

HEADQUARTERS 811TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 403, U. S. ARMY

11 February 1945

OFA
Eto-

SUBJECT: After Action Report Against the Enemy, 1-31 January 1945.

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

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

1. 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 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, for the period 1-31 January 1945.

2. During the period covered by this report this command was attached to the 9th Armored Division, 7th Tank Destroyer Group, 17th Airborne Infantry Division, 87th Infantry Division, and 11th Armored Division. In addition portions of this Battalion were attached to the 4th Armored Division, through CGA of the 9th Armored Division, and also the 101st Airborne Infantry Division.

3. Even though, in the opinion of the commanding generals mentioned in paragraph 2 above, this Battalion operated efficiently while under their command, it is my belief that a tank destroyer battalion could operate much more efficiently if it were attached to one division permanently. This would enable the tank destroyer battalion and the division to work out standing operating procedures, to learn what to expect of each other, and what not to expect, thereby becoming familiar with how each other operated. The morale of both organizations would be greatly improved. Further, the knowledge that they would be relieved with the division to which they were attached would greatly increase the morale of the tank destroyer battalion.

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

SECTION I

S-3 REPORT

1-3 January 1945

This battalion less Company A, and one platoon of Reconnaissance Company, and Company C, and one platoon of Reconnaissance were attached to CCA, 9th Armored Division, and continued on it's mission of support with the 4th Armored Division in retaking the surrounding towns around Bastogne, Belgium, and direct support in the opening the Neufchateau and Bastogne highway. During the first few days of the month they were being held in reserve in position at Vaux-Les-Rosier, Belgium.

3-6 January 1945

At 1430 hours, 3 January 1945 CCA and attached units were ordered to a marshalling area at Traimorant, Belgium, and on 4 January units attached to CCA (-), Company B and one reconnaissance platoon, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, made a motor march to Touteron, France, via Etalle, Belgium, Virton, Monmedy and Sedan, France. Company B and one reconnaissance platoon were ordered to report to General Taylor, Belgium, Barracks, Bastogne, Belgium, on an independent mission. (A brief discourse of their activities follows at the end of narrative for the period of 3-17 January 1945) Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, closed in at Touteron, France, and Reconnaissance Company (-) three platoons closed in at Cherbogne, France, where they remained until 8 January 1945.

6-8 January 1945

On 6 January 1945 the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion less Company A, B, C and three Reconnaissance Platoons were relieved from attached CCA of the 9th Armored Division and reverted to Division control, and Company C, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and one reconnaissance platoon of Reconnaissance Company,

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811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, were relieved from attached to CCB, 9th Armored Division, and reverted to Battalion control. They were billeted at Les Louches, France. On 7 January 1945 Company A and one reconnaissance platoon of Reconnaissance Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, were relieved from attached CCB, 9th Armored Division, and reverted to Battalion control.

8-16 January 1945

On 8 January 1945 the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from 9th Armored Division and attached to 7th Tank Destroyer Group, and were ordered to move to the vicinity of Bellefontaine, Belgium. Reconnaissance Company closed in at Bellefontaine, Belgium; Headquarters and Headquarters, and Company C closed in at St. Marie, Belgium, and Company A closed in at Fratin, Belgium. On 10 January 1945 Company C, which consisted of only two gun platoons, and one platoon of Reconnaissance Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was ordered to move to Vaux-Les-Rosiers, Belgium, and remain in reserve for an anticipated tank attack in front of the 17th Airborne Infantry Division. After a shift was made in the remaining equipment in the battalion, one platoon of Company A was ordered to move to the position of Company C, and Company C with one platoon of Company A were attached to the 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion. (A brief discourse of their activities follow at the end of this report.) During the period 10-16 January 1945 the remaining elements of the Battalion were busily engaged in getting reequipped and refitted for further possible action.

17-25 January 1945

On 17 January 1945 the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to 17th Airborne Infantry Division, and moved to the vicinity of Bertogne, Belgium.

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P(52-67). A forward command post was established at Compegne, Belgium P(550-671) where operations were carried on in conjunction with the different regiments of the 17th Airborne Infantry Division. The 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion Rear closed in at Bertogne P(52-67); Reconnaissance Company at Egreux, Belgium P(547-711); Company A less one platoon at Lengchamp, Belgium P(535-635), later moving to Gives, Belgium P(500-657); Company B who was supporting the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment of the 17th Airborne Infantry Division at Wicourt, Belgium P(60-68) and Company C who was supporting the 507th Parachute Infantry of the 17th Airborne Infantry Division and closed in at Vissule, Belgium P(500-657). Little resistance was encountered throughout most of the period. On 19 January 1945 the second platoon of Company C moved to the vicinity of Houfalize, Belgium P(70-70), and fired eleven rounds of HE and one round of HVAP on a church steeple located at Vissule, Belgium. From information received this was being used as a German CP. On 20 January Company B moved to the vicinity of Steinbeck, Belgium P(644-694). Actual engagement with the enemy became more or less static and was confined mainly to patrolling with both Company B and C being held in readiness. The chief obstacle being the weather, terrain, occasional roadblocks, mines and destroyed bridges. On 22 January Company C's gun positions were moved to one-half mile east of Limerle, Belgium, and supported the 193d Glider Infantry Regiment. Gun positions were moved to P(733-755) on the morning of 23 January 1945. Position of Company B remained the same. On 25 January 1945 Company C moved to vicinity of Hauthballain, Luxembourg (745-749); Company B closed in at Wattermal, Belgium P(75-77) in support of 513th Glider Infantry Regiment, and forward CP closed in at Steinbeck, Belgium P(691-735).

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26-28 January 1945

On 26 January 1945 Company C moved to Huldange, Luxembourg (771-745) and Battalion CP closed in at same location at 1900 hours the same day. Reconnaissance Company (*) two platoons closed in at same location at 1600 hours. The 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved from attached to the 17th Airborne Infantry Division and attached to the 87th Infantry Division. Company B was used to support the 346th Infantry Regiment and Company C was supporting the 347th Infantry Regiment. The Reconnaissance Platoons with Companies B and C, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, were relieved and reverted back to Company control. With Reconnaissance Company under Battalion control the platoons were sent on reconnaissance missions on 27 January assisting in the support of both Companies B and C of the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Two platoons of Company C advanced to Lengler, Luxembourg (800-776) and Company B advanced to Eppeler, Luxembourg (800-795). One platoon of Reconnaissance Company received light enemy artillery fire in Gruflange, Luxembourg, but it did not delay their mission. Two prisoners of war were taken by the third platoon of Reconnaissance Company.

29-31 January 1945

On 29 January 1945 conditions remained practically the same as the previous day. Weather conditions were such that operation of the destroyers over the terrain was hindered. Late on 29 January 1945 orders were received from VIII Corps Headquarters that the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion would be relieved from attached to the 87th Infantry Division and was attached to the 11th Armored Division, and would be held in Corps reserve. The 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved Companies B and C in the line.

All during the period of operation it was apparent that all along the Division sector the enemy was withdrawing to the Sigfried Line, and the only

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contact being made was with enemy rear guard. A very weak defensive attitude was displayed by the enemy and during this period only three enemy tanks were sighted by Division Air Observation and were never sighted by either Company B or C.

The Battalion operated successfully under several different commands. Although both Company B and C operated with a minimum of personnel and equipment, because of previous losses suffered in the initial counter-attack, their efforts, initiative and skill were influential in assisting the clearance of the Ardennes Sector of the enemy and making possible a further advance through the enemy lines.

- PART II

The activities of Company B, who were not under Battalion control, from 3-16 January 1945 were as follows:

Commanding Officer, Company B, reported to General Taylor, 101st Airborne Infantry Division, where he received orders to proceed to Savy, Belgium. One platoon of Company B worked in conjunction with the 327th Armored Infantry of the 101st Airborne Infantry Division. After accomplishment of mission they were relieved and Company B and one platoon of Reconnaissance Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, were attached to Combat Team Cherry, 4th Armored Division. The first platoon was attached to support the first Battalion, 501st Armored Infantry and moved to (57-60), and the third platoon was attached to support the second Battalion, 501st Armored Infantry. The second platoon was attached for support of the 506th Armored Infantry. ~~The second platoon was attached for support of the 506th Armored Infantry.~~ During this time no enemy tanks were sighted, but the entire Company worked in close cooperation with the 4th Armored Division in driving the enemy from the towns surrounding Bastogne, Belgium.

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PART III

The activities of Company C, not under Battalion control, from 12-16 January 1945:

The Commanding Officer, Company C, reported to the Commanding Officer of the 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion after closing his column at Juseret, Belgium P(435-133). On 12 January the Company was assigned to the 11th Armored Division and moved to Longchamps, Belgium. The Company was attached to CCA of the 11th Armored Division on 13 January and one platoon was attached to Task Force Stubbs of CCA and moved to Monaville, Belgium. On 16 January CCA ordered two platoons to move to vicinity of Mabompre, Belgium, and were in position at this point when the 311th Tank Destroyer Battalion was assigned to the 17th Airborne Division when the 11th Armored Division was relieved by the 17th Airborne Infantry Division.

Blaine C. Taylor
BLAINE C. TAYLOR,
Major, TD,
S-3.

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SECTION II

3-2 REPORT

Maps: 1/ 50,000 France & Belgium.
Sheet No. 93, 107, 106, 121
& 122.

1/100,000 Belgium & NE France.
sheets 13, 16, 17 & S. 7.

1-3 January 1945

The 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, commanded by Lt Col A. R. Brownfield, less Company A, with one reconnaissance platoon attached and Company C, with one reconnaissance platoon remained attached to UCA, 9th Armored Division. The mission of UCA was to retake towns which were German strong points south and southwest of the encircled city of Bastogne, Belgium. Enemy units in contact were the 130th Pz Lehr Division and Remer Brigade with elements of the 3d Pz Div in the Sibret-Sandchamps area southwest of Bastogne.

Company B, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was used in direct support during the reopening of the vital Neufchateau and Bastogne highway, thereby enabling supplies to roll into the 101st Airborne Infantry Division, as well as to allow the evacuation of wounded.

The Pioneer Platoon of Reconnaissance Company under the leadership of Lt Paul W. Jones, O-1823741, on 27 December 1944 removed wrecked vehicles and road-blocks from the highway to permit the flow of traffic to and from the besieged city.

The Battalion forward CP was located at Vaux-Les-Rosiers, Belgium P(445-480).

3-8 January 1945

At 1430 hours, 3 January 1945, UCA and attached units were ordered to a marshalling area at Traisont, Belgium P(461-418), and on the 4th of January 1945 units attached to UCA (-), Company B and one reconnaissance platoon, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion, made a motor march to Touteron, France P(760-091), via Stalle, Belgium, Virton, Belgium, Montmedy and Sedan, France. Headquarters and

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Headquarters Company closed in at Touteren, France, at 1700 hours and Reconnaissance Company (-) three platoons closed in at Charbogne, France P(725-050), at 1700 hours where they remained until 8 January 1945.

8-18 January 1945

For the activities of the Battalion during the period 4 January 1945 to 18 January 1945 see the S-3 Summary.

18-25 January 1945

On 18 January 1945 Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Reconnaissance Company and Company A moved to Bastogne area. Headquarters and Headquarters Company located at Bertogne, Belgium P(522-671); forward CP at Compoigne, Belgium P(550-672); Reconnaissance Company at Engreux, Belgium P(547-712), and Company A at Longchamps, Belgium P(586-635).

The 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the 17th Airborne Infantry Division 18 January 1945.

On 19 January 1945 the enemy was found to have dug in positions along the road P(628-708), P(626-704), P(629-704), and along railroad at P(620-689), P(616-668) and P(617-683). Unoccupied foxholes were located at P(620-677). Enemy units on our front have been identified as elements of 130th Pz Div, 26 Inf Div and GHQ Engr Units.

Company A, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion moved to Givès P(500-657) 1600 hours, 19 January 1945.

On 20 January 1945 the enemy continued his defensive policy in the area Alhoument, Belgium P(629-703). Patrols to south of 17th Airborne Infantry Division area report negative. There is indications that the enemy is withdrawing from the Division sector in the direction of east and southeast.

There was continuous patrolling on 21 January by our forces in preparation for attack to the east. (See attack order FO No. 7, 17th Airborne Division,

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dated 21 January 1945). Minefields found in woods on south bank of the L'Ourthe River between P(522-735) and P(6505-7380).

Company B on the above date was operating with the 194th Glider Infantry. Company C was in direct support of 507th Parachute Infantry. Patrolling revealed additional withdrawal of German forces.

Forward CP, 511th Tank Destroyer Battalion, moved to Tavigny, Belgium P(644-964), at 1555 hours, 21 January 1945.

On 22 January our patrols received small arms fire at the Luxembourg border. Enemy outpost line is believed to follow Belgium-Luxembourg border from P(719-778), P(745-781), P(743-744), and P(747-753)). It is expected that the enemy will continue to withdraw to south and southeast.

The enemy dug in at Wattermal, Belgium P(745-771). Hautballain, Belgium P(744-745) has been cleared of enemy. Four Germans killed, five PW's taken, and about forty driven from town by our patrols. The enemy is defending generally along a line P(744-700), P(750-760), P(753-747), and P(750-737).

Remnants of the 1128th, 1129th and 1130th VG Regiments of 560th Division (Approximately 250 men), 11th Pz Gr Regiment of the 9th Pz Div (95 men). Elements of 104th Pz Gr Regiment, 15th Pz Gr Division have been identified in this sector. It is believed that this is the only enemy covering forces remaining.

On 25 January 1945 continued advance by our forces. A very weak defensive attitude has been displayed by the enemy. Three enemy tanks made appearance, fired, then retired to position P(800-795). Air-Ground observation reports enemy traffic withdrawing behind southern line.

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26-28 January 1945

The 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved from attached to 17th Airborne Infantry Division and attached to 87th Infantry Division in direct support. Company B with 346th Infantry Regiment. Company C with 347th Infantry Regiment. Reconnaissance platoons reverted to Battalion control at 1700 hours, 26 January 1945.

An aggressive reconnaissance forward is being instituted by our Reconnaissance platoons, working all road nets in zone of advance. Expected route to be taken is Thommen, Schirn, Neubruck and on. Tank Destroyers in full support of infantry.

Lt Lennart O. Sundstrom, Reconnaissance Company, took two PW's near Bieler P(823-752).

Heavy artillery fire received at Thommen and Espeler.

Forward CP moved to Huldange, Luxembourg P(771-754), January 27, 1945; Company C at Durler P(813-781); Company B to Neubruck P(835-847). One platoon in reserve at Espeler P(800-795).

Roadblocks reported south of St. Vith 28 January 1945. Road from Grufflingen to Oudler P(830-794), and from Oudler to Burg-Reuland P(858-785) now being cleared.

Three enemy tanks reported at P(867-803). Being investigated by Reconnaissance Executive Officer. This report was investigated personally by Battalion S-2. His report on this was negative.

29-31 January 1945

On 29 January 1945 the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from 87th Infantry Division and attached to 11th Armored Division in reserve. There

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RESTRICTION

as no contact with the enemy at this time, who is evidently withdrawing behind
his defenses of the Siegfried Line.

Melvin J. Bryson

MELVIN J. BRISON,
Captain, TD,
S-2.

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SECTION III

S-4 REPORT

1-31 January 1945

During the month of January 1945 the greater portion of the time was spent in drawing personnel equipment, communications equipment and vehicular equipment lost during the previous month during the enemy counter-attack. The personnel equipment as well as the vehicular equipment was delivered to the companies while in the line.

Working in close coordination with the Battalion Motor Officer, vehicular equipment was exchanged between the companies on the line, repaired in the field and replaced. No effective loss of fire power was sustained by the companies. Due to the previous loss Company C and Company B operated nine guns per company.

Communications equipment lost during the previous engagement was replaced in vehicles as soon as they were issued to the respective companies. During the entire month constant communications was had with the two companies.

Class III and Class IV supplies were easily accessible. Weather conditions and road congestions were the only factor to cause any delay, but neither one of the two companies suffered as a result of the unavoidable delay.

No vehicles were lost during the month as a result of vehicle accidents.

The following information is submitted showing the distribution of vehicular replacements and loss and the expenditure of ammunition:

<u>Vehicular Losses:</u>	<u>Hq</u>	<u>Com</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Car, Armored, Utility, M-20						
Car, Armored, Light, M-8						
Carriage, Motor, 76mm, M-18						
Trailer 1/4 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo						
Trailer, Ammo, M-10						
Truck 1/4 Ton, 4x4	1			1		2
Trailer, 1 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo						

Vehicular Losses (cont'd)

Truck, 3/4 Ton, 4x4, w/c,
w/12 Volt System
Truck 2 1/2 Ton, 6x6

Hq	Rcn	A	B	C	Total
1	0	0	1	0	2

Vehicular Replacements:

Car, Armored, Utility, M-20
Car, Armored, Light, M-8
Carriage, Motor, 76mm, M-18
Trailer, 1/4 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo
Trailer, Ammo, M-10
Truck, 1/4 Ton, 4x4
Trailer, 1 Ton, 2 Wheel Cargo
Truck, 3/4 Ton, 4x4 w/c,
w/12 Volt System
Truck 2 1/2 Ton, 6x6

Hq	Rcn	A	B	C	Total
	1	1	1	6	8
		2		5	7
1			1	2	3
1				3	4
		1			1
1	1	4	1	14	21
					22

Ammunition Expended:

76mm, HE - 11
 76mm, APC - 0
 Cal. 50 MG - 0
 Cal. 30 MG - 0
 Cal. 30 Rifle - 0
 Cal. 30 Carbine - 0
 Cal. 45 Ball - 0
 37mm, HE - 0
 37mm, APC - 0
 37mm, Canister - 0
 81mm, Mortar, HE - 0
 Rockets, AT, M6A3 - 0
 Grenade, AT - 0
 Mine, AT, HE, M1A1 - 0
 Grenade, Hand, Frag - 0

[Handwritten Signature]
 Captain, B.
 1st.

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SECTION IV

S-1 REPORT

1-31 January 1945

311th TD BN

TABLE NUMBER 1.

BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT BY TYPE OF CASUALTY
(Figures taken from Morning Reports up to
and including 31 January 1945 for the
period 1-31 January 1945.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>	<u>NIA</u>	<u>IIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RTD'S</u>
1 Jan				1		1	
* * *							
7 Jan			7			7	
* * *							
10 Jan			2		1	3	1
* * *							
12 Jan			2		1	3	
13 Jan			8			8	1
14 Jan		3*	2			5	
15 Jan							2
16 Jan			1			1	
* * *							
18 Jan			1			1	
19 Jan				1		1	
20 Jan							1
* * *							
29 Jan							3
30 Jan							1
31 Jan							2
TOTAL		3	23	2	2	30	11

*2 DOW 19 Dec 44 - 1 DOW 25 Dec 44 reported on M/R of 14 Jan 45.

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TABLE NUMBER 2.

PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PWIS</u>
28 Jan 45	2
TOTAL	<u>2</u>

TABLE NUMBER 3.

REPLACEMENTS RECEIVED
(Including Hospital Returnees)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO.</u>
15 Jan 45	77
16 Jan 45	11
23 Jan 45	<u>3</u>
TOTAL	91

TABLE NUMBER 4.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations awarded from 1 Jan 45 to 31 Jan 45, incl.

NO.

- ___ Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously)
- ___ Distinguished Service Cross
- ___ Silver Star (Posthumously)
- 4 Silver Star
- ___ Oak Leaf Cluster to Silver Star
- ___ Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously)
- 9 Bronze Star Medal
- ___ Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star
- ___ Air Medal
- ___ Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal
- ___ Soldier's Medal
- 12 Purple Heart Award
- 2 (1st) Oak Leaf Cluster to Purple Heart
- ___ (2d) Oak Leaf Cluster to Purple Heart

John J. Hux
J. J. HUX
S-1

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