

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
640TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

23 April 1945

SUBJECT: Periodic Unit Report.

TO : Third Army (Attention Historian)
(Through Channels)

1 Mar 45. Companies dug in in close support of the infantry. Intermittent shell fire falling on company gun positions on the line, no casualties. Bn Fwd CP (consisting of; Bn CO, S-2, S-3, and Ron Off) moved from DIEBLING to BEHMENS.

2 Mar 45. Co A 3rd platoon moved lat section up to gun positions overlooking the highway between STRENG-WENDELL and FORDACH. 1st platoon of Co B moved to 100 yds east of SPICHEREN. This brought them off the line where they had been under almost constant mortar and artillery fire for 6 days. To date this platoon has suffered 9 casualties and received 2 replacements. 2nd platoon of Co B is in indirect fire positions 1,000 yds south of STELING. Co C sector quiet.

3 Mar 45. Co A, during today's attack, knocked out; 5 enemy pillboxes, 1 MK3 tank, 1 enemy occupied house, 2 large caliber guns (type unknown), 1 80mm gun, and 1 MG nest. Co B had no action in their sector during the attack. At 0130 Hrs, Cpl E J KILYS 31286277 of Co C was killed by mortar fire. Co C 3rd platoon knocked out 1 enemy MG nest and 1 enemy half track. Today the Bn CO received a commendation from CG 70th Inf Div on the close support of his troops by the Bn. At 1500 Hrs Cpl COCRAN, Co A, 3rd platoon, was wounded by enemy artillery fire. During the daylight hours today, several 12th Armd Div tanks moved into ready positions in BEHMENS. This seemed to have drawn heavy shell fire which fell in the town during the night. There were no casualties or damage at the Bn Fwd CP. During the afternoon 1 of several AAF bombers making runs on SAARBRUCK strong bombs on our lines by error. No damage or casualties were sustained by our guns in this vicinity.

4 Mar 45. Co A 3rd platoon underwent heavy shelling during the day. Co B sector quiet. Co C 2nd platoon received enemy mortar fire during the morning. This platoon fired on the town of MARENNEAU, knocking out an enemy MG and 1 enemy tank (positive identification of the tank cannot be made until the infantry advance to it). Commendation from Gen BARNETT to Bn, via Lt ROBERTS, IO, form G3 journal. Commendation reads as follows: 1620 3 Mar 45, from Gen BARNETT (through 274th Inf) to G3 (Col TOWNSEND). Gen BARNETT "I am at 274th Inf, things are going all right. I want you to get the TD Bn CO and compliment him on what his people are doing by direct fire. He has been a big help as he has been knocking out these pillboxes with direct fire." Col STEVENS was to be notified that the Div CG was very pleased with work done by personnel of his unit with 274th Inf, on direct fire on pillboxes. BEHMENS (location of Bn Fwd CP) received some shelling from enemy artillery during the night. No damage was done.

5 Mar 45. Co A 3rd platoon 1st Sec. knocked out 2 MG nests and 1 track laying vehicle (not a tank). They also spotted targets for artillery by firing on strong points which artillery came in on and destroyed. Co B 2nd platoon fired indirect (harrassing) into SAARBRUCK. Co C 3rd platoon fired into HORBACH, knocking out enemy MG nest in church steeple. Co C 2nd platoon fired into MARENNEAU, knocking out 1 track laying vehicle (type unknown).

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Periodic Unit Report (Contd)

Col WHEATON, Capt KNOWLES, and Lt. HITT, 16TD Group visited Fwd CP. Col STEVENS, En CO, took them to Co CPs and gun positions. Col WHEATON was very pleased with the work of the En. Fwd CP received slight shelling during the night. No damage.

6. Mar 45. Col STEVENS remained in CP during the morning to confer with staff officers and Co Comdrs, also to discuss orders on commissioned battle promotions. Co A 3rd platoon knocked out 1 enemy MG nest in Vic of STERENG-WENDELL. Co B 2nd platoon fired indirect on the town of BREBACH. Their Fwd observer was Capt THOMAS, Co C 275th Inf. The target, a large factory was demolished. The Fwd observer was very pleased with the firing and made an inspection of Co B 2nd plat FDC. He was quite surprised to find it run by only one man at the time of firing (Sgt BAUER). This plat is now receiving fire missions Co C 275th Inf and from 883rd FA. Co C, during the night, moved 3rd platoon back to rest area and replaced them with 1st platoon. 3rd platoon had been under fire almost constantly for 13 days and had done a very good job, receiving a letter of commendation from 276th Inf Rgt CO. This platoon is led by 1st Lt DOWD. 2nd platoon Co C moved 1/2 Sec north of EMMERSWILLER in close support of Inf. This platoon has also taken a lot of shelling and done a splendid job under the command of 2nd Lt G E LEDDER. LO, Lt CALLON, of 691st TD Bn (T); contacted this CP today and conferred with Col STEVENS! The 691st TD Bn is attached to 26th Inf Div, which will be relieved by the 65th Div on 7 Mar 45. Today is the second anniversary of the activation of the 648th TD Bn.

