

HEADQUARTERS
445TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 45, U S ARMY

8 April 1944

RESTRICTED

SUBJECT: Battle Report

TO : Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO 464, U S Army (Thru channels)

MAP REFERENCES: Italy, 1/100,000, Sheet #158

PERIOD COVERED: 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1944.

1. The first of March found the entire Battalion attached to the 45th Infantry Division, maintaining anti-tank defense in the division sector. This was no easy matter due to boggy terrain, the constant hammering of enemy artillery and the scarcity of protected good fields of fire. Requisition for replacements of M-10 crews had not been filled, but all M-10's were kept running using limited crews. Twelve M-10's in anti-tank role, in the vicinity of PADIGLIONE, ITALY were kept manned by rotation of crews from Company "A" and Company "C", approximately every three days, thus giving the respective crews a much needed rest from the unduly heavy enemy shell-fire in that vicinity. Company "B" CP was located five kilometers north of NETTUNO, near the ANZIO-ROME road provided covering anti-tank fire for the 45th Infantry Division left flank with six (6) tank destroyers ~~in vicinity~~ of 877278, and the remainder of the company in mobile reserve at the Company C.P. A rotation system was also effected within the company to provide relief for the crews on the line. The Battalion C.P., Reconnaissance Company C.P., and the Battalion rear echelon were located in the same position as the previous month. (913210) Reconnaissance Company continued to maintain OP's on the Division's front and adjusted artillery fire on numerous enemy targets in that sector. They also maintained road reconnaissance and reconnoitered for new gun positions, under the unrelenting shell fire thrown by the enemy artillery.

2. On 3 March 1944, eleven enlisted men were picked from Headquarters Company and Reconnaissance Company and transferred to Company "A" to be trained to fill vacancies of M-10 crews. The remainder of the Battalion remained in present positions and made no contacts with enemy tanks. Twenty-five Armored Force replacements were received and assigned to the three gun companies on 7 March. The loss of one M-10, suffered by Company "A" by enemy shell fire, was the only change up to 9 March 1944.

3. On 10 March, six guns of Company "B", on the 45th Infantry Division left flank were relieved by Company "A" of the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion. The relieved guns returned to vicinity of 884236, where they remained in mobile reserve, in support of the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion. The remainder of Company "B" moved to new position, one kilometer west of the Battalion C.P., and that night, four gun positions were dug near the road junction southeast of PADIGLIONE, in preparation for movement to that area. The above movements were conducted in accordance with Attack Plan being formulated by this Command to coincide with major attack plan, "Centipede".

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BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

Company "B" to participate in attack by supporting two regiments of the 45th Infantry Division, keeping leading tank destroyers well forward to prevent any enemy tanks from penetrating the infantry. The attack was to have moved up diagonal road from PADIGLIONE towards the "Factory" area, and up road directly north of PADIGLIONE. Company "C", which had relieved Company "A" from anti-tank positions in the vicinity of PADIGLIONE, was to remain in reserve and indirect fire and shoot up houses and targets of opportunity in path of the attack. Reconnaissance Company was to maintain OP's and scout for gun positions.

4. On 16 March, in accordance with the above plan, Company "C" moved one (1) six gun battery to vicinity of 938247, and by the following day were registered on enemy held houses on the 45th Infantry Division's front by Reconnaissance Company OP's. On these registrations, a new time shell for the 3" gun was used and is considered a big factor in bringing the guns on their targets quickly. Company "B" moved the second platoon to assembly area, southeast of PADIGLIONE. All companies conducted extensive reconnaissance during this period to insure a successful completion of the attack plan.

5. On the night of 18 March, "CENTIPEDE" attack plan was called off, and on the following night, Company "B" relieved Company "A" in the PADIGLIONE sector using Company "C" to provide covering fire until relief was effected. Company "C" continued to further harass the enemy by firing interdictory and observed fire on enemy personnel, vehicles and houses.

6. Heavy enemy shell fire in Company "B" area on 20 March, resulted in four casualties and one M-10 was slightly damaged. Saving of the lives of the men is attributed to a cover devised by this Battalion, made from Half-Track armor plate, which fits over the open turret. The following day, Company "C" fired at a Mark VI tank using HE delayed fuze, at a range of 10,000 yards. Many rounds were fired, two of which were known to be direct hits. Friendly infantry reported it to be definitely knocked out. Company "C" continued to pound 3" shells into the enemy with Reconnaissance Company doing most of the observing. All fires were reported excellent and direct hits on houses were scored. On the night of 21 March, one section of the Pioneer platoon, Reconnaissance Company, digging gun positions for Company "B", north of PADIGLIONE, was shelled and five casualties were sustained. The remainder of the period up to and including 23 March, proved to be more or less routine with all companies receiving normal enemy shell fire, especially in the forward areas and Company "C" indirect fire positions.

7. Due to the expansion of the 45th Infantry Division's front to include the CARANO sector, Company "A", on the night 24 March, moved four guns to vicinity of CARANO to provide anti-tank defense for that particular sector. Guns were moved into positions vacated by the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and relief was effected without incident. On the same night, Reconnaissance Company established a new OP, vicinity of 969294, in addition to the three OP's already in operation. On 26 March, Company "B" lost one M-10 due to enemy shell fire. Vehicle burned immediately and was a total loss.

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

Company "C" continued to be active in artillery role and on the 28th March, moved three guns from the rear battery (937246) and two guns from the forward battery (935264) back to assembly area, vicinity of Battalion C.P.(913210) All was quiet on the companies fronts except for continual shell fire and on 30 March, another $\frac{1}{4}$ ton was destroyed. On the night, 31 March, Company "B", according to a prearranged plan, sent two M-10's up the diagonal road west of PADIGLIONE to fire on house, vicinity of 893303, where an enemy tank was believed to be firing from. The target was marked by white phosphorous, fired by a neighboring Field Artillery Battalion, and forty rounds of APCBDF was poured into the house by the two M-10's. Results were undetermined.

8. The report of Company "C" indirect firing from 16 March to 31 March is as follows:

	<u>HE</u>	<u>Smoke</u>	<u>Time Shell</u>	<u>APC</u>
Total Round Fired:	4655	347	127	1

Targets fired: Enemy tanks, Personnel, Houses, Vehicles, Assembly Areas and Bivouac Areas.

Observers: Reconnaissance Company OP's did most of the observing with Company "C". Infantry OP's and neighboring Field Artillery OP's adjusted occasionally.

Results; Enemy Materiel Destroyed: On some instances direct hits were observed on enemy personnel, vicinity of houses on the 45th Infantry Division front, and all fire on houses and personnel was reported to be very effective. On one enemy tank taken under fire, two direct hits were reported by infantry observers and the tank was definitely knocked out. HE delayed fuze was used at a range of 10,000 yards. Two enemy vehicles were destroyed and burned during this period. A ammunition dump and supply point that was fired on was set afire and enemy tanks firing were neutralized.

9. Training in gunnery, tank driving, map reading and radio procedure was conducted by each unit while in assembly area.

10. Brief Summary of Operation:

The month of March was comparatively quiet with only small groups of enemy tanks being reported. Anti-tank defense was restricted to one company due to the limited positions and good fields of fire, but on 24 March, another platoon was added to cover additional sector taken over by the 45th Infantry Division. Enemy artillery was heavy all through this period and resulted in the loss of one M-10, and two (2) $\frac{1}{4}$ tons of Company "B". Company "C" registrations on houses proved invaluable. Most of the houses were used as strong points and vehicles, tanks, and enemy personnel provided inviting targets in their vicinity. Many missions requested by the infantry were fired and infantry observers were well satisfied with the results.

M-10's Lost: Two (One by enemy shell fire and one by mechanical difficulties)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ton vehicles: Two (Both by enemy shell fire).

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

11. During the month of March, this Battalion received fifty-five replacements. Four officers were attached to the Battalion for training during the month of March. The combat efficiency of the battalion was superior, the morale of the men was excellent, and supply of the battalion was good.

12. The following changes in assignments and duties of officers were directed: 2nd Lt. ANGELO P. MICCLINI was assigned to Company A, as a Company officer on 1 March; On 3 March, Captain JERRY L. MORGAN was reassigned to the Battalion, and took over the duties as Liaison Officer; BERNARD SACS was promoted to the rank of Captain, effective 1 March 1944, and assumed the duties of Liaison Officer on 7 March 1944; The following named officers were promoted to the grade of 1st Lieutenant: 2nd Lt. JACK W. LINDBERG, effective 24 March 1944; 2nd Lt. ROBERT W. MOORE, effective 24 March 1944; and 2nd Lt. BEVILLE R. SPENCER, effective 26 March 1944.

