

UNIT REPORT
(After Action Report)

Number 10

From: 282400A February 1945
To : 312400A March 1945.

Unit: 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion
Date: 31 March 1945.
Place: St Vith, Germany B372568

MAPS: GSGS 4507, Scale 1/50,000; GSGS 4414, Scale 1/25,000; GSGS 4416, Scale 1/100,000.

I. ENEMY:

1 - 6 March. During the first part of this period, the enemy continued to resist and delay with infantry, sometimes dug in, but small groups of tanks were active at approaches to towns and critical positions. Bridges across the Nord Canal were defended by AT guns and Artillery Fire. The bridges at Stackerselt (212922) and Hinterfeld (232915) were destroyed by the enemy. Groups of Infantry and vehicles were reported throughout the area, generally retreating Northward.

On 2 March, elements of the 130 Pz Lehr Division, consisting of a Battalion of Infantry and four to seven tanks, supported by concentrated artillery and mortar fire, made a determined counter attack against our forces at Schiefbann in an effort to force their way through to the East from the MUCHEM-GLADBACH area. This determined attempt to break out of the encirclement failed, and the enemy gradually disengaged and withdrew toward the North.

Throughout this period, the enemy fired concentrations of heavy artillery on front line troops and centers of communications.

Enemy planes were active over the Division area on strafing and bombing missions throughout this period but caused little damage.

The units in contact on our sector were the 130 Pz Lehr Division, 59th and 363rd Infantry Division.

6 - 30 March. Not in contact.

30 - 31 March: During the two days operation, the enemy continued to resist our advance in scattered uncoordinated groups of Infantry with small arms, light artillery and some bazooka fire. Reconnaissance elements in general met light to scattered resistance and heavy artillery fire from Hamm while blocking the northern exits from that city. The town of Drensteinfort (0055) was defended by personnel of Officer Candidate School Detmod who offered stiff resistance from dug in positions.

Large numbers of prisoners were taken during the two day period. In one instance an entire company surrendered. Morale of prisoners was very low. However some still continue to think that a new weapon will be introduced and that some strategy will be employed that can still stop us.

Large numbers of foreign laborers and prisoners of war were freed in towns overrun by our forces.

The civilian populace seemed more cordial than in the past.

II: OUR OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD: The Battalion CP moved from the vicinity of Otzenrath Germany (K107755) to Steinhausen, Germany (E160860) on the 1 March 1945 to maintain contact with the forward elements of the battalion. The Bn less companies "A", "B" and "C" remained under control of the Division. On the 2 March 1945, the Bn CP moved to Osterath, Germany (F223974) closing at 1600 and establishing contact with higher headquarters; remaining in that location until the 4 March 1945, when it moved to the vicinity of Krefeld, Germany (A198062). On the 5 March 1945, the battalion moved the vicinity of Gresenens, Germany (F224973) with companies "A" and "C".

The Battalion forward CP moved with Company "B" to coordinates (A235104) to control direct and indirect fire across the Rhine at (A252083), remaining in that location available to the 2nd Tank Destroyer Group for missions, until the 7 March 1945 when

The Battalion forward CP rejoined remainder of Battalion in the vicinity of Hardt, Germany, (F208954) 071300 March 1945.

The Battalion remained at Hardt, Germany (F208954) training and reorganizing until the 12 March 1945 when due to shift in Corps boundary, the Battalion moved to Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F140842), closing in new area 121525A March 1945. Training, reorganizing and preparations for future operations continued throughout the period.

On 281520 March 1945, the 702nd TD Bn (- Companies "A" and "C") in Division control moved on the Division East route, ~~from~~ Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F150842) arriving in the new area A145285 at 281320 March 1945. The Battalion (-) crossed the Wesel Bridge at 291545 March 1945 and assembled at coordinates A281401 prepared to move East on Division order to support either combat command. On the 30 March the Battalion (-) moved on the Division South route following CC"B" to assemble in the vicinity of Mullern, Germany (A655481) closing in area at 301500 March 1945. On the 31 March the Battalion (-) following CC"B" on the south route placed road blocks in the vicinity of Wessel, Germany (A955465) until 311600A March at which time the Battalion was relieved of responsibility of the road blocks and moved to the vicinity of Kurrich, Germany (A019198) and ordered to place road blocks to the south of the area and north of the Lippe river to protect the CC"B" assembly area. No armor contacted during this period.

Company "A" in support of CC"A" crossed the Nord Canal in the vicinity of Schiefbann, Germany (F161944) and outposted front line area in the vicinity of Willien, Germany (F159508) on the 1 March 1945. On the 2 March 1945, Company "A" continued the drive north in support of CC"A". The 1st Platoon was withdrawn from CC"A" control and moved to the vicinity of Hemmerden, Germany (F199812) to block reported counter attack of seven enemy tanks. No contact was made and the platoon returned to Company "A" control on the same day. Verified reports substantiated claims that Company "A" had destroyed two 88 mm towed guns and one cargo truck on the 1 March 1945, during operations along the Nord Canal.

On the 3 March 1945, Company "A" assisted in the cutting of the highway between Krerela, Germany (A198062) and Urdigne, Germany (A241073). During this operation, Company "A" destroyed three (3) trucks, one (1) passenger car, and one (1) motorcycle. On the 4 March 1945, the three platoons of Company "A" assisted CC"A" in mopping up operations along the Rhine River. In this action, Company "A" destroyed one (1) half-track, one (1) sedan, and one (1) truck, one (1) motorcycle, and captured two enemy officers and twenty-eight enlisted men.

On the 5 March 1945, Company "A" was released to control of Battalion and assembled in the vicinity of Hardt, Germany (F208954) for reorganization and training, remaining in that location until the 121525A March 1945 when it moved under battalion control to the town of Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F150842). Training was continued in this area for remainder of period. Platoon tactical problems were held with tank and infantry troops upon order from Division. General instructions in basic subjects and preparations for future operations continued.

On the 26 March 1945, Company "A" was alerted to move with CC"A" north to the Ninth Army origenead.

Company "A", in support of CC"A", moved from Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F150842) to join the combat command at 271800A March 1945. The first platoon was in support of the First Battalion, 2nd platoon with the 2nd Battalion, and the third platoon with the third battalion, both Armored Regiment. Company "A" less three platoons under CC"A" control.

Company "A" moving on Division east and west routes to the Ninth Army bridges "G" and "H" cleared the bridges and assembled on the east bank of the Rhine River by 281200A March 1945, with Combat Command "A" troops.

On the night of the 28th March 1945, Company "A" remained in assembly area preparing to support the attack of CC"A" toward the east. On the 29 March 1945, Company "A" moved with the respective task forces of CC"A" toward the line of departure to arrive there by 300600A March 1945. After crossing the line of departure, Company "A" moved east east with CC"A" in the attack along the Dilmen-Halterne line, protecting the north flank of the movement.

Company "A" moved across the Lippe Canal at 311600A March 1945 with CC"A" and proceeded with the rapid advance along the north route of the Division meeting with very light resistance. No contact made with enemy during this period.

Company "B" in support of CC"B" assisted in the drive of the Division North toward Scheibann, Germany (F161944) reaching that objective on March 1st, 1945. The town was outposted by Company "B" on the left flank. On the 2 March 1945, Co. "B" con-

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and moving north toward Krefeld, Germany (A185043) protecting the left flank of the Division. On the 4 March 1945, Company "B" moved toward the railroad yards south of Urdingen, Germany and assisted CC"R" in freeing the west side of the Rhine in that sector of German armored resistance.

On the 5 March 1945, when the remainder of the Battalion was relieved, Company "B", reverting to Battalion control and was made available to the 2nd Tank Destroyer Group for indirect fire missions. Company "B" moved to the vicinity of (F235103) prepared to do indirect fire on order.

On the 6 March 1945, the 2nd platoon of Company "B" moved to direct firing positions at coordinated A252083 to fire at installations on the east side of the Rhine and to prevent any enemy river traffic. During the night 6 - 7 March, 1945, two platoons of Company "B" fired 200 rounds 90mm HE on the town of Nichtenreich, Germany (F338992). The third platoon moved into direct firing positions at the west approach of the Adolf Hitler Bridge.

Due to the limited visibility for direct fire, Company "B" was relieved of this mission on the 7 March 1945 and returned to the Battalion assembly area in the vicinity of H Harat, Germany (F208954).

Company "B", under Battalion control, remained in Harat, Germany (F208954), accomplishing maintenance and preparing for future operations in that area until 121525A March 1945 at which time the Battalion moved to Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F150842). Intensive training of replacements was carried on during this period. Maintenance of vehicles was stressed. Company "B" also took part in demonstrations of tank-infantry TD problems conducted by CC"B" on Division order.

On the 25 March 1945, Company "B" was alerted for and relieved Company "C" on indirect fire mission at location F289806, being attached to the 92nd FA Battalion for missions of tactical operations.

On the 26 March, company "B" was alerted for movement of the North to the Ninth Army Bridge Area.

Company "B" under Battalion control, moved from Horset-Schelsen, Germany (F150842) at 270830 March 1945, north toward the Wessel Bridgehead on the Division East route, closing in new area at 281600A March 1945 on the west bank of the Rhine at coordinates A145285, prepared to cross the Rhine River on order.

On the 29130A March 1945, Company "B", under Battalion control, moved across the southern bridge at Wessel, Germany (A265285) outpostting and protecting the Division south flank. Road blocks established in the vicinity of Hüllern, Germany (A625481) to the North of the Lippe River.

On the 31 March 1945, Company "B" placed road blocks in the vicinity of Wessel, Germany (A958405) to protect the Division operations along the south route. During this operation, two enemy officers and forty-three enlisted men were captured. At 311600A March, Company "B" was relieved of outpost duty and placed on road blocks with tanks and infantry from CC"R" in the vicinity of Kurrich, Germany (A019498) to protect the assembly area and routes of CC"R". No contact made with the enemy armor during this period.

Company "C" in support of CC"B" attacked north of the right flank of the 2nd Armored Division, across the Nord Canal in the vicinity of Stackersle (F215925) on the 1 March 1945 and continued the attack toward Klienslep, Germany (F215925) destroying two 75mm AT guns during the operation. On the 2nd March 1945, Company "C" attacked from the town of Osterath, Germany with CC"B", driving north toward the Adolf Hitler Bridge at Urdingen, Germany (A241073) destroying one towed 88mm gun, one (1) cargo truck, and one (1) armored half-track.

On 3 March 1945, Company "C", with CC"B", cut the road from Krefeld to Urdingen, and assisted in the mopping up operations in the town of Urdingen, Germany (A241073), destroying one (1) 88mm gun, one (1) passenger car, one (1) motorcycle and neutralized two pill boxes by direct fire. The remainder of defenses and consolidation of positions was completed on the 4 March 1945.

Company "C" was released to Battalion control on the 5 March and assembled in the vicinity of Harat, Germany (F208954) for reorganization and maintenance. An extensive training program was instituted and personnel and vehicles prepared for future operations.

On the 12 March 1945, Company "C" moved with the Battalion to the new assembly area at Horset Schelsen, Germany (F150842). Continued training; vigorous athletics and maintenance of vehicles. On the 16th of March 1945, Company "C" moved to the vicinity of Weekhoven, Germany (F211849) occupying indirect firing positions in the area. Counter battery fire, harassing and interdictory fires on the super highway running NW from Hilde,

Germany. On the 25 March 1945, Co. "C" was relieved of the secondary mission and returned to Battalion assembly area.

On the 26 March 1945 Company "C" was alerted for movement with CC"B" for the Division march North to the 9th Army bridgeheads.

Company "C", in support of CC"B", joined the task forces of the 271630 March 1945, prepared to move on the East route of Division to the 9th Army bridgehead. The 1st Platoon remained under Company control; 2nd platoon in Task Force "C" and 3rd Platoon with Task Force "A". On the 280230A March 1945 Company "C", with CC"B" moved to the vicinity of Ossenberg, Germany (A674480) prepared to cross the Rhine River on orders. Company "C" crossed the Rhine bridges 290330A March 1945 and assembled, prepared to cross the line of departure by 290600 March and continue the attack East. During the 30 March, Company "C" assisted in the drive along the Lippe River crossing the Lippe Canal early on the 31 March 1945. Company "C" protected the flanks of the advance. No enemy armor contacted during this period.

The Reconnaissance Company, 702nd T.D. Bn, less three platoons remained under Battalion control throughout the tactical operations. Each line company had one Reconnaissance platoon attached for operations.

From the 5th to the 11th of March the Company remained with the Battalion in Hardt, Germany (F208754) training and accomplishing maintenance. On the 11 March the company moved with the Battalion to Horset Schelsen, Germany (F150842). Training was intensified and continued until the Battalion was alerted for movement on the 26th March 1945. The Reconnaissance platoons prepared to join the combat companies on movement.

III. TOTAL ENEMY MATERIAL DESTROYED:

a. By date and company.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>"A" COMPANY</u>	<u>"B" COMPANY</u>	<u>"C" COMPANY</u>
28 Feb 45	2 Towed Guns 88 mm		
1 March 45	2 Towed Guns 88 mm		1 AT Gun 75mm
	1 Truck, Cargo		
2 March 45			1 Towed Gun 75mm 1 Truck, Cargo 1 Half-Track
3 March 45	3 Trucks, Cargo 1 Sedan 1 M/C		2 Towed Guns 88mm 1 Sedan 1 M/C 3 Pillboxes
4 March 45	1 Half-Track 1 Sedan 1 Truck, Cargo 1 M/C		

b. Total by types:

6 Guns, Towed 88 mm	6 Trucks, Cargo
1 Gun, Towed 75 mm	3 Sedans
2 AT Guns 75 mm	3 M/C
2 Half-Tracks	3 Pillboxes

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE:

a. T/O Strength: 35 Officers, 2 WO, 607 EM.
 Effective Strength: 37 Officers, 1 WO, 609 EM.

b. Casualties.

	Hq.	Med.	Rcn.	"A"	"B"	"C"	Total
(1) Killed	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 1	0 & 1
(2) Sick, gassed and Wounded							
Evacuated	0 & 3	0 & 0	0 & 2	1 & 7	0 & 6	0 & 9	0 & 27
Non evacuated	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0
(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 : 5 Officers, 78 EM.

d. Evacuation: Normal

e. Does not apply.

f. Status of Supply: 150 Operational Miles of gas and oil carried by Battalion at all times. One 1/3 units of fired carried.

g. Conditions of roads and circulation: Movement made by this unit operating with the Second Armored Division normally carried out on primary and secondary road nets. Some cross country movements made.

h. Replacements received: 7 Officers, 31 EM.

John A. Beall
 JOHN A. BEALL,
 Lt Col, Inf.,
 Commanding.