

HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 45, U. S. ARMY

11 February 1945

SUBJECT: Battle Report

TO : Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, U.S. Army (thru Channels)

MAP : FRANCE 1/100,000, WISSENBURG, Sheet V-2 and SAARBRUCKEN, Sheet V-1.

PERIOD COVERED: 01 January 1945 to 31 January 1945.

PART I

SUMMARY

1. Operations:

The new year started with a German attack early in the morning of the 1st January 1945 on a front BITCHE-DAMBACH. Immediate penetration of our lines was stopped just north of PHILLIPPSBOURG. By the 5th of January our front in this sector had witherawn to a general line, SARREINSBERG - BAERENTHAL - PHILLIPPSBOURG - DAMBACH. By 20 December our line was established at SARREINSBERG - REIPERTSWEILLER - ROEMBACH, which is still in effect at the end of the period.

This Battalion, attached to 75th Infantry Division, carried on Anti-Tank defense, assault fire and artillery missions during period. "B" Company, this unit, was attached to Task Force HUELSON for period 22 December 1944 to 2 January 1945. 2 platoons of "C" Company and 1 platoon Reconnaissance Company, both from 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion, were attached to this Battalion from 5 January 1945 to 16 January 1945. Battalion expended 5,164 rounds of ammunition during the period. Battalion lost 3 M-10s and 2-1/4 ton trucks during period. Battalion destroyed 2 tanks, 1 field piece and 2 flakwagons during period.

2. Intelligence:

The enemy used approximately 100 tanks and GPs against us during period. Elements of 1st SS Pz Div, 2d SS Pz Div and 6th SS Pz Div were contacted, the last named being most aggressive and best equipped.

3. Miscellaneous:

This Battalion received 8 M-36s during period. A six-day Battalion school was conducted in driving, maintenance and gunnery of the M-36. The M-36 has been used only in an artillery role to date, within this unit.

PART II

DAY BY DAY RECORD OF EVENTS

On the 61st of the year of 1945 the enemy attacked along the SARREINSBERG - REIPERTSWEILLER - BAERENTHAL - PHILLIPPSBOURG - DAMBACH line. "B" Company attached to the Task Force HUELSON generally covering and providing Anti-Tank Defense along the front extending from SARREINSBERG to PHILLIPPSBOURG round themselves at the end of the day out of contact with 2 platoons, one in the SARREINSBERG sector and one in the PHILLIPPSBOURG sector. The company CP and one platoon located in BAERENTHAL was overrun by enemy Infantry in the afternoon and after battling the Germans for 2 hours, made a run through the gauntlet of enemy small arms fire and set up in new CP vicinity of REIPERTSWEILLER.

During the night of the 61st December - 01st January one TD of "C" Company located in the north end of DAMBACH fired at estimated company of enemy infantry, some within range of 50 feet, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Also 2 other guns in the DAMBACH area fired at enemy personnel in houses in the north end of town, chasing them from house to house. 41 HE and 40 APCBDF were fired during the two spots. At 1800A "C" Company pulled guns from NIEDERBRONN and 20 guns in indirect fire positions vicinity of 043305, 3 of which moved to block the PHILLIPPSBOURG - NIEDERBRONN les BAINS road from any enemy armored thrust. During the period "C" Company's indirect fire battery fired 150 rounds HE, interdictory and harassing fire on enemy supply routes. "A" Company moved 3 TDS to REIPERTSWEILLER, in AT reserve positions where they were available to reinforce any part of the front. During the period indirect fire

battery vicinity of 142277 fired 156 rounds, harassing and interdictory fire on enemy road junction and fortifications. One platoon of Rcn Company was rushed to the PHILLIPSBURG area to keep us posted on the latest situation, while the remainder maintained CPs in the NÖTHWEILER - BOBENTHAL sector in GERMANY. At 1300A the Battalion CP (advance group) moved to NIDERBRONN les BAINS to better control the situation which was more or less confused.

On the 2nd of January "A" Company moved 3 guns to the BAERENTHAL - ZINSWILLER road and established road blocks. The indirect fire battery vicinity 045453 fired 156 rounds HE and 3 rounds Smoke in harassing enemy supply routes. At 1200A "B" Company released from control of TASK FORCE HUDELSON and reverted to Battalion control, and at 1300A one gun moved from REIPERTSWILLER to WILDENGUTH to cover enemy tank activity in that sector. The 1st platoon vicinity SARREINSBERG was still cut off by enemy troops who had established road blocks on roads leading up to their position. Guns were out of fuel but every effort was being made to get supplies through to them. "C" Company's 4 guns remained in the PHILLIPSBURG area in support of the 275th Inf Regt, and 4 more continued in support of the 157th Inf in the DAMBACH sector. At 1030A one gun moving from antitank position vicinity of MATSALL, hit a mine causing damage to the tracks but no personnel were injured. "A" Company did not move any gun on the 3rd of January. "B" Company moved 3 guns up to block the REIPERTSWILLER - LICHTENBERG road and to provide antitank defense in that sector. One TD in WILDENGUTH was cut off by enemy troops who had cut the road behind them but the reported situation well under control (reported by radio). The 3rd of January proved to be "C" Company's unlucky day. One TD moving into PHILLIPSBURG at 1000A was hit by enemy antitank gun, and at 1300A another M-10 was knocked out by enemy tank fire in approximately the same vicinity. Both vehicles burned and 2 casualties were incurred. Another TD, which had moved into the town earlier in the morning, had not been heard from and was later reported to have been destroyed by the crew before their capture. Meanwhile enemy troops had infiltrated through our infantry and had succeeded in cutting the only road into the town between the remaining M-10 and the town of PHILLIPSBURG. The TD crew realizing the situation, moved up and engaged the enemy with its 3" gun. The enemy took cover in the ditches along the road, but the destroyer crew seeing that direct fire was useless, fired HE at the trees and telephone poles above the heads of the krauts. The aerial bursts obtained by this unorthodox but effective fire killed or wounded most of the krauts and eliminated a German bazooka crew which had sent one shell over the destroyer previously, missing it by inches. Rcn Company lost 2 peeps in PHILLIPSBURG by enemy shell fire while attempting to maintain liaison with the infantry but suffered no casualties. At 1600A Rcn Company was given the mission of contacting cut-off troops in the town of WILDENGUTH by G-3 45th Inf Div but mission was later called off by the infantry commander in that sector.