13. Two officers and three enlisted men were rotated to the United States on 7 March 1944; Five enlisted men were rotated to the United States on 27 March 1944. One officer and three enlisted men were rotated to the United States on 30 March 1944.

Edward L. Austin

EDWARD L. AUSTIN
Major, Field Artillery
Commanding

Annex "A" Battle Casualty Summary
Annex "B" Battle Report Overlay

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Intelligence Summary
Operation Journals
(1) Messages

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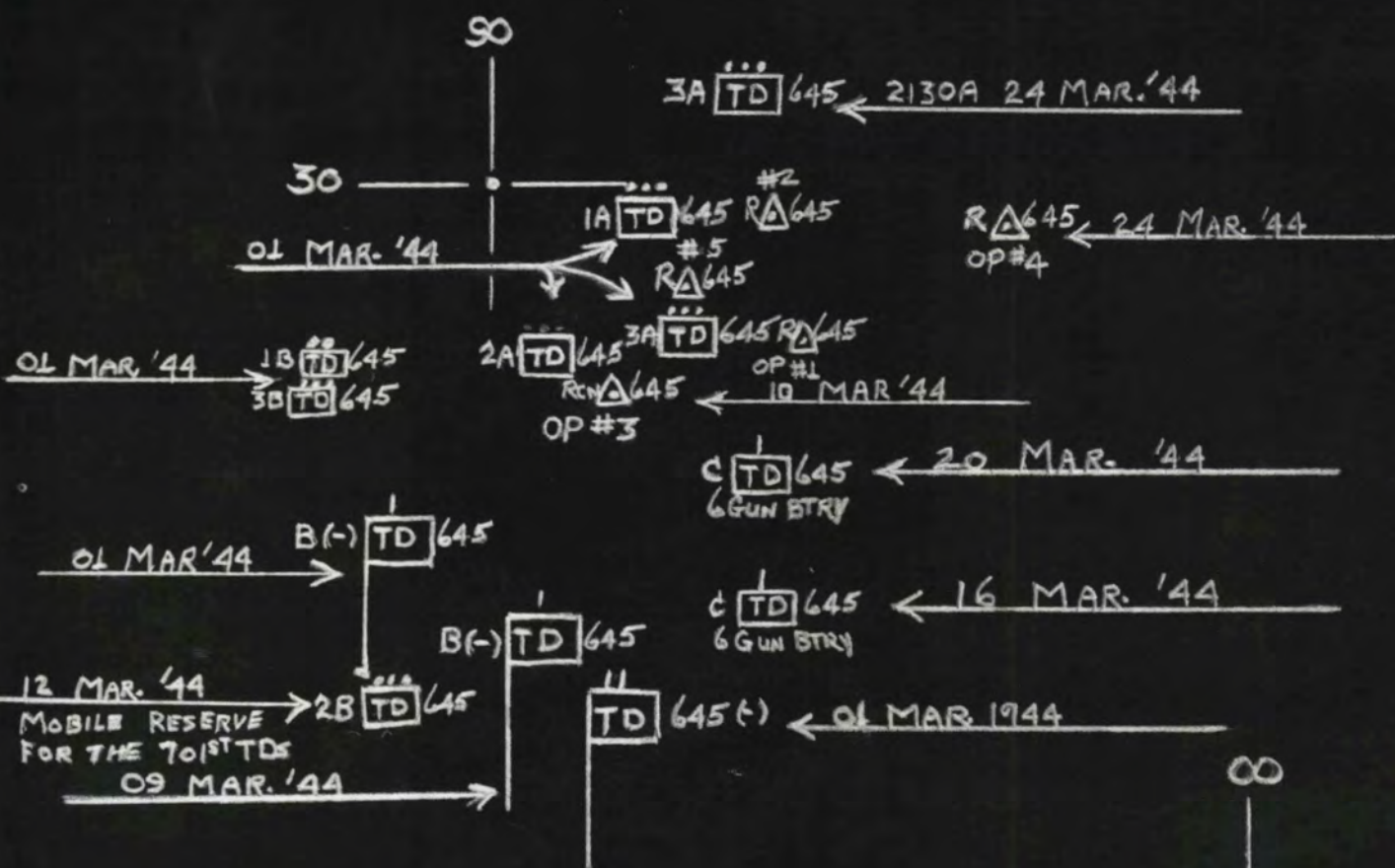
BATTLE CASUALTY SUMMARY

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>CO.</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
Levi G. Acuna	38011134	T/5	Hq. Co.	3 March 44	Wounded
Oscar H. Deal	38017784	S/Sgt	Co. B	4 March 44	Wounded
Leroy J. Boyer	35111730	T/5	Co. B	4 March 44	Wounded
Leroy N. Nickerson	35292445	PFC	Co. C	4 March 44	Wounded
Jerry L. Pruett	20832058	Cpl	Co. C	5 March 44	Wounded
Jack Passoff	32204686	T/4	Co. C	6 March 44	Wounded
Antonio W. Pepin	31098866	T/5	Co. B	6 March 44	Wounded
Wilfred L. Saucier	31027952	Pvt	Co. B	6 March 44	Wounded
Frank Gerard	35292106	PFC	Co. B	6 March 44	Wounded
Thomas O'Connell	33178072	Pvt	Rcn Co	19 March 44	Wounded
Lawrence Hurley	20834155	Pvt	Co. B	20 March 44	Wounded
Leo Woodard	20834271	Pvt	Co. B	20 March 44	Wounded
John E. Huls	38468257	Pvt	Co. B	20 March 44	Wounded
Clair M. Hoover	35292175	PFC	Co. B	20 March 44	Wounded
Carl S. Anderson	37119321	PFC	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Wounded
Andrew L. Lichkay	35111588	PFC	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Wounded
Joseph Marziale	32244545	Cpl	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Wounded
William H. Vadakin	20834384	S/Sgt	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Wounded
Paul H. Fyles	35292111	PFC	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Wounded
Arthur L. Greathouse	35291979	Pvt	Rcn Co	21 March 44	Killed in action
Alex J. Lelia	33420545	Pvt	Co C	25 March 44	Wounded
Alyre F. Gauthier	31107327	T/5	Rcn Co	28 March 44	Wounded
William H. Haynurst	35292396	T/5	Rcn Co	28 March 44	Wounded
Dorsey W. McDiffett	35292448	Cpl	Co B	30 March 44	Wounded

ANNEX "A"

HQ 645TH TDBN OVERLAY TO
 ACCOMPANY BATTLE REPORT
 FROM 01 MAR. TO 31 MAR. 1944
 MAP: ITALY 1/100,000 SHE. 158
 OFFICIALS
 PRIOR S-3
 AUSTIN
 CMDG



NOTES:

NIGHT OF 19TH MAR '44 "B"
 CO COMPLETELY RELIEVED
 "A" CO. VICINITY OF PADIGLIONE
 (SEE BATTLE REPORT
 COVERING PERIOD.)

HEADQUARTERS
645TH Tank DESTROYER BATTALION

AFC 45, U S Army
1 April 1944

SUBJECT: Intelligence Summary, 45th Division Sector
01 March to 31 March 1944
Annex to Battle Report for March 1944
Maps: Italy, Sheet 158, I, II, III, IV.

Enemy Front Lines: For entire period - see overlay.

Enemy lines were static. Only shifting of note was in the early part of the month when enemy moved back to dug in positions along Dead End Road from a line 500 yards south of the road. There enemy proceeded to improve it's positions. Attitude throughout period was entirely defensive. Defensive "attacks" were never made with forces greater than 150 men, and usually no more than 20 to 30 men were used. Strong-points were established around houses. Defensive organization, as usual, was in depth. Armor was used in small groups of 3 and 4 to "terrorize" our front line units and also our "rear" areas with low trajectory fire. Theme of enemy activity was to keep us off balance. Succeeded in keeping our troops on the alert.

Evidently, enemy supply improved, enabling them to have more ammunition to expend. Enemy artillery was exceptionally heavy from 15 March to the end of the period, being used even against targets heretofore considered unprofitable by them. Heaviest shelling in vicinity of PADIGLIONE. Reported used against NEPTUNO-ANZIO shipping was a 350mm gun with a range of 80 miles.

Enemy air activity fell off considerably. Sporadic. Few daylight attempts were made on the port, those attempted being in force of 25 to 40 planes. All daylight raids were made early in the morning or in evening, planes diving out of the sun. Night attempts, though frequent, were not numerous. These rarely comprised more than a half dozen planes, usually not more than one or two, and the effect sought after appeared to be "harassive" rather than destructive. Flares, used profusely, increased effect.

Units Opposing - 3 FGD, 29 FGD, 114 ID, 362 ID.

Disposition of enemy units during period: 1 March to 3 March - on the left (179th Inf Sector): 1st Bn 71 FGR; on the right (180th Inf Sector): I and III Bns 741 IR. 4 March - left (179th Inf), III Bn 309 IR; right (180th Inf), I and III Bns 741 IR. 5 March - left (179th), One Bn 129 FGR, III Bn 309 IR; Right (180th) I Bn 741 IR. 6 and 7 March - No change except I Bn 721 IR in 180th Sector. 8 to 12 March - Division Sector reduced, 180th only Regiment on line, opposite them were I Bn 721 IR and I and III Bn 741 IR. 13 to 15 March - No change except II Bn 741 IR instead of I Bn 741 IR. 16 March - left (179th), III Bn 309 IR; right (180th) I Bn 721 IR, II and III Bns 741 IR, 114 Rcn Bn?, and II Bn 1028 FGR. 17 to 22 March - No change except II Bn 309 instead of III Bn 309. 23 to 25 March - Division Sector enlarged (see overlay); on the left (179th) II and III Bns of 29 FGR, on the right (157th) 114 Rcn Bn, I and II Bns 1028 FGR and 362 Rcn Bn. 26 to 28 March - No change except 510 Light Mobile Bn in front of 179's left. 29 to 31 March - On the left and center (179th) - II Bn 29 FGR, III Bn 29 FGR?, 510 Lt Mobile Bn ?; on the right (157th) 362 Cav Bn, 60 Eng Bn, one Bn 95 IR.

MISCELLANEOUS

GAF - German Air Force Divisions comprise air force personnel equipped and functioning as infantry. Some 22 GAF Divisions have been identified several of which are in the Balkans, four of which are in France and the rest in Russia. Organization - 2 Inf Regiments, 3 Bns artillery, including 1 AA Bn, a Reconnaissance Company, one AT Bn and an Eng Bn. GAF Divisions include about 10,000 men at full strength. Manpower shortage forced the German High Command to commit the 22 GAF Engr Bn to the Anzio front as infantry.

Booby Trapped Telephone Line - lineman, while reeling in a disused British cable in the MCATOLA area, observed it to pass under a stone. Instead of pulling the cable, he lifted the stone. Under the stone the cable was threaded through a 36 grenade. Had the lineman pulled the line, it would have exploded.

Flame Thrower - An old type flame thrower, (Type KLI2F) was captured by 180th Inf and is described as follows: A pack type thrower, carried horizontally on the back, held in place by shoulder and waist straps. Fuel is said to be a mixture of creosote oil and gasoline and is ignited by action of hydrogen and nitrogen on a hot wire. The effective range is 20 meters and with 2/3 second bursts, it will last for 20-30 seconds.

Booby Trapped "S" Mine - A German "S" mine with anti-lifting device was encountered by 36th Engr C Regiment. Description of anti-lifting device - ZZ 35 Pull igniter, one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) pound block of TNT, twelve inch (12") wooden stake. The wooden stake was driven two inches below top of "S" mine with prepared charge wired on stake. Strand of wire from igniter to band of light wire about one inch below top of "S" mine, detonates charge when mine is lifted. Sides and base of mines should be checked before lifting.

SUCKKOMMANDOS - Contacted by SFF. Described as suicidal fanatical troops, whose rule is never to be captured alive. One report is to the effect that many of them are ex-convicts who are given a chance to wipe out their past. They receive better rations than other troops and receive twelve instead of six cigarettes per day. The marking on their right breast is a silver lightning rod with an arrow through it.

ITALIAN TROOPS IN GERMAN ARMY - Italian units still fight for the Germans. Opposing the SFF were identified the SAN MARCO Marines. They have naval rank and wear naval insignia. Although their proper function is in combined operations, during the present war, they were employed mainly as port defense troops or to man coast defense guns or as ordinary infantry, which latter role was theirs on the Beach-head. Regiment in strength comprises three Bns of four companies, each about 120 men, organized into three platoons.

Numbers as Passwords - Sturm Regiment used numbers as passwords. If number "15" is the number, the guard will call any number from one to fourteen, and the approaching person will then give the number to make the total "15". Ex: Guard - "10", person "5".

Intelligence Summary (Cont'd).

For the Commanding Officer

James H. Legendre Jr.
JAMES H. LEGENDRE JR.

Capt FA

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