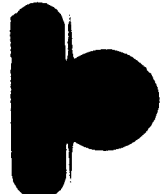


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AFTER ACTION REPORT
for the
MONTH OF DECEMBER 1944

321ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 339
UNITED STATES ARMY



321-63.2

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C O N T E N T S

NARRATIVE REPORT

- I - Summary of Operations
- II - Awards and Decorations
- III - Commanding Officers

Inclosure No. 1; BATTLE LESSON NOTES
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- inclosure No. 3, S-2 Journal
- inclosure No. 4, S-3 Journal

MAPS AND SKETCHES
(on attached envelope)

4/23, 1950 Reg. Map - sheets 5003, 5004, 5103, 5104
overlay of positions occupied during the month

HEADQUARTERS
821st Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)
APO 139

1 January 1945

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1944

I SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

1. Continuation of PHASE V: The battle for Julich.

a. During the period, 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944, the 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion remained attached to the 29th Division Artillery.

(1) At the beginning of the period, 821st Tank Destroyer platoons were employed in the Division zone as follows.

(a) The 1st and 3rd platoons of Company "A" were in direct fire positions, the 1st Platoon in the vicinity of Englesdorf, map coordinates 9953, the 3rd Platoon in the vicinity of Koslar, map coordinates 0159. The 2nd Platoon was in assembly position in the vicinity of Songen, map coordinates 8353.

(b) The 1st Platoon of Company "B" was in indirect fire position in the vicinity of Putzdorf, map coordinates 985570. The 2nd Platoon was in direct fire position in the vicinity of Aldenhoven, map coordinates 9856. The 3rd Platoon was in assembly position in the vicinity of Schleiden, map coordinates 952548.

(c) The 1st and 3rd platoons of Company "C" were in direct fire positions, the 1st Platoon in the vicinity of Bourhien, map coordinates 015575, the 3rd Platoon in the vicinity of Kirchberg, map coordinates 024562. The 2nd Platoon was in indirect fire position in the vicinity of Siersdorf, map coordinates 937563.

(d) The 1st Reconnaissance Platoon was located in the vicinity of Aldenhoven, map coordinates 980556, their mission was to maintain contact with the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, on their left, and the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion on their right, also general road net reconnaissance in the Division zone.

(2) Destroyer platoons employed on their primary mission of direct fire, were in general support of the 29th Infantry Division's anti-mechanized defenses. Platoons employed on their secondary mission of indirect fire were in support of the fires of 29th Division Artillery. Indirect missions were harassing and interdiction fire behind enemy lines. A total of 4,067 rounds was fired indirect during the month of December.

b. On 18 December 1944, acting on orders of the Commanding General, Fifth United States Army, the 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion (Tracked) was redesignated 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion (Self Propelled).

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Cont'd; After Action Report for the month of December 1944.

(1) Prior to the actual publication of the orders, for the redesignation of the battalion, key personnel were sent to a training area in the rear to receive instruction in driving and maintenance of M-10 Destroyers. As a result of this advance training it was possible to convert the battalion from "towed" to "self propelled" by effecting normal company and platoon reliefs.

(2) On 10 December 1944, the 1st and 2nd platoons of Company "A" were relieved of their tactical missions and were held in Division reserve. As Division reserve the two platoons received instruction in the employment of the M-10 Destroyer. Company "A", while engaged in converting from the towed TD gun to the M-10 Destroyer, maintained their towed guns and held them in a position of readiness for immediate employment. At the end of the period, 31 December 1944, the 1st and 2nd Platoons of Company "A" were equipped with M-10 Destroyers. The 3rd Platoon, not having completed conversion, retained their "towed guns" for employment.

(3) On 11 December 1944 the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Platoons of Company "C" moved to a training area in the vicinity of Mariadorf, map coordinates 915525, to receive instruction in the employment of the M-10 Destroyer. Company "C"'s Destroyer Platoons remained in the training area until 20 December 1944. On 20 December the three platoons moved out with their new weapons to occupy positions on the line. Positions shown on inclosed overlay.

