLEN
1st Lt, FA

1. On Friday August 11, 1944, 1700 my platoon was called to support an Infantry Company, who was pinned down by enemy Machine Gun and Mortar fire 100 yards north of (Tremereuc, France) on section commanded by Sgt John Friel under command of myself and S/Sgt Henry Mutz moved into position and fired (82) rounds of 3" H.E. at the pillboxes; destroying three pillboxes, 1 German wheel vehicle, and one observation post. At 2130 the same date at the same place the enemy threw a counter attack. The CO of the Infantry called for my platoon again. I again took up one section commanded by Sgt Marlan Sammon, and Sgt Walter McDonald, fired 55 rounds of H.E. into the enemy line and beat off the counter-attack.

2. On Saturday, August 12, 1944, 1800 South-east of PLEURTUIT, we were called on to flank the same Infantry Company on their left. They were still pinned down, and were moving across open terrain. I moved my platoon around in front of their lines. As we were proceeding along a long hedgerow, we over run all of those pillboxes and took 168 German prisoners.

3. On Sunday, August 13, 1944, 0930 hours North-east of PLEURTUIT, France, we observed two Pillboxes. One was a 20mm anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacement and a radio control station. One destroyer commanded by Sgt Walter McDonald fired 17 rounds of H.E. into those pillboxes, which destroyed the radio station and set the other pillbox on fire which turned out to be an ammunition dump. Later in the day prisoners were taken from one of the pillboxes. At 1500 the same date we advanced from north of PLEURTUIT to south of DINARD, France, without much opposition. With help of the Infantry Company we took around 200 more prisoners.

4. On Monday, August 14, 1944, at 1330 we rolled into DINARD. We were the first Tank Destroyers to enter DINARD. We moved through without much opposition. Company "A" 121st Infantry was pinned down by machine gun fire at the railroad station in DINARD. Again, they called on my unit to come to their rescue. One destroyer in command of Sgt Sammon stopped the fire and covered an Infantry officer while he took 55 prisoners. At 1700, the same date, we fired 10 rounds of AP and 10 rounds of HE at German fortification North-east of DINARD on an Island. No observation was observed to see what we destroyed. The break through of the 1st Bn 121st Infantry credit was given to my platoon by the Commanding Officer of that unit.

CHARLES E COATS
1st Lt, FA
3rd Platoon leader

Date 18 August 1944

NO. PG 2/3

TO: CO 644 TD Bn.

1. Mission: To Rcn route: MORLAIX - LANDIVISIAU - LANDERNEAU - LESNEVEN
 - a. Is LANDIVISIAU ours?
 - b. Is LANDERNEAU ours?
 - c. Is bridge over HALON R. at LANDERNEAU OK?

2. Action: Moved over route MORLAIX - LANDIVISIAU - LANDERNEAU - LESNEVEN.
 - a. Contact w/17 US Cav made at LANDERNEAU
 - b. Contact w/FFI at LANDERNEAU

3. Info:
 - a. See msg this date.
 - b. Answer to all questions: Yes
 - c. FFI strongly recommends outposting SW of LANDERNEAU 2 or 3 km to prevent german raid of reprisal on this place.
 - d. Other to follow.

4. Recommend outpost SW of LANDERNEAU as above
 - a. Can contact FFI at barracks at LANDERNEAU
Head (chef): Capt CASTEL

CO RCN Co 644 TD Bn 1734

NCW Capt FA

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY
644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

31 August 1944

SUBJECT: Report on Rcn 20 August 1944

TO : CO, 644th TD Bn

1. Mission: Rcn Area BOURG BLANC MILLIZAC ST RENAN PLOUDALMEZEAU TREGLOU.

- a. Mission: (1) Deny enemy use of area for rcn.
(2) To determine whether enemy in area.

- b. Requirements: (1) 2 circuits of area
(2) Cover internal road net also
(3) Move at 0700

2. Action

- a. Plan: (1) III Rcn Platoon to make circuit
(2) II Rcn Platoon in reserve at PLOUDALMEZEAU
(3) CO Rcn Company w/III platoon in observation
b. Left Co area N.S. of PLOUVIEN at 0700. Moved BOURG BLANC MILLIZAC

ST RENAN.

- (1) Nothing seen of enemy to ST RENAN
(2) At MILLIZAC found enemy O.P. (abandoned) in church,

cut wires.

(3) Made contact with enemy dismounted patrol of approximately 20 men, whose heaviest weapon was GEW 98K w/grenade. This occurred on outskirts of ST RENAN by road block on main road to BREST. Enemy was denied entry to ST RENAN and retired with at least one seriously wounded. We had no casualties. Action from approximately 1000. 1100 our force involved III Rcn Platoon CO Rcn Co and 5 EM.

c. III Platoon continued its Rcn of area, and II Rcn platoon was moved to Southern outskirts of ST RENAN to out post the three main roads leading from ST RENAN to German lines and to be in observation until II Rcn Platoon completed its mission.

- (1) 1st circuit was completed by III platoon about 1330
(2) 2nd circuit was completed by II platoon about 1830
(3) No further signs of enemy were found this day.

d. Other information:

(1) Enemy OP in trees near church and convent ST RENAN. Wires were cut by this unit

(2) Enemy search lights station (860033) near ST RENAN found, reported by French blown up about 192000 August 1944. This not investigated. Not in assigned area.

(3) Enemy Radar installation (830157) which had been dismantled on 6 August 44 by enemy. Investigated. This near PLOURIN. Buildings OK. All equipment gone. We cut all wires above ground.

(4) Reports from a French civilian (not FFI) on German defenses around BREST.

a. Wood (910025) German AA Btry 105 guns

b. Approximately 1 km North (857005) of PLOUZANE (852897) about 50 parachutists

c. A/T barricade on road from PLOUZANE to LA TRINITE (875800) No guns. A ditch. Perhaps mines. Approximately located (865995)

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- d. Germans at GUIVERS (SO HQ) No details.
- e. A/T ditch between GUIVERS - ST RENAN
- f. Gestapo men in civil clothes in ST RENAN 191800 Aug 44. No one know where they were.

3. Observation

a. French civilians in ST RENAN friendly, but afraid to show it because of their expectation of German return to the town in reprisal.

(1) Following action of II platoon, this unit, on evening of 19 August, the Germans killed one French male civilian at that scene.

(2) Also following that action, German threatened a French lady with a machine pistol trying to learn where II platoon had gone.

4. Recommendations

If it is desired to stop worries at ST RENAN, outpost it with a reinforced rifle Co plus one or two platoons of light tanks.

/s/ Nelson C Works
/t/ NELSON C WORKS
Captain, FA
Commanding Ron Co.

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

22 August 1944
APO 436

SUBJECT: Report on Reconnaissance of 22 August 1944

TO : CO, 644th TD Bn

1. Mission: This unit was ordered to Rcn area BOURG-BLANC-MILIZA-ST RENAN-PLOUDALMEZEAU-BOURG-BLANC, including ARGENTON-LAND-UNVEZ-KERSANT to determine presence of enemy in the area and to prevent activity of their patrols if contacted.

a. Rcn to begin at 1300 and not to end earlier than 1600

2. Action:

a. The order was received at 1250

b. The II Rcn platoon left the area at 1320, moving BOURG-BLANC-MILIZAC-ST RENAN, etc.

c. There was no reserve in hand. The I and II Rcn platoons being already engaged on a TD Rcn of Division zone.

d. About 1415 CO II Rcn platoon met elements of 29 Inf Div Rcn Troop and of 6 Armored Div. These personnel informed CO II Rcn ST RENAN under enemy gun fire of large calibre (Greater than 88-mm)

e. At this time 2 more armored cars were sent to MILIZAC to aid CO II Rcn platoon.

f. There was no fire or any other enemy action when II Rcn platoon was at ST RENAN about 1515 hrs.

g. The rest of the mission was carried out without event.

3. Information:

a. An EM (Sgt) of 29 E Div Rcn Tr. told CO II Rcn platoon that enemy patrols based on GUILERS move into ST RENAN as soon as ours leave. Source of information: French civilians.

b. Mission of 29 E Div Rcn Tr. includes observation of road going from ST RENAN to BREST. (Same Sgt).

c. Rangers went to PLOUARZEL plus 6 Armored Div elements evening of 21 August and found it clear. (Same Sgt).

d. CO II Rcn platoon thinks shelling from direction of BREST not Le Conquet. Rounds came in groups of three, sounded larger than 88.

4. Recommendations:

a. That this organization be relieved from this mission at once.

1. Commitment of troops on this mission in past actions indicates need for a reserve.

2. This mission prevents use of this for TD Rcn which is now necessary in the present situation

3. Elements of 29 E Div have appeared in that sector.

Nelson C Works, Jr
NELSON C WORKS, JR
Captain, FA
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

22 August 1944
APO 436

MAP REFERENCE FRANCE: 1:25,000 "PLEURTUIT" SHEET NO. 25/10 S.E.

At 0900 hours 12 August the first section was in position at (763058) with the mission of covering the movement of a platoon of tanks across open ground along the road from (767054) to (764063). The tanks were in support of the Second Battalion 121 Infantry Regiment and they jumped off at 0900 hours under concealment of mortar smoke on their right flank. During the movement of the tanks no enemy fire, other than small arms, was drawn, and the only target offered the TD's was an enemy C.P. in one of the houses at (763067). C-15 fired approximately 10 rds, H.E. into this house with destruction effecting setting the house afire. This firing was done at approximately 0910 hours. At 0920 hours the section was ordered to move forward and join the tanks. Platoon leader and destroyer commander (C-16) reconnoitered a suitable route on foot as far as the houses at (763059). Destroyer commander was sent back to bring the M-10's forward to the houses by the route selected while the platoon leader located the cleared road block at (765061) through which the tanks had passed and through which the TD's must pass to join the tanks. Immediately upon getting into his M-10 this destroyer commander was wounded and rendered unconscious by enemy mortar fire before he had outlined the platoon leader's order to bring the section forward. Lacking orders, destroyer commander C-15, second in command of the section, withdrew the section to cover positions in the vicinity (762053). Upon completing the assigned rendezvous at the houses and waited for the section to join him there. After what seemed to be an undue delay he contacted the infantry battalion C.P. using an infantry mortar O.P. telephone and requested that the C.P. order the section forward to his location by radio. Approximately 15 minutes later second in command of the section brought the section to the platoon leader in compliance with the radio order which he had just received. (NOTE: The infantry commander, having no knowledge of the injury of the destroyer commander (C-16) and the resulting delay of the TD's, requested relief of the TD platoon leader on the grounds that he had not complied with the order to displace forward and join the tanks; however, when the situation made personal liaison between the TD commander and the infantry commander possible, and the reasons for the delay could be explained the request for the TD Commander's release was countermanded).

The first section TD's joined the tanks at (764063) at approximately 1130 hours taking position on line and on the right flank of the infantry forward elements (F and E Companies) and in front of "G" company who had the mission of right flank security. "G" company personnel pointed out hedgerows occupied by enemy machine gunners to the TD commander a few moments after the arrival of the TD's, and C-15 and C-16 fired approximately 200 rds. caliber .50 machine gun into these hedgerow. Infantrymen also pointed out houses to the direct front and right front of the TD positions known to be occupied by the enemy. C-15 fired approximately 20 rds, H.E. into these houses with destruction on the houses and setting off the enemy ammunition dump. Explosions from this dump continued for 20 minutes after C-15 ceased firing.

[REDACTED]

At 1230 hrs the platoon leader called the infantry battalion C.P.; using infantry wire communication, and requested that the second section be relieved of their mission (static position at (774057) and be ordered to join the first section as soon as possible, using the same route which the tanks had taken. He further requested that this section be given screening smoke identical to that which the tanks had had. The infantry acknowledged this request. However, when the second section moved across the open ground at 1300 hrs, no smoke was laid down for their concealment.

The second section joined the first section at 1310 hrs and the platoon leader assigned them sectors to the right flank and right front of our line. No fire was drawn by the infantry, the tanks, or the TD's after 1310 hrs. At 1400 hrs the platoon leader was advised by the adjacent infantry company commander that the tanks and the infantry would jump off at 1430 hrs, their objective being the high ground at (763079). The mission given TD's was to follow the tanks, supporting them by fire during this movement.

At 1430 hrs the infantry - tanks - TD Team jumped off, moving cross country and reached their objective at 1600 hrs. During this move resistance was negligible, the infantry sustained extremely light casualties, and no targets were offered to the TD's.

The infantry, the tanks, and the TD's remained in this location for the night, and the infantry battalion commander joined us and established his C.P. at (762075). His orders were that there would be no further movement of tanks or TD's that day although the TD platoon leader asked permission to draw his M-10 into position offering greater cover for the night's bivouac. This request was not granted.

During the night the TD commander and members of the crew of C-15 heard movement of enemy track-laying vehicles (later identified as self-propelled 88's) and clearly heard the movement of these vehicles being directed by voice by enemy personnel. The location of this activity was determined to be in the vicinity of the houses at (761082). These houses were brought under observation at daybreak 13 August, and at 0600 hrs crew members of C-15 were able to pick out an enemy tank or similar vehicle, well camouflaged in the suspected location. The TD platoon leader ordered the destroyer commander C-15 to load and lay his 3" gun on this target. He then contacted the infantry battalion commander, informed him of the situation and requested permission to put fire upon this target immediately. This request was refused by the infantry commander who explained that he was planning an attack at 1000 hrs and that he did not wish to disclose our location or cause enemy counter-fire to be brought upon our position which was shared by his troops. The infantry commander ordered the TD Commander to withhold all fire until 0959 hours and to cease firing at 1002 hours. This order was passed down to the destroyer commanders C-15, C-16 and C-18, all of whom had had camouflaged enemy vehicle activity under observation and in their sights since daylight.

[REDACTED]

At 0730 hours with a previous warning the tank platoon, making no effort to maintain quiet or secrecy, withdrew from their positions and moved in column towards the rear. The TD commander immediately contacted the infantry battalion C.P. and asked the reason for the withdrawal. He was informed that the tanks were being relieved by another tank platoon and that this withdrawal had been ordered accomplished prior to 0600 hour, for reasons of secrecy and security of the position. The TD commander has not received an explanation for this poorly planned and badly timed tank withdrawal, to date. The TD commander told the infantry commander that in his opinion the movement of the tanks had attracted so much attention to the position that our location was no longer a secret to the enemy and he again requested permission to fire upon the targets which he had under observation. The infantry commander instructed the TD commander to reconnoiter positions safely removed from his troops, from which these targets could be fired upon. The TD commander accompanied by acting destroyer commander (C-16) made the reconnaissance and found that he could not fire upon these targets from any positions other than those which he already occupied. He reported this to the infantry commander and again was given the order to with-hold his fire until 0959 hours. He caused C-16 to move approximately 10 yards, so that he would have under observation the target on which C-15 had been laid for several hours.

At 0930 hours C-15 was fired upon and directly hit with 2 rounds of enemy 88 fire. The first round hit the upper rear edge of the turret setting off the 3 inch ammo and knocking off part of the counter-balance. One man, the driver escaped alive, suffering from severe shock, concussion, and third degree burns over his entire body. A fire fighting detail and a detail of medical personnel for evacuation of the remaining other members of C-15 was immediately organized. However, due to the exploding ammo and the intensity of the flames, it was impossible to extinguish the fire or evacuate the remaining three members of the crew.

Destroyer commander C-18 observed the muzzle-blast of the enemy gun as it fired upon C-15. He asked for and was granted permission by the TD commander to fire upon this target. C-18 then fired 48 rounds mixed APC and HE into this target. A few minutes later we received radio confirmation from the third platoon Company "C" 644 TD Bn, operating approximately 1 mile away, on our left flank that the tank upon which we were firing had received many hits and was in flames. (The TD platoon leader later identified this target as self-propelled short barrelled 88mm on Mark IV chassis).

At 0959 hours, acting destroyer commander C-16 opened fire on his target as ordered firing 12 rds HE, most of which had effect upon the target, disabling the gun and killing the crew. Infantry observers in the immediate vicinity of the enemy tank reported that our fire upon this target has been effective, by telephone to the infantry battalion C.P. This information was relayed to the TD Commander (TD platoon leader later identified this target as self-propelled 75mm assault gun "STURMGESCHUTTS" 40).

At 1030 hours destroyer commander C-18 observed movement of an enemy vehicle in his sector, he requested and was given permission to fire upon this target by the TD Commander. The TD Commander first obtained "Troops safety" clearance from the infantry commander. 2 rds APC and 6 rds HE were fired into this target and the target was clearly seen to be in flames by the TD Commander (this target was later identified by the TD platoon leader to be PZK IV, mounting long barrelled 75mm gun).

While firing, C-16 received one direct hit with enemy AP ammo in the left fuel tank and the platoon leader ordered the acting destroyer commander to withdraw to a covered position. At 1035 hrs TD Commander requested relief of the attachment and mission of his platoon. Permission was granted, and the platoon retained the positions held by the remaining 2 destroyers, C-17 and C-18 until physically relieved at 1130 hrs, by the 1st platoon, Co C, 644 TD Bn.

COMPANY "C" 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

25 August 1944

Capture of PAUL R STEVENSON

0600 started out on reconnaissance for positions for 2nd Platoon Destroyers accompanied by S/Sgt Bonacci. Enroute to prospective positions, they arrived at (app) coord. 966-049 (France 1/25,000) when they met a patrol. (Sgt Bonacci's statement) "We saw men against a hedge row whom we assumed to be American soldiers. We approached them to ask them questions concerning the terrain. One who was sitting, stood up and looking close into Lt STEVENSON'S face, suddenly answered him in German and grabbed him. Another started toward me. I pulled my pistol and fired two rounds into his stomach, then emptied my magazine into the group, then I escaped. As I headed back I met an American patrol who being on a mission refused to assist me so I went to the 2nd Bn CP and reported the event, then I returned to my platoon and arrived at 0800 (app)"

George A Bonacci
S/Sgt GEORGE A BONACCI

As related to : A DAVIS
2nd Lt, FA
Exec Co "C"

/s/ E B Geforos
E B GEFOROS
Capt, FA
Cmdg Co "C"