On the 04th supplies and fuel got through to the 1st platoon of "B" Company cut off vicinity of SARREINSBERG, and they reported knocking out an enemy MK IV tank that same morning. With one round of APCBDF. The platoon had been under sniper and artillery fire continuously and had lost their platoon leader and one man by enemy shell fire.

At 1130A an enemy mortar landed on one of "C" Company's M-10s in PHILLIPSBURG, breaking the turret lock, which was repaired immediately.

For detailed account of the 1st and 2d platoons, "B" Company during the enemy attack see ANNEX "C".

During the night of the 05th 4 TDs of "A" Company providing AT defense in the REIPERTSWILLER sector in support of the 314th Inf, took 7 Krauts PWs who attempted to infiltrate through our lines vic of the town. 3 guns continued blocking the BAERENTHAL - ZINSWILLER road. At 0500A 4 guns 1st platoon "B" Company relieved by the 2d platoon "B" Company, continued to provide antitank defense in the SARREINSBERG sector in support of the 179th Infantry Regiment. "C" Company's 3 guns blocking the PHILLIPSBURG-NIDERBRONN les BAINS remained unchanged but at 1800A 2 guns vicinity of DAMBACH and 2 vicinity of JEMBACH were relieved of AT mission by "C" Company 813th TD Battalion, attached to this Headquarters, and moved to assembly area vicinity of GUMBRECHTSFELD. Reconnaissance Company maintained liaison between TDs and various elements of its own supporting. At 1200A, on order of G-3, 45th Infantry Division, Reconnaissance Company established 3 motorized patrols to reconnoiter REIPERTSWILLER - NÖTHWEILER - LICHTENBERG - WITTENAU, and INGWILLER road not works with the mission of keeping the roads open and clear of enemy infiltration.

At 1700A 06 January 3 guns of "A" Company on the BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER road were relieved by 2 TDs of "C" Company and moved to AT reserve positions in ZINSWILLER. 2 TDs of "B" Company supporting advance of the 180th Infantry Regiment moved to vicinity of 779475, and 760387 respectively. A third TD, in supporting role, remained in WILDENGUTH. 4 TDs remained in reserve vicinity

Battle Report for Period 01 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 (continued).

of ~~FUEBER~~ and ~~ROSTEIG~~, providing a defense in that sector. The relief of "A" Company's TDs on the road south of BAERENTHAL proved to be the only change for "C" Company. Reconnaissance Company continued patrolling of same road net-work in 45th Division sector and during the period took 2 PWs on the BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER road. 3 guns of "C" Company 813th TD supporting 157th Infantry Regiment in the DAMEBACH area and 4 guns supporting 36th Engineers (C) Battalion, with 2 guns south of LEMBACH and 2 vicinity of PFAFFENBRONN.

Under cover of darkness on the 7th of January "A" Company relieved TDs of "B" Company in the 180th Infantry Regiment sector. 2 guns moved to vicinity of 756386 and 2 guns to 782350. During the period the 3d M-10 lost in the PHILLIPSBURG battle was found burned with no holes in it, indicating that the crew had destroyed it before being captured. Also a knocked out Flakwagon was found on the road nearby with a 3" hole in it. Reconnaissance Company continued mounted patrols to keep the roads open.

From 08 January to 10 January there was almost no change in dispositions. Companies executed reliefs within themselves and all positions received heavy enemy artillery fire of all types. On January 9th one TD of "B" Company vicinity of SARREINSBERG fired 23 rounds HE, 1 round APCBDF, and 1 round HE T-105 at enemy house emplacements and concrete installations vicinity 743420. Infantry elements reported good effect. Reconnaissance Company continued road patrols in the 180th and 179th Infantry Regiment sectors with areas increased to include the towns of WINGEN, KOHLHUTTE, HUHNERSCHERR, and COLONNE. Two more PWs were picked up on the BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER road. On the 10th of January 2 TDs of "C" Company moved to LAMPERSTOCK to support 36th Engineers (C) Battalion and provide an AT reserve.

