

HEADQUARTERS, 644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 230
US Army
4 Jan 45

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After/After Action Report

To: Adjutant General,
Washington, DC,
(Tara Channels)

1 Dec 44 - The 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, less Company "B", and with Company "C", 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, continued in support of the 121st Infantry Regiment in attacking in the KLEINHAU-BRANDENBERG area. Company "B", attached to 13th Infantry Regiment, continued direct support and indirect fire missions. An advanced Command Post was established in HURTGEN 042355 to further the maintenance of communications. Captain WM P BYE, Commanding Officer, Company "A", wounded by shell and was evacuated. 1st Lt CLARENCE STEVES assumed command of Company "A".

2 Dec 44 - Attachments as follows: 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, less Companies "B" and "C", and with Company "C", 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, was attached to 8th Infantry Division Artillery. Company "B", 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to 13th Infantry Regiment. Company "C", 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to 121st Infantry Regiment. Mission of company "A": (1) To provide anti-armor defense of the KLEINHAU area, employing one platoon for this mission, (2) To provide anti-armor defense for the Division with special attention to the Southeast. 1st Platoon Reconnaissance Company, attached to 121st Infantry Regiment to relieve elements of the 46th Infantry Regiment in its zone of action, northeast of KLEINHAU, with mission of maintaining contact between the 2d and 3d Battalions of 121st Infantry Regiment. Two positions were dug for destroyers in the vicinity of KLEINHAU from which direct fire could be delivered into GROSSHAU; these positions were never occupied. Company "C", 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion, to support arty by indirect fire.

3 Dec 44 - BRANDENBERG taken by CG'R' of 5th Armored Division. Company "C" moved two platoons to positions of high ground (056355), Northwest of and overlooking BRANDENBERG. One (1) destroyer, in darkness, ran over a pile of box mines at (056355) which the Engineers had removed and stacked. Destroyer was not recoverable. Captain JAMES C WILLIAMS assumed command of company "A".

4 Dec 44 - company "A" continued mission with two platoons in HURTGEN, one platoon supporting KLEINHAU garrison. Company "C" continued mission with two platoons in the vicinity of BRANDENBERG (056355), one platoon in HURTGEN. Company "B" continued in support of 13th Infantry Regiment; one platoon in reserve, firing indirect. Company "C", 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion, remained in indirect fire positions and fired harassing and interdiction missions.

5 Dec 44 - Commanding Officer, Company "B", wounded in mine explosion, sent to rear for rest and medical attention until released by Surgeon - 1st Lt JOSEPH J ENNEKING assumed command of Company "B". BERGSTEIN seized by CG'R' of 5th Armored Division. Company "A" (- one platoon) moved into BERGSTEIN after dark to strengthen anti-armor defense of the town. Heavy artillery fire falling in BERGSTEIN since CG'R' moved in. Other dispositions no change.

6 Dec 44 - BERGSTEIN counter-attacked several times by Germans. Company "A" destroyers destroyed one SP gun and

inflicted casualties on enemy in these attacks. All counter-attacks repulsed. Artillery fire in BERGSTEIN still heavy.

7 Dec 44 - Reconnaissance with 121st Infantry Regiment relieved to Battalion. Counter-attacks and heavy artillery fire continue on BERGSTEIN. Company "A" destroyed one SP gun and one tank in helping to repulse these almost desperate German efforts to retake BERGSTEIN.

8 Dec 44 - Company "A" (- platoon) moved from BERGSTEIN to assembly area at 0530. Heavy artillery fire still falling in BERGSTEIN. Company "A" lost one destroyer in BERGSTEIN. Received orders attaching the Battalion (- Company "B" and the Reconnaissance Platoon attached to Company "B") to 2d Infantry Division - effective 11 December 1944.

Battalion Commanding Officer, with S-3, left for Headquarters, 2d Infantry Division, at St Vith, Belgium.

9 Dec 44 - Battalion Commanding Officer and S-3 returned to Battalion. Plans for move to SOURBRODT, on 11 December 1944, in accordance with 2d Division orders, completed.

10 Dec 44 - 817th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed), relieved 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP) (- company "B"), moved to assembly area to prepare for move to SOURBRODT on 11 December 1944.

11 Dec 44 - Move to SOURBRODT completed without incident at 1745. Roads were covered with snow and weather was cold - no enemy interference. Distance - approximately 50 miles.

12 Dec 44 - Company "A" attached to 9th Infantry Regiment. Moved to Company assembly area, closing by dark.

Company "C" attached to 38th Infantry Regiment - plans to move forward to assembly area on order.

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-) attached to 2d Division Artillery.

13 Dec 44 - Division attack begun - slow progress over difficult, snow-covered, mined terrain.

no change in Battalion dispositions.

14 Dec 44 - Battalion Forward CP moved to ROCHERATH (977045). Battalion Rear CP remained at SOURBRODT. Company "A", attached to 9th Infantry, supported them in attack which, on 14 December, had reached coordinates (011125).

Forward CP attacked by planes (Four bombs dropped).

15 Dec 44 - Triangular road junction in the vicinity of coordinates (011125) was occupied by 9th Infantry. Company "C" still supporting 38th Infantry Regiment and Company "A", the 9th Infantry. Captain WIGGENHORN resumed command of Co "B".

16 Dec 44 - Company "C" Command Post established in ROCHERATH. 1st Platoon, Company "C" located at coordinates (989079). 2d Platoon, Company "C", located at coordinates (995104). 3d Platoon, Company "C", with company Command Post in ROCHERATH.

Liaison Officer No 1, 1st Lt JOSEPH M OWEN, wounded by shell fragment and evacuated. Companies "A" and "C" released to Bn, on 17th

17 Dec 44 - Heavy armor attack by enemy reported SE of BULLINGEN. One Reconnaissance Platoon sent to establish and maintain contact with the enemy tanks, was surrounded in the town of BULLINGEN and is presumed to have been captured, except for 2d section, which

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broke from encirclement. 1st Platoon, Company "C", moved to vicinity of WIRTZFELD and met German Panzer attack about 1000 yards south of the town. This platoon destroyed four tanks and a half-track and stopped the German attack on that town.

Company "A" ordered to move to WIRTZFELD and arrived just as the action was ending with two platoons. Commanding Officer, Company "A", was wounded by shell fire and evacuated. 1st Lt CLARENCE STEVES assumed command and was ordered to provide anti-armor defense for WIRTZFELD, relieving the 1st Platoon of Company "C" without delay. Commanding Officer, Company "C", was then ordered to provide anti-armor defense for ROCHERATH-KRINKELT area. The Forward CP moved to WIRTZFELD. Commanding Officer, 38th Infantry Regiment, assumed responsibility for defense of KRINKELT-ROCHERATH and the 9th Infantry secured WIRTZFELD. Artillery fire was heavy throughout the area and the requirement of withdrawing from contact on short notice, under heavy fire and with the communications damaged as they were, to meet an attack delivered about 10,000 yards behind the Division combat elements was extremely difficult. The picture was further complicated by the fact that the 99th Infantry Division which had been literally overrun by the German Panzers was attempting to move through the 2d Infantry Division to an assembly area at EISENBORN. However, the attack was met and stopped in the sector in the new position.

Captain HARRY L GODSHALL, JR, assumed command of company "A". At about 2030 elements of the attacking Germans pierced the line defending ROCHERATH-KRINKELT and succeeded in entering the town at the point where Reconnaissance Company CP was located. The Reconnaissance Company CP group, fighting under command of Commanding Officer, Reconnaissance Company, organized the CP and were defending successfully at midnight.

