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HEADQUARTERS
808th Tank Destroyer Battalion

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APO 403, US Army
9 March 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Reports, Against the Enemy.

TO : Commanding General, 76th Infantry Division, APC 76, U. S. Army.

ATTENTION: Division After Action Reports Officer.

Transmitted herewith After Action Reports for period 1 February to 28 February 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:

THEODORE H. BLACK
Major, 808 TD Bn
Executive

1 Incl-

After Action Rpts (5 copies with accompanying unit journals and supporting papers)

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Paul J. Gable Maj AGC
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 15 Feb 46

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AFD 403, US Army
1 March 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Reports
Against the Enemy

FROM: 01 February 1945
TO : 28 February 1945

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

SECTION I - SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.
SECTION II - INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, USE OF SECTIONS, ETC.
SECTION III - LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURE, PROBLEMS.
SECTION IV - PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION.
SECTION V - COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

SECTION I. SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.

1. 1 - 6 February 1945. During this period the Battalion continued attached to TF REED, (2d Cavalry Group, Reinforced) protecting the right flank of the VII Corps along the MOSELLE RIVER between WASSERBILLIG and KONTZ. "A" Company continued in support of the 2d Cavalry Squadron (CT COSTELLO) and "B" Company continued in support of the 42d Cavalry Squadron (CT HARGISS), each company providing AMCsd defense with two platoons and with the 3d (reserve) platoon in the roll of reinforcing artillery. "C" Company was employed as reinforcing artillery in its entirety. During this period plans were completed for the conversion of the Battalion from a towed to a self-propelled unit with M-36 Tank Destroyers.

The indirect fire delivered during the period was principally harassing and interdictory fire. However, on 6 February the Battalion supported the attack of the XII Corps to the North by fire, delivering 997 rounds HE MC on 19 missions. During the period a total of 1559 rounds HE MC was fired on 46 missions and 13 registrations, and a total of 259 rounds HE MC was fired on 6 missions and 14 registrations. Also 10 rounds Shell, illuminating were fired.

On 4 February the 9th TD Group (CT DARLING) took over the sector of CT HARGISS and Reconnaissance Company was attached. It operated armored and foot patrols along the MOSELLE RIVER and operated OP's and MG positions.

2. 7 - 21 February 1945. On 7 February the first four M-36's were received from Ordnance, were issued to "B" Company, and assigned to the 2d Platoon. On the 8th eight additional M-36's were received from Ordnance and were issued to "B" Company. On the 9th "B" Company's 2d Platoon was relieved from attachment to TF REED and attached to the 76th Infantry Division. The platoon test fired its 90mm guns and Cal .50 MG's and marched to an assembly area vic DICKWEILER. On the 11th the 1st Platoon was relieved of attachment to TF REED and attached to the 5th Infantry Division and by the 5th Division to the 803d TD Battalion. The Platoon test-fired its 50 Cal. MG's and 90mm's and marched to an assembly area vic (B928355). On the 11th the 3d Platoon of "B" Company marched to an assembly area near DICKWEILER, and "B" Company, less the 1st Platoon, (attached to the 5th Infantry Division), was attached to the 76th Infantry Division and placed in direct support of the 417th Infantry Regiment.

The mission of "B" Company was to support the assault of the 417th Infantry on the fortifications on the North side of the SAUER RIVER.

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Initially the attachment was conditioned by the understanding that no platoons would cross the SAULS RIVER until they had, in the judgment of the company commander, trained sufficiently to justify the commitment. Training was accomplished by maneuvering into positions and supporting the assault of the infantry on pill boxes across the river. On 13 February the 1st and 2d Platoons were committed across the river and on the 15th the 3d Platoon crossed. On the 16th February the 1st Platoon was relieved of attachment to the 5th Infantry Division and returned to the company. The company was then employed with one platoon supporting each battalion of the 417th until 16 February when the 385th Infantry relieved the 417th. "B" Company then went into direct support of the 385th.

During this period "B" Company supported the infantry by firing on fortifications, OP's, personnel and AT guns. The effect of the fire in all instances was good and the infantry was assisted materially in taking their objectives by this fire. The fire on the pill boxes was closely coordinated with the infantry and was particularly effective. In some instances the pill boxes were so effectively neutralized that the infantry took the boxes without receiving a round of enemy fire. During the period a total of 54 pill boxes and 4 OP's were neutralized, 3 AT guns were destroyed, and 15 enemy estimated killed with an expenditure of 501 rounds HE (21 with fuze CP T105) and 340 rounds APC.

On 15 February one M-36 of the 2d Platoon was withdrawing from a position from which it had fired on pill boxes and struck a mine, disabling the destroyer but no casualties resulted. The destroyer was evacuated but declared a combat loss. The area had been swept by engineers but the mine was a wooden box type and the mine sweepers did not respond to it. The extent of the damage to the destroyer and the size of the crater indicate that two mines did the damage.

On 18 February the 2d Platoon, 691st TD Bn, was attached to "B" Co and occupied A/Czd positions vic BRNZEN.

During this period the remainder of the battalion remained attached to TF REED. On 9 February when the 2d Platoon of "B" Company came off line and received M-36's, the 2d Ren Platoon took over the operation of the 3" guns in place and manned them for two days, the 7th and 8th. On the 9th the 3d Platoon of "C" Company took over these positions and occupied them until the 14th when the guns were pulled out entirely. "C" Company at the same time continued to operate 12 guns in indirect fire positions. "A" Company continued to occupy A/Czd positions with two platoons and indirect positions with one. During the period the battalion expended 441 rounds 3" HE NC and 4 rounds 3" HE RC indirect on 10 missions and 6 registrations. In addition 7 rounds of Shell, illuminating Mk 24, Navy Mod. 1 were fired on the call of the Cavalry. The results were good and in two instances OP's were able to observe enemy activity in the light. On the 7th and again on the 10th and 14th tanks were observed in the 94th Division area across the MOSKLE RIVER. They were at extreme ranges but were fired on and dispersed; the amount of damage inflicted is not known. Also an enemy MG was destroyed in that area. Sixty-six rounds 3" APC and 15 rounds HE direct were fired.

On 11 February "C" Company received one M-36 and on the 12th "A" Company received one. The companies started a program of intensive training with the

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Destroyers. On 14 February "C" Company received 5 M-36's and the entire company was relieved on line to train. The company was held in reserve and all 3" guns laid on normal barrage prepared to be manned on call.

On the 19th the 10th Armored Division and 94th Infantry Division of the XI Corps attacked to the North on the East side of the MOSELLE RIVER. "C" Company occupied positions in vic of WENEN - OBER ORFELDANGE to support the attack and to support TF REED in containing INCHERINGEN. "C" Company destroyed one artillery piece with 6 rounds HE and 6 rounds APC.

3. 22 - 28 February 1945. On 22 February the battalion was relieved of attachment to TF REED and attached to the 76th Infantry Division. "A" Company was placed in division reserve, remaining in FLANDEILLY, and continued training. "B" Company continued in support of the 385th and "C" Company was attached initially to the 304th Infantry. On 22 February the Battalion CP and Reconnaissance Company moved to CHT-KNACH. On the 21st "C" Company received 5 M-36's and on the 22d another one, bringing them to full strength. "A" Company received 6 on the 22d, 2 on the 24th, 2 on the 26th, making a total of 11.

On the 24th "C" Company moved across the SAUER RIVER assembling vic FERSCH-WEILER and the 2d Platoon, "B" Company, 691st TD Bn was relieved attachment to "B" Company. On the same day the 1st Recon Platoon was attached to "B" Company, the 3d Recon Platoon to "C" Company. On the 26th the 2d Recon Platoon was attached to "A" Company, and the company crossed the SAUER RIVER, assembling vic GRNZEN in direct support of the 417th Infantry. On the same day "C" Company was relieved of attachment 304th Infantry and placed in direct support.

The mission of all companies during this period was to provide AMCSd defense and to support the advance of the infantry by fire as needed, particularly in the reduction of pill boxes. The companies gave close support in this respect, and during the period a total of 495 rounds HE and 491 rounds APC were expended (16 rounds of the HE with CP T105) on pill boxes, OP's, dug-outs, and other strong points and enemy personnel. Destroyer crews also fired their Cal .50 MG's at enemy personnel on several occasions. The known damage inflicted during this period is as follows: 7 Enemy killed, 1 NEBELWERFER destroyed, 100 pill boxes neutralized, 13 OP's destroyed, 10 dug-outs destroyed, and 4 MG's destroyed. In addition 19 PW's were captured and at least 149 taken by the infantry as a direct and immediate result of our fire.

One M-36 was destroyed during this period on 27 February when it was hit by an AT gun. The platoon leader and one man were killed and four men seriously wounded. The destroyer was put into position on a ridge over-looking the town of GILZEM to fire into the town. It fired three rounds before it was knocked out. It is believed that either the first or second round of enemy fire hit the destroyer, which immediately burned. In all the destroyer was hit five times, one round going through driver's compartment, one through the assistant driver's compartment, and three hitting the tube of the gun.

II. INTELLIGENCE AND OPERATIONS AND USE OF SECTIONS.

1. At the beginning of the period there was no change in the disposition of the Reconnaissance platoons. 1st Platoon was attached to "B" Company; 2d Platoon was attached to "A" Company.

From 1st February to 4th February both platoons operated CP's for their respective companies.

On 5 February the Reconnaissance Company CP opened in DALHEIM and both platoons reverted to its control. The 1st Platoon operated mounted and dismounted patrol in the vic of DALHEIM. The 2d Reconnaissance Platoon was held in reserve.

7 February, 2d Platoon was attached to "B" Company. They relieved the 2d Platoon of "B" Company on the line at REMICH. One Section of the 1st Platoon was also attached to "B" Company and established 3 MG positions on high ground in the vic of GREIVELDANG.

8 February 2d Bcn was relieved of attachment to "B" Company and returned to Bcn Company.

9 February, 2d Bcn relieved 1st Bcn on the line, 1st Bcn returning to DALHEIM.

11 February to 13 February, 1st Bcn Platoon operated armored security patrol in the vic of BOUS, CANACH, and REMICH.

13 February it was reported that enemy were in the woods west of DALHEIM. 1st Bcn patrolled the woods and found no enemy. At this time the 3d Bcn Platoon was formed and held in reserve, conducting technical training. The Pioneer Platoon was also formed and conducted technical training.

14 February, 1st Platoon relieved the 2d Platoon on line. 1st Platoon returned to DALHEIM and conducted armored patrols in vic of DALHEIM.

19 February, 2d Bcn Platoon relieved the 1st Platoon on line. 1st Section of 3d Platoon furnished security for the 2d Cavalry Squadron's M-18's in vic of ENNEN. Remainder of the Bcn Company patrolled in the vic of ELLANG and WILBRANG for reported Germans. Report was negative.

20 February, 1st Bcn Platoon relieved Troop "A" of the 2d Cavalry at ENNEN, outposting the town along the west bank of the MOELLE, NIVEL.

22 February, Bcn Company CP moved to ECHTERNACH. 1st Platoon was attached to "B" Company which at the time was fighting in the Siegfried line. This Platoon was used to make route, area, and position reconnaissance. If mines were located they were removed or marked. Platoon operated CP's and maintained close liaison with the infantry units with which the company was working and the units on their right and left.

25 February, 2d Platoon was attached to "A" Company and 3d Bcn attached to "C" Company. Pioneer platoon still conducted technical training.

All platoons to the end of the period were used on missions assigned by company commanders. Missions assigned were liaison with Infantry units and route, area, and position reconnaissance, also operating CP's. Any mines found were either removed or marked.

SECTION III. LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURES, PROBLEMS.

1. Logistics.

a. Ammunition expenditures during month of February:

3" HE (Normal)	3401
3" HE (Reduced Charge)	666
3" APC	21
3" Illuminating	9
90mm HE	1038
90mm APC	884

b. Gasoline expended: 28,645.

c. Rations consumed:

Operational:

"B"	15330	83%
"10 in 1"	2640	14%
"C"	620	3%

Reserve:

"10 in 1"	530	77%
"C"	980	142%
"K"	456	66%

d. Vehicles and primary weapons destroyed during period:

2 Carriage, motor 90mm M-36

e. Socks turned in for washing and return: 3790 pairs.

2. Procedure.

a. General.

- (1) During the month, while the organization remained on line a complete conversion from towed T/O and E to Self-Propelled T/O and E was made. All new items for initial issue were placed on requisition by Battalion Supply. Redistribution of equipment was made and all excess equipment was turned in to appropriate Services of Supply.
- (2) Battalion Supply continued accepting informal requisitions, editing same, and relieving the units from as much paper work as possible by keeping the company supply sergeants in the Rear Echelon with Battalion Supply.

- (3) Supply problems, directives, changes in policy, and requirements were sent to the companies on administrative messages through command channels.

b. Class I.

- (1) Battalion Supply requested rations from Army Class I Supply Point daily for operational rations, and on Friday of each week for P.I. rations, using the strength of companies as reported on Morning Reports.
- (2) Battalion drew rations from Army Class I Supply Point and delivered them to the companies at the Rear Echelon.
- (3) Three days reserve rations were maintained by picking up any reserve rations requested by companies on special requisition from Army Class I Supply Point.

c. Class II.

- (1) Battalion accepted informal requisitions from companies. They were edited, consolidated, and forwarded to Army Supply Points. In the event items were not received on initial request Battalion backordered for the companies.

d. Class III.

- (1) With the conversion to self-propelled a complete change was necessary in servicing the companies with Class III items. Three gas trucks were maintained and gas was carried to the companies by Battalion Supply.
- (2) The oil was kept in gas and oil trailers, thus keeping everything as mobile as possible.

e. Class IV. None.

f. Class V.

- (1) Basic ammunition loads were maintained at all times and a reasonable amount in excess was held for indirect firing.
- (2) All ammunition expended was picked up by battalion and delivered directly to the company C.P.'s.
- (3) Upon receiving the new type gun basic loads of ammunition were delivered to companies.
- (4) When all 3" guns were turned in, Corps AT Officer was contacted as to the disposition to be made of special type 3" ammunition, such as illuminating shell and high velocity ammunition.

g. Miscellaneous.

(1) Motor vehicular maintenance:

- (a) Company Maintenance performed 1000-mile and 50-hour checks and Battalion performed 6000 and 100-hour checks. Company Maintenance remained with the company.**
- (b) Since Reconnaissance Company is split, with one Recon Platoon attached to each line company, the Recon Motor Sgt went to each line company and completed his checks there.**

(2) Evacuation.

- (a) Evacuation is handled by the company to the Maintenance Shop and by Battalion Maintenance from the company to the battalion shop. If vehicles are damaged beyond 2d Echelon Repair they are immediately evacuated to the supporting Ordnance Company.**
- (b) Since the Battalion had but one Recovery Vehicle this was kept by Battalion Maintenance so that it could assist any of the three line companies.**

3. Supply Problems.

a. Company Maintenance sections are hindered by shortages of Armored Command Company Sets. Also the only Recovery Vehicle was a T-2 for most of the period. This vehicle was found to be of little value as it was too light and required more maintenance hours than were available.

IV. PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION.

1. Replacements.

a. During the period of this report the Battalion has drawn four (4) replacements — two (2) officers and two (2) enlisted men. Twenty enlisted men have returned to duty from the hospital.

b. The Battalion has had five (5) enlisted men and one officer killed, five enlisted men wounded in action, thirteen enlisted men sick in hospital, four non-battle casualties, and have lost forty-two enlisted men, transferred out of the battalion, forty of which were transferred as a result of reorganization under T/O 18-25 as a self-propelled battalion.

c. During the month the battalion completed its reorganization for a self-propelled battalion under T/O 18-25, dated 15 March 1944 and as of 28 February after having 40 enlisted men transferred out of the battalion had exactly T/O enlisted strength but was low its authorized excess officer strength of four officers.

2. Special Service.

a. During the month of February all men of the Battalion were given opportunity to see movies frequently.

b. During the month five enlisted men went on three-day passes to Paris; ten enlisted men and one officer went on four-day passes to the XII Corps Rest Center in Nancy, France; twenty enlisted men and two officers went on four-day passes to XII Corps Rest Center in ESCH, LUXEMBOURG; and seventy-five enlisted men went on two-day passes to the Task Force Reed Rest Center in the City of LUXEMBOURG. Quotas were received through the 2d Cavalry Group (Task Force Reed) and through 76th Infantry Division, organizations to which assigned during this period.

c. Red Cross Clubmobile facilities were available to each company at least once during the month.

3. Medals. During the month one recommendation to award the Bronze Star for heroism and thirty four for meritorious service were submitted to XII Corps. Awards during the month were as follows: Two enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service and twenty-four enlisted men were awarded the bronze star for meritorious service.

4. Graves Registration. Men killed and wounded were evacuated through squadrons of 2d Cavalry Group and through the respective combat teams to which the units of the battalion were attached.

5. Personnel Administration. The Personnel Section operated with the Battalion's own rear echelon until the Battalion was attached to the 76th Infantry Division at which time the section began operation with the Division Rear Echelon.

SECTION V. COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. During the period covered by this report the task of conversion of the battalion from a towed to a self-propelled M-36 unit was accomplished while the battalion continued to be on line. Immediately that the first destroyers were received, higher headquarters committed them. The result was that one company was committed a day and a half after receiving the destroyers. The speed of the conversion permitted little more than a brief familiarization by the crews. However, what would normally take months to accomplish in the states was accomplished in combat in days without serious difficulty.

For approximately one week the Battalion manned 42 guns. For two days one of the Ren Platoons was employed to man the towed guns of the 2d Platoon of "B" Company. Thereafter "C" Company manned those guns as well as their own full complement of guns. "A" Company, with one destroyer, had about one week and with nine, about four days, intensive training. "C" Company had substantially the same period of training.

Reconnaissance Company was organized during this period, the two existing Ren Platoons providing most of the cadre. Immediately on the organization of the Pioneer Platoon, it started a program of training in mine detection and removal. Four mine sweeping squads have been organized in the platoon, which will be used to assist the gun companies.

2. The vehicular status under the conversion is as follows:

	TD COMPANY			RCM COMPANY			HQ CO	MKD	TOTAL
	Co	Hqs	Per Plat	Total	Co	Hqs			
M-36			4	12					36
M-20	1			2	2			3	8
M-8					2			6	6
M-32*	1			1					3*
Truck 1/4-T	4	1		7	3	4	1	16	49**
Truck 3/4 T WC					1			1	8
Truck 3/4 T CAR								2	2
Truck 1 1/2 T	1			1			4	4	9
Truck 2 1/2 T	1							18	21
Wrecker 10 T								1	1
Compressor							1	1	1
Halftrack	1	2		7			2	2	23
Trailer, 1 T	1			1				15	18
Trailer, Ammo		1		3					9

* Have actually received only one M-32 and one M-31.

** Includes odograph.

Under the above set-up the TD Platoon has one 1/4-ton, 2 half-tracks and the four destroyers. This enables the security section to have the protection of the half-track armor and in addition provides two vehicles capable of carrying ammunition.

3. The final results of operations by the battalion as a towed unit, with respect to known damage inflicted on the enemy and rounds expended are as follows:

Tanks	4	Pill boxes	10
Other vehicles	1	Prisoners	136
Arty and AT pieces	8	Enemy killed	196 (Illu)
MG's	8	Rounds fired indirect	32,526 (HE) 30 Shell
Mortars	5	Rounds fired direct	2,352 (HE) 587 (APC)
OP's	19	Total rounds expended	35,495

4. In order to facilitate communications between the infantry and our TD Platoons the infantry battalions have furnished our platoons with SCR 300 radios and the battalions with SCR 610 radios. Excellent use has been made of these facilities. In one instance an M-36 was moved into position to neutralize a pill box being assaulted by the infantry. Fog was heavy and the gunner was unable to see his target. The gun was laid with map data and fire adjusted by the infantry company commander, using the SCR 300. The range was approximately 800 yards and the third round went into the embrasure. Fire was then continued until lifted by the infantry C.O. as the pill box was taken. In another instance two M-36's continued firing on a pill box until the infantry advanced to within 50 yards of the box when fire was lifted by the infantry C.O. and the infantry took the box and 10 prisoners without receiving a round of fire.

5. During the assault on the SIEGFRIED LINE in the vicinity of BONTENHACH recently the infantry assaulted 6 pill boxes without supporting fire. They were driven off by heavy fire from the boxes. In the afternoon they reorganized and attacked again under the supporting fire of one of our platoons. All boxes were taken without receiving a round of fire in return and 60 prisoners were taken.

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6. On 26 February the 2d Platoon, "B" Company, occupied positions on the West side of the PRUM RIVER overlooking the town of PRUMZERLY to support an attack on the town by the infantry across the river from the North. Fire was delivered on the town until the entire garrison of 53 men surrendered. Three enemy swam the river and requested that fire be lifted while they returned for the remainder of the garrison. They returned in a small boat, lined up the garrison at the river's edge and commenced ferrying them across. Fifteen were brought across the river in this fashion when the infantry arrived and took the remainder.

7. An example of the employment of mutually supporting TD's occurred on 13 February. One section of the 2d Platoon of "B" Company occupied positions in the vic of ECHTERWACHBRUK to fire on pill boxes. As the M-36 on the left started to fire an AT gun to its immediate front opened up on it. The destroyer pulled back behind a house immediately but the platoon OP observed the flash and spotted the gun. The M-36 on the right then took the AT gun under fire knocking it out. While it was firing, a second AT gun opened up on it and it withdrew. This AT gun was then taken under fire and knocked out by the M-36 on the left.

8. With the companies using a considerable amount of ammunition in close support of infantry attacks on SIEGFRIED LINE pill boxes ammunition was dumped by Battalion Supply as close to positions as possible. In several cases dumps were established within 1000 yards of front line. Companies or platoons could then speedily pick up as much 90mm as necessary with Security Halftracks or Ammunition Trailer.

9. At one period during the month, with long lines of communications and a poor road network to the Rear Echelon we found it advisable to keep a gas truck and several ammunition trucks loaded with 90mm at the Forward C.P. for speedy dispatch to companies.

Robert C. McDonald, Jr.
ROBERT C. MCDONALD, JR.,
Lt. Colonel, 808 TD Bn
Commanding

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