

HEADQUARTERS
813th TANK DESTROYER BN
A.P.O. 339 U.S. ARMY

From: 0001 hrs 1 Feb 1945
To : 2400 hrs 28 Feb 1945

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports.

TO : Adjutant General, Washington, D.C. (Thru Channels).

Foreword:

At the beginning of the period of this report, the 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP) was still attached to the 79th Infantry Division, and was in support of said division in Alsace. The Battalion CP was still located in SCHWINDRATZHEIM, Coord 930175, WISSEBOURG SHEET, 1/100,000 (V2) The division and Corps MLR was the south bank of the MODER RIVER, and what remained of the Battalion's M-10 tank destroyers were in position along or near the ~~river~~. As has been indicated in the After Action Report for the month of January 1945, the battalion suffered heavy losses in materiel and more than average losses in personnel in the fighting in the Hatten-Rittershoffen and Gamsheim-Drusenheim areas. The Battalion had left but eleven M-10s and these were reinforced by seven M-18s which the Battalion had received as replacements for M-10s lost in action.

As has been stated, the Battalion CP was in SCHWINDRATZHEIM, and the Battalion rear echelon was at HOCHFELDEN [875175]. Following is the location of the rest of the unit elements:

	1st Plt	2nd plt	3rd plt
Co A: WEITBRUCH (031172)	088193 (3 guns)	072214 (3 guns)	060198 (3guns)
Co B BATZENDORF (975205)	055226 (2 guns)	None	None
Co C NIEDER- (001192) SCHAEFFOLSHEIM	040240 (4 guns)	030237 (2 guns)	030230 (2 guns)
Rcn Co. Same as Co C.			

Map reference as shown in first paragraph.

During the fighting in Alsace, the 79th Infantry Division to which this Battalion is attached had formerly been attached to XV Corps but previous to the beginning of this report, both the division and battalion had passed to VI Corps.

1 Feb 45

Co A: At 1200 hrs, the 2nd destroyer of the 1st platoon fired 9 rds of HE at enemy troops in the vic of 090209 dispersing same with some of the enemy's sustaining casualties. At the same time, the 1st destroyer of the 3rd platoon fired 12 rds of HE and 1rd of APC at a house vic of 086212, known to contain a number of enemy foot troops, and excellent results were obtained. At 1400 hrs the 2nd destroyer of the first platoon fired 6 rds of HE and 1 rd of APC (indirect) at an enemy tank. Fire was adjusted by the (79th) infantry who reported that the enemy tank was forced to withdraw as a result of the destroyer's fire. At 1750 hrs, the same destroyer fired 6 rds of HE at enemy troops in the vic of 090209. Sporadic mortar and artillery fire fell in the gun position areas of all three firing companies, but

CLASSIFICATION
CANCELLED
 BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
 DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE
 17 June 45

Handwritten initials/signature

TDBN-813-013

DEC 1 1945

7324

After Action Reports (Cont'd)

there were no casualties.

2 Feb 45

There was no change in position during the day other than the assigning of twenty four reinforcements to the various firing companies. These reinforcements had sailed from the United States on 6 Jan 45 arriving in this sector approximately three to four weeks later. None of them had had previous combat experience, but an appraisal of their work during the past month would indicate very satisfactory performance.

3 Feb 45

On this day, one destroyer of Co B went into position at Coord 971205 with the mission of firing illuminating star shells on call, data for firing to be prepared by the company fire direction center. At 1945 hrs, a test round was fired with excellent results. The shell burst 150 yds above the target illuminating the target area for a period of 13 seconds. No further firing was done. There was one casualty, an enlisted man, during the day and this occurred when an artillery barrage fell in and near some of Co C's gun positions.

4 Feb 45

The only event of importance during this period took place at 1730 hrs, when one destroyer of Co A's 1st platoon moved into position in the vic of 088194, just NW of BISCHWILLER and fired 11 rds of HE into an enemy OP in a church steeple in the town of OBERHOFFEN, (093203). The destroyer returned to its former position after it was fully satisfied that its mission had been accomplished.

5 Feb & 6 Feb

The period of 5-6 Feb saw the Battalion relieved by the 636th and 807th TD Bns, and the 79th Infantry Division by the 101st AB Division, and the subsequent moving of both the Division and the Battalion to PONT-A-MOUSSON, MUERTHE-e-MOSELLE, (north of Nancy and south of Metz), France, to go into a period described as a "reconditioning" period rather than one of rest and recreation. As of 2400 hrs, 5 Feb, the Battalion was relieved from VI Corps and after relief on the ground had been effected by the above mentioned units the Battalion, at 0445 hrs, moved from SCHWINDRATZHEIM, through HOCHFELDEN, SAVERNE, PHALSBOURG, SAARBURG, MAIZIERES, MOYENVIC, CHATEAU-SALINS, NOMENY, closing in PONT-A-MOUSSON at approximately 1130 hrs, 7 February 1945, distance traveled: about 85 miles.