18 Dec 44 - Reconnaissance Company CP group fought off attacks until about noon. During this action they destroyed one tank, damaged another and accounted for about 20 casualties among the attackers. Reconnaissance Company lost all vehicles open to the attackers' view but suffered only minor personal casualties. Company "C" of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed), was moved up and attached to the 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The commanding Officer, 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was made responsible for AT defenses in the WIRTZFELD area. Three guns of the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed) were attached to the 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion. 2d Platoon of Company "A" did not come under the control of Commanding Officer, Company "A", as planned, and was, therefore, attached to Company "C" in KRINKELT where the platoon arrived after withdrawing to that point with the infantry.

Repeated Panzer attacks to take KRINKELT and ROCHERATH were repulsed.

19 Dec 44 - Fighting around ROCHERATH-KRINKELT continued. Medium artillery fire fell throughout the Division sector. Commanding Officer, 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attended conference and was advised by Assistant Division Commander of plan to withdraw to EISENBORN Ridge that night. Plans were made accordingly. The local action in KRINKELT-ROCHERATH resulted in destruction of 17 tanks, 2 damaged, and two SP guns knocked out by the 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The withdrawal to the new line (about 5000 yards west) was accomplished without undue difficulty - enemy artillery fire was moderate - the town of WIRTZFELD being set on fire. Company "C" covered the withdrawal from ROCHERATH-KRINKELT as rear guard and Company "A" covered the withdrawal from WIRTZFELD as rear guard.

20 Dec 44 - Prior to daylight, one platoon of company "C" moved into positions on high ground east of BERG (939051)(939063) in support of 38th Infantry Regiment. Company "A" moved into reserve in EISENBORN. Battalion Forward Command Post established at BERG. 1st Platoon, Company "A", moved to high ground east of EISENBORN (938064) to provide anti-armor protection from the east. Continuous

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were received via 99th Infantry Division. ~~...~~ in anticipation of heavy shelling. The 2d Infantry Division Commander, Major General ROBERTSON, telephoned the Commanding Officer of the 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion *commending the unit.*

21 Dec 44 - Various reports of tanks in adjacent sectors - no determined action anywhere in 2d Division sector - moderate shelling. This Battalion ordered to be able to act in adjacent as well as own

22 Dec 44 - Attack by tanks and infantry in sector on our right. 1st Infantry Division repulsed - Light to moderate artillery fire into 2d Division sector. No major changes. Company "C" into reserve. Company "A" - Two platoons in position, one platoon in reserve.

23 Dec 44 - Company "B" returned to Bn control and moved to SOURBRODT. Company "B" attached to 1st Infantry Division. One platoon firing indirect. One platoon of Company "C" sent to the rear CP for maintenance, modification and repair; platoons will be rotated. The 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion received a commendation from General HODGES, Commanding the First United States Army, for performance in recent action against the counter-attacking German Panzers. Company "A" reconnoitered for positions in vicinity of and to the east of EISENBORN to prevent any enemy armor penetration. Firing positions were reconnoitered in vicinity of WEYWERTZ and NIDRUM for occupation in event of armored attack from south.

24 Dec 44 - Received order to carry gas masks as part of uniform. Company "B" and 2d Ren Platoon completed plans for move to 16th Infantry Regiment area (attached to 1st Infantry Division). Tanks reported at various points in front of sector - no action.

25 Dec 44 - Company "B" moved with 2d Ren Platoon attached, to 16th Infantry Regiment area. Otherwise, no change.

26 Dec 44 - Continued reconnaissance and improvement of positions.

27 Dec 44 - no change.

28 Dec 44 - Repulsed attack during pre-dawn hours - no tanks. Three (3) star shells (illuminating) fired on call of infantry 0600. Company "B" destroyed one enemy vehicle and two German occupied houses by indirect fire.

29 Dec 44 - Forward CP moved to EISENBORN. Flares and light artillery in area.

30 Dec 44 - 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion will assist the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion by giving instructions on azimuth indicator and indirect fire. One platoon of Company "C" moved into indirect fire position.

31 Dec 44 - Sporadic small arms fire in forward sector - no attack. Otherwise, no change.

For the Commanding Officer:

LESLIE P MCDUGAL
Captain, FA
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