

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

Jan 31

5 March 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report Against the Enemy, 1 - 28 February 1945.

TO : The Adjutant General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

THRU : The Commanding General, 80TH Infantry Division, APO 80, U. S. Army

Submitted herewith in accordance with paragraph 10, AR 345-105, as amended by Change 3 and Change 4, reports After Action Against the Enemy for the 511th Tank Destroyer Battalion, for the period 1-28 February 1945.

a. Administrative Remarks:

- (1) A supply truck (1 1/2 Ton), and ration truck (2 1/2 Ton) should be authorized for Hq & Hq Co, Tank Destroyer Battalion.
- (2) A supply truck (1 1/2 Ton) should be authorized Rca Co, Tank Destroyer Battalion.

b. Remarks Tactical:

During the month of February this Battalion was, for the most part, attached to the 80th Inf Div. This Division had already built up an SOP for tank destroyer employment, whereby one company of Tank Destroyers was attached to each Inf Regt. In turn, the Inf Regts usually attached a tank destroyer platoon to each Inf Bn. Such a system of allotment and sub-allotment has been proven many times to be erroneous. In the first place, the Bn Comdr loses control of his battalion. As a consequence, most of his specialized training, knowledge, and experience is not utilized. Likewise, his specially trained staff has no real function under this system. The same, of course, is true of the Co Comdr when the tank destroyer company is sub-allotted to Inf Bns. Secondly, it poses a real liaison problem. Neither the tank destroyer company or platoon have the necessary equipment, or the trained personnel, necessary to effect the required liaison under such a system. In the third place, a communication problem of some magnitude is introduced. Neither tank destroyers or Inf have radios which will not together. Fourthly, the frequent result of such a practice is gross misuse of the attached unit, due to lack of knowledge of the proper employment of tank destroyers on the part of Inf Bn Comdrs. During this month three (3) destroyers were lost due to mis-employment. Such losses due to mis-employment had a decidedly detrimental effect on the morale of the company concerned.

580-6312

It is recommended that, in addition to the announced War Department doctrine of indirect fire as the secondary mission for tank destroyers, a secondary mission be given them of direct support of Inf Regts for two companies, and general support for the third company. Such a mission, and system, places

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the tank destroyer company in the same position with respect to the Inf Regt as is now occupied by its' direct support FA Bn. Such a system has many advantages:

- (1) The tank destroyer battalion can be permanently placed under Div Arty control, thereby making it a simple matter to switch from one secondary mission to the other.
- (2) Places all the cannon of the division under Div Arty control.
- (3) Utilizes the training, knowledge, and experience of the Bn Comdr and Staff.
- (4) Practically eliminates the probability of mis-employment, since the Co Comdrs and Bn Comdr remain in command and in control of their commands.
- (5) Allows the Bn Comdr to make effective plans for massing his guns in performance of his primary mission.
- (6) Enables the tank destroyer battalion to most effectively support the Inf in furtherance of the Div mission.
- (7) Enables the Bn Comdr to institute a policy of rotation of companies, thereby obtaining time for rest, rehabilitation, and maintenance.

A. R. Brownfield
A. R. BROWNFIELD,
Lt Col, FA,
Commanding.

[REDACTED]

SECTION I

5-3 REPORT

From 0001 1 Feb 45 to 2400 28 Feb 45

1-3 February

At beginning of period (1 Feb 45), this battalion was attached to the 11th Armored Division, VIII Corps, and was initially in Corps reserve. From 1 Feb to 3 Feb 45, the Battalion remained in the following assembly areas and conducted maintenance of all vehicles and equipment plus rehabilitation of personnel:

Bn CP, Rcn & C Cos - Located at HULDANGE (P7775)

Hq & A Cos - Located at MATTEBOL (P7577)

B Co - Located at SPFLER (P8079)

3 - 5 February

Effective 3 February 1945, the Battalion was relieved of attachment to 11th Armored Division, VIII Corps, and was attached to 80th Infantry Division, XII Corps. At 0800 hours, 3 February 1945, the Battalion left assembly areas and made a road march to vicinity MERSCH, LUXEMBOURG. Upon arrival at Mersch, Companies were notified that they were to relieve the 802d Tank Destroyer Battalion on the line. In accordance therewith, Companies occupied the following positions by 1630 hours, 3 February 1945.

Bn CP & Hq Co - STEGEN (P8737)

Rcn Co - MEDERNACH (P9035)

A Co - EPPLDORF (P9339)

B Co - GILSDORF (P8841)

C Co - BEAUFORT (P9638)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

5 - 9 February

On 5 February 1945, Company C was attached to 319th Inf Regt, 80th Inf Div, and occupied direct fire positions in vicinity of BEITENDORF (P909428). Company B was attached to 318th Inf Regt, 80th Inf Div, and moved into direct fire positions vicinity BLATFURT (P960982). Company A was to support the fires of the 314th FA Bn, and occupied indirect fire positions in vicinity of EPFLENDORF (P930996). On 7 February 1945, one platoon of Company A was withdrawn from indirect fire positions and attached to Btry A, 558th FA Bn. Mission for the unit was to deliver direct fire on enemy pillboxes.

9 - 12 February

On 9 February 1945, 80th Div Arty Comdr assumed coordinator of all fires of all cannon of Div. Accordingly, Company B, 311th TD Bn, fires were under control of 315th FA Bn with two platoons in indirect positions and one platoon in direct position. Company C, 311th TD Bn, fires under control of 905th FA Bn, with two platoons in indirect positions and one platoon in direct position. While in these and alternate positions, the companies placed both direct and indirect fire on enemy pillboxes positions. On 11 Feb 45, the latter Companies were again placed under control of the Infantry Regiments, with Company A attached to 317th Inf Regt, Company B attached to 319th Infantry Regiment, and Company C attached to 319th Infantry Regiment. This attachment continued throughout the month of February. Field Artillery battalions continued to exercise fire control when companies were in indirect fire positions, with 314th FA Bn exercising fire control of Company A, 311th TD Bn.

12 - 19 February

On 12 February 1945, 3d Platoon, Company C, which was working in conjunction with 3d Bn, 319th Inf Regt crossed the OUB River in vicinity of WALLENDORF on mission of direct fire on enemy pillboxes. On 13 Feb 45, [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]

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OUR River at vicinity of DILLINGEN. In addition, the remainder of Company C crossed OUR River and occupied direct fire positions in support of the 319th Inf Regt. On 16 Feb 45, Company A moved from indirect fire positions, crossed OUR River to vicinity BOLLENDORF (LO04) and occupied defensive positions. On 19 Feb 45, Bn CP moved from STEGEN to BETTENDORF (P9043) in order to be of more effective aid to firing companies.

19 - 28 February

From 19-23 Feb 45 the firing companies engaged enemy positions, pillboxes, and tanks from various positions in vicinity of CRUCHTEN (P9845), STOCKIGT (LO045), KORPERICH (P9448), and OBERSGEGEN (P9449). On 23 Feb 45, Company B placed direct fire on the towns of METTENDORF (P993508) which assisted in its capture. On 24 Feb 45, Company A occupied direct fire positions firing on enemy vehicles and personnel and also into the villages of STEFFESHOF (LO150) and BURG (LO152). Company A's CP moved to FREILINGEN (P9947). On same date, Company B CP moved to LAHR (P9650) and Company C's CP moved to GEICHLINGEN (9551). In addition, Bn CP crossed the OUR River and moved into CRUCHTEN (P9845). On 25 Feb 45, Hq Co (Rr) moved from STEGEN to BETTENDORF (P9042). Company A remained in direct fire positions with 1st Platoon moving to vicinity of BRUMINGEN (L 018533), and 3d Platoon moved to METTENDORF (P9951). Company C's 1st Platoon moved to OBERRADEN (P998567). 2d Platoon remained in direct fire position in support of 3d Bn of 319th Inf Regt. On 26 Feb 45, Rcn Company moved to METTENDORF (P9951). Company A's CP moved to HUTTERSCHLID (LO856), 1st Platoon moved to vicinity of BLESBORN (LO858), 2d Platoon moved to MULLBACK (LO45530), 3d Platoon moved to vicinity of HELLSDORF (LO850), Company B remained in LAHR (P9650), with exception of 3d Platoon which occupied position N. of METTENDORF (LO05505). Company C's CP moved to ALTSCHIED (LO458), 1st Platoon vicinity PHILIPPSMILLER (LO862), 2d Platoon vicinity WEIDINGEN (LO358), 3d Platoon moved to ALTSCHIED (LO458). On 27 Feb 45⁴⁷

Hq Co moved to METTENSDORF (P9951). Hon Co moved to BIERSDORF (L0858). Company A's 2d Platoon moved to vicinity of WISSMANNSDORF (L0755). Company B's 3d Platoon returned to Company control and moved to LAHR (P9850). On 28 Feb 45 Bn CP moved to METTENSDORF (P9951). Company A remained in direct fire positions with Co CP moving to BIERSDORF (L0858). Company C's CP and all three platoons in vicinity of WEIDINGEN (L0257).

During the month, Reconnaissance Company was busily engaged on reconnaissance missions, locating and occupying OPs, and reporting valuable information concerning the enemy. Reconnaissance for routes, stream crossing and CP's were primary mission. In addition, enemy minefields, installations, and location of personnel were reported.

Hq Co continued its role of administration and supply during the period. Results of the Battalion's operations against the enemy are as follows:

Enemy Tanks Destroyed - 4	Enemy MG Nests - 2	Rocket Sights - 1
Enemy Half-Tracks - 2	Enemy AT Guns - 7	PW's Captured - 85
Enemy SP guns - 8	Enemy Pillboxes - 12	

SECTION II

S-2 Report

Period 1-28 February 1945

Maps: Germany - 1/25,000, GSGS No. 4414
Sheets Number 5903, 5904, 5905, 6003, 6004, 6005, 6103, 6104, 6105.
Germany - 1/50,000, GSGS Number 4507.
Sheets Number 107, 122, 137, 22, 23.
Central Europe - 1/100,000, GSGS Number 4416.
Sheets Number S-1, T-1, U-1.

1 - 5 February 1945

After the action of January in the Bastogne-St. Vith area the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 11th Arm Div, which was in reserve at the time, and ordered to move to vicinity of STEGEN, Luxembourg (P875378) on 2 February 1945. Here the unit was attached to the 80th Inf Div whose sector was generally from BOTH, Germany, (P913483) on the OUR River, south to BOLLENDORF, Germany, (L0140) on the SAUER River.

Investigation disclosed that the enemy was holding a line following east bank of the OUR and SAUER Rivers with mines, booby traps, anti-tank obstacles and pillboxes manned by the 1st, 5th, 6th and 7th Companies, 915th Regt, 352d VG Div, and 2d Bn of 423d Regt, 212th VG Div. Estimated strength of this holding force was 665 men.

Thirty-eight pillboxes known to be occupied on our front were reported by the 80th Div. A plan of attack was worked out for A and B Companies to fire direct on pillboxes from west bank of the River. Supporting fire by artillery was arranged for the 905th FA Bn with 155mm Howitzers furnishing the covering fire. The plan was for the tank destroyers to fire approximately 10 rounds then move back. This firing was hampered by rain and fog, but in spite of the poor visibility Company A scored four direct hits with four rounds drawing no reaction from the enemy.

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It was learned from two deserters from the 7th Co, 915th Regt that their company occupied nine bunkers with MCO, and seven men in each.

Enemy mines were generally used all along the River defenses with widely dispersed super-sensitive Regel mines between OUR River and bunker line at Gantingen. In many cases wires were attached to full igniters extending from mine to mine, connected to cause simultaneous explosion.

6-10 February 1945

The first appearance of enemy tanks was made on 6 February in the vicinity of AMGELDINGEN entering the town from the NE. The firing Companies continued their mission of direct firing on pillboxes and installations along the line.

On 7 February the 319th Inf Regt, 80th U. S. Div had two and one-half companies across River. Here they received heavy small arms, mortar and artillery fire on the crossing site. The enemy made extensive use of Nebelwefer fire. At 1615 hours the ponton bridge was knocked out by artillery. Heavy shelling with mortars and artillery was received by 80th U. S. Div Engineers while trying to rebuild the bridge.

Company A, 811th TD Bn, was given mission to furnish four destroyers to work in pairs with a direct laying FA Bn. Heavy enemy activity reported east of BETTEL. Apparently reinforcement were brought up by the enemy as they became aware of a determined U. S. thrust on this sector. On 8 February Company C destroyed one enemy rocket position at P983453 and a pillbox located at P945455.

Continued pillbox firing was accomplished by all Companies throughout the initial thrusts by 80th Inf Div to secure a bridgehead. 1st and 2d Companies, 1130th VG Regt identified at P990433, with Bn CP at P9944.

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Reconnaissance Company maintained OP's during the month, reporting movements of the enemy and in many cases acting as FA forward observers.

On 10 February 15 men surrendered from pillbox P949445, after firing by Company A, 811th TD Bn.

The enemy continued his defense by using artillery, mortar (81mm and 120mm) and Nebelwefer fire. There was a noticeable lessening of machine gun fire, mainly on the crossing sites.

11 - 15 February 1945

On 11 February the enemy attempted to counter-attack about 1120 hours in vicinity P982446, but was dispersed by our artillery fire. Our observers reported such movement by foot troops and horse-drawn vehicles toward our lines through HOMERDINGEN, CRUCHTEN, LAHR and OBERSGEGEN. Another counter-attack attempted to form on the morning of 12 February but this was also dispersed with no ground lost by our troops.

The enemy brought up a few tanks and SP guns to bring direct fire on our bridgehead and continued heavy resistance was encountered by our troops from pillboxes and dug-in positions.

Our reconnaissance observed columns of foot troops, horse-drawn vehicles, mortar vehicles, armored cars, and tanks moving south and southeast in the vicinity of LAHR P9650, MEITENDORF P9950, HOMERDINGEN P9846, and FREILINGEN P992477. Several small counter-attacks were launched vicinity WALLENDORF and South CRUCHTEN on 15 February. Enemy continued to occupy defensive positions on east-west ridge south of CRUCHTEN.

16 - 20 February 1945

South and east of BIESDORF and in vicinity of ROHRBACH LOO44 which proved to be the left flank of 352d VG Div, whose CP was in ROHRBACH, became a center

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of activity as continued reports of both men and vehicles in that sector, were made. It was near this location that Lt B. C. Sawyer of Company A narrowly escaped capture and reported killing or wounding six of the enemy before his escape after darkness.

PW's continue to report lack of gasoline for their tanks and SP guns. In many cases the enemy was found using such guns as stationary artillery, and in others the vehicles were reported to be immobilized and parked in buildings.

On 18 February the enemy front lines on the 80th Div sector were generally NIEDERSGGEM, KEMNIG, FRAILINGEN and NUSBAUM. The enemy began using combat teams at this time composed of remnants from various outfits, whose mission was to defend to the last man. As a result of this our forces met stiffened resistance on all sections. The new HETZER type SP AT Guns were first encountered in this area on or about 19 February. The 610th AT Bn which previously was identified on the 5th Div sector moved over to 318th Regt, 80th Inf Div front.

Our firing Companies, A, B, and C continued their missions attached to the three Inf Regts of 80th Div, and pushed the attack to north and east. By 20 February the enemy was defending along a line north of BOTH, OBERSGGEM, LAMR, GUEHLINGEN, METTENDORF to DETTINGEN.

21 - 24 February 1945

Enemy stubbornly resisted with fire from S/A, tanks, SP and AT guns. 16 tanks, 3 SP guns, 4 towed guns (3 77mm and 1 88mm) were knocked out 21 February 1945. Combat team SCHWIRTZ, remnants of 276th VG Div, and Combat Team MOERIG, elements of 276th VG Div were identified on this sector. Only isolated groups in towns were remaining west of Fran River.

25 - 28 February 1945

By 26 February 1945 the enemy appeared to be disorganized by our advance and was making efforts to withdraw to east of KYLL River to establish a defensive line there. The enemy front lines were from the northern boundary of 80th Div in vicinity of MAVEL on the Prun River to HAMM then east to LIESSEM, (L101591), at the end of the month. The 1st Bn, 694th VGR, 340th VG Div, and the 4th Co, VOLKSSTURM RIFEL were identified on this line. The enemy continued to make use of mines, AT ditches, roadblocks, abbatis, and dug-in positions to delay the advance through the Westwall.

KNOWN ENEMY EQUIPMENT DESTROYED
By 811th TD Bn Month of February

	<u>Com</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Tanks, Mk V or VI			2	2	4
Half-Tracks		2			2
SP Guns			7	1	8
MG Nests			1	1	2
AT Guns			1	6	7
Fillboxes		2	2	8	12
Rocket Sites				1	1
Prisoners	5	31	1	48	85

Killed and Wounded (estimated) - 150

[REDACTED]

SECTION III

S-4 REPORT

1 - 28 February 1945

During the month of February all classes of supplies except Class III were drawn from the 80th Inf Div.

Supply lines were generally short, but road conditions were bad and considerable time was spent traversing said roads.

Following is a breakdown by classes of supply:

Class I

Class I supplies were easily accessible. Considerable amounts of emergency "K" rations were consumed by the firing companies during the initial River crossing. All companies received rations every day. A ration vehicle should be authorized for a TD Bn.

Class II

Class II supplies were plentiful.

Class III

All Class III supplies were drawn from Army and Corps dumps. This necessitated long hauls over very bad roads. Gas and oil was not drawn from the Div because of their inability to maintain adequate reserves.

Class IV

All Class IV supplies were generally available.

Class V

During this period considerable Class V supplies were expended. ASP's were centrally located. Considerable CPT-105 fuzes were expended.

Vehicular Losses:

	<u>Hq</u>	<u>Rcn</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Car, Armd, Utility, M-20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Car, Armd, Light, M-8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carriage, Mtr, 76mm, M-18	0	0	0	3	0	3
Vehicle, Tk Recovery, M-32	0	0	1	0	0	0
Trailer, 1/4 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trailer, Ammo, M-10, Truck 1/4 Ton, 4x4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trailer, 1 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck, 3/4 Ton, 4x4, w/o W/12 Volt System	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck, 1 1/2 Ton 6x6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck, 2 1/2 Ton, 6x6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	3	0	0

Vehicular Replacements:

	<u>Hq</u>	<u>Rcn</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Car, Armd, Utility, M-20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Car, Armd, Light, M-8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carriage, Mtr, 76mm, M-18	0	0	0	0	3	0
Vehicle, Tk Recovery, M-32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trailer, 1/4 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trailer, Ammo, M-10	2	0	0	2	3	7
Truck, 1/4 Ton, 4x4	3	3	3	0	2	11
Trailer, 1 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo	1	0	0	0	0	1
Carrier, Cargo, M-29	1	0	0	0	0	1
Truck, 3/4 Ton, 4x4 w/o W/12 Volt System	1	0	0	0	0	1
Truck, 1 1/2 Ton, 6x6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Truck 2 1/2 Ton, 6x6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	3	3	2	8	24

Ammunition Expended:

76mm, HE	- 7,455
76mm, APC	- 210
Cal. 50 MG	- 5,122
Cal. 30 MG	- 0
Cal. 30 Rifle	- 500
Cal. 30 Carbine	- 1,000
Cal. 45 Ball	- 100
37mm, HE	- 45
37mm, APC	- 0
37mm, Canister	- 0
81mm, Mortar, HE	- 0

Ammunition Expended Cont'd:

Rockets, AT, M6A3 - 4
Grenade, AT - 0
Mine, AT, HE, M1A1 - 0
Grenade, Hand, Frag - 0

SECRET

S-1 REPORT

SECTION IV

1 - 28 February 1945

TABLE NUMBER 1.

BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT BY TYPE OF CASUALTY
(Figures taken from Morning Reports up to
and including 28 February 1945 for the
period 1 - 28 February 1945.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>	<u>NIA</u>	<u>IIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
7 Feb	1*					1
8 Feb	2*					2

10 Feb	1		3	1		5

13 Feb			1			1

15 Feb	1*					1

18 Feb	1					1

20 Feb			1			1
21 Feb			1			1

23 Feb			2			2

25 Feb	3*)					4
	1)					
TOTAL	11		8	1		19

*Previously reported MIA, information received showing men KIA.

TABLE NUMBER 2.

PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED

<u>Date</u>	<u>PW's</u>
18 Feb	21
20 Feb	39
23 Feb	25
TOTAL	85

RECEIVED 57

TABLE NUMBER 3.

REPLACEMENTS RECEIVED
(Including Hospital Returnees)

<u>Date</u>	<u>No.</u>
11 Feb	2
14 Feb	8
18 Feb	2
19 Feb	19
20 Feb	1
23 Feb	1
25 Feb	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	49

TABLE NUMBER 4.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations awarded from 1 Feb 45 to 28 Feb 45, incl.

<u>No.</u>	
—	Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously)
—	Distinguished Service Cross
—	Silver Star (Posthumously)
<u>1</u>	Silver Star
—	Oak Leaf Cluster to Silver Star
<u>9</u>	Bronze Star Medal
—	Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously)
—	Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star
—	Air Medal
—	Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal
—	Soldier's Medal
<u>6</u>	Purple Heart Award
<u>1</u>	(1st) Oak Leaf Cluster to Purple Heart
—	(2d) Oak Leaf Cluster to Purple Heart

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