

*Comp. Campbell
K4*

HEADQUARTERS
656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U. S. ARMY

7 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D.C.
(Attention: Historical Section)
(Thru Channels)

1. In compliance with AR 345-105, 18 November 1929, as changed by Change 4, dated 10 August 1944, the After Action Report of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion for the period 1 - 30 April 1945 is forwarded herewith.

For the Commanding Officer:

Victor A. Stefanowicz
VICTOR A. STEFANOWICZ
Captain, S-2
Historian

- 2 Incls.
1. After Action Report 656 TD Bn
2. Maps

609-632

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:

CANCELLED

BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Paul G. Zuber Maj DGO 7 Feb 46
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE

NOV 27 1945
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656TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, U. S. ARMY

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

Section I

1. Campaign (Current Campaign in Western Europe)
2. Map References:- GSGS 4416, Sheets Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, R6 and R7.
3. Unit Commanders of Troops:-
 - Bn CO - Lt Col John C. Meador
 - Hq Co CO - Capt Charles D. Driscoll
 - Rcn Co CO - 1st Lt Lawrence R. Beard
 - A Co CO - Capt Clarence M. Thieme
 - B Co CO - Capt Archie S. Benegar
 - C Co CO - Capt Richard H. Tuggle

Section II

Statistical Data

a. Personnel Losses:

Date	KIA		DOI		WIA		MIA		CAPT		NBC	
	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM
1 Apr 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
12	0	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Personnel Losses (Cont'd)

Date	KIA		DOI		WIA		MIA		CAPT		NBC	
	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM	O	EM
21 Apr 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

b. Personnel Replacements:-

Date	O	EM	Date	O	EM	Date	O	EM
1 Apr 45	0	0	11 Apr 45	0	0	21 Apr 45	0	0
2	0	0	12	0	0	22	0	0
3	0	0	13	0	8	23	0	0
4	0	1	14	0	0	24	0	0
5	0	0	15	0	0	25	0	0
6	0	0	16	0	0	26	0	3
7	0	0	17	0	0	27	0	4
8	0	8	18	0	0	28	0	0
9	0	4	19	0	0	29	0	0
10	1	0	20	0	0	30	0	0

c. PWs Taken - 381.

Approximately 200 civilians were turned in to
CIC for screening.

d. Vehicular Losses:-

Date	1/4-T	3/4	11/2	21/2	10	M8	M20	M32	M36	Trailers		
										1-T	M10	1/4
Apr 45												
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

e. Vehicular Replacements:-

Date	1/4-T	3/4	11/2	21/2	10	M8	M20	M32	M36	Trailers		
										1-T	M10	1/4
Apr 45												
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

f. Ammunition Expended:

90mm HE
218

90mm APC
4

37mm HE
42

3

Section III

The Battalion CP, Headquarters Company and C Company remained in the open field 500 yards North of NEU BERICH (B935113) during the period 010001A to 012400A April 1945. At 1200A the Bn mail clerk reported to the Bn CP on his return from 9th Armd Div, Rear. During the trip the mail clerk took two enemy prisoners and turned them over to an MP. Slit trenches were dug by personnel. No other activity took place at the bivouac area on the 1st of April 1945.

CCB of the 9th Armd Div continued to attack North in its zone of action 1 April 1945. A Company attached to CCB supported the attack. The 1st Plat attached to the 52nd Armd Inf Bn had the 1st section supporting Company B of the 52nd Armd Inf Bn and the 2nd section support Company C of the same organization. In the advance to the North, the 1st section delivered indirect fire on a suspected gun emplacement in the vicinity of EISSEN (B990316). The fire was adjusted by an artillery FO. Due to the distance at which the enemy gun was taken under fire and the difficulty of observing the burst, fire had to be discontinued without any definite results observed. A total of 20 rounds were expended. The 2nd section fired a direct preparation on the town of GROSSENENDER (B986-290). A total of 25 rounds were fired from a range of about 1000 yards after which the supported infantry advanced and took the town. At the completion of these actions one section moved to and occupied positions at PECKELSHEIM (B964342) and the other section moved to and occupied positions at SCHONTHAL (C003338). The 2nd Platoon moved to the vicinity of LOWEN (946320) with a mission of covering the cross road at (B926-319). The 3rd Plat moved to HOHENWEPEL (B971270). The company CP departed from WETHEN (931223) 1000A and arrived at HOHENWEPEL at 1100A.

CCA with B Company, 656th TD Bn, attached continued the attack to the North against moderate resistance, enlarging the bridgehead across the DIEMEL R. B Company with the three platoons under company control had the mission of providing the security for the Combat Command A, at WARBURG (B9822), 1 April 1945. At 1330A verbal orders were received to move to LUGENEDER (C019278) to take up defensive position at the perimeter of the town. The Co CP moved to DOSSEL (B993258) arriving there at 1400A. Effective 1430A one platoon, the 3rd, was detached from Company control and reverted to Div control. The 3rd Plat was given the mission of securing VOLKMARSEN (B960685) and the 9th Armd Div CP in that town. B Co did not see any action against enemy 1 April 1945.

C Co remained in position 1 April 1945 in the vicinity of NEU BERICH providing security for Division Trains.

The Bn S-2 left the Bn CP at 021415A April and moved to VOLKMARSEN. At 1435A the Bn CO visited the CP and gave the information that 9th Armd Div CP was moving to WARBURG (B980220). The Bn S-3 was directed to formulate plans to

move the Bn (- A & B) to WARBURG. The Bn CO after inspecting C Company's gun positions returned to 9th Armd Div. At about 1800A two enemy planes flew over the area. The planes were taken under fire. Results could not be observed since the planes flew into the low overcast.

CCB had taken up defensive positions 2 April 1945. A Company's Platoons were disposed in the following towns: one section 1st Plat at PECKELSHEIM (B964341) and one section at SCHONTHAL (E003338), 2nd Plat at LOWEN (B946320), 3rd Plat at HOHENWEPPEL (B971270). All three platoons had taken up AT positions in the vicinity of the above mentioned towns. At about 021000B April the 2nd Platoon's position was taken under fire by enemy foot troops. The fire was returned with small arms and the enemy withdrew. One officer and five enemy enlisted men were taken prisoners in this action. There was no enemy action in any of the other platoon positions. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons reverted to Company control.

The 1st and 2nd Platoons remained at LUTGENDER (C019278). There was no enemy action in this locality. The 3rd Plat under Div control moved from VOLKMARSEN (B961134) to WARBURG (B980220) providing security for the Div CP on the march. Upon arriving at WARBURG the 3rd Plat took up positions covering the roads leading into WARBURG.

Two enemy planes flew over the Div Trains' area 2 April which was being secured by C Co. The planes were taken under fire but results could not be observed. Otherwise there was no enemy activity.

A Bn billeting party left the field at NEU BERICH under command of the Bn S-1 030725B April for WARBURG! At 0842B the CP group, Hq Co and C Co were alerted for movement. The Bn CP closed at NEU BERICH at 1000B and joined Div Trains column for the road march to WARBURG. After an uneventful road march the destination was reached. The Bn CP opened at WARBURG at 1130B. Since the Div CP moved out of VOLKMARSEN, the town, astride the Div MSR, was left devoid of friendly troops. The 2nd Recon Plat attached to C Co was assigned a mission of establishing a motor patrol through the town. The 2nd Plat was in position and performing its assignment at 2330B.

There was no activity in A Cos 1st and 3rd Platoons 3 April 1945. Enemy patrols were sighted in the vicinity of 2nd Plat position. Three enemy were sighted in vicinity of CR at B926319 at 1940B and were taken under fire with MGs. The enemy were observed to fall. There was no other activity after that incident.

B Cos 1st and 2nd Platoons remained in their previously mentioned positions 2 April. There was no enemy activity in either of the platoon positions. The 3rd Plat under Division control left VOLKMARSEN (B961135) at 1350B accompanying the Division to WARBURG (B980220). The Plat arrived at its des-

tinuation at 1400B and took up positions covering the roads leading into the town.

The 1st and 3rd Platoons of Co C remained in position in vicinity of the Div Trains 500 yards N of NEU BERICH (B935105) 3 April 1945. 12 infantrymen were attached to the 3rd Plat. The 2nd Plat was in road block positions at VOLKMARSEN. Two squads of Inf were attached to the 2nd Plat as protection against enemy foot elements. The attached 2nd Rcn Plat set up a road block covered with a 37mm and bazookas at HERBSEN (B917-154). This platoon was the only friendly element in that vicinity until about 2400B when elements of the 2nd Inf Div arrived. At 0230B, C Co was alerted for movement to WARBURG at 1000B. The three platoons assembled in the vicinity of VOLKMARSEN at 1230B and proceeded to WARBURG where previously reconnoitered positions were occupied. Liaison was established between Co C and the 89th Rcn Squadron. At 1800B the attached Rcn Plat was given the mission of patrolling the MSR through VOLKMARSEN. This was done by having a two jeep patrol go through the town every fifteen minutes. The 2nd Rcn Plat reported "in position and performing mission" at 2330B.

At 040800B April 1945 the 656 TD Bn (- A & B) was relieved from attachment to Div Trains and reverted to Div control. In addition, the 1st and 3rd Rcn Plat (reverted to 1) were detached from A and B Cos respectively and reverted to Bn control. The 656 TD Bn (- A & B) was given the mission of providing security for the Div CP. In order to do this the Rcn Platoons attached to gun companies were detached and Rcn Co was reconstituted. One platoon of TDs (2nd C Co) was attached to Div Trains to provide security for that element. In order to make up the loss of the TD Plat, one Plat of light tanks (1st Plat, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn) was attached to C Co. The Rcn Plat assembled at WARBURG (B980220) by 1100B. After spending about 2 hours on the cleaning of arms and material the platoons moved to the perimeter of the town where outposts were established. Enemy aircraft were taken under fire by Rcn Plat guns at 1130B but results were not observed. Rcn Co CP was established at WARBURG.

Enemy ground activity in A Cos sector dwindled to sporadic small arms fire. Enemy planes flew over the 2nd Plat area at LOWEN (B946320) strafed and dropped one bomb. No casualties in men or materiel were suffered. All other elements of A Co remained inactive.

At 041400B April the 3rd Plat, B Co, was relieved from Div control. The platoon left WARBURG at 1430B and rejoined the company at LUTGENENDER (C015275). The 1st and 2nd Platoons remained in place.

One Plat of TDs (2nd) was detached from C Co and attached to Div trains in order to provide security on the march and in bivouac for that unit. This platoon however did not move from its position. To make up the loss of the 2nd Plat, one plat (1st) Co D, 14th Tank Bn, was attached to C Co. Several times during the day enemy aircraft flew over the platoon positions. 6

Planes were fired on but due to the low overcast results could not be observed.

In order to provide the Div CP with security on the march, plans were drawn up which amounted to: attachment of the light tank platoon to Rcn Co; Rcn Co reconnoitering the main road and two parallel roads along the axis of advance and C Co indisposed in the column with the main body. Upon reaching the destination, all elements would move to the perimeter of town and set up outposts. Through the aid of 9th Armd Div two M-36s were secured. One, each, went to B and C Cos respectively. These light tanks were drawn in addition to M-20s in the organization. One light tank was assigned to each of the gun companies.

Rcn Co continued with the mission of securing the town 5 April 1945. Since the rapid advance of our forces cut off large and disorganized large numbers of enemy units, enemy soldiers discarded their uniforms and moved about in civilian clothes behind our lines. In order to apprehend these individuals orders were received and disseminated to apprehend and search all civilians leaving or entering the town of WARBURG. 36 such individuals were apprehended 5 April 1945. These were turned over to the 9th Armd Div for screening.

There was no activity in A Cos 1st and 3rd Plats' sectors, 5 April 1945. The 2nd Plat moved from the vicinity of LOWEN (B947320) to position in the vicinity of HOHENWEPEL (B970270). The area was strafed by two enemy planes but no damage was suffered. Time was spent on maintenance of vehicles.

B Co remained in position in the vicinity of LUTGENENDER (C029278) performing maintenance 5 April 1945.

The 1st and 3rd Plats remained in position at WARBURG 5 April 1945. At 1700B the 2nd Plat moved with 9th Armd Div Trains to WORMELN (B970202). The 1st Plat, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, assumed responsibility for the area vacated by the 2nd Plat. Upon reaching its destination the 2nd Plat moved into positions forming a perimeter AT defense for the Division Trains. Enemy aircraft flew over the company area several times during the day and were taken under fire.

Information in reference to the expected displacement by 9th Armd Div was received at the Bn CP 6 April 1945. At a conference between the Bn CO, SX, CO Rcn Co, CO Co C, the final plans for the protection of the Division CP on the march and in bivouac was drawn up. This plan was then presented to Division and accepted. Routine visits to companies were made by the SX and staff officers.

Elements of CCB moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of LONDAU (B938057) and WOLFHAGEN (B999040), in preparation for an attack to the East. A Co accompanied its Combat Command in this move. The 1st Plat departed from SCHONTHAL (C004339) at 060100B April 1945 and arrived at BUHLE (B950300) at 1930B. The 7

1st Plat was relieved from attachment to the 52nd Armd Inf Bn 1700B and reverted to company control. The 2nd and 3rd Plats and the Co CP departed from HOFENWEPPEL (B970270) 0600B and arrived at BUHLE 0900B. The platoons, upon arriving at BUHLE, moved to the outskirts of town and set up a perimeter AT defense.

In preparation for the attack to the East B Co moved S with its Combat Command. B Co departed from LUTGENEDER (CO19-278) and arrived at WETTESINGEN (CO07180) at 1530B. The Co CP moved from DOSSEL (B992258) 1500B and arrived at WETTESINGEN at 1600B. Since CCA established its CP in the same town, Co's platoons moved to the perimeter of town and established an AT defense.

The 1st, 3rd Plats, Co CP, C Co, remained at WARBURG 6 April 1945. There was no enemy activity of any sort. 2nd Plat remained at WOHLELN (B970278) providing security for the Div Trains.

There was no unusual activity in the Bn CP 7 April 45. Routine staff functions were carried out. Routine visits to companies were made by the Bn CO and Executive Officer.

Rcn Co continued to perform the security mission at WARBURG. There were no changes in position or disposition.

Companies A, B & C remained in place 7 April 1945.

Advance information on the movement of the Bn (- A & B) was received at the Bn CP at 081023B April 1945. Rcn Co was assigned the mission of making a route reconnaissance to SIMMERSHAUSEN (B239097) and to check OBERSCHIEDEN for possible billets. Other normal staff functions were also carried on.

Rcn Co continued with the assigned mission of securing WARBURG 8 April 1945. A total of 22 prisoners were picked up at the outposts and delivered to CIC, 9th Armd Div. The Rcn Co CO was given the mission of reconnoitering the road from WARBURG to SIMMERSHAUSEN. The mission was duly performed and a report rendered on the findings. One additional light tank was received by Rcn Co this date. This tank replaced the Co CO's M-20.

A Co remained in place 8 April 1945 awaiting CCB's movement to the E. Maintenance of arms and equipment was carried on through the day.

B Co departed from WETTESINGER (CO07180) at 081530B April with CCA. The mission during the march was to furnish the security for CCA CP. Upon arriving at the destination, OBERSCHIEDEN (C389199) at 2345B, the company moved to the perimeter of the town and set up an AT defense. There was no enemy action during the march.

C Co (- 2nd Plat) remained at WARBURG providing security 8 April 1945.

The Bn CP closed at WARBURG (B928217) 090730B April and

joined the Div CP column in the move towards the East. After an uneventful march the destination, OBERSCHEDEN was reached. The Bn CP opened at 1100B at the new location. The Bn CO visited the Div CP and upon his return the following changes were made. Effective 1300B C Co (- 1 Plat) was attached to CCR. The 1st Plat Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, was detached from C Co and attached to Rcn Co. One plat from A Co was detached from CCB and reverted to Bn control. One plat from B Co was detached from CCA and reverted to Bn control. A and B Cos were notified to dispatch the platoons to OBERSCHEDEN. Upon arrival the platoon leaders were oriented as to their new mission. The two new platoons took up their positions in locations vacated by C Co's platoons.

Rcn Co departed WARBURG 090600B April with the mission of reconnoitering the main route and parallel roads from WARBURG to OBERSCHEDEN. The road reconnaissance was completed without incident. Upon arriving at OBERSCHEDEN 1100B Rcn Co proceeded to outpost the town. At 1300B the 1st Plat, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, was detached from C Co and attached to Rcn Co. Three prisoners were taken, 2 by the 2nd Plat, and one by the 1st Plat. Prisoners were taken to the Div PWE.

CCB departed from the assembly area 9 April and headed towards the East. A Co left HOHENWEPPEL (B971270) 090600B April. Prior to the move the following attachments were made: 1st Plat attached to 52nd Armd Inf Bn, 2nd Plat under company control, 3rd Plat attached to the 19th Tank Bn. Upon completion of the road march the 1st Plat took up positions at GROVE (C501287), the 2nd Plat and Co Hq at DRAMSFELD (C408250), the 3rd Plat at HELGERSHAUSEN (C478286).

At 091130B A Co was notified to send the 2nd Plat to OBER SCHEDEEN. The 2nd Plat was attached to the Bn CP. Upon arriving at OBERSCHEDEN and after an orientation by the S-3 the platoon leader moved his platoon to positions vacated by C Co.

Co B departed from OBER SCHEDEEN at 091000B in a movement to the East. After an uneventful road march the company closed at VOLKERODE (C474212) at 1930B. At 1300B the 3rd Plat came under Bn control.

C Co (- 1st Plat) departed WARBURG with the Div CP column. The mission of C Co was to provide march security for the Div CP. After an uneventful march the company arrived at OBER SCHEDEEN and moved to defensive position at the perimeter of town. At 1300B C Co (- 1 Plat) was attached to CCR and ordered to move to LIPPOLDSHAUSEN (C387152). C Co departed OBER SCHEDEEN at 1330B and arrived at its destination at 1500B. The march was uneventful. Upon reporting to the Combat Command CP the Co CO was informed that he was attached to the 3rd Bn, 273rd Inf, 69th Div. which was the main element of Task Force Shaunnesy. The other elements comprising TF Shaunnesy were: 1 Plat of tanks from the 777th Tank Bn and one Plat of TDs from C Co, 661 TD Bn. The march was resumed and the company arrived at GERTENBACH (C439108) at 1830B. Upon reporting to

the Task Force CP at GERTENBACH, the CO C Co was informed that the plat of tanks was attached to his company. The remainder of the day was spent on maintenance of the vehicles.

Upon reaching the LD at the WESER R, the 9th Armd Div attacked in the Corps sector with the three Combat Commands committed. The advance to the East was resumed on 10 April 1945 with Div CP moving along the axis of advance of CCB. Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering and securing the route in advance of the Div CP main body. The Bn was alerted to move at 0830B. The time of departure was changed and the Bn CP plus Hq and Rcn Co and the 2nd Plat, Co A, and 3rd Plat, Co B, did not leave OBER SCHEDEN until 1100B. The road march was uneventful. The Bn elements pulled into a field 800 yards East of GROSS BRUCHTER (D035075) at 1900B. Hq Co did not arrive at the bivouac until 2330B. The plan at that time was to spend the night in the bivouac and resume the march in the morning.

At 100800B April Rcn Co departed from OBER SCHEDEN in continuance of their mission of reconnoitering and securing the road for the Div CP. At 0830B the leading elements of Rcn Co reached the tail end of CCBs elements and halted. After several other halts the company arrived at and secured the bivouac area in the vicinity of GROSS BRUCHTER (D035075) at 1930B. Fifteen prisoners were found in the vicinity of the bivouac. The prisoners were turned over to an MP for internment to the Div PW enclosure.

A Co continued the road march Eastward 10 April 1945. The company (- 1 Plat) departed from the vicinity of GRANSFELD and after an uneventful march arrived at KLEINFURRO (D107177) 1900B. The 2nd Plat, A Co, accompanied the Bn and Div CPs.

B Co (- 1 Plat) continued the advance to the East with its Combat Command. B Co left VOLKERODE (H634983) 100800B April 1945 and after an uneventful march arrived at THALEBRA (D139053) at 2400B. The 3rd Plat accompanied the Bn and Div CPs.

C Co advanced to the East with its Combat Command. At approximately 100900B April C Co (- 1 Plat) departed from GERTENBACH (C440110) for an unknown destination. At 2000B C Co arrived at ISSERSHEILINGEN (J035935) and moved to the perimeter of the town and set up an AT defense. There were no incidents of any sort during the march. The 2nd Plat, Co C, moved with Div Trains.

The Eastward march was resumed 11 April 1945. The Bn CP closed at GROSS BRUCHTER (D035075) at 1315B. The Bn column joined Div CP column and moved towards the East. After traveling several miles the column moved into a field 500 yards East of KIRCHENGEL (D220038) at 1500B. Rcn Co, the 2nd Plat /6 B Co, and the 3rd Plat A Co, formed a perimeter defense. Hq Co did not arrive at the field until 1610B. Two prisoners

were taken by a gun section from A Co. The Bn CP departed from the field at KIRCHENGEL and moved to KINDELBRUCH (D340-338). The Bn CP opened at KINDELBRUCH at 1750B. Hq Co while on the move to KINDERBRUCH was bombed and strafed by enemy planes. The planes were taken under fire but results were not evident. Hq Co did not suffer any casualties or damage to equipment.

Rcn Co performed the usual mission of security during the march and at the halts. Rcn Co upon arriving at KINDERBRUCH posted outposts at the perimeter of the town. There were no unusual activities during the march or upon arrival at KINDERBRUCH.

CCB continued its advance to the East 11 April 1945. The 1st and 3rd Plats A Co departed BARNSTADT (D720120) April 1945 and arrived at GROST (D870037) at 1200B. There was no action against the enemy during the march. The Platoon leader of the 1st Plat was evacuated when his arm was broken by a .50 Cal MG which hit a low branch, swung around and hit the platoon leader in the arm. The Plat Sgt assumed command of the Plat. The Co CP moved from KLEINFURNA to EPERSTEDT (D390-110) arriving there at 1300B. The 2nd Plat remained with the Bn CP with the mission of providing security for the Div CP.

At 110300B April while at THREBRA (D120005) the 2nd Plat Co B was attached to the 14th Tank Bn. The 1st Plat was given the mission of providing security for CCA CP, provide the advance guard during the march and maintain contact with the 14th Tank Bn. The Co CP remained with the 1st Plat. CCA continued the advance to the East against negligible opposition. While approaching SACHENBURG (D390045) elements of the 14th Tank Bn ran into a strong enemy force at 1500B. The tanks deployed in the field West of town with the TDs to the rear in support. The position occupied was under high velocity fire from the high ground East of LOCHENBERG. Mortar fire was also falling in the area. The 1st Plat took two OPs under fire and after expending 16 rounds both targets were destroyed. The company commander requested to fire on a third OP but the request was denied. One man was slightly injured by mortar fire. At 1700B the 2nd Plat was detached from the 14th Tank Bn and attached to the 60th Armd Inf Bn. The 1st Plat was also attached to the 60th Armd Inf Bn. The platoons spent the remainder of the evening and night in the field West of SUCHENBURG. Intermittent high velocity fire fell most of the night.

C Co (- 1 Plat) with Task Force Shaunnesy departed ISERSHEILINGEN 1115B in the movement to the East. The method of employment was as follows: TD Platoons would lead off at the head of the task force column on the resumption of the march. Upon reaching a town the TDs would move to the flank sectors of town and take up firing positions. The Task Force would then proceed through the town when the column passed through, the TDs would proceed to the head of the Task Force where the advance guard role was resumed. Upon reaching the next town the procedure would be repeated. Enemy air was very active, 11 April 1945. Planes were fired on by all TDs but no planes

were knocked down. C Co (- 1 Plat) arrived at ROLDISLEBEN (J550925) at 1800B where it bivouacked for the night.

The Bn CP accompanying Div CP moved out of HINDERBRUCK (D340338) into an open field North of the town. The position was occupied until 1300 when the march was resumed. The column pulled into a field at D473103 where it remained until 1700B. The march was then resumed. Div and Bn CP moved into a field S of STEIGA (E744072) where it bivouacked for the night.

Rcn Co left HINDERBRUCK at 120730B April and moved to the high ground North of town. This area was secured in anticipation of the occupation by the Div CP group. Upon resumption of the march Rcn Co moved out to perform its road reconnaissance mission. The platoon of light tanks attached to Rcn was detached to the 2d and 3rd Rcn Plats. The Liaison Officer acting as a billeting officer accompanied the 3rd Rcn Plat. During the road Rcn mission the platoons moved through towns that were by-passed by elements of CCB. In the town of ROSSLEBEN (D525062) the 3rd Plat took 31 prisoners. One was killed while trying to escape. The towns of WENDEISTEIN (D602043) and KLEIN WAGEN (D659040) were also cleared. An airplane factory was taken intact in the town of KLEIN WAGEN. During the halt in the field at (D473103) Rcn Co performed the usual perimeter security mission. After departing from the field at D473103 and securing the proposed Div CP Group bivouac area and the 2nd Plat took 15 prisoners. Rcn Co Hq section took eight prisoners that day.

The advance was resumed 12 April by CCB. While proceeding along the road between SCHAFSTALL (D810170) and BAD LAUCKSTADT (D875175) tanks of Co B, 19th Tank Bn, were taken under fire by 88mm guns AA guns. These guns were being used against foot troops and armored vehicles. The 3rd Plat in support of Co B, 19th Tank Bn, followed directly behind the rear tank of Co B. Four of the tanks preceeding the leading destroyer were hit. The leading destroyer of the 3rd Plat was also hit by an 88mm HE shell. Two men were killed, two injured seriously, also one crewman was injured lightly. The man who received slight injuries returned to duty after receiving treatment. During the fight all eight guns were either destroyed or the crews surrendered. The Column then continued and went into a bivouac in the vicinity of BARNSTADT (D720120).

The intermittent shelling ceased at about 120045B April 1945. B Co departed from SACHENBURG (D390045) at 1015B moving in an Easterly direction. The 1st Plat and Co Hq marched with 60th Armd Inf Bn and the 2nd Plat with 14th Tank Bn. Co B (- 1 Plat) after an uneventful march went into bivouac in an open field in the vicinity of ZUCHFELD (D085508) at 130300B April.

C Co departed from ROLDISLEBEN (J550925) 12 April with Task Force Shaunnesy. Five tanks of 772nd TD Bn attached to the company were lost during the road march on account of mechanical failures. One company of Inf was carried on the

TDs. The company moved to UNTERNESSA DIPPELSDORF (J995920) arriving there at 1930B. The Task Force moved out again at 2130B trailing Task Force Devers until a driver in 27th Armd Inf Bn fell asleep West of ZEITZ (D085815). Elements of the Task Force halted in place. Time shell fire was delivered on the column but no casualties or damage was suffered by C Co.

The Bn CP closed at STEIGRA (E744072) 131150B April and accompanied the Div CP to a field at (J950905), where it remained until 1700B. After being alerted for movement at 1645B elements of the Bn CP moved on to the road. The march was resumed at 1700B. A billeting party was dispatched to HOHENMOLSEN (F050930) in anticipation of setting up the CP there. Upon arrival at HOHENMOLSEN the CP opened at 1800B.

In anticipation of a move to the S Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering a route to NAUMBERG (J845915). The 3rd Plat moved out of its position at STEIGRA at 130800B April to perform the route reconnaissance. The mission was accomplished without incident. Upon the resumption of the march by the Div CP group, Rcn Co preceded the column providing advance security. Upon movement into the field at J950905 Rcn Co took up the usual position setting up perimeter security outposts. The 1st Rcn Plat while performing a route reconnaissance in the vicinity of KOSSLITZ- WLEDEBACH (J965-940) received direct 88mm fire. The leading vehicle, a light tank, took the gun under fire. After securing several hits, the 88mm gun emplacement burst into flames setting off the ammunition store. The 2nd 88mm gun, located nearby was also taken under fire and knocked out. A total of 20 rounds of 37mm HE was expended. In the afternoon of the same day, Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering the road network towards HOHENMOLSEN. While in the vicinity of LANGENDORF (J954950) the platoon (- M20s) and attached light tanks was taken under small arms fire. The fire was resumed. Four enemy were killed and 10 were taken prisoners. The rest of the road reconnaissance mission was performed without incident.

CCB continued the advance in a general easterly direction against moderate enemy opposition. Most of the enemy opposition in the LEUNA sector came from AA guns depressed to fire on ground forces. The 1st section of the 1st Plat ran into difficulty in the vicinity of NALENDORF (D910040) while supporting A Co, 52nd Armd Inf Bn. Light Inf opposition moderate artillery fire and a considerable amount of high velocity artillery fire constituted the main obstacle. At about 131000B April the 1st Section was requested to take four towers in the vicinity of NALENDORF under fire. All towers were fired on and destroyed. Several buildings were taken under fire also. The supported infantry took the objective by 1115B. The 1st section took 21 prisoners in the vicinity of the action. The 3rd Plat departed from SCHAFSTADT (D810-170) 0630B and arrived in the vicinity D840000. No action against the enemy. The 2nd Plat A Co moved with Div and Bn CPs. The Co CP departed from BARNSTADT and arrived at GROST (D870038) at 1200B.

Co B (- 1 Plat) moved out of ZEUCHFELD (D855008) following CCRs route of advance. The 1st Plat and Co Hq advanced with the 60th Armd Inf while the 2nd advanced with the 14th TankBn. Upon arriving at WERBEN (K136919) the 1st Plat was requested to fire onemplaced 88mm AA guns. The 1st section fired 7rounds and got 3 hits on one gun. The emplacement began to smoke and then burn. The supported tanks took care of three other guns sited nearby. At 1700 the advance continued to GROSS-STORKWITZ (K167974) where after spending about 30 min in that location orders were received from 60 Armd Inf Bn to support 1 Plat of Inf in taking the town of WEIDEROEDA (K165964). The Inf entered the town at 1800B without opposition. The Co rear elements moved from NIBIMITZ to SITTEL (K132992). Upon arrival the town was taken under heavy artillery fire. An ammunition truckfrom the 60th Armd Inf Bn was hit and began to burn. Two men, a T/5 and a Pfc from B Co, and one man fromHq Co exposed themselves to the fire in order to move the burning truckaway from other vehicles that were parked nearby. One prisoner was taken by B Co 13 April 1945.

At 120800B Task Force Shaunnesy advanced towards BEERSDORF (K145920). When about 600 yards from the objective, the entire column was taken under time fire. The Plats deployed and the Inf dismounted from tanks and tank destroyers and assaulted ALTENGROITZ (K170920). The 3rd Plat fired approximately 15 rounds of HE into a high building in ALTENGROITZ which was suspected to be an enemy OP. With the destruction of the building the firing stopped. The Inf then advanced and took the town. The 3rd Plat then supported Co L, 273rd Inf, in an attack on GROITSCH (K175840). From a range of 600 to 900 yards the 3rd Plat fired a preparation of 30 rounds. The areas occupied by our forces were constantly under enemy fire consequently it was necessary to change positions continuously. Upon completion of the preparation the 3rd Plat withdrew to BEERSDORF where it bivouacked for the night. The platoon arrived at BEERSDORF at 1600B. The 2nd Plat, Co C, remained attached to Div Grains at NEBELDITZ (J935885). Four enemy planes bombed BEERSDORF at 1930B. No damage or injuries sustained by C Co.

Normal staff functions were carried on at Bn CP 14 April 1945. The Bn S-3 visited the company positions and returned to the CP at 1927B. Two prisoners were taken in HOHENMOLSEN (K050930) by the S-2 Sgt. Several enemy planes flew over the CP area, were taken under fire but no results were noted. Plans were drawn upfor the reconnaissance of roads in case the march was to be resumed on the morrow. The Rcn Co CO was informed of the details of the plan. The battalion was alerted for the resumption of the march on the following day.

Rcn Co continued to perform the security mission on the perimeter of the town of HOHENMOLSEN. A section of Rcn Co was posted at all roads leading into town. Due to the possibility of resuming the march on the 20th of April, Rcn Co CO

upon visiting the Bn CP was acquainted with the tentative road reconnaissance plan. Seven German soldiers and eight civilians were picked up by the outposts. The prisoners were turned in at the PWE while the civilians were turned over to Div CIC for screening.

CCB continued to advance to the East against moderate resistance. The 1st section, 1st Plat, advancing in support of 52nd Armd Inf Bn in the vicinity of NELLSHUTZ (D0188) was taken under time fire by dug in 88mm AA guns. Two of the four guns were taken under fire. Hits were secured on both guns. Twenty of the enemy crew members were killed. The 2nd Plat remained in the location occupied the day before. The Company rear CP moved from GROST (D870037) to LUCHA (K035970) arriving there at 1100B. The march was uneventful.

Co B remained inactive during the morning hours of 14 April 1945. Time was spent on motor maintenance and repairing of equipment damaged by enemy artillery fire. At 141130B April 1945 the CO Co B departed for CCB Hq. Upon learning the objective of the command the company was assembled and moved out in an easterly direction. From the outset the movement was slow with frequent halts. The column was halted on a hill in the vicinity of PIEGEL (K216953) by heavy and accurate artillery fire. While held up in this position, the Co CO's light tank was used to round up 16 German prisoners in a field near an AA position. An order was received to advance through the zone covered by enemy artillery. Vehicles raced through the zone by infiltration. The column then advanced through KIERITZSCH (K245949). When about 3/4 of a mile past the town the column was again taken under fire by enemy artillery. B Co (- 1 Plat) turned around and returned to KIERITZSCH at 2130B. At 2400 the CoCO was summoned to the CP of CCA at TRACHENAU (K266965) to receive further orders.

While awaiting further orders at BEERSDORF (K145920). 14 April 1945 a Polish PW volunteered information at the Co CP that English, Polish and Russian PWs were in a factory cellar in town. The security sections of the 1st and 3rd Plats under the command of the Co Executive and the attached Rcn Plat leader were sent to investigate. As a result, 19 German enlisted men and 1 officer were taken prisoner and over 100 English paratroopers and 300 Polish and Russian PWs liberated. C Co was alerted to move at 1200B. At 1225B C Co departed from BEERSDORF performing the point mission for Task Force Shaunnesy column. After an uneventful march the company (- 1 Plat) arrived at WEIDENHAIN (K247873) at 1500B and set up road blocks on roads leading into town. At 2300B three Hitler youths were captured. These boys upon questioning, revealed that they were AA gun crew members from ZEITZ. One Plat of tanks from the 777th Tank Bn rejoined the Company. The 2nd Plat of C Co moved with Div Trains. 15

In anticipation of the Div CP's move forward, Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering the road from HOHEN-

MOLSEN to BREITINGEN (K285865). The Bn was alerted to move at 161300B April but the time of departure was changed to 1315B. The Bn CP closed at HOHENMOLSEN 1320B and joined the Div CP group for the march to BREITINGEN. Hq Co remained at HOHENMOLSEN awaiting movement of Div artillery. The Bn CP opened at BREITINGEN at 1715B. Rcn Co and the attached platoons outposted the perimeter of town. At 1730B information was received at the CP that one of the factory chimneys in the outskirts of town was being used as an OP. A section of guns was dispatched to destroy the OP. The report was found to be groundless and the guns returned to their post at the perimeter of town. Hq Co arrived and took up billets at BREITINGEN at 2320B.

At 150830B April Rcn Co received the mission of reconnoitering the road from HOHENMOLSEN to BREITINGEN. The 1st Plat performed the mission without incident. When the Div CP moved out, Rcn Co secured the main route and parallel roads to the destination. Upon arriving at BREITINGEN Rcn Co posted security outposts on the perimeter of town.

The 1st Plat A Co was relieved from attachment to 52nd Armd Inf Bn and reverted to company control; the 3rd Plat was relieved from attachment to the 19th Tank Bn and reverted to company control at LAUCHA (K030970) 15 April 1945. A Co however remained attached to CCB. Co A departed from LAUCHA at 1500B and arrived at BLUMRODA (K310880) 1800B. The Co (- 1 Plat) then set up road blocks on roads leading in to town. The 2nd Plat remained and moved with the Bn CP.

Upon reporting to the CP of CCA at TRACHENAU (K266965) the Co CO Co A was informed that the Combat Command would move out at about 150300B April with HAINICHEN (K368990) as the objective. A Co (- 1 Plat) departed from TRACHENAU at 0300B and arrived at NEUKIERITZSCH (K284950) at 0530B. The 1st Plat set up road blocks on the Southern part of town. At 0920B CCB resumed its march to the original objective. When approaching THIERBACH (K349966) the column was taken under intense artillery and mortar fire. The column remained on the road from 1100B until about 1600B when it was decided to make a run for the town. The fire let up a bit but as soon as the column reached THIERBACH the town received a heavy barrage of artillery fire. Vehicles were pulled under cover and the men took cover in buildings. No casualties or damage to vehicles was suffered. After the artillery fire let up the company proceeded to set up road blocks. The Co rear CP and the attached Hq vehicles arrived at THIERBACH at 1900B.

Task Force Shaunnesy moved out from WILDENHAIN at 15-0900B April. One Plat of tanks from the 777th Tank Bn lead the column. Co C (- 1 Plat) followed the last Co of Inf. The head of the column arrived at LEUPAHN (K515896) at 1620B. While at LEUPAHN C Co was assigned mission of supporting the 3rd Bn, 273rd Inf, 69th Div, in the attack on COLDITZ (K5493).

The plan of attack was to have the TDs and tanks fire from the West to the East into COLDITZ on any activity that was noticed while the Inf assaulted the town from the South. C Co's 1st and 3rd Plats and the attached platoon of tanks took up positions in defilade and against houses in HCHNEACH (K533917). The TDs began firing before the Inf got under way. Since the range at which the TDs were firing, 1,600 to 2,000 yards, target designation was extremely difficult.

This difficulty was solved by using the 20 power telescope. The Plat leader set up his scope at a vantage point. When a target was picked out the platoon leader would let a gunner and TD commander observe the target through the 'scope and then take it under fire. In one instance, two enemy were observed against an embankment. This target was taken under fire. The following day, the spot taken under fire was inspected and the only evidence found of the two enemy was a cap. A total of 45 rounds were fired into suspected MG emplacements, field fortifications and houses. Two MG emplacements were definitely destroyed and an unknown number of enemy killed. After dark the destroyers were pulled back into town and the men billeted.

Upon visiting the Div CP the CO learned that the Div CP was to displace to BAD LAUSICK (K426940) 16 April 1945. Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering the route and securing the town of BAD LAUSICK. Since no previous report was received as to the town disposition, one section of TDs was attached to the Rcn Co executing the mission. The town was reported cleared by Rcn Co at 1330B. The Bn CP closed at BREITINGEN at 1530B and after an uneventful march opened at BAD LAUSICK at 1735B.

The 1st Rcn Plat left BREITINGEN at 160730B April in the execution of the road reconnaissance mission. One abandoned 76mm gun was found in the vicinity of BAD LAUSICK. Since the gun was intact and ready for use, a few thermite grenades were thrown into the tube. No resistance was encountered at BAD LAUSICK but 96mm enemy enlisted men and 4 officers were rounded up in clearing the town. The 1st Plat then posted outposts in their sector of responsibility on the perimeter of the town. One section of Rcn Co accompanied the Bn S-2 in moving to BAD LAUSICK. The remainder of Rcn Co executed its mission of march security when Div CP made its move from BREITINGEN to BAD LAUSICK. Upon arriving at BAD LAUSICK the remaining elements outposted their sector of responsibility.

A Co (- 1 Plat) spent the early part of the 16th of April on motor maintenance. At 1830B A Co departed from BLUMRODE accompanying CCB on the move to the North with WETEWITZ (E355241) as the objective. The march proceeded without incident and the Company arrived at ALTENHAIN (E450-100) at 2359B. The company secured bivouac for the night.

At 0830B, 16 April B Co departed from THIERBACH (K350970) with CCA on the move to the North. Elements of the 14th Tank Bn provided the point while the TDs lead the main body. As

soon as THIERBACH was cleared the column was taken under fire by enemy 88mm guns which were firing air bursts. Several of the M-36s were hit with shrapnel but no damage resulted. The town of OTTERWISCH (E000001) was cleared by the TD Plats. Co B remained in OTTERWISCH until the tanks which were maneuvering in a flanking operation arrived at the town. Upon arrival of the tanks the march was resumed to ALTENHAIN (E455105). The tanks and Inf went ahead to clear the woods while B Co remained in town. In the engagements one tank was knocked out. B Co's recovery vehicle was sent into the woods to retrieve the tank. There was some small arms interference during the tank recovering operation but no one was hurt and the tank was pulled back into town. The march was then resumed and the Company reached LEULITZ (E435155) at 2140B. The road network leading into town was then outposted.

During the early morning hours under the cover of ground haze the 1st, 3rd Plats and the attached tank platoon returned to their firing positions in the vicinity of HOENBACH (K532917). Positions with more defilade were taken however, since positions of the day before were disclosed by the previous day's firing and a considerable amount of small arms fire was being received. Firing was not resumed because elements of the 69th Inf Div had reached the town of COLDITZ. C Co (- 1 Plat) left the positions at HOENBACH at 1330B, 16 April 1945 and moved into the town of COLDITZ where road blocks were set up. The Company arrived at COLDITZ at 1530B without any incidents.