7 Mar 45. Co A 3rd platoon fired on fortified factory and blasted a hole in wall for Inf entrance. Also fired on house that had MG in it. All this firing done in the Vic of STERENG-WENDELL.

Co B 1st plat sector all quiet. 2nd platoon fired indirect into SAARBRUCK and destroyed 2 enemy personnel carriers, a RR junction, and an oil dump at BREBACH. Also silenced an enemy artillery battery north of SAARBRUCK at a range of 13,500 yds. 3rd plat, no action in sector.

Co C had no action in it's sector.

8 Mar 45. Co A 3rd plat fired HE at a flack tower, extent of damage unknown.

Co B 2nd plat still in indirect fire positions. At 2200 Hrs fired a star shells at the request of artillery, which said the results were very good. 3rd plat received fire mission on 2 locomotives in ST JOHANN! Mission accom;lished. In the afternoon OP sent down word that enemy personnel seen on road would make good target. Plat fired on target for a half hour with good results.

Co C sector quiet. 1 plat moving back to indirect fire positions at ST NICHOLAS.

9 Mar 45. Orders have been issued by Gen BARNETT (CG 70th Div) for the Div to defend in present positions, reorganize and be prepared to resume the attack on order.

Co A fired HE at; factory, water tower, blockhouse, and brick wall 1 crew knocked a hole in a stone wall to permit Inf to enter a fortified area. The hole was covered by MG fire immediately.

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Periodic Unit Report (Contd)

Co B 2nd platoon fired indirect on a train and other targets in SAARBRUCK. A house used as enemy OP was knocked down. A concentration of 2 volleys was fired on a bridge in SAARBRUCK. 3rd plat had a self inflicted casualty, gun commander states that it was accidental.

10 Mar 45. Co A received commendation in writing from CO 274th Rgt indorsed by Gen BARNETT; on the splendid work they did in the past and the close support they gave to the Inf to whom they were attached. 1st Plat Co A fired indirect to mark targets w/Smk for observation plane. Also fired at enemy MG nest with good results. Observation made by artillery Fwd OP.

Co B 2nd plat fired indirect. 1 mission on tiger tank, registering 5 hits at a range of 11700 yds. Range was so great that 155s were brought in on target to be sure it was knocked out. Several buildings in BREBACH, housing enemy personnel were fired on and set on fire.

Co C 3rd plat fired indirect, marking targets for artillery and harrassin fire in conjunction with 884th FA Bn.

11 Mar 45. Co A 1st plat fired HE indirect (Harrassing) and APC at concrete building housing enemy with good results.

Co B 2nd plat fired indirect (Harrassing) during the night and during the day knocked out 1 enemy MG nest.

Co C 3rd plat fired HE indirect on targets of opportunity.

During the last few days the 70th Div has been on the defensive, in that they are dug in on a line and are holding the ground they have already gained. The Bn has 2 platoons per company on the line in direct fire positions and one per company in indirect fire positions. Today 70th Div CP moved from ST JEAN RHORBACK to FREYMLING. At 2200 Hrs Col STEVENS received a telephone call from 70th Div to report to G-3 at 0830 in the morning.

12 Mar 45. Co A 2nd plat fired HE at concrete buildings housing enemy personnel. 3rd platoon fired indirect (harrassing).

Co B 2nd plat fired at enemy tank which they had immobilized yesterday. They enemy was attempting to recover the tank. 3rd plat fired at several RR cars (tank). Punctured holes in several but started no fires.

Co C 3rd plat fired indirect at targets of opportunity with observation by Ren plat in KLIENROSSLIN. Ren officer reports the destruction of small enemy ammo dump during firing. Rest of Co in direct fire positions in support of Inf. All sectors quiet.

Col STEVENS received order from 70th Div to move 1 Co over on left flank to relieve Co C 822 TD Bn. Col called a meeting of S-3, S-4, S-1, CO Co B, and CO Co C to explain that Co B would pull out of present position and move to new position relieving Co C 822 TD Bn. Maj BRKILLA? Bn S-3, was to go along with Co B. The question of supply was taken up with Capt VAUGHN, S-4, Co A will spread out their guns on a longer line and all indirect fire positions will come out, with the exception of Co C which will be used for indirect fire and as a reserve in case of a breakthrough by the enemy (1 platoon only).

13 Mar 45. All Co sectors quiet. Co B moved to DIFFERTON this morning and is now attached to 101st Cav Group. 2nd Ren Plat is with Co B.

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Unit Periodic Report (Contd)

14 Mar 45. All Co Sectors quiet. Enemy has dropped back to the SAAR river and Companies are preparing to move forward to new positions

15. Mar 45. Hq & Hq Co moved to new location at ROSBROCK. Companies making reconnaissance for Fwd positions overlooking the SAAR river.

Co A fired indirect, destroying 2 houses containing enemy personnel and destroyed one fuel dump in SAARBRUCK.

Co B 1st and 2nd platoons deployed as Inf along a line from WADGASSEN to slag piles east of HOSTENBACH, a distance of about 2,000yd. This group, known as Maj ERKKILA's Task Force, suffered 2 casualties. One man was killed by an enemy mine and one was severely injured by enemy artillery fire. 4 men of the 3rd platoon fired 240 rds indirect (harrassing) at targets south of BONS.

Co C had no action in their sector.

16 Mar 45. Co A 3rd platoon fired 201 rds HE & 3 rds APC at 5 pillboxes. Actual damage difficult to determine. Enemy returned fire with MGs and mortars, no damage to personnel. Reconnaissance made for positions in Vic of GERSHWEILLER. Positions will be occupied at night.

Co B 2nd plat guns dug in at SPURK. 1st plat dug in at HOSTENBACH. 3rd plat being held in reserve at SCHAFFENHAUSEN, location of Co CP. 2nd plat guns with a one man crew and one Sgt in charge are firing indirect at enemy positions across the SAAR river from the 1st and 2nd platoons. 1 gun Sgt wounded today by enemy mortar fire while directing mortar fire on enemy positions. 1 officer acted as FDC.

Co C reconitered positions for the 2nd plat in Vic of FURSTENHAUSEN. This plat now in Vic of CLARENTHAL. 1st plat being held in reserve.

17 Mar 45. Co A 3rd plat was able to place 1 gun in position along the SAAR river in Vic of GERSHWEILLER early this morning. They fired a few rds and immediately received counter battery so heavy and accurately placed that the crew was forced to leave the Vic of the gun. 1st plat fired HE & APC at 5 pillboxes, 19 enemy houses and 1 snipers nest. Resulting damage undetermined.

Co B released from attachment to 101st Cav Group. They are moving into GROSBLIEDERSTROFF tonight and tomorrow will move to old Co CP at LIXINGEN. They will shower and get the men rested from their experiences with the 101st Cav Group, where they had been used as Inf on the line. With half of a Ren plat they held a line across the SAAR river from VOLKINGEN with no support ahead of them or behind them. During this period they fired 4 guns indirect fire with only 4 men and 1 Sgt on the guns. 1 officer acted as FDC.

Co C reconitered sector today for positions along the SAAR river to fire into VOLKINGEN and WALSTAFF. Enemy mortar and artillery fire were so heavy that the contemplated gun positions couldn't be occupied at this time. Holes will be blown for the guns and if possible occupied at night.

18 Mar 45. Co A 2nd plat fired HE & APC at 4 enemy houses containing snipers and destroyed 1 oil tank. 3rd plat has all guns in new position overlooking the SAAR river in the Vic of GERSHWEILLER.

Co B CP is set up in LIXINGEN. 3rd plat is being set up at AIRSTED and guns will go into old positions. 2nd plat CP is being set up at SPICHEREN and all guns will go into positions as soon as they have been selected. 1st platoon will fire indirect from ROUHLING.

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Periodic Unit Report (Contd)

Co C moved. 1st and 2nd platoons CPs in CLARENTHAL and guns will go into position as soon as they can be placed safely. 3rd platoon has been set up at FURSTENHAUSEN and guns are going into position.

19 Mar 45. Companies dug in and awaiting further orders from Div. All companies engaged in improving positions.

20 Mar 45. Co A 1st plat fired HE & APC today knocking out 6 enemy pillboxes. 2nd platoon fired HE & APC neutralizing 4 enemy pillboxes and fired into a factory. 3rd plat fired indirect. They got 1 direct hit on an 88mm gun, knocking it out.

Co B 1st plat should not fire because of poor observation. 2nd pl fired direct on pillboxes and personnel south of SAARBRUCK. This plato suffered 2 casualties; 1 officer (Lt RISHE) and EM. 3rd plat fired dir on pillboxes neutralizing them, assisting the Inf in the attack.

Co C did not fire any ammunition during the period.

21 Mar 45 to 24 Mar 45. All companies performing first echelon maintenance on equipment and personall while awaiting further orders from Division.

25 Mar 45. Battalion moved from ROSBRUCH on Div order to vicinity of WESELBERG. Order of March; Adv Det. Co B, Co C, Co A, Hqs Co.

26 Mar to 31 Mar 45. Companies performing first echelon maintenance and screening the small towns in the vicinity of WESELBERG in which they are located. All companies also carrying on small arms firing for training. On 31 Mar 45 a verbal order was received by the battalion detaching it from the 70th Inf. Div.

Jack ERKKILA, Maj, Inf (TD)
S-3
648th TD Bn (T)

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