

**HEADQUARTERS 511TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 403, U. S. ARMY**

17 January 1945


SUBJECT: After Action Report Against the Enemy, 1 - 31 December 1944.
TO : The Adjutant General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.
THRU : Commanding General, 9th Armored Division, APO 299, U. S. Army.

1. Upon checking Section XII (Narrative) of the After Action Report Against the Enemy, 1 - 31 December 1944, submitted by this organization, the attached paragraph concerning the activity of Company C, 511th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was erroneously omitted.

2. The additional paragraph should be inserted on page 14 following the end of paragraph one (1) "and closed in new positions at 1400 hours, 18 December 1944" and before the beginning of the next paragraph, "At 0600 hours, 19 December 1944", etc.

3. Request the additional paragraph be inserted in order to have a more complete report from this organization.

For the Battalion Commander:


**U. S. ARMY,
WASH, D. C.,
Adjutant.**

11 January 1945

Subject: Inter Action Report Against the Enemy, 1 - 31 December 1944.
To: Lieutenant General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.
From: Commanding General, 7th Armored Division, AC 259, U. S. Army.

PART I

Section I - Introduction

1. Campaign Western Europe

a. Waldbillig-Christnach, Luxembourg,
Storet-Willereux, Chenagne-
Sanchamps, Belgium.

2. Maps:

Germany 1/25,000; Sheet No. 5702, 5, 5802, 3
5804, 5802, 3; 6102, 3, 4, 6202, 3, 4,
6302, 3, 4.

France and Belgium 1/25,000; Sheet 121 NS,
1/50,000, Sheet 106, 107, NS, 121, 122, 136,
137.

Belgium & NE France 1/100,000, Nos. S-1, T-1,
U-1, 15 & 17.

Europe Road Maps Carter Michelin 1/209,000,
No. 4, 1/200,000, 4, 56

3. Command:

a. During the period mentioned the Battalion
operated under the following commanders:

- Lt Col A. R. Brownfield - Battalion Commander.
- Company A - Capt Henry J. Cronin
1st Lt Burton G. Sawyer
- Company B - Capt France B. McDonkie
- Company C - Capt David G. Collins
- Recn Company - Capt Samuel H. Parsons
- Hq - Hq Co - Capt Howard P. Clarke, Jr.
Capt John Zakel, Jr.

Section II - Statistical Data.

	Off	EW	Total
1. Killed in action	2	7	9
Died of Wounds or Injuries	1		1
Wounded or Injured in action	3	32	35
Missing in Action	4	78	82
Captured			
Sick & Other Non-Battle Loss	2	26	28
Total Losses	12	143	155

449-69-9
380-63.2

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2. Personnel Replacements:

	Off	W	B
8 Decembe	0	0	6
12 December	0	0	1
Total	0	0	7

b. Returned to Duty - 1.

3. Prisoners of War Taken:

19 December - 1
 20 December - 3
 22 December - 2
 23 December - 2

Total 8

4. Vehicular Losses:

	Ha	Rcn	4	3	2	Total
Car, Armored, Utility, M-20			2		7	9
Car, Armored, Light, M-8		3				3
Carriane, Motor, 76mm, 1-18			4	3	10	17
Trailer 1/4 Ton, 2 wheel, Cargo					1	1
Trailer, Ammo, M-10			1	1	3	5
Truck 1/4 Ton, 4x4	3	4	4	1	5	17
Trailer, 1 Ton, 2 wheel Cargo			1			1
Truck, 3/4 Ton, 4x4 w/c, 12 Volt System	1					1
Truck 2 1/2 Ton, 6x6			1			1
Total	4	7	13	5	26	55

5. Vehicular Replacements:

No vehicular replacements received.

6. Ammunition Expended:

70mm, HE - 5,557
 70mm, AT - 149
 Cal. 50 MG - 35,840
 Cal. 30 MG - 17,740
 Cal. 30 Rifle - 8,254
 Cal. 30 Carbine - 4,756
 Cal. 45 Ball - 900
 57mm, HE - 119
 57mm, AT - 9
 57mm, Canister - 12
 81mm, Mortar, HE - 70
 Rockets, AT, M23 - 106
 Grenade, AT - 95
 Mine, AT, HE, M1A1 - 154
 Grenade, Hand, Frag - 537

76

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Section III - Narrative

This Battalion less Company A, and one (1) Reconnaissance Platoon continued its mission of supporting artillery under the control of Division Artillery, 9th Armored Division. This mission continued from the 1st to 16th, inclusive, and 2,368 rounds were expended on harassing and interdiction missions. Much of this fire was necessarily unobserved because of poor visibility. Fog and rain was predominant during this period of the month, which made accurate reports of fire difficult to the extreme.

Considerable effect was obtained in fire on towns east of the Sauer River. One oil tank was observed to have been set afire at Neiderwals, and many buildings in Eisenach, Schternach, and surrounding towns were observed to have been set afire, and undoubtedly damaged, and positive results were obtained.

During the period 13 to 16 December an increasing number of German patrols, planes and general activity became apparent. It became evident that the enemy was becoming aggressively active in this sector.

On 14 December, Company C, and one platoon of reconnaissance attached were ordered to GCR, 9th Armored Division and came under its control and moved to (F305-215).

At this time the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-) consisted of Company B, Reconnaissance Company Headquarters, one platoon reconnaissance, pioneer platoon, and Headquarters Company (-).

At 0600 hours on 16 December German artillery fire in considerable strength began to fall in the Scheidgen, Consdorf area. Enemy patrols were reported in strength in the area, and the forward observers were either unable to reach OP's or did so with difficulty because of shelling and heavy ground activity. Captain Parsons was involved in enemy action which, by this time, was obviously serious and in determined strength.

77

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The usual interdictory fire was carried out throughout the morning. A fairly heavy artillery concentration was received in Consdorf at approximately 1245. At 1450 orders were received to withdraw to new positions at (F495.60-333.93) in the vicinity of Waldbillig. Company B was ordered to new indirect fire positions at (F495.05-334.78) for first platoon, (F495.07-334.02) 2d Platoon, (F495.26-334.47) 3d Platoon. S-2 reported that the enemy had attacked all along the VIII Corps front. In the immediate sector the towns of Berdorf, Lauterborn, Osweiler, and Wickweiler are now held by the enemy. Waldbillig was shelled at 0015, 17 December 1944.

At 1045 on the 17th an enemy force of estimated strength of one regiment was reported advancing through the draw on our immediate right flank to Mullerthal. A reconnaissance patrol was requested by Division Artillery to investigate and retake Mullerthal. Company B was ordered into direct fire positions to repel a possible armored attack.

At 1100 hours the Battalion came under control of JCA, 9th Armored Division. Shelling of our positions continued intermitterly.

Troop B, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron was ordered by the Commanding Officer, JCA, to take control of Mullerthal and help contain the German advances. Before this was possible one platoon of Troop A, 89th Reconnaissance, which was at that time in Mullerthal was compelled to withdraw. At the instigation of the Battalion Commander, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, an attack was planned independantly in conjunction with the reconnaissance elements of the 89th Reconnaissance Squadron to retake Mullerthal.

The attack began at 1330 hours with one platoon of Company B moving down the road into the draw, with a screen of dismounted personnel of the 89th Reconnaissance Squadron. The remainder of the reconnaissance elements were to attack dismounted over high ground into woods NE of Waldbillig. The leading destroyer of the first platoon was put out of

78

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action of machine fire and the mortar were compelled to withdraw. The immediate effect was positive indication of strength, estimated to be at least a company. The elements of the force were reformed and the attack resumed at 1500 hours with the remaining tank destroyer of the first section, and dismounted men proceeding down the draw, and the second section to attack with the elements of dismounted men over the high ground. As darkness fell all elements were withdrawn. Results: Four machine guns definitely knocked out, and 13 enemy dead. New estimate of enemy strength in draw - one battalion. Outposts were established for the night. Lt Col Brownfield was given command of the sector from Mullerthal to vicinity of Savelborn by COA Commander. Company B had three men wounded and four missing. Headquarters Company had two men wounded. At this time one platoon of Troop A and Troop B, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron came under Battalion control.

During the next few days artillery fire on our positions continued to be heavy, and caused considerable damage to both personnel and equipment. No direct attacks were received, but information indicated heavy attacks on surrounding elements. The time was spent in consolidating ^{and} strengthening position as well as possible for expected attacks. Our artillery gave constant support throughout the period and helped to make our positions tenable.

On the 19th in a coordinated effort, with the unit on our left, one platoon of Company B destroyed a farm house by direct fire, and killed and wounded an unknown number of the enemy. This made it possible for adjacent units to capture 61 prisoners. At this time prisoners were identified as being members of 5th Company, 988th Regiment, 276th WG Division. They reported about 40 dead and wounded in the house. They had crossed the river on the 14th and had received no supplies due to the accuracy of artillery and TD fire.

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Because of heavy pressure a plan of withdrawal was proposed for all units, but the ground would be held to the maximum degree. The right flank was static due to the pressure of friendly elements.

On the morning of the 20th three prisoners from 7th Company, 2d Bn, 987th Regt, 276th Vd, were taken by Troop B, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron. These men stated that they had no tanks, and only horse drawn transportation. Our artillery and TD's fire was so effective in Mullerthal Draw that one-half of their company was killed or wounded. The division and regiment commanders were also killed. The description of the effect of our fires was graphically stark; it was described in the following words: "The shrapnel was just like apples falling from the trees". The regiment crossed the river on Sunday on cables and fanned out to protect bridge construction, after which they moved into the Draw. The plan of attack was for the left battalion to flank Waldbillig with an attack on Christnach while simultaneously the right battalion attacked Waldbillig from the right. The morale was poor and many men wished to surrender, but were threatened with death by their officers.

At 1430 hours the enemy infantry estimated to be one company supported by two tanks attacked frontally from the direction of Haller at 968-338 and were repulsed. The attack came on again at 1630 (approximately two companies with three more tanks) and as darkness fell the enemy withdrew leaving approximately 50 dead, one tank destroyed and one probable (confirmed by arty Lm plane the following day).

During this action the rear echelon withdrew to Christnach, and at darkness the combat elements also withdrew to high ground SW of Waldbillig. This became necessary because of insufficient infantry support to protect the guns. Patrols were maintained all night, and outposts screen was put out.

Task Force Chamberlain composed of two infantry companies, one tank company, and one field artillery battalion, was ordered to attack Waldbillig at 1000 hours on 21 December 1944 and take

90

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high ground to the north, passing through our positions. Task Force Brownfield was to act as support for this operation. After two delays the attack jumped off at 1030, and gained the town. TD's supported by direct fire from high ground. Because of infantry casualties it became necessary to withdraw at night fall into the positions of Task Force Brownfield on high ground to southwest of Waldbillig. During the night one company of 61st Arm Inf Bn, 10th Arm Div, was brought forward to outpost the positions and provide necessary protection for our armor. All troops came under control of Task Force Brownfield.

During the following few days the situation became static with the enemy holding Waldbillig. One small enemy attack was mounted on the 23d from draw on right flank, but it was beaten off. During this entire period our positions received almost constant artillery and small arms fire both in the forward positions and in the town of Christnach. One mortar round landed inside the turret of a destroyer, killing one man and wounding one.

The enemy continued to bring up artillery and reinforcements and tank activity was reported throughout the area. Our artillery continued to pound suspected enemy gun positions in and around Waldbillig.

On the morning of the 24th elements of the 11th Regt, 5th Division, began an attack through our positions. At this time all of Task Force Brownfield was alerted for movement. During the day our guns were in direct support of the above mentioned attack.

At 2030 on the night of 25 December the billeting party of this organization and attached units left for Etalle, Belgium. The following morning all of our units were relieved and departed for assembly area at Schrodweiler. At this time due to a change in orders CGA was ordered to Tronquay, Belgium, to support the 4th Arm Div. All units of CGA jumped off in attack on Sibret and Villeiroux at 0730 on the 26th. One platoon of Company E, reconnaissance section attached, were with Task Force Karsteder,

81

one platoon and reconnaissance section with Task Force Collins, and Task Force Brownfield, composed of Company B, 11th T. Co., Troop B and E of 89th Recon Sq, Company A, 9th Engrs and reconnaissance of 11th T. Co., remained in reserve under the direction of the Battalion Commander. During the day all forward elements moved to Vaux-les-Rosiers.

The mission of the reserve was to protect the road to Bastogne with active patrols and strategically placed outposts. During this time those elements of this organization with other Task Forces mentioned, supported them with direct fire support.

The following account is the report of the action of the 1st platoon of Company B with Task Force Karsteder, in the vicinity of Willeroux:

Around 0600 hours on the morning of the 30th Sergeant Stacy had sighted either a Mark IV or Mark V tank directly to his front, immediately giving commands to gunner, Corporal Hatcher, the destroyer swiftly fired three rounds of APC at approximate range of 600 yards. All three rounds hit their mark destroying the enemy tank completely.

A few hours later at about 0900 hours, Sergeant Kucinski's destroyer, and gunner, Corporal Rush, sighted a large tank at approximate range of 800 yards. With the first round of APC the tank was knocked out and set afire. The infantry confirmed this and said it was a Mark VI tank. Sometime later this same destroyer got in their sights either a Mark V or Mark VI. With three rounds it was knocked out, but did not burn. Still later in the day Sergeant Kucinski's crew knocked out an enemy machine gun nest and possibly a mortar. In the same vicinity Sergeant Morgan's M-8 with Pfc Nestly knocked out an enemy occupied half-track at approximate range of 800 yards. In knocking this vehicle out they used their 37mm, 50 caliber and 30 caliber machine gun.

At 0830 on 30 December the reserve command was alerted to move to protect and reinforce the left flank of Task Force Collins. During the

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which of the enemy made four attacks on this flank. The reserve command closed in Joleville at 1.30 and took up defensive positions. During the afternoon elements of the 11th Arm Div passed through this position, and at 1720 the reserve retired to original positions in Vaux-Les-Bosiers.

At the moment and the positions mentioned above were being held. Throughout the entire operation all elements of the battalion were forced to fight a defensive battle. Ill-equipped to cope with ground troops in close contact, all tank threats were effectively handled, and an unknown number of enemy infantry was killed or wounded, thus effectively halting enemy progress until reinforcements could be brought into action.

83