In anticipation of moving the Div CP North, Rcn Co was given the mission of reconnoitering a route to and the town of GRIMMA (E483045). Since the area wasn't thoroughly cleared of enemy a section of TDs were sent as a supporting element. Plans were undertaken to rotate platoons of A & B Co which were under battalion control providing security for Div and Bn CPs. The plan was completed and submitted to Div for approval. Routine visits by Bn staff officers were made to the companies.

The 2nd Rcn Plat was assigned the mission of reconnoitering the route to GRIMMA. One section of TDs (1st section, 3rd Plat, Co B) was attached to the 2nd Rcn Plat. The mission was routine until the objective was reached. The enemy had left the town of GRIMMA the previous day and took up positions in woods across the MULDE R. Harassing small arms fire was directed into the town and on the roads leading North. After establishing contact with elements of the 89th Rcn Bn Task Force Eibel moved into position to eliminate the pocket of enemy at E482037. The woods and visible entrenchments were raked with 90mm, 37mm and .30 and .50 Cal MG fire. Tree bursts were secured. Two enemy were definitely killed. Observation into the woods was limited. It is presumed that more of the enemy were killed. After the completion of fire by the Task Force Eible, enemy fire ceased to come from the woods. A total of 40 rounds of 90mm HE and 35 rounds of 37mm

was expended. The Task Force then returned to BAD LAUSICK without further incident. The 1st and 3rd Plats remained at BAD LAUSICK outposting the town.

A Co's sector was quiet 17 April. CCB was providing an armored screen to the East of LEIPZIG. A Co deepened this screen. The company moved North to new positions. A Company (- 1 Plat) departed LEULITZ at 1430B and after an uneventful march arrived at WELTEWITZ (E355241) arriving there at 1630B. Road blocks were set up on roads leading into town.

B Co spent the morning of 17 April 1945 on maintenance and outposting the town of LEULITZ. At 1500B B Co was given the mission of taking the town of MACHERN (E405175). The Task Force was composed of a Plat from Service Company, 60th Armd Inf Bn. A section of Engineers, one light tank and two M-20s. The Platoon leader of the 1st Plat Co B was placed in command of Task Force Zapf. The town was taken without opposition and held until 2030B when relief furnished by Co C, 60th Armd Inf Bn arrived. The Task Force then returned to LEULITZ. At 1700B, B Co was given the mission of running a contact patrol between LEULITZ and BINNOWITZ (E464184) every two hours. This mission was duly executed. The 1st Plat maintained road block positions in GRETEN.

C Co CP remained in COLDITZ 17 April 1945. The 1st Plat moved to and occupied positions at ZSCHADRASS (K554942). The 3rd Plat moved to and occupied positions in HAUSDORF (K566-922). Both of the platoon positions were on the front lines as elements of the 3rd Bn, 69th Inf Div, were dug in on the flanks of the destroyer positions. The 3rd Plat captured eight prisoners on the 17th of April 1945.

The plan for the rotation of the platoons of A, B & C Cos upon submission to Div was not accepted. It was stated that this plan would receive some consideration at some later date. Normal staff functions and visits to companies were carried on and made 18 April 1945.

Rcn Co performed the assigned mission of outposting BAD LAUSICK. There were no unusual activities 18 April 1945.

Cos A, B & C performed their assigned mission 18 April. Time was spent on maintenance of vehicles, arms and equipment.

The security mission assigned to the elements of the 656 TD Bn were performed in a routine manner 19 April 1945. Hq Co and Rcn CP moved into a field in the Western part of BAD LAUSICK.

Routine functions carried out by Bn Hq, Rcn, A & B Cos. The Bn CP was alerted for movement to LOBSTADT (E295820). Rcn Co turned over 38 Germans to CIC for screening.

Task Force Shaunnesy was disbanded 20 April 1945. Co C was relieved from attachment to the 3rd Bn, 273 Inf, and attached to the 2nd Tank Bn. The platoon of tanks from the 777th Tank Bn was relieved from attachment and attached to the 3rd Bn, 273 Inf Regt. C Co departed from COLDITZ (K545-

931) at 1330B and moved to GROSSERMUTH (K528958) arriving there at 1500B. The 1st Plat moved into position with a mission of guarding a Cl 70 bridge, the 3rd Plat moved into position covering a Cl 40 bridge. At 1640B enemy movement was noticed in woods in the vicinity of the 1st Plats position. Four rounds of HE were fired into the woods. The results were not observed nor was an investigation made of the results of the firing.

The Bn CP closed at BAD LAUSICK (E426941) 210825B April and accompanied the Div CP to LOBSTADT where it opened at 1030B. At 1655B word was received that 25 German officers and 180 enlisted men in civilian clothes were in the town of NOTSCHUTZ. Rcn Co was given the mission of investigating this report.

Rcn Co performed the usual mission of road security during the march from BAD LAUSICK to LOBSTADT. Upon arriving at the destination the usual outpostting was performed. Four 20mm and two 88mm AA guns in positions in the vicinity of LOBSTADT were destroyed by demolitions and incendiaries respectively. At 1700B Rcn Co was given the mission of investigating a report of enemy officers and enlisted men in civilian clothes in the town of NOTSCHUTZ. The 2nd Rcn Plat performed the mission. No traces of the reported personnel were found. The 1st Plat turned in eight civilians to the CIC for screening.

In the general displacement of the 9th Armd Div from the front line positions to the rear, A Co departed from WELTEUWITZ (E356247) 240800B April and arriving at DOBITZ (E320200) at 1845B. Road blocks were set up on the perimeter of town.

B Co displaced from LEULITZ (E435155) to NEUKIERITZSCH (K-285451) arriving at its destination at 1800B. Usual road block positions were occupied. The 1st Plat was detached from the 60th Armd Inf Bn and was given the mission of securing the Combat Command CP at NEUKIERITZSCH. The 2nd Plat occupied positions at HEUERSDORF (K258900).

Co C moved from GROSS SERMUTH to BLUMRODA (K308879) arriving at its destination at 1600B. C Co (- 1 Plat) outposted the town of BLUMRODA.

Routine staff functions carried on in the Bn CP 22 April. There were no changes in Rcn and C Co that day. A Co moved from DOBITZ (E330200) to ROTH (K295923) arriving there at 1040B. Outposts set up at the outskirts of town. The 2nd Plat Co B was relieved from attachment to the 14th Tank Bn and reverted to company control. The platoon then moved and joined the 1st Plat at NEUKIERITZSCH.

The 656th TD Bn with the 9th Armd Div reverted to VII Corps control as of 231700B April. A total of 45 Germans in civilian clothing were turned over to the CIC for screen- 20

ing during the period 230001B to 232400B April. There were no other activities in any of the company locations.

Routine staff functions carried on at the Bn CP 24 April. Rcn Co turned in two PWs in civilian clothes to Div PWE and 10 civilians to CIC for screening. No other activity reported on this date.

The Bn instituted a training program 25 April. A total of 7 civilians were turned in to the CIC for screening. No other activities reported.

All companies performed motor maintenance training in addition to performing their outpost mission. Two civilians were turned in to CIC for screening 26 April 1945

All companies reverted to Bn control 272400B April 1945. During the day scheduled training was conducted by all companies. The 1st Plat of B Co replaced the 3rd in its position mission of securing the CPs. The 3rd Plat rejoined its company at NEUKERITZSCH.

Companies upon reverting to Bn control 272400B April remained in their positions with the same missions. At 1430B 28 April the Bn was alerted to move in six hours to APOLDA (J656771).

Companies A, B & C (- 1 Plat ea) were assigned to Combat Command B, A and R respectively at 1800B, 28 April. There however were no changes in positions or missions. No activities were reported by any of the companies.

Elements of the 9th Armd Div began displacing to the vicinity of APOLDA (J650765) 29 April. The Bn CP, Hq, Rcn and attached platoons remained at LOBSTADT. A billeting party under the command of the CO of Hq Co left LOBSTADT to arrange for billets. A Co did not move this day. B Co (- 1 Plat) left NEUKERITZSCH 290600B April and arrived at KRIMPERDORF (J679709) at 1200B. The company outposted the town upon arrival. Co C moved from BLUMRODA (K308879) with CCR and arrived at UMPERSTEDT (J580705) at 2000B hours. The town was outposted upon arrival.

The Bn CP accompanying Div CP departed from LOBSTADT 300830B April 1945 and arrived at ~~APOLDA~~ 1530B. Since the town of APOLDA was the largest which the 656 TD Bn outposted, 2 Platoons, the 2nd and 3rd, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, were attached to the Bn. The additional platoons were attached in turn to Rcn Co. The total outposting force controlled by Bn at this time consisted of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Platoons, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, Rcn Co, 656 TD Bn, 1st Plat, Co B and the 3rd Plat of Co A. This force was responsible for the security of APOLDA. At 2400B the 656th TD Bn reverted to First Army control and was attached to the VIII Corps for administration.

Rcn Co moved as the advance guard for the Div CP column in the move from LOBSTADT to APOLDA. Upon arriving at the destination Rcn Co outposted the town. In order to supplement

the outpostting force the 2nd and 3rd Plats, Co D, 2nd Tank Bn, were attached to Rcn Co. The platoons were then fitted into the general outpostting scheme.

A Co moved with its Combat Command from ROTH A (K265991) to WELLINGEN (J768667). The road march was uneventful and the company upon arriving at its destination moved into road block positions.

Companies B and C performed maintenance and training in addition to outpostting their respected towns. C Co detained and turned over to the CIC one former German soldier and two women of the German Women's Corps.

The first few days of April found the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion with the 9th Armored Division terminating the FIRST Army's drive to the North and Northeast linking up with the NINTH Army to form the RUHR POCKET. With the formation of the Pocket Combat Commands of the 9th Armored Division defended the flanks of the Right Pincer and exerted force to the North against limited objectives. The action then changed to a holding operation. Positions gained were defended against counter-attacks by German Armored and other miscellaneous elements hastily brought down from Denmark. Elements of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion aided in the defense of the newly won positions. With the establishment of a new Corps Zone of action towards the East with the Elbe River as the final objective, the 9th Armored Division with the attached elements of the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion withdrew from positions North of WARBURG and assembled in the LANDAU-WOLFHAGEN area in preparation for operations to the East. Leaving the assembly area and crossing the line of departure at the WESER RIVER, the 9th Armored Division attacked in the entire Corps Zone committing the three Combat Commands. A Company of the 656th TD Battalion supported the actions of CCB in the Northern part of the Corps sector, B Company supported the actions of CCA in the center sector and C Company supported the action of CCR in the Southern sector. Resistance from the offset varied from stiff in the Northern sector to light in the Southern sector. The advance was pushed relentlessly against heterogeneous enemy elements. Upon arriving South of the HALLE-LEIPZIG area the main enemy resistance came from AA defenses. They however constituted no organized force and did not impede the advance.

The Corps Objective was changed when the leading elements of the Southern sector reached the MULDE RIVER. The 9th Armored Division provided the armored screen West of the MULDE RIVER while the 2nd Infantry Division assaulted LEIPZIG from the West and the 69th Infantry Division from the South and East. With the capture of the new Corps objective, all elements of the V Corps remained in place awaiting the coming of the Russian forces. The 9th Armored Division after the capture of LEIPZIG went into Corps reserve. At the close of the month the 9th Armored Division accompanied by the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion went into Army Reserve and displaced

to an assembly area in the vicinity of APOLDA.

The second month of action for the 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion consisted mostly of advances in support of the 9th Armored Division elements. There was no opportunity for the battalion to be used in its primary role, nevertheless a considerable amount of action was engaged in. A total of 381 prisoners were taken. Over two hundred civilians were apprehended and turned over to the CIC for screening. The following enemy equipment was destroyed in combat: 3 88mm guns, 3 OPs, 2 MG emplacements and a number of houses. In addition four possible OPs were fired on and destroyed and one MG captured.

SECTION IV

Target designation at great ranges in execution of direct fire missions proved difficult at times and impossible when taking moving targets under fire. The stereotype method of target designation is ^{not} adequate and generally has to be supplemented by a more or less detailed description of the target. The following approach to solving this problem was employed by this organization: German BC 'scopes were set in the center of the platoon position for observation purposes. When a target was picked up a gun commander identified the target through the 'scope. The gunner also identified this target. The target was then taken under fire. In the COLDITZ operation, targets were fired on at a range of 2600 yards. Hits were generally secured with the first or second round. This method of target designation is slow and cannot be used when speed is the criterion. However, it certainly should receive consideration when small stationary targets are engaged at great ranges. The twenty power telescope can be used as the observation instrument.

The .50 caliber machine gun proved to be a very valuable secondary weapon on both the M-18 and M-36 destroyers. The position of the mount and gun was not satisfactory on the M-36 destroyers. Upon receipt of the M-36 destroyers as replacements for the M-18s and prior to release to the gun companies, the position of all machine guns was changed so that the gun was more readily accessible. This change was not entirely satisfactory but it was better than the original position.

The .50 caliber machine gun was used against aircraft, personnel and buildings. The gun proved satisfactory against personnel and exceedingly so when used against buildings and other inflammable materials. In the attack on villages and the subsequent fights within the villages confines, the .50 caliber machine gun was used to spray the

streets to clear the streets of enemy personnel. Spraying the street generally resulted in one or two homes catching fire and burning. Direct fire into buildings also resulted in setting the buildings afire. Enemy personnel driven from burning buildings were then fired upon by the .50 caliber machine gun.

In one instance both primary guns of one section jammed. The .50 caliber machine guns were then brought into use. Targets taken under fire located in buildings were neutralized or destroyed.

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