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HEADQUARTERS  
80th Tank Destroyer Battalion

AFO 403  
30 November 1944

SUBJECT: After Action Reports  
Against the Enemy

From: 1 November 1944  
TO : 30 November 1944

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 PROCEDURES, PROBLEMS.
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- SECTION V - COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

SECTION I. SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.

1. 1 November 1944. "A" Company in direct support 319th Infantry. Supported attack of 319th to clear out area made by hook in LA SELLIE RIVER (S and W of river) by delivering both direct and indirect fires. First and 3rd Plats moved to positions and delivered direct fire on MAILLÉ, LEBRICOURT, AILLOIS, CHAINCOURT, PELLE, and the area of LOTTIN, expending 145 rds HE and 26 rds APC. Second Plat delivered 161 rds HE indirect preparatory fires and 117 rds HE on 9 missions throughout day and night. Results of operations: 319th accomplished mission, "A" Company captured 5 prisoners. "B" and "C" Companies continued to provide AA defense for 316th and 317th Infantry Regiments, respectively, with two Plats each, one Plat from each company firing indirect harassing and interdiction fires; expended 262 rds HE on 23 missions.

2. 2 November - 23 November 1944. During this period 80th Division attacked to N and E, crossing LA SELLIE RIVER and pushing to the MAGNOC LINE vic WEDLACH and the MINE at CITE CHARCONNAGES, a distance of approximately 35 kilometers. Battalion was employed with one company attached to each Co: "A" Co to 319th, "B" Co to 318th, and "C" Co to 317th. One section of each Rcn Plat attached to each line company, 2d Section, 2d Plat in reserve. Initially "A" and "C" Companies were under regimental control, "B" Co under Battalion control, a Plat attached to each Infantry Bn. On the morning of the attack, 8 November, "B" and "C" Companies delivered direct supporting fires, expending 119 rds HE. "C" Co credited with knocking out four pill boxes and two mortars. "A" Co (1st and 2d Plats, attached to 905 FA Bn, D/S Bn) fired 192 rds HE indirect fire as part of Arty preparation. "B" and "C" Companies crossed the river the afternoon of the 6th. On the 9th "A" Co Sptd the attack delivering both direct and indirect fires, expending 145 rds HE and 52 rds APC direct fire and 10 rds HE indirect. Knocked out enemy 88 mm gun at range of 2500 yds. Displaced across river with 319th. "B" Co's 1st Plat was caught by rising water of LA SELLIE RIVER and half its guns and vehicles were temporarily stranded. "C" Co moved with advance of 317th knocking out two 88 mm guns at ranges of 1000 and 1200 yds, killing 10 enemy. On 13 November "C" Co knocked out another 88 mm gun. 15 November, 1st and 2d Plats "A" Co relieved attachment to 905th FA Bn, one Plat attached to each Infantry Bn. 20 November, Rcn Plats placed in reserve. 22 November, 1st Rcn

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Plat assigned mission of road reconnaissance to H and E. During advance of Division companies provided A and defense, moving with advance and taking positions always well to the front. In one instance "A" Co carried infantry in half-tracks into town and provided covering fire with 50 Cal MG's. A total of 113 prisoners were captured during this operation.

3. 24 November - 30 November 1944. During this operation Division breached the PARROT LINE vic ST BARBIDESTRUP and PELAC and pushed E to vic PARBERSVILLE. On Div order Bn relieved of attachment to CT's and attached to 80th Div Arty, "prepared to Spt Atk on Forts of LAGIVON LINE by direct fire." Companies atchd to D/S FA Bns: "A" Co to 905th FA, "B" Co to 311th FA and "C" Co to 313th FA. On the 24th Bn Sptd Atk with 1st and 2d Plats (minus base piece of each Plat) of "A" Co and one section of 1st and 2d Plats of "B" Co in direct fire positions; remaining guns of "A" and "B" Companies and "C" Company occupied indirect positions. 245 rds HE and 139 rds APC direct fire were delivered on forts, pill boxes and targets of opportunity; "A" Co also fired 50 Cal MG's Sptng Atk. 30 known enemy killed. 278 rds HE were fired indirect on 14 missions. During remainder of period companies displaced with D/S battalions and delivered indirect reinforcing fires, expending a total of 2190 rds on 100 missions. On 29 November a small tank threat developed and "C" Company moved its 3d Plat and two guns of the 2d Plat into direct fire positions.

SECTION II. INTELLIGENCE OF RATIONS, USE OF SECTIONS, ETC.

1. 30 October 1944. In preparation to crossing the SEILLE RIVER both Rcn Plats were assigned the mission to reconnoiter the river for possible fords from ROEY to ELN. The mission was accomplished by 1200 hours 3 November.

8 November 1944. One section of Rcn Plat was attached to each company to aid in crossing the SEILLE RIVER with mission to keep companies informed on Infantry front lines, condition of roads, and to sweep for mines around gun positions. Each section had direct communication with the company with which they worked. Information concerning any other company was sent over the battalion command net. 2d Sec of the 2d Rcn Plat was held in Bn reserve.

12 November 1944. 2d Sec of 2d Rcn was attached to Company "A".

20 November 1944. Both Rcn Plats were called under control of S-2.

21 November 1944. 1st Rcn Plat was assigned the mission to reconnoiter the roads HEILLY, GURGLANGE, FUREIGN, VAUTE-VICHLINIA, and PARIDE STROFF and to establish an OP in that area. At this time this area was very much exposed. Platoon was called in 1600 hours 22 November.

29 November 1944. 1st Rcn Plat was assigned the mission to reconnoiter the roads north of ST AVOLD and to contact the 42d Cavalry Squadron on our left. The 2d Rcn was assigned the mission to reconnoiter the roads to the SE from ST AVOLD and to contact the units on our right. Both missions were completed by 1600 hours 29 November.

30 November 1944. 1st Rcn Plat was assigned a route reconnaissance, ST AVOLD, LAGIVON, PARBERSVILLE, PARST PARBERSVILLE, CAFFEL, STAVILLE, PARBERSVILLE, SEIG-BUSCH. 2d Rcn assigned a zone reconnaissance of an area 3000 yds North East of ST AVOLD. Both missions were completed by 1200 hrs.

2. Instructions. Between 3 and 8 November the S-2 Section gave classes to the Rcn Plat on German mines, firing devices, grenades, and the use of the mine sweeper. 54

On 13 November G-2 Section started publication of daily Intelligence Summary compiled from ~~Infantry~~ Corps, and Division G-2 reports and information gained from front gun companies and men Plats. It also contained a short summary of the news of the Western Front. Distribution was made to each Plat.

3. Sources of information for this period.

- (1) Division G-2 reports.
- (2) Corps G-2 reports.
- (3) Division Engineers.
- (4) Gun Companies.
- (5) Reconnaissance platoons.

4. Maps used for period.

Battle maps - 1:50,000  
 " " 1:25,000  
 Battle Map Maginot Line - 1:5,000

5. Codes for the period.

Division map code.  
 Slidex for radio and telephone communication - new Slidex code issued 5 November.  
 Geographical codes #3 and 4 published by Division.

SECTION III. LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURE, PROBLEMS.

1. Logistics.

a. Ammunition expended from 1 November to 30 November inclusive:

3" H.E.	6129
3" H.E. (Reduced Charge)	109
3" APC	310
50 Cal. M.G.	2530
30 Cal. M.G.	1000

b. Gasoline expended during period: 16,365 gallons.

c. Ration percentage consumed:

"B" Ration	20%
"10 in 1"	80%
1 day Reserve "C"	0%
1 day Reserve "K"	0%
1 day Reserve "10 in 1"	0%

d. Vehicles and primary weapons replaced during period:

Half Tracks	2
3" Guns	2
1/4-ton Truck	1

2. Procedure.

a. General.

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S E C R E T

- (1) In S-4 remained a member of the forward C.P.
  - (2) Company Supply Sergeants worked in Rear Echelon with Battalion Supply making frequent visits to companies and going forward to assist in determining losses involving much equipment, either organizational or individual.
  - (3) The communications officer controlled all items of Signal equipment requisitioned. Companies requested needs from him be consolidated and worked with Battalion Supply crew in procuring and distributing equipment.
- b. Class I.
- (1) Battalion Supply continued to request rations from Division Quartermaster daily using the strength of companies reported on Morning Reports.
  - (2) Battalion Supply drew rations from Division Class I Supply Point and delivered them to the companies at the Battalion Rear Echelon. In cases where company could not get truck back Battalion Supply delivered rations to Company C.P.
  - (3) Another day of reserve rations (10 in 1) was authorized during this period so that the companies were required to keep three days reserve ration on hand.
  - (4) On Thanksgiving Day every man in the Battalion was fed a "D" ration - with turkey.
- c. Class II.
- (1) Battalion Supply accepted informal requisitions from companies. Company Supply Sergeants kept a record of individuals or platoons, to which requisitioned items should be sent upon receipt.
  - (2) Battalion edited, consolidated and forwarded requisitions and in event items were not received on initial request, back-ordered for the companies.
  - (3) Upon receipt of items, Company Supply Sergeants tagged them for platoon and/or individual and sent them forward on the ration truck.
- d. Class III.
- (1) Daily reports of gasoline on hand were made to Division G-4 and the Battalion received allotments in accordance to requirements while this item was rationed. When units began to move in attack, required amounts were picked up daily from Division Class III Supply points.
  - (2) Can for can exchange was carried out within this Battalion whenever possible.

e. Class IV.

- (1) Demolitions were requisitioned and received for use of Battalion Reconnaissance elements in clearing paths through mine fields.

f. Class V.

- (1) Basic ammunition load was maintained at all times. Headquarters Company personnel and vehicles maintained the Main Supply and each line company drew its required amount from the Battalion Ammunition Dump with 1 1/2-ton ammunition vehicles.

g. Miscellaneous:

- (1) Engineer Water Point locations were sent to Companies and water picked up by company kitchen trucks from these points.

- (2) Motor vehicular maintenance.

- (a) Thousand and six-thousand mile checks were performed as normal when in a static position; when in movement they were completed at first opportunity.

- (b) Company motor maintenance crews travelled with the companies normally. During a portion of the period the company maintenance section worked several miles behind the Company C.P. but this lengthened the communication lines and slowed up the maintenance and evacuation of vehicles and was discontinued.

- (c) A mechanic from Battalion Maintenance was kept with the forward C.P. to keep constant check on the C.P. vehicles. Any mechanical difficulties he could not fix were sent to the Rear Echelon for repair.

- (3) Upon receipt of instructions from Third U. S. Army the following items of C.W.S. property were turned in:

Apparatus, decon., 3 - gal.  
Alarm, gas  
Curtain, gasproof  
Disinfectant, gas, mask  
Impregnite, shoe  
Paint, liquid vesicant detector  
Paper, liquid vesicant detector  
Sack, gas resistant  
Sign, gas warning

- (4) Duffle bags and gas masks were moved forward as required to make them easily accessible to troops. Duffle bags of men killed in action were inventoried and personal effects forwarded to C.P. effects.

- (5) Evacuation

- (a) Vehicular evacuation was handled by the Battalion wrecker crew when Company Maintenance could not evacuate.

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- (b) Deceased were evacuated through Combat Teams which units were supporting.
- (c) Prisoners were evacuated to Combat Team P.M. enclosures.
- (d) In accordance with instructions from Third United States Army socks were picked up from companies daily and turned into Division Class I Distributing Point.

3. Supply problems.

a. Preparation of "B" ration was handicapped by a shortage of condiments, particularly salt.

b. Shortages of tires, tubes, and patches has made the job of "keeping them rolling" increasingly difficult for maintenance crews. The following list of shortages as of 30 November 1964 will help to elucidate:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Short</u>
Tires, 600 x 16	19
" 750 x 20	2
" 900 x 20	1
" 900 x 16	2
Tubes, 600 x 16	24
" 750 x 20	4
" 900 x 20	1
" 900 x 16	1
Hot patches	500

c. Shortage of half-track winch cables (12 short in Bn at end of period) made cross-country movement of guns more difficult.

S E C R E T

SECTION IV. PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION (S-1)

1. Replacements.

a. During the period of this report the Battalion has drawn a total of thirty-two men from replacements pools.

b. The Battalion has had five (5) men killed, nineteen (19) wounded, twenty-nine (29) men hospitalized through sickness, fifteen (15) of which have been returned as replacements mentioned above.

2. Special Services.

a. From 1 November 1944 to 8 November 1944 one of the line companies continued to send approximately thirty (30) men to the rear echelon each day for baths, a motion picture, and passes to PONT-A-MOUSSON, a chance to listen to the radio, etc. The other two line companies during this period continued having a motion picture every other day, which was operated by Battalion Headquarters at the Company CP.

b. On or about 9 November the Division started attacking and pushing forward, and since that time the companies have been continually with the attacking forces with very little opportunity for shows or other forms of entertainment.

c. During the month the Battalion was allotted a quota of eight (8) enlisted men and one (1) officer for a forty-eight hour pass to Paris. These passes were divided among the companies equally and the men selected by lot.

3. Medals. During the month fourteen (14) recommendations for the Bronze Star were sent to the 80th Infantry Division, of which number eight (8) have been received and awarded to the men concerned. The men who have received the awards are: Sergeants Joseph J. Vetashick, Headquarters Company, John W Hooker, Company A; Corporals Jessie R. Walton, Boris Angoff, Company A; Tec 5 Marvin T Wilkes, Company A; Pfc's Brownie Woodlee, Headquarters Company, Bus McNeal, Company A; and Private Francis D. Lightfoot, Company A.

4. Graves Registration. The five (5) men killed were evacuated through the combat teams to which the companies were attached at the time.

5. Personnel Administration. The Personnel Section continued to operate with the 80th Infantry Division rear echelon and continued to handle most of the paper work for the companies and part of the paper work for the Battalion CP.

SECTION V. OBSERVERS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. During initial part of period Arty ammunition continued to be very critical and sharply rationed. Accordingly this Bn and the tank Bn attached to Division provided virtually all harassing and interdiction fires for the Division. The Arty Bn with each company provided a place mark and the companies ran their own position area surveys. The Arty simply gave concentrations direct to computed by the company FDC. Occasionally Div Arty gave concentrations direct to the Bn. In such cases Bn plotted the concentrations and assigned them to the appropriate company. Whenever visibility permitted the Arty endeavored to register the company by plane. However, because of the difficulty of observing the burst of the 3" shell, it was frequently impossible to register in this manner. Accordingly registration was usually accomplished by the company commander from a forward OP using FO methods.

2. Normally in the 80th Division we have been employed to provide AT defense with one company attached or in support of each Combat Team. In a fast moving situation, as during the drive across the SEILLE RIVER to the MAGINOT LINE, we have found it advisable to have the platoons attached to the battalions rather than have the company under regimental control. This, in effect, gives each platoon a sector equivalent to the infantry battalion sector and enables the platoon to occupy positions promptly as the infantry organizes an area, being well forward and in position to repel any armored counter-attack. This method is particularly effective in river crossings as the TD's cross with the battalion, usually immediately after the organic AT guns. On the other hand, when the company is under regimental control there is difficulty in getting the TD's forward promptly, obtaining necessary road priority, etc. In a defensive situation, however, the better solution is to have the company under regimental control. This permits better coordination of fields of fire, mutual support, etc.

3. In the reduction of fortified areas where the TD's are called upon to deliver direct fires on pill boxes and emplacements and supporting fires, their fires should be closely coordinated by the artillery and directed by observers with the infantry. The observers may be the artillery observers or may be furnished by the TD's, but it is essential that there be observers in front with the infantry. In the reduction of the MAGINOT LINE in the vicinity of ST AVOLD each company was attached to a D/S artillery battalion. One company had two platoons in direct fire positions and one in indirect positions supporting the attack. The artillery battalion assigned sectors of fire for the platoons, lettering each sector. The artillery observer called for direct fire (by radio) as the situation required. The result was that the fires were extremely effective and were delivered continually until the objectives were seized. One of the companies was also employed to deliver direct fire but the B/S artillery battalion made no effort to coordinate its fires with the result that the company was unable to fire after the infantry had advanced into a tree line because of uncertainty as to the location of our friendly troops. This experience emphasizes the fact that there should be one centralized authority to coordinate the supporting fires.

4. The SCR 608 radio has been taken from Headquarters Company and each line company given two 608's. This enables the company commander to use one radio at his CP for his executive and at the same time maintain constant communication with Battalion and his platoons wherever he may be. This has resulted in better communications, since there is always one radio available in case of a breakdown.

5. We have prepared Graphical Firing Tables for 3" HE (Reduced Charge) which were printed by the Topographical Engineer Battalion thru the offices of Lt. Colonel Waldo Walker, XII Corps, ATO. We have fired 109 rounds of the reduced charge ammunition.



6. Our S-2 publishes a daily Intelligence Summary for the companies. The summary contains information on mine fields, roads, general and specific enemy information, numbers of enemy captured, enemy material destroyed and items of general interest, including progress of the front. Sufficient copies are issued so that each platoon receives a copy. The men receive these reports with great interest, and they have been a prime factor in stimulating their interest in the "big picture".

7. Battalion maintenance made a grouser for a half-track. The supporting maintenance company (129th Ord L.C. Co) is now in the process of making enough for the battalion. Basis of issue: twenty grousers per half-track.

8. An electric arc welding unit should be issued to a T.D. Bn due to the large number of armored vehicles authorized.

9. When the Battalion was moving forward rapidly a "mobile" Battalion Ammunition Dump was tried with good success. The necessary vehicles were dispatched forward to a centrally located point and the coordinates of the location sent to the companies. The ammunition was issued to the companies off the 6 x 6's.

10. One unit in the organization turned one of its 1 1/2-ton vehicles into a gasoline vehicle, primarily, with all the cars in the company pooled. Thus the Company commander could dispatch gas as needed to his platoons and was always sure that in a moving situation he could take care of the platoon which had greatest need.

11. In the attack, in close support of infantry, each platoon carried ten rounds of T.S. with the normal fuze removed for quick application of fuze GP 9-105.

*Robert C. McDonald, Jr.*  
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Commanding.