(4) M-10 Destroyers were not available for Company "B" during the period, however, intensive training was conducted in the employment of the new weapon in preparation for the conversion.

(5) Reconnaissance Company was activated on 18 December 1944. The company remained in assembly position in the vicinity of Nontron, map coordinates 925535, during the organizing and training period, 18 December to 31 December 1944.

(a) On 24 December 1944, the Pioneer platoon of Reconnaissance Company cleared mine fields for Company "B". Mine fields were cleared from selected alternate and supplementary gun positions.

(b) On 25 December 1944, the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon established an OP in the vicinity of Pier, map coordinates 0652. On 27 December 1944 the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon established a second OP in the vicinity of Schopoven, map coordinates 0654. Both OP's were maintained through the end of the period, 31 December 1944.

c. On 18 December 1944, the 30th Infantry Division moved out of the sector, on the 29th Infantry Division's right, for employment in the First Army Sector. The 29th Infantry Division assumed responsibility for the sector that had been occupied by the 30th Infantry Division and initiated a deliberate defensive fire plan for the Division zone. In coordination with the Division's fire plan, alternate and supplementary fire positions were selected and prepared for occupation.

(1) As far as practicable bulldozers of the 121st Engineer Battalion were used to prepare positions. In some instances the bulldozers were driven off by enemy artillery and mortar fire. When enemy activity made it impractical to use bulldozers to prepare positions, they were dug by hand, under cover of darkness.

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Cont'd: After Action Report for the month of December 1944.

(2) Deliberate defensive fire positions were selected in the zone bounded on the north by a line through Bieren (map coordinates 955610), Barmen (map coordinates 995615), and Koslar (map coordinates 0159) and bounded on the south by a line through Wiedermers (map coordinates 9755), Patten (map coordinates 0154), Jaden (map coordinates 0352), and Piar (map coordinates 0352).

(3) During the period, 18 December 1944 to 31 December 1944, constant reconnaissance was made for fire positions on possible tank approaches in the division zone. Positions already prepared were continually improved.

d. At the end of the period, 31 December 1944, three Destroyer platoons were in direct fire positions, in support of the 29th Infantry Division's anti-mechanized defenses; the 1st Platoon, Company "B", in the vicinity of Bournein, map coordinates 998571, the 1st Platoon, Company "C", in the vicinity of Harsenhausen, map coordinates 9860 and the 3rd Platoon, Company "C", in the vicinity of Freialdenhoven, map coordinates 9559. At the end of the period, two platoons were in indirect fire positions, in support of the fires of 29th Division Artillery; the 2nd Platoon, Company "B", in the vicinity of Patten, map coordinates 0054 and the 2nd Platoon, Company "C", in the vicinity of Freialdenhoven, map coordinates 9659.

e. As a result of enemy action the following casualties were suffered.

(1) Two enlisted men were wounded in action by shell fragments from enemy artillery fire.

II AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

1. For heroic achievement in military operations against the enemy, on the dates following their names, the following named officer and enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

1st Lt Herman G. Snaddy O-18226382	26 November 1944
S/Sgt Max Kingery 39302002	11 November 1944
Sgt Andy C. Schuen 39276104	4 November 1944
Tec 4 Frederick Garver 36366566	11 November 1944
Cpl Paul A. Ginier 39119444	1 December 1944
Cpl Donald McGvoy 39119620	4 November 1944
Tec 5 Clevis L. Bell 36137637	26 November 1944
PFC Theodore A. Nicholas 36862481	26 November 1944
PFC Walter B. Johnson 34445798	1 December 1944
PFC Peter Belluomin 3969186	4 November 1944
Pvt John G. Gordon 20957069	1 December 1944
Pvt George U. van Meter 33726822	11 November 1944
Pvt Jack Gold 32613619	26 November 1944

2. For meritorious service in military operations against the enemy, the following officers were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

1st Lt William P. Dudley O-1822248
1st Lt Paul C. Mills O-1825035
1st Lt John J. McGoy O-1825030
1st Lt William J. Woods O-1825390
1st Lt Reed D. Wood O-1826044

Continued; After Action Report for the month of December 1944.