7 Feb 45

7 Feb-16 Feb

During the period between 7 Feb and 16 Feb, the Battalion entered into a period of partial rest and reconditioning. Shower facilities, movies, and other forms of recreation were made available and coordinated with work on materiel and equipment. On 13 Feb the Battalion attended a medical lecture and examination by the Battalion Surgeon, Captain True, and also attended a movie entitled "YOUR JOB IN GERMANY". Typhus and tetanus shots were administered on 14 Feb to the entire battalion. Range practice firing also took place during the period thus enabling new men to become more familiar with the 3-in gun on the M-10.

On 15 Feb, the Battalion was alerted to move, and on 16 Feb, all tracked vehicles were moved by train to the vic of Kerniel, Belgium, with the remainder of the battalion following on the next day and closing at Kerniel or near vicinity on 18 Feb. in the early morning hours (about 0200), distance traveled approximately 200 miles. The route of march: PONT-A-MOUSSON, THIA COURT, ST. BENOIT, FRESNES, ETAIN, DAMVILLERS, MONTMEDY, VILLERS, FLORENVILLE, NEUFCHATEAU, BAROQUES, GRATTES, MARCHE, LIEGE, TONGRES, KERNIEL.

Co A closed in VOGELSBERG, Co B in ABSWELLEN, The Bn CP, and Cos B and Rcn closed in KERNIEL.

On this same date, 18 Feb, the 79th Inf Div with 813th TD Bn attached went into XVI Corps with this Battalion still attached to the division but also to 12th TD Group, XVI Corps, Ninth Army. Incidentally this attachment to the Ninth Army made the fifth army to which this battalion has been attached. The Fifth in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, 1st, 3rd, 7th and 9th in Europe.

After Action Reports (Cont'd)

18-19 Feb

During the day, Major McCUTCHEN, the commanding officer of the Battalion, went to 9th Army Headquarters, and as a result of his visit, the Battalion eventually received thirty-six M-36 tank destroyers (including nine B-1 type). This Battalion was never satisfied with being equipped with M-18 tank destroyers back in Alsace as replacements for its M-10s and without going into details which have been thoroughly discussed many times in the past, the Battalion Commander was especially desirous of obtaining something other than M-18s with which to fight the remainder of the war, if M-10s could not be requisitioned by the battalion. In the following days, the Battalion received M-36 TDs and turned in their M-10s and M-18s. Incidentally on 28 Feb, the Battalion had received 27 M-36s and 8 B-1 models making a total of 35, with the 36th TD arriving shortly after the period of this report had expired.

22 Feb 45

The Battalion remained in the Kerniel area until 0600 hrs, 22 Feb 45, at which time it departed Kerniel and by the following route: TONGRES, MAAS-TRICHT, MEERSEN, closed in and around HOUTHEM, HOLLAND at approximately 0800 hr 22 Feb 45, distance traveled, 30 miles.

22-28 Feb

During the period 22-28 Feb 45, the Battalion was engaged in training with those M-36s which they had drawn, and some range practice was had and the only move of any importance took place on 27 Feb at 2200 hrs when twelve guns from the Battalion formed a provisional company in support of the 79th Div Arty and moved to DIETEREN (677773).

On 24 Feb, the commanding general of the 79th Infantry Division, Maj Gen Ira T. WICHE visited the Battalion CP and discussed plans for future operations with Major McCUTCHEN and staff. On the 25th of Feb, Major Gen. WICHE witnessed the practice firing of the 90mm gun on the Battalion's new M-36 TDs and expressed his approval at the performance and results.

The Battalion continued training on the M-36 at every opportunity and on several occasions worked with the 79th Infantry in putting on very successful demonstrations.

At the close of the period, the Battalion was still in the HOUTHEM, HOLLAND area and momentarily expecting the return of the provisional company sent to DIETEREN.

In summation, the Battalion saw little action during the period, but after the hard bitter and bloody battles of HATTEN, RITTERSHOFFEN, DRUSENHEIM, and other critical points in the area north of Hagenau and in the German bridgehead sector, and the sharp fighting along the MODER RIVER near NEUBOURG and SCHWEIGHAUSEN, the officers and men of the unit were sorely in need of a breathing and reconditioning period. That the need for such a period was recognized by higher headquarters is to their credit and good judgment.

The lessons learned during this February period are largely incorporated into the report for the month of January which, next to Normandy and the Foret de PARROY battles, ranks as being the fiercest in which this battalion has been engaged.

For the Battalion Commander:



GEORGE McCUTCHEN

MAJOR, 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)
(FA)

Commanding.