The 10th of January "A" Company moved 2 TDs to 755385, 1 to 778385, and one to 782378 to support 180th Infantry Regiment. "B" Company continued in support of the 179th Infantry Regiment with 4 guns vicinity of SARREINSBERG and 4 guns vicinity of COLONNE. 2 TDs remained in AT reserve vicinity of INGWILLER. At 2400A one of "C" Company's three TDs in the PHILLIPSBURG sector, supporting the 274th Infantry Regiment, was hit by kraut artillery fire causing damage to the turret. Reconnaissance Company continued active patrols in the 179th and 180th Infantry Regiment sectors and reconnoitered for gun positions. "C" Company 813th TD (minus 1 platoon) remained attached to this Headquarters and provided AT defense in the 157th Infantry Regiment and 36th Engineers (C) Battalion sectors. On the 11th of January the only change was the movement of "B" Company's guns; two moved to ALTHORN to support forward Infantry elements and 2 moved from INGWILLER to ROSTEIG. At 2100A Reconnaissance Company, in accordance with instructions from G-3 45th Infantry Division, established an outpost line from REIPERTSWILLER along road to 82 grid line (approximately 2,00 yards). Constant patrols were maintained between outposts to prevent enemy infiltration in that area.

On the 12th of the month "A" Company established a 3-gun indirect fire battery vicinity of ZINSWILLER and tied in with the 171st FA Battalion. "C" Company continued blocking the PHILLIPSBURG-NIEDERBRONN les BAINS and the BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER roads in support of the 274th Infantry Regiment and 275th Infantry Regiment respectively. Dispositions of remaining TDs remained unchanged. At 1630A a Reconnaissance Company patrol investigating a bridge vicinity of 824371 surprised two squareheads, killing one and capturing the other. On January 13th all was quiet but on the 14th "A" Company's battery vicinity of ZINSWILLER created some confusion on enemy supply routes vicinity of BAERENTHAL with harassing fire, expending 72 rounds HE and 10 rounds smoke, including BP registration. Not to be outdone, "B" Company established an indirect fire battery vicinity of ROSTEIG and further harassed the enemy with 105 rounds HE in EP registration and interdictory fires along enemy field road vicinity of MOUTERHOUSE. At 2200A Reconnaissance Company pulled out outpost line and moved to assembly area vicinity of WIMMENAU to support 157th Infantry Regiment. "B" Company continued blocking BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER road with 2 guns and the PHILLIPSBURG-NIEDERBRONN les BAINS road with 3 guns. On January 14th Battalion G moved from ZUTZENDORF to WEINBOURG.

On January 15th "A" Company's battery threw 137 rounds HE high velocity shells into BAERENTHAL and surrounding vicinity and "B" Company fired a total of 140 rounds in harassing fire missions along road leading into MOUTERHOUSE and surrounding enemy positions. "C" Company continued same mission, and Reconnaissance Company moved from WIMMENAU to INGWILLER where they remained in 45th Infantry Division reserve. At 2200A 16th January Reconnaissance Company established another outpost line from REIPERTSWILLER east to the 83 grid line in support of the 157th Infantry Regiment. Outposts set up automatic weapons covering all draws and trails leading into that area. Indirect fire batteries of "A" and "B" Companies expended a total of 618 rounds HE and 3 rounds smoke which continued to disrupt enemy supply routes and known installations vicinity of BAERENTHAL and MOUTERHOUSE.

FWs reported fire very effective in curtailing their movements. On 16th "C" Company 813th TD Battalion relieved in position by 614th TD Battalion and reverted to control of parent unit.

At 0750A 17th January "A" Company moved one gun to high ground on SW side of REIPERTSWILLER and fired 15 rounds HE and 4 rounds APC50R direct fire on hills north of the town at enemy personnel dug in. At 1500A the same shoot was repeated with 15 rounds HE, further disrupting the enemy. Indirect fire battery wound up by firing 200 rounds HE on enemy supply routes and vicinity of BAERENTHAL; then packed up and moved to WIMMENAU. "B" Company's battery expended 290 rounds HE during the period in harassing and interdiction fire missions. During the night "C" Company's 3 guns on the PHILLIPSBURG-NIEDERBRONN las BAINS road were relieved by guns of the 614th TD Battalion (towed) and moved to indirect fire positions vacated by "A" Company in ZINSWILLER. 2 guns remained on the BAERENTHAL-ZINSWILLER road in support of the 36th Engineers (C).

During the 18th January Reconnaissance Company outpost line east of REIPERTSWILLER continued active patrolling of all draws to prevent enemy infiltration which had been reported in that area. Patrols, however, reported all clear.

From the 18th to the 20th of January, inclusive, indirect fire batteries of "A", "B" and "C" Companies fired a total of 1,057 rounds HE in harassing of enemy supply routes and known positions. The missions of companies remained unchanged - "A" Company supporting 180th Infantry Regiment, "B" Company supporting 179th Infantry Regiment and "C" Company supporting 36th Engineers (C) Battalion. "A" Company's indirect fire battery vicinity of WIMMENAU discontinued firing from that position at request of infantry as too much counter battery was received. After firing 20 rounds over 300 rounds of counter-battery was received around their position within two hours. At 1700A "C" Company's 3-gun battery moved from ZINSWILLER to AT reserve positions in ING-WILLER and 2 guns moved to LICHTENBERG. On the night of the 21st one TD of "A" Company moving from WILDENGUTH slid on the icy road and ended up teetering on the side of a bridge with a 20 foot drop beneath. Due to Infantry retrograde movement in that sector the bridge was to be blown before daylight by the Engineers. The M-10 could not be retrieved because of icy hill leading to the bridge from the south which no vehicles could traverse, so the Engineers put an extra charge of TNT in the M-10 and blew both the bridge and the vehicle at the same time. "B" Company's battery southwest of ROSTEIG fired 230 rounds HE, interdiction fire, during the period. At 0300A Reconnaissance Company relieved from outpost positions along the REIPERSWILLER-MOTHBACH road when infantry moved back to that line, and moved to assembly area vicinity of MOTHBACH. On January 21st Battalion Command Post moved from WEINBOURG to LA PETITE PIERRE.

The 22d January found "A" Company providing AT defense in 180th Infantry Regiment sector, "B" Company providing AT defense in 179th Infantry Regiment sector and "C" Company providing the same in 36th Engineers (C) sector. Activity for the period consisted in "B" Company's battery firing 200 rounds HE and 10 rounds Smoke in interdiction and harassing fires on the town of MOUTERHOUSE. Reconnaissance Company reconnoitered trails in 45th Infantry Division sector for possible TD routes.

The 23rd January one M-10 of "A" Company turned over in the town of WIMMENAU when weak bridge collapsed. Gun was righted, however, and ready for action the following day. "B" Company continued in support of the 274th Inf Regt after that unit relieved the 179th infantry in position. At 1400A 2 TDs moved from ROSTEIG to 759179 to cover reported enemy tank threat. During the period indirect fire battery fired 216 rounds HE and 4 rounds Smoke, interdiction fire and Pace Point registration on town and vicinity surrounding MOUTERHOUSE. "C" Company moved 4 M-10s to high ground on northeast and southwest side of INGWI to protect right flank of 45th Infantry Division. Rcn Company moved out and established security outposts for these guns with 2 platoons and 1 platoon maintained contact between TDs and infantry elements on high ground to the left with patrols. Platoon also established road block vicinity of 799414. On January 24th platoon "C" Company was relieved of AT defense mission and moved to battery position south of LA PETITE PIERRE. Rcn Company continued mission of providing security for TDs of "C" Company protecting 45th Division right flank south of 799414.

On the 25th January 2 TDs of "A" Company vicinity of WILDENGUTH were heavily shelled causing casualties among the TD crew. "B" Company moved one platoon to AT reserve in 45th Division right flank.

A school for drivers and gunners for M-36 TDs was opened on the 26th January with orientation course on driving, maintenance, and gunnery conducted at Battalion Barracks in REIPERTSWILLER and actual firing of 3-gun indirect fire battery vicinity of REIPERTSWILLER. The Battalion was well on the way for the conversion from M-10 to M-36. Five of the 90mm guns had already been drawn.

Battle Report for Period 21 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 (Continued)

The remainder of the period up to and including 31st January, all platoons of the firing companies had completed courses on the M.36. During that period "A" Company fired 70 rounds 3" HE and 4 rounds 3" APC direct fire at enemy personnel on hill northwest of REIPERTSWILLER from positions on high ground southeast of the same town.

Edward L. Austin
EDWARD L. AUSTIN
Lt.Col., Field Artillery
Commanding

Annex "A" - Administrative Report
Annex "B" - Report of Firing
Annex "C" - "B" Company's Statements
Annex "D" - Motor Maintenance Report

-----3 Incls:

Unit Journal
Messages
Intelligence Summary

HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTRUCTOR BATTALION
APO 45, U. S. ARMY

1 February 1945

Subject: Intelligence Summary, 45th Infantry Division Sector.
01 January 1945 to 31 January 1945.
To Accompany Battle Report for Same Period
Map: Central Europe, 1/100,000, WISSENBURG, Sheet V-2

The enemy attack made at 0200A along a front from DAMBACH to BITCHE and NW, was originally instituted on a probing action in search of a weak spot for exploitation. This they found sooner than expected between EGUEIA-HARDT and DAMBACH and were apparently unprepared to fully exploit it as evidenced by the fact that they did not do so and also by the fact that it was several days before they had any supporting weapons in effective numbers. By the time the supporting weapons had come up, we had been able to concentrate sufficient forces to stop any resumption of their effort, which they were by then prepared to develop.

The purpose of the enemy drive was manifold. It was timed for an hour which should have found us suffering from the effects of New Year's Eve indulgence, and counted heavily on surprise and inertia on the part of our troops. It was at once a diversionary drive to relieve pressure in the ARDENNES sector, where the abortive German drive to gain the MUESE River had reached a crisis, by either forcing us to drain troops from there to meet this new threat and keeping us from reinforcing that sector with our troops. It was an effort to open the HARDT (VOSGES) Mountain passes (NUENHOFFEN - DAMBACH - PHILLIPSBURG - ZINSWILLER, WINGEN - WIMMENAU - INGWILLER) to enemy armor already assembled (21 Pz Div, 25th PG Div), for a sweep thru the flats of the ALSACE plain with the objective of clearing it of Allied troops. (This objective, the retaking of ALSACE, was the aim of SS Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler, commander of German troops in the sector). Failing to open the passes, the attack again was a diversionary one, while enemy armor shifted to the right and attempted to crush its way thru on the Corps right flank (HATTEN-RITTERSHOFFEN area) in conjunction with an effort by elements on the newly established RHINE bridgehead N of STRASSBURG. The attack on the right evolved as the enemy's main effort, and was blunted with great loss of armor and men to the enemy by the end of the period, his attitude was strictly defensive.

At the start of the period, 45th Infantry Division was at the fringes of the German Siegfried Line. Planned withdrawals to Maginot Line Defenses were effected 1st January by Division, to DAMBACH - LEMBACH line. Enemy pressure in HARDT (VOSGES) Mountain sector, command of which the Division from Task Force HUDELSON, 2 January, reached it's furthest success with a penetration by the 12 SS Regt to WINGEN on 4th January. These elements were cut off and were forced to withdraw by 6 January. Thereafter, the enemy offensive attitude changed. The tactics consisted of a series of attempts to build up forces behind our lines by sustained and heavy infiltration over a period of times with the intention of relaunching their attack from within our lines. Between the 16 and 19 January, some such infiltrations in strength had been effected N of REIPERTSWILLER, and were a contributing factor to the withdrawal by our troops to prepared line (REIPERTSWILLER - ROTHBACH road) in conjunction with the Corps withdrawal to the HAGENAU line (ROTHBACH - PFAFFENHOFFEN - HAGENAU) on the 20th January. Thereafter the enemy attitude was defensive. The enemy dug in and the line remained unchanged till the end of the period.

Units contacted during period: 361st VG Div - 951 VGR, 952 VGR - 256 VGR Div - 456th VGR - 257 VG Div - 477 PGR - 481 PGR - 36 VG Div - 6th SS Mtn Div - 11 SS Regt - 12 SS Regt - XII Fortress Regt - 38th GAF - 815 Lt AA Bn.

ENEMY ARMOR REPORTED DURING PERIOD

DATE	(45th Div Sector)		(Remainder of VI Corps Sector)	
	NUMBER	PLACE	NUMBER	PLACE
1 Jan	12	NUENHOFFEN	20	BITCHE Road - net
2 Jan	2	BERERENTHAL	12	745459
	2	NUENHOFFEN		
3 Jan	4	Vic REIPERTSWILLER		
	2	854425		
4 Jan	2	NUENHOFFEN		
	2	DAMBACH		

ENEMY ARMOR REPORTED DURING PERIOD

(45th Div Sector)			(Remainder of VI Corps Sector)	
DATE	NUMBER	PLACE	NUMBER	PLACE
4 Jan	4	798396		
	1	842418		
	3	729390		
5 Jan	4	84024325	2	ROHRWILLER
	4	82724367		
6 Jan			4	171407
			6	BAMBSHEIM
7 Jan	1	DAMBACH	20	ASCHBACH-BUHL area
	2	DISTELDORF	10	FOHRWILLER-DRUSENHEIM
	3	900450	10	BAMBSHEIM
	3	890475		
8 Jan			10	ASCHBACH
			12	OBERSEEBACH
9 Jan	2	762395	25	HATTEN
			15	DRUSENHEIM-HERRLISHEIM
10 Jan	3	844418	12	182337
	1	792390	3	HERRLISHEIM
	1	791388		
11 Jan	1	DAMBACH	5	124135
			7	131152
			10	LUDWIGSWINKEL
12 Jan	1	DAMBACH	20	RITTERSHOFFEN-HATTEN
13 Jan	4	848444	12	RITTERSHOFFEN-HATTEN
14 Jan	2	773387	15	HATTEN
	3	764400	3	HERRLISHEIM
15 Jan 2	2	847418	3	HERRLISHEIM
	1	793402		
	1	76543976		
	2	76543975		
16 Jan				187157
17 Jan	1	79183994	10	HATTEN
	1	792425	3	SESSENHEIM
			6	OFFENDORF
			15	HATTEN
18 Jan			2	SESSENHEIM
			6	Vic DENGALSHEIM
			4	ROESCHWOOG
			6	HERRLISHEIM
19 Jan			29	Bridge at 0812
			17	HERRLISHEIM
			9	SESSENHEIM
			6	HATTEN
			1	099150
20 Jan			1	HERRLISHEIM
			6	099210
			4	HATTEN
			12	087120
21 Jan			15	HERRLISHEIM
			18	OBERHOFFEN
22 Jan	1	822375	10	OBERHOFFEN - BISCHWILLER
	2	773388		
23 Jan	4	GUNDERSHOFFEN	4	HERRLISHEIM
			6	Vic HAGENAU
			4	007350
24 Jan	2	854348	10	HERRLISHEIM
	3	ROTHBACH		
	10	ROTHBACH		
25 Jan	1	ROTHBACH	5	888290
			3	985261
26 Jan	3	ROTHBACH	4	DRUSENHEIM
			2	OFFENDORF
27 Jan			3	092145
			1	MUHLHAUSEN
28 Jan	1	ROTHBACH	1	085210
29 Jan			2	971268
			2	METZGER

ENEMY ARMOR REPORTED DURING PERIOD

DATE	(45th Div Sector)		(Remainder of VI Corps Sector)	
	NUMBER	PLACE	NUMBER	PLACE
30 Jan			3	970269
			10	OBERHOFFEN
Total	<u>84</u>			
		Total	<u>490</u>	
		45th Div	<u>84</u>	
			<u>574</u>	

In 45th Infantry Division sector, enemy did not have his Infantry screen his armor, but moved it on roads towards objectives while his infantry moved down on objectives from high ground. Two concentrations of armor were reported in 45th Division sector, 12 Tanks vicinity NUENHOFFEN on 1st January and 12 Tanks or SPs vicinity ROTHBACH on 24th January. The enemy committed the bulk of three Armored Divisions (21 Pz Div. - 25th Pz Gren Div and 10 SS Pz Div) on Corps right flank, and lost heavily. Large massed attacks by enemy armor in HATTEN area were first such experience for VI Corps in FRANCE. Total number of enemy tanks destroyed in Corps sector during the month of January was 150, with 55 damaged.

Enemy matériel destroyed by this Battalion consisted of 2 Tanks, 1 field piece and 2 flakwagons.

For the Commanding Officer

James H. Legendre Jr.
JAMES H. LEGENDRE JR.
Captain, I. F. A.
S.

Subject: Administrative Functions, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion,
For The Period 1 January 1945 - 31 January 1945.

I. Narrative

1. Activities for the month of January commenced with the departure of two enlisted men for the Zone of Interior on the day following the New Year.

a. To bolster the commissioned strength of the battalion, two officers who had been wounded in combat, 1st Lt. ERNEST P. SANTANGELO, and 2nd Lt. FRED E. GROOVER, rejoined their old units on the 3rd and 5th, respectively.

b. Although considerable difficulty was experienced in contacting the men in the forward areas, all Allied Supplement Francs in 100, 500, and 1000 denominations in the hands of the troops, were collected and exchanged for Bank of France notes to combat widespread counterfeiting.

c. Perhaps the outstanding event from a health point of view was the arrival on the 13th of two dentists from the 1st Armored Group Headquarters on temporary duty. Since the loss of the Battalion dentist due to a T/O change, proper dental treatment was in demand.

d. On the 17th and the 19th, a total of twelve (12) enlisted reinforcements were received to fill the vacancies created by combat casualties suffered during the heavy fighting in the early part of the month. Since these men were all graduates of the 1st Armored Group School, they were assigned without delay.

e. To provide men who have been in continuous combat with a rest and to bring about a higher degree of versatility, a system of rotating Headquarters personnel with men from the gun companies was put into effect on the 23rd. On that date, ten (10) Headquarters Company men were interchanged with letter company personnel.

f. Five (5) additional reinforcements were received during the latter days of the month to keep the battalion up to normal operating strength.

g. The first month of the new year was brought to an end with the good news of an additional quota of two (2) enlisted men to be sent home on temporary duty in February.

II. Casualties.

1. Casualties were heavier than usual due to the hard fighting during the first part of the month. Total casualties for the period 1 January to 31 January 1945: Five (5) enlisted men, missing in action; Four (4) enlisted men and one (1) officer, killed in action; Two (2) enlisted men, seriously wounded in action; Six (6) enlisted men, lightly wounded in action; Three (3) enlisted men, lightly injured in action. Total - 21.

III. Roster of Key Personnel

Lt.Col. EDWARD L. AUSTIN, O-311026	Commanding Officer
Major JOHN C. NIEHAUS, O-333318	Executive Officer
Major PAUL W. PRIOR, O-394217	S-3
Capt JAMES H. LEGENDRE JR, O-454767	S-2
Capt WILLIAM M. WESTFALL, O-205588	S-4
1st Lt. JOHN J. SNYDER, O-1165958	S-1

IV. Promotions

None

V. Decorations and Awards

None

VI. Summary

The month just concluded was a perfectly normal one from an administrative standpoint. Too much cannot be said for the reinforcements the battalion has been receiving through the 1st Armored Group School. Without exception, these men have been found to be properly trained thereby eliminating the necessity of an orientation period.

Subject: Report of Firing, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, for the Period
02 January 1945 to 31 January 1945
To accompany Battle Report for same period.

To.....: Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, U S Army.

ASSAULT FIRE

DATE	COMPANY	TARGET	ROUNDS	RESULTS
2400A02	B	Enemy Personnel in WIIDEN-	130 HE	14 PWs
2400A03		GUTH-target of opportunity.		
2400A03	B	1 M1 VI Tr (726403) enemy	50HE	Knocked out by Tr
2400A04		personnel (targets of Opportu-	1 APC	dispersed personnel
		nity)		
2400A04	B	Field Piece - 1 FlakWagon vic	64HE	Knocked Field Piec
2400A05		72640 - targets of opportunity	4 APC	and Flakwagon and
				dispersed personnel
2400A06	C	1 Flakwagon and personnel in	64 HE	Knocked out Flak
2400A07		PHILIPSBURG		WAGON other unknown
2400A09				
2400A10	C	Fy house emplacement and con-	25 HE	Direct Hits scored
		crete installations (743420)	1 APC	
			1 T105	
2400A16	A	Enemy activity vic hills at	56 HE	Very good effect
2400A17		HENGISBERG AND RUHDENKOPF	4 APC	area well covered
2400A27	A	By installations on hill NE	24 HE	Very good effect
2400A28		REIPERTSWILDER	6 APC	area well covered
2400A29	A	By personnel on hill NE of	40 HE	Area well covered
2400A30		REIPERTSWILDER		
2400A30	A	By personnel on hill NE of	20 HE	Area well covered
2400A31		REIPERTSWILDER		

INDIRECT FIRING

1. Number of rounds expended:

81	4,635 rounds
Smoke	40 rounds
M54 time	1 round

2. Targets:

Enemy supply routes
Enemy supply points
Enemy artillery positions
Road junctions and towns.

3. Type of Targets:

Observed missions	None
Unobserved missions	131

4. General Results:

All fires were harassing missions on enemy held road net works, towns and reported troop concentration. Results unknown.

All Base Points registrations were made with the minimum rounds and guns were registered by Air OP.

Subject: Action of 1st platoon, Company "B", 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion during German Breakthrough in MOUTERHOUSE - BAEPENTHA area.

TO : Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, U S Army.

December 31st, 1944, 1st platoon, "B" Company, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached to 117th Reconnaissance Squadron, in AT position south and east of BITCHE, AISACE (462779), direct support of infantry elements.

At 2300 hours enemy infantry elements assaulted and over-ran friendly outpost positions. Platoon received orders from higher headquarters to occupy forward positions and place fire on enemy personnel vicinity 488776. 36 rounds were expended. From later reports it has been established that this fire enabled approximately three friendly infantry squads to regain contact with their parent unit. Upon completion of this mission the platoon returned to original position to await further orders.

At approximately 0100 hours 1st January 1945, the 1st platoon received word through the TD company Headquarters of a major breakthrough in their sector. Without awaiting orders, 1st Lt. Longmire, platoon leader, gathered all available personnel, including stragglers from infantry units already engaged, and formed a strongpoint at the platoon position. He placed himself in command of all troops in the area until higher authority arrived. The unit remained in position here beating off attack after attack with all available weapons. At approximately 0800 hours the platoon withdrew and set up another strongpoint 500 yards to the SW of their former position. This second position came under almost immediate assault by enemy elements. Several attempts were made to over-run the strongpoint but all were repulsed. These attacks were made by well organized troops. It is thought that the lack of armor support prevented the enemy from breaking through. Shortly after repulsing the last attack, the platoon received word of enemy infantry, supported by tanks, trying to cut their only route of escape. One TD under command of Corporal R. Grimm moved into an exposed position and placed direct fire on enemy personnel. Corporal R. Grimm and his crew held their ground until all friendly vehicles had been withdrawn from the area. It was later established that Corporal Grimm's action disorganized an entire company of enemy infantry long enough to enable our troops to consolidate new positions. During the entire time he occupied this position Cpl. Grimm's vehicle was under observation and direct fire from concealed enemy tanks on SAs.

Shortly before 1500 hours T/4 Butterworth was wounded in an eye while moving his TD to a new firing position. At approximately 1500 hours the platoon withdrew to the MOUTERHOUSE area. Events from this time on are very sketchy. (Shortly after the platoon withdrew, the enemy shifted his attack to the left of the Task Force sector).

During the night of 1st - 2d January the platoon contacted elements of 19th Armored Infantry Battalion vicinity SARREINSBERG (74-42) and attached themselves to that unit until morning. At approximately 0800 hours the unit moved into position to support defense of town. At approximately 0930 hours the town was attacked by enemy infantry elements supported by very intense artillery fire of heavy and medium calibre. Some direct fire was received and Lt. Longmire went forward in an attempt to locate their firing positions. Shortly after leaving his platoon Lt. Longmire was fatally wounded by fire from these same vehicles.

S/Sgt John F. London took command of the platoon and moved them forward toward the expected enemy armor. Corporal Grimm was shot through the head by sniper fire while directing his TD into position. S/Sgt London kept his platoon in position under intense artillery and mortar fire until the attack was repelled. (At this point diesel fuel for the M-10s was very, very low). At approximately 1700 hours S/Sgt London moved his platoon vicinity of ST LOUIS (722432) and reported to Col. Gritchfield, 142d Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division.

The platoon received fuel, ammunition, and rations at ST LOUIS. At approximately 1800 hours S/Sgt London received word through TD Company Headquarters by messenger (several attempts had been made to establish contact with the unit, this being the first successful effort) that his unit would be attached to 2d Bn 179th Inf Regt, 45th Inf Div. The platoon leader reported to Major Smith, 2d Bn, and received orders to move platoon to SARREINSBERG at 0400 hours. At 0800 hours radiocontact was established with TD Company CP. During the occupation of positions the platoon was heavily shelled and a crew member, Pvt R. Bortner was wounded by shrapnel and evacuated to hospital. At approximately 1030 hours one TD fired on several houses which were giving trouble to our troops.

Action of 1st platoon Company "E" 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion during German breakthrough in MOUTERHOUSE-BALLENTRAIL area (continued)

The situation was generally quiet until about 1600 hours when the platoon had received word of a tank attack approaching from the SE. S/Sgt London maneuvered one section (2 TDs) into position under heavy artillery fire and repelled attack, knocking out one (1) enemy vehicle (thought to be a TD of the Mk IV class). This vehicle was knocked out with one (1) round of APCBC entering the vehicle at rear and burning it. No crew members bailed out. Three (3) rounds APCBC fired at unidentified target at tree line -- the results are unknown. It is believed that this was another enemy tank or TD.

Shortly after dark Lt Santangelo assumed command of the platoon, S/Sgt London reverting to second in command.

Action was sporadic for the remainder of the day. Artillery and sniper fire was very intense.

On 4th January the platoon expended to fire (12) rounds at enemy towed artillery piece. The results are not positive, but smoke and several explosions were seen at the position for several minutes after the mission was completed.

The 1st platoon was relieved on 5th January by the 2d platoon of this organization.

PHILIP A. DOHERTY
1st.Lt., F. A.,
Ex. Off. Co. B.

Subject: Report of activities of the 2d platoon 645th TD Battalion from 0100A 1 January to 0600A 2d January 1945.

TO : Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, U S Army.

While in PHILLIPSBURG we were attached to 62nd Armored Infantry commanded by Lt. Col. Myers.

At 0100A we received an alert call from the 62nd Armored Infantry. We received the actual call to proceed on to BANNSTEIN at 0330A with two M-10s which I proceeded to do. We arrived at the 62nd Infantry CP of "C" Company at approximately 0430A 1 January and reported in to Major Higgins. He in turn asked us if we could take up positions to cover the road junctions at the approximate coordinates 832447. With the two tank commanders I put the M-10s in position near their CP at coordinates 831447.

We just got in position when the Jerries put in a large scale barrage of large artillery, mortars, and 20mm in our vicinity, which lasted approximately one hour. After that lifted there was unusual firing of small arms in great numbers directed in our vicinity. Our lines withdrew to a position which placed us in the front lines. I reported to Major Higgins and he gave me permission to withdraw back down the road to coordinates 825437. Before we withdrew we fired 35 rounds HE on a hill held by the Jerries at 835445. Then we withdrew to a more advantageous position.

We stayed at that position until approximately 1400A that afternoon, Jan 1st. Our Infantry started withdrawing so we pulled rear guard action covering their withdrawal. We put up a road block at 804404, so a company of 540th Engrs could pack up to pull out. At that position we picked up approximately 20 Infantry men who rode the M-10s. We pulled on past REIPERSWILLER on by WIMMENAU into INGWILLER where we laid over for two hours. By pure chance I ran into Major Higgins who told me to take my M-10s into ZINSWILLER. We reached our destination at 2100A where we bedded down.

On January 2d at 1900A Sgt. Silver contacted us. At 1100A the CO of our Company gave us orders to pull into INGWILLER which we did.

Incidentally while we were with the 62nd Armored Infantry we were practically cut off.

EDWARD E. TOUSIGNANT
2d. Lt., AUS
Platoon Cmdr., Co. B

ANLFX "C"

Subject: Report of Activities of the 1st section 2d platoon "B" Company, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, from 0500A 1 Jan to 1800A 2 Jan 1945.

To : Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, U S Army.

When S/Sgt. Tousignant left with the 2d section I remained in position until 0700A. I received a call to report to Lt. Col. Myers at his CP. I was ordered to move both M-10s, leave one in PHILLIPSBURG and take one to the position previously reconnoitered with "B" Company 62nd Armored Infantry. I reported to Captain Moore at about 0930A. Remained in position until about 1630A when we were ordered to cover the withdrawal of "B" Company 62nd Armored Infantry to new position.

Before withdrawing we received about 6 rounds of heavy artillery which wounded 2 men near us. PFC Hageman and I helped pick up one of the men and held him on our vehicle while we moved back 2 kilometers where I again reported to Capt Moore. He gave us permission to return to PHILLIPSBURG where I reported to Lt. Col. Myers and then moved both M-10s to the platoon CP for the night. Posted guard.

At 2300A I received word to report to the 3d Bn 275th Inf Regt CP. While there I was asked about a night direct fire mission. I couldn't help then so I returned to the platoon CP.

At 0600A 2 January I received word by telephone that the enemy had infiltrated behind "B" Company 62nd Inf and were between them and PHILLIPSBURG. I was to use my own judgement. I sent the two half tracks back through PHILLIPSBURG and placed both M-10s to cover the roads leading into PHILLIPSBURG and then reported to Lt. Col. Myers.

At 1030A I received word by our Battalion messenger to move my section to ~~EE~~IPERTSWILLER and report to our company CP. I checked out at the 62nd Armored Inf CP and proceeded to NIEDERBONN where I halted the convoy while I reported to our Battalion CP. When I returned to where I left the convoy they were gone. I proceeded to ZINSWILLER and made a road search for the vehicles but couldn't find them. Reported to S/Sgt Tousignant at approximately noon.

Received word from Captain Moos that the first section plus two half tracks were in ZINSWILLER and I was ordered to proceed to INGWILLER to the Company CP. Contacted the first section by radio from INGWILLER and the first section plus two half tracks reported to the Company CP at about 1800A 2 January.

BERNARD SILVER
Sgt. Co. B