

**SECRET**  
UNIT REPORT  
(After Action Report)

No. 5

From: 012400 A Oct 1944  
To : 312400 A Oct 1944

Unit : 702nd Tank Destroyer Bn  
Date : 31 October 1944  
Place: Palenberg, Germany

Maps: GSGS, Sittard Sheet 48, 1/50,000; Sheets 5002 and 5003, 1/25,000

I. SUMMARY:

a. 1 - 9 October. During this period the enemy defended from in and behind the Siegfried Line against our attack.

Major units encountered were the 183rd Infantry Division; elements of the 49th and 275th Infantry Divisions, and the 42nd MG Battalion.

The enemy was well supplied with small arms; AT guns (mostly high velocity 75's) and artillery of calibers from 88mm to 170mm, and possibly, a few larger caliber railroad pieces. Few tanks were encountered, but a total of approximately ten (10) 75mm SP guns and at least three (3) 150mm howitzer on a Mk IV chassis were used by the enemy. There seemed to be no shortage of ammunition for any of these weapons.

Aircraft was used to some extent. As many as six ME 109's were seen in one formation, but as a rule the enemy planes appeared not more often than once or twice a day in pairs; and in small numbers at dusk and during the night. The largest bombs dropped appeared to be no heavier than 100 lbs. Most of the bombs were of the anti-personnel type.

The personnel encountered during this period varied in quality between the two extremes, and enemy morale varied likewise. As a whole the defense put up by the enemy was much stiffer than could have been expected from the types of troops used.

From the 1st to 4th October the enemy defended along the Wurm River and the high ground east of it. Pillboxes formed an essentially new element of the defense. The average pillbox usually had only one, or at most, two apertures, from which the enemy was able to deliver small arms, machine gun, and AT fire. Much more dangerous than the pillboxes, which could usually be reduced without much difficulty, were numerous AT guns, — dug-in and skillfully camouflaged between the pillboxes, and protected by infantry in firing trenches and bomb-proof dugouts. SP guns were used very skillfully in the narrow streets of Weibach, Germany where they halted our advance for about twenty-four hours.

From the 5th to the 9th of October the battle took place on the slightly rolling, open terrain east of the Wurm River. In this area the last pillboxes were encountered and reduced; but enemy infantry defended tenaciously from hasty field fortifications; in some cases, did not surrender until after our tanks had rolled over their heads and passed on. Enemy AT guns took a heavy toll of our forces. The enemy massed fires of batteries and possibly battalion quickly and accurately, using air bursts and keeping up an intensity of fire previously not experienced in this campaign. During this period light enemy bombers operated over our front line troops at night in clear weather.

b. 10 - 31 October: During this period the enemy contained our salient through the Siegfried Line.

Major units encountered remained the same, although elements of the 116th Pz Div; 1st SS Div; 2nd Pz Div; 3rd Pz Gren Div; 176 Inf Div; 506th Tank Bn; 9th Pz Div; 12th SS Div; 15th Pz Gren Div; and several Combat Groups were at one time or the

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other active in adjacent sectors or reported as reserves in rear areas.

The main item concerning the enemy's activity during the above period is his failure to stage a major counterattack. Troops for such an attack seemed to have been assembled north and east of our salient, but nothing beyond local and unimportant sallies of small numbers of assault guns ever resulted. Enemy artillery remained active, although the volume of fire, varying from day to day, was much less than during the assault phase. The heaviest concentrations were placed on the front line troops, on the edges of villages, and on crossroads.

In some instances it appeared probable that some civilian or soldier with a radio behind our lines was directing the enemy artillery fire. No positive proof of this was found. Enemy airplanes remained active during the night, and four or five sorties during the daylight were observed.

The number of prisoners taken during this phase was obviously low. Most of the PW's were deserters and their morale was low.

German civilians caused no trouble. As a whole their attitude was subservient and in a reserved manner, cooperative.

## II: OWN SITUATION:

On 1 October 1944 the Battalion less Companies "A" and "C" (attached to CC "A", 2nd Armd Div) was situated in the vicinity of Versluisbosch, Holland (K765597).

Company "A", 702nd TD Bn (attached to CC "A") was relieved from duty along the front line sector in the vicinity of Gllrath, Germany (K834662) 1 October 1944, and moved to the Battalion assembly area at OSOO. The period 1 October to 7 October was spent in maintenance and preparations for future operations against the Siegfried Line.

Company "C", 702nd TD Bn was detached from control of the 113th Cavalry, and was relieved from outpost duty in the vicinity of Sittard, Holland (K690683) to move to the assembly area of the Battalion under Division control. Company "C" remained in the vicinity of Versluisbosch, Holland from 1 October to 4 October 1944 for purposes of maintenance and reorganization.

The Battalion less Companies "A" and "C" was alerted for movement on thirty minutes notice to assist CC "B" in drive against Siegfried Line on the 2nd and 3rd of October. Reconnaissance of routes and bridgeheads established by the 30th Infantry Division was made during the day by all companies. Possible gun positions were reconnoitered along the heights overlooking the Wurm River.

The Battalion less Companies "A" and "C" moved from the vicinity of Versluisbosch, Holland (K765597) to Grotewrath, Germany (K820616) on the 4th of October.

Company "A" and "C" remained under attachments to CC "A" and Division control on alert to assist CC "B" if necessary.

Company "B" supporting the attack of CC "B" crossed the Wurm River at Falenburg, Germany (K849598) 4 October 1944. The 1st Platoon was attached to TF #1, CC "B"; and the 2nd Platoon attached to TF #2, CC "B". The 3rd Platoon was placed in CC "B" reserve. Road blocks were placed at points (K871592) and (K878599) by Company "B" to protect assembly area of CC "B". One M-10 Tank Destroyer was destroyed by Mk IV Tank. (This M-10 was recovered but was not repairable)

Company "C", 702nd TD Bn (Division control) was placed in indirect firing positions in the vicinity of (K812503) October 4, 1944 to assist in the attack. Co "C" was on alert for movement to support Company "B" in event of a counterattack. Reconnaissance was made for possible gun positions during the day.

Company "B", 702nd TD Bn on the 5 - 6 October 1944 was in direct support of CC "B", in the attack along Wurm River. Company "B" destroyed one AT gun; one artillery piece; one O.P. and five pillboxes; captured 90 prisoners and killed approximately 30 enemy EM. Two M-10 Tank Destroyers were lost through enemy action (Both M-10's were recovered and repairable) Two EM were killed and two wounded and evacuated.

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Company "A" crossed Wurm River on 6 October 1944 at Palenberg, Germany (K849598). The 1st Platoon was attached to the 2nd Bn, 66th Armored Regt in the left column of CC "A". The 2nd Platoon was attached to the 1st Bn, 66th Armored Regt in the right column of CC "A". 3rd Platoon remained in CC "A" reserve. Company "A" destroyed two AT guns during this operation.

Company "C", under Division control remained in indirect firing positions at (K812603) firing harassing fire at ranges beyond the reach of the Division Artillery.

Elements of Company "B", in direct support of CC "B" were divided into two platoons of three guns each after the loss of three additional guns. Two M-10's were later recovered; one M-10 was destroyed by the 67th Armored Regt to prevent its falling into enemy hands during a counterattack on 7 October 1944. One Platoon Leader and two EM were killed and three EM slightly wounded. 1st Platoon supported the left column and 2nd Platoon supported the right column of CC "B". Large amounts of ammunition were expended on probable enemy targets--muzzle flashes, strong points, etc, without confirmed results. Company "B" was placed on road blocks along the CC "B" sector to provide security for the main communication and supply routes.

Company "A" (attached to CC "A") continued the attack and destroyed two SP guns 6 October 44; two SP guns on 7 Oct; and two Mk IV tanks, two SP guns, and captured 18 prisoners on 8 Oct 44. One M-10 Tank Destroyer was temporarily disabled in a German mine field. Three EM were wounded.

Company "B" (attached to CC "B") remained in position on the 8th of October prepared to defend its sector against enemy tank concentrations formed on the North and East of CC "B" Sector.

Company "C" (attached to 3rd Bn, 66th Armored Regt under control of CC "A") moved to the vicinity of Ubach, Germany (K865590) prepared to assist in the attack if necessary. 3rd Platoon, Company "C" was attached to Ron Company, 66th Armored Regt with the mission of sieging and holding Beggendorf, Germany (K894595). This platoon assisted in sieging the town and remained in position through 29 Oct 44.

Company "A" attached to CC "A" remained in vicinity of Herbach, Germany (K856576) holding present gains while mopping up operations were carried on by CC "A". Several local counterattacks were beaten back. One M-10 was destroyed by AT gun (Not evacuated due to heavy artillery concentration) Three EM wounded. (Several attempts were made during the month but this M-10 could not be recovered as direct fire weapons covered this area from enemy positions).

Battalion CP on 9 October 1944 moved from vicinity of Hosenrath, Germany (K820616) to vicinity of Palenberg, Germany (K847588)

Company "B" (attached to CC "B") on outpost duty along front line sector of CC "A" (1st Platoon supporting 2nd Bn, 66th Armored Regt (K905563), 2nd Platoon supporting 66th Armored Regt at (K905567), 3rd Platoon in CC "A" Reserve (K905559). Platoons were on constant alert.

Company "C", 702nd TD Bn, (attached to 3rd Bn, 66th Armored Regt) was in Division Reserve. Two platoons were in indirect firing positions in vicinity of Ubach, Germany (K865590). Approximately six thousand rounds were fired during this period at targets assigned by Division Artillery, usually during the hours of darkness.

Company "B" on road blocks in CC "B" sector fired from ten to twenty rounds daily direct fire at possible CP's on orders from the Combat Command. Results of this fire are unknown.

An alert for threatened German counterattack was ordered 21 October 1944. Plans and reconnaissance was made by all companies. Company "C" minus one platoon, prepared to assist either CC "A" or CC "B". All units were placed on instant alert until 25 October 1944. Extra ammunition was placed in accessible dumps and all extra light skinned vehicles recalled.

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Enemy counterbattery fell on Company "C" during night of 22 October 1944, damaging one M-10.

Winterproofing and preparations for cold weather began 15 October 1944. All vehicles were completed by 28 October 1944. This processing was slow due to enemy observation along the front line outposts.

Preparations started the 28 October 1944 for relief of front line outposts by infantry. Company "C" was forced to move to position south of Ubach, Germany due to counterbattery fire. Companies "A" and "B" withdrew their outposts 29 October 1944, reverting to CC "A" and CC "B" Mobile Reserve. Company "A" retained one outpost in vicinity of Ordweiler, Germany (K910650) consisting of one platoon (3rd Plat) of TD's and one Platoon (2nd Plat) of Reconnaissance Company to comprise CC "A" outpost in conjunction with infantry front lines on the right flank. Company "A" relieved the 3rd Platoon of Company "C" in vicinity of Beggendorf, Germany (K895593) 29 October, leaving one Platoon Company "A" in CC "A" reserve.

Company "C", under Bn control, in Division Reserve was held in Ubach, Germany prepared to assist in event of enemy counterattack. Reconnaissance and plans were made for possible counterattack. This company continued on indirect fire missions.

Company "B" assembled at (K86660A) in CC "B" reserve on 28th of October to complete maintenance; reorganization; and check of all ordnance material in preparation for future operations.

III: TOTAL ENEMY MATERIAL DESTROYED:

a. By Date and Company

<u>Date</u>	<u>Co "A"</u>	<u>Co "B"</u>	<u>Co "C"</u>
5 Oct 44	2 AT Guns		
6 Oct 44	2 SP Guns	90 Enemy EM Captured	
		30 Enemy EM Killed	
		1 AT Gun	
		1 Arty Piece	
		1 OP	
7 Oct 44	2 SP Guns	5 Pillboxes	
8 Oct 44	2 Mk IV Tanks		
	2 SP Guns		
	18 Enemy EM Captured		

b. Total by Types

3	AT Guns
6	SP Guns
2	Mk IV Tanks Destroyed
108	Enemy EM Captured
30	Enemy EM Killed
1	Arty Piece
1	OP
5	Pillboxes

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IV: ADMINISTRATIVE:

- a. T/O Strength: 34 Officers, 2 Warrant Officers, 639 Enlisted Men
- Effective Strength: 35 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer, 595 Enlisted Men

b. Casualties

	HQ	Med	Rcn	Co "A"	Co "B"	Co "C"	Total
(1) Killed	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 1	0 & 1	1 & 6	0 & 1	1 & 9
(2) Sick, Gassed & Wounded Evacuated	0 & 4	0 & 2	0 & 2	1 & 13	2 & 30	0 & 19	3 & 75
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: 108 Enlisted Men
- d. Evacuation: Normal
- e. Does Not Apply
- f. Status of Supply: 150 operational miles gasoline and oil carried by Battalion at all times. 1-1/3 units of fire carried by Battalion at all times.
- g. Condition of roads and circulation: Movements made by this unit operating with 2nd Armored Division normally carried out on primary and secondary road net. Some cross country movements made during present operation.
- h. Replacements Received: 4 Officers and 55 Enlisted Men.

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

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