3. The Purple Heart was awarded the following named enlisted men for wounds received in action against the enemy on the dates following their names:

Sgt Leonard Jackson 20956714	26 November 1944
Cpl Walter E. Gray 39276832	16 December 1944
Pvt Everett Harris 39854893	26 November 1944
Pvt William C. Papagianopoulos 31371229	18 December 1944

4. The Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart was awarded to the following named enlisted man for wounds received in action against the enemy on the date following his name.

Cpl Lawrence L. Caillau 39119721 18 December 1944

III COMMANDING OFFICERS

1. Lt Col Howard H. Arbury was in command of the Battalion for the period from 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944.

2. Company Commanders for the period from 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 were as listed below:

Company "A" - Capt Edward A. Burke

Company "B" - 1st Lt Marahan G. Shaddy (1 Dec to 11 Dec)
1st Lt Floyd F. Ginder (11 Dec to 31 Dec)

Company "C" - 1st Lt Dale A. Wafaiger

Ron Company - 1st Lt Herman H. Von Benge

HQ Company - 1st Lt Harry G. J. Good

Howard H. Arbury
HOWARD H. ARBURY
1st Col., FA
COMMANDING

Incl 1

HEADQUARTERS
821st Tank Destroyer Battalion
APO 339

1 January 1945

BATTLE TALKING NOTES AND CONCLUSIONS

1. It has been found in past action, that when enemy tanks meet resistance at the face of a town, they immediately attempt to maneuver to the flanks to effect their penetration. By placing Tank Destroyers on commanding ground these flanks may be denied the maneuvering tanks. Mine fields and organic 57mm guns employed at the immediate front would provide sufficient resistance to cause the enemy tankers to make the flanking maneuver.

a. In this type action enemy tanks utilize all available draws, surrounding small villages, in their attempted penetrations. By having Tank Destroyers on the higher ground in the rear and on the flanks of towns, the maximum number of draws may be covered effectively. The remaining draws, if any, being securely mined and protected by either Infantry or Tank Destroyer security personnel.

b. When Towed Tank Destroyer guns are placed on high ground they afford an easily detected and vulnerable target for enemy artillery. Due to this fact, without exception, all guns, crews, and equipment must be dug in and sand bagged. Camouflage must be faultless. Movement of personnel must be kept to an absolute minimum, communication ditches used whenever possible. In this type emplacement, for security reasons, vehicles are often times left back in the nearest rear town that affords defilade. Wire and radio communication must be maintained between the guns and vehicles to expedite any change of position and for resupply of ammunition.

2. During static situations it is desirable to dig emplacements in forward positions for the M-10 Destroyers, however, security reasons preclude actual occupation of the positions until absolutely necessary. This is due to having to start and run motors during cold weather to charge the battery and because of the time required to warm up the motors for an extended move. If positions must be occupied it is felt that one destroyer, of each platoon committed, be held in the vicinity of the position area but in reserve. The reserve destroyer would be ready for relief of the destroyers in position, allowing them to be interchanged for maintenance.

3. The new "Shell Illuminating M24 mod 1 (Navy) Type T. 80. M4" (White Star Cluster shell), for the 3" gun has proven an excellent medium for the illumination of designated areas during night operations. We find this parachute flare gives best results when ejected from the shell approximately 1100 feet above the ground. At this altitude the flare gives effective illumination for approximately 30 to 40 seconds, over a 400 yard area. Some of the possibilities of the shell are as follows.

a. Illumination of close-in terrain to aid in spotting targets for our primary mission.

b. Illumination of areas at ranges up to 9700 yards, to aid friendly artillery observers to spot targets and adjust their fire more accurately.

10011: above report notes and conclusions.

3. Identification of areas for the infantry, and in
specifying the location, type, and strength of enemy activity.

4. We have used two "White Star" cluster shells at ranges from
1000 to 1000 yards with poor results. On one call mission we were able
to illuminate an area for an artillery observer. The observer had a
concentration of fire laid down just as the illumination started. This
enabled him to adjust his fire on enemy personnel who were plainly
visible in the light of the shell.

JOHN H. ARMY
Lt Col., FA
JