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OPD
EWO-1

UNIT REPORT

(After Action Report)

Number 8

From: 312400A December 1944
To : 312400A January 1945

Unit: 702nd Tank Destroyer Bn.
Date: 31 January 1945
Place: Lince, Belgium.

MAPS: Sheet 79, 1/50,000; 4336, 1/100,000; 80, 1/50,000.

I: ENEMY:

1 January - 3 January 1945: No contact with enemy.
3 January - 18 January 1945: From the beginning of our effort to cut south from GRANDMENIL, BELGIUM to BASTONE, BELGIUM to sever the enemy in the Salient from their main body of troops, every defense was made by the Germans to delay our advance.

The enemy defended their attack on his flank by numerous counter-attacks and by holding stubbornly from well concealed positions at all critical points, utilizing artillery and mortar fire, automatic weapons, small arms and bazookas.

Artillery was placed by the enemy very effectively on our front line troops; in towns; and on all important communication centers.

After the start of our attack it became evident to the enemy that he would have to postpone, if not abandon, his plan to continue north and west to capture LIEGE, BELGIUM, which presumably was one of his main objectives.

The enemy units used mainly in the defense of our attack was the 560 VG Division and elements of the 2nd Panzer Division. While these units held against our advance, the enemy started withdrawing other troops to the east where they would be safe, at least, from being cut off from Germany.

Personnel of units used in the defense were generally young, some not having yet reached the age of 20. These units continued to receive replacements even when other units were trying to withdraw to the East. The PW's taken now did not have the attitude of bravado they possessed when they had first made their initial penetration and breakthrough. Most of them now believed that their one chance to turn a great portion of the American forces in the west had not only failed but had resulted in severe losses to them.

On 4 January 1945, the enemy attempted aggressive action just before dawn with a small number of tanks and infantry East of Belle, Belgium, which was dispersed by our artillery fire.

In our attack on LACOMENIL, BELGIUM, the enemy took full advantage of his previous knowledge of the rough terrain and our bad road net. Due to the very few lines of attack, the enemy could place his Anti-tank guns in places he knew we would have to use if we used armor in conjunction with infantry.

Those tactics were used repeatedly at the enemy was pushed slowly south endangering their salient into our lines.

In addition to his other defenses, the enemy now began using mines more effectively on all the roads and in the few fields near the roads which could have been used to our advantage.

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Against our advance to DOCHAMPS, BELGIUM, the enemy used well dug in infantry camouflaged with snow suits. Our most stubborn resistance was met at SAMREE, BELGIUM where the enemy increased his artillery fire, and at least ten tanks in stationary positions were used as pill boxes.

Starting about 9 January 1945, the enemy increased his efforts to withdraw all his troops and most valuable equipment east of our attack so as to save what had not already been lost in their venture.

Mortar and artillery fire ranged from moderate to heavy during the period from 14 to 18 January 1945, but when our forces finally reached HOUFFALIZE, BELGIUM there was virtually no resistance. The enemy now used his artillery fire to cover up his retreat further east into his original lines. Only points that could be strongly held were manned very effectively and as he moved further east, the enemy attempted to form the strong lines he had held before the offensive which had now been effectively stopped.

18 - 31 January 1945: No contact with the enemy.

II: OUR OPERATIONS:

The Battalion (less Companies "A", "B", and "C") remained under Division control throughout operations from the 1st to 17 January 1945. The Battalion CP moved from MARMIERE, BELGIUM (K133012) to the vicinity of LOISEL, BELGIUM (K435968) on 2 January 1945, following the advance of the Division, remaining in that location until the 9th of January 1945, when moved to EZZERE, BELGIUM (K444905). The Battalion CP remained in this location throughout operations on SAMREE, BELGIUM (P506824) and HOUFFALIZE, BELGIUM (P610721) moving forward CP's and radio contact stations, when necessary, forward as the Division elements advanced. Close contact was maintained with companies and combat command headquarters during all operations.

On 11 January 1945, Company "B" (less one platoon) was released from control of CC "R" to that of the Battalion. On 17 January, Company "B" with its three platoons moved from Odeigne, Belgium (P535862) to the vicinity of EZZERE, BELGIUM to rejoin the Battalion less Companies "A" and "C" in preparation for move to new area.

The Battalion moved to the vicinity of Lance, Belgium 20 January 1945. Remained in that position for remainder of period.

Company "A", attached to Combat Command "A", remained in assembly area at MOHIN, BELGIUM (K162940) preparing for future operations. On the 2nd of January 1945, Company "A" moved with CC "A" to the vicinity of FISEMME, BELGIUM (K432909). The 1st Platoon was attached to the 1st Battalion, 2nd Platoon to the Second Battalion, 3rd Platoon to the Third Battalion, 6th Armored Regiment, respectively TF "C", TF "B", and TF "A" for the attack from SOY - FISEMME towards SAMREE, BELGIUM (P506814); which started on the 3rd of January. One Platoon (2nd) of Company "B", was attached to Company "A" on the 3rd of January and placed in TF "B", 3rd Battalion, 6th Armored Regiment.

From the 3rd of January to 7th of January 1945, the 2nd Platoon of Companies "A" and "B" and the 3rd platoon of Company "A" assisted in the attack of CC "A" on SEFFE (P423851); MARCOUAY (P438818); MACOSTER (P428861) and AMONINES, BELGIUM (P448874), by direct fire in support of tank and infantry attacks. During this period, Company "A" had three M-30 tank Destroyers damaged by enemy action. The 2nd Platoon, Company "B" lost two M-30 Tank Destroyers, one of which was a total loss. (Company "A"'s guns were returned to action by 17 January and two replacements by that date brought Company "B" back to strength.

The 1st Platoon, Company "A", remained in reserve with TF "C" in HILAL (P4440096) and AMONINES, BELGIUM (P450875) throughout operations until moved

to DOCHAMPS, BELGIUM (P495836) on attack toward SAMREZ, BELGIUM (P406814), 8 January 1945.

From the 7th to the 10 January 1945, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons, Company "A" and 2nd Platoon, Company "B" attacked through LAID-FRANCOLEUX (P465834) and LE WATE (P482831) and DOCHAMPS, BELGIUM (P495836) on SAMREZ. On the 8 January 1945, the 1st Platoon, Company "A" relieved the 3rd Platoon which reverted to TF "C" in DOCHAMPS.

On the 11 January 1945, after SAMREZ, BELGIUM (P506814) had been taken, Company "A" with CC "A" was relieved and assembled for maintenance and preparation for coming operations.

The 1st Platoon under control of TF "A", 1st Battalion, 56th Armored Regiment, assembled in DOIS ODEIGNE (P545832) for attack on FAIM ST JEAN (P547814) and CHABREBEE, BELGIUM (P564825) on 12 January 1945. The 2nd Platoon of Company "B", and 3rd Platoon of Company "A" remained in FREYNEUX, BELGIUM (K513862) in reserve with TF "C" and the 2nd Platoon, Company "A" with TF "B" in LAMORMENT, BELGIUM (P500831), prepared to assist under command of the 1st Battalion, 56th Armored Regiment, moving across country from FAIM ST JEAN attacking from the north. The objective WIRIN was taken on the 12 January 1945.

The attack continued toward ACHOURFE, BELGIUM on the 13 January 1945, the objective being taken and occupied on that date. The 1st and 3rd Platoon of Company "A", and the 2nd Platoon of Company "B" assisted by overwatching and flank protection of the attacking tanks and infantry.

Company "A" assembled on the 16th January with CC "A" units following the completion of the mission involved. The first and 3rd Platoons of Company "A" assembled under their respective task forces in WIRIN, BELGIUM. The 2nd Platoon, Company "A" remained with the 2nd Battalion, 56th Armored Regiment in ODEIGNE, BELGIUM (P50482). The 2nd Platoon of Company "B" was released from Company "A" control and reverted to Company "B".

Company "A" remained in this location under CC "A" control from 16 through 17 January accomplishing maintenance and reorganization until moved to LILISE BELGIUM (K502143) on 20 January 1945 in Division Assembly Area, at which time they reverted to Battalion control.

From the 21 - 31 January 1945, Company "A" remained under Battalion control training and preparing for future operations of the Division. Maintenance, practice firing, and extensive tactical platoon training was accomplished.

Company "B" under control of CC "B" remained in road block positions in the vicinity of FLOSROY, BELGIUM (K186021) protecting CC "R" assembly area; and accomplishing maintenance and reorganization for coming operations.

On 2 January 1945, Company "B" moved with CC "R" assembly area in the vicinity of GRANDCHENIL, BELGIUM (K520901) prepared to support the attack of the Second Armored Division to the southeast. The company less one platoon was attached to the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Armored Infantry. The 2nd Platoon of Company "B" was attached to Company "A" under control of CC "A". Company "B" remained on alert prepared to support attack of CC "B" until 5 January 1945.

On 5 January, Company "B" was assigned mission of supporting tanks in defensive positions in FREYNEUX and LAMORMENT, BELGIUM, coordinated with the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion. The two platoons supported the tanks attacking towards the southeast, destroying one SP gun on the 8 January 1945 which was holding up the tank advance. As objectives were taken, Company "B" assumed defensive positions for the area.

On the 9-10 January 1945, Company "B" less one platoon, supporting the 2nd Battalion, 1st Armored Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 57th Armored Regiment, attacked SAMREZ, BELGIUM (P506814) coordinating the AT defense of that town after seizure by the Division.

The 1st and 3rd Platoons of Company "B" were released from attachment to 28

The 625th Armored Regiment and 41st Armored Infantry and reverted to Company control on the 11th January 1945 and assembled under Company control in ODEIGNE, BELGIUM (P538852) in CC "B" reserve. On 12 January, Company "B", less one Platoon was placed under Battalion control for maintenance and reorganization. The 2nd Platoon Company "B" was released from CC "A" control and returned to Company "B" assembly area in ODEIGNE on the 16th of January 1945.

Company "B" under Battalion Control, was moved to HEPRES, BELGIUM (K444903) on the 17 January 1945 to prepare for move to new Division assembly area. On the 20th of January, the company under Battalion control moved from HEPRES BELGIUM, to LINCE, BELGIUM (K502145) in the Division assembly area to prepare for coming operations.

From the 21-31 January 1945, Company "B" remained under Battalion control training and preparing for future operations of the Division. Maintenance, practice firing, and extensive tactical platoon training was accomplished.

Company "C" under control of CC "B" remained in assembly area on the 1st of January 1945 preparing for future operations. On the 2nd of January, Company "C" moved with CC "B" to the vicinity of OLSHEED, BELGIUM (K474503) placing road blocks around that assembly area upon closing. On the 3rd of January, Company "C" in support of the tank attacks assisted in the drive south toward FRENHEUX (K513602) and LAMONTENT, BELGIUM (P500861), destroying one Mark IV tank on the 4th of January.

On the 6th of January 1945, the 1st Platoon of Company "C" supported the tank attack on ODEIGNE, BELGIUM (K538852), while the 2nd and 3rd Platoons remained in reserve.

From the 7th of January 1945 through the 16th of January 1945, Company "C" alternated platoons, advanced steadily in direct line support of the tank attacks with mission of protecting the flanks of the advance. Upon completion of the mission, cutting main road running northeast from SACREE, BELGIUM. CC "B" placed two platoons of Company "C" on outpost duty as tank blocks on the 11th of January. One Anti-tank gun destroyed during this period.

On the 12 January 1945, Company "C" was reorganized for new attack in the zone to the east. The 1st Platoon was placed under control of TF "Y"; 2nd Platoon in CC "B" and 3rd Platoon supporting TF "Y".

The attack toward NOUFVALIZE, BELGIUM (P610721) was launched 13 January 1945. Company "C" in support of the two task forces of CC "B" destroyed four Mark IV's, one Mark V, one 105mm Artillery Piece, one cargo truck, and one tractor truck on the 16th and 15th of January 1945. After mission was completed by CC "B", two platoons of Company "C" were retained on road blocks while the remainder of the Company assembled in DINEZ, BELGIUM (K605700) preparing for future movements, remaining in these positions until 19 January 1945. Platoons were alternated on road blocks protect Division left flank.

On 20 January 1945, when the Division was relieved from the line, Company "C" accompanied CC "B" on the march to the new assembly area, going into LA PHEAIE, BELGIUM (501133). Upon closing into this area, Company "C" reverted to Battalion control for maintenance and reorganization.

From the 21-31 January 1945, Company "C" remained under Battalion control training and preparing for future operations of the Division. Maintenance, practice firing, and extensive tactical platoon training was accomplished.

Reconnaissance Company (Less three platoons) operated under Battalion control during periods of action. When the battalion assembled, the company was regrouped for training and reorganization. During the attack phases, the three Reconnaissance Platoons were attached to the line companies. The Pioneer Platoon personnel were assigned to the companies due to understrength on the guns and that platoon has not been returned.

III. TOTAL ENEMY MATERIAL DESTROYED:

a. By date and company.

DATE	"A" COMPANY	"B" COMPANY	"C" COMPANY
4 Jan 45	2 Mark V 2 Arty Pieces	1 Mark V	24 Enemy Killed
5 Jan 45	3 Prisoners	3 Mark IV 2 AT Guns, 75mm 3 Trucks 1 Half-track 1 Mark V	1 Mark V
6 Jan 45		1 AT Gun, 75mm	
8 Jan 45			1 AT Gun, 75mm
9 Jan 45	1 Mark VI	1 Mark V	
13 Jan 45			1 SP gun, 75mm
14 Jan 45			1 Mark V 1 Mark IV 1 Cargo truck 3 Mark IV 1 Tractor truck 1 Arty Piece, 150mm
15 Jan 45			

b. Total by types:

1 Mark VI	4 Cargo Trucks
7 Mark V	1 half-track
7 Mark IV	24 enemy killed
3 Arty Pieces	3 prisoners
2 AT Guns, 75 mm	1 tractor truck
1 SP gun, 75mm	

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE:

a. T/O Strength: 35 Officers, 2 Warrant Officers, 607 Enlisted Men.
 Effective Strength: 34 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer, 549 Enlisted Men.

b. Casualties.

	Hq	Med	Non	"A"	"B"	"C"	Total
(1) Killed	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 1	1 & 0	1 & 7
(2) Sick, gassed & Wounded							
Evacuated	1 & 5	0 & 0	1 & 5	3 & 12	0 & 23	1 & 34	6 & 79
Non evacuated	0 & 2	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 1	0 & 1	0 & 5	0 & 9
(3) Captured	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0
(4) Missing	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0

c. Prisoners captured: Three
 d. Evacuation: Normal
 e. Does not apply.

- f. Status of supply: 150 operational miles of gasoline and oil carried by battalion at all times. One 1/3 units of fire carried.
- g. Conditions of roads and circulation: Movements made by this unit operating with the 2nd Armored Division normally carried out on primary and secondary road nets. Some cross country movements made during present operations.
- h. Replacements received: Five officers, 89 enlisted men.

John A. Brall
JOHN A. BRALL,
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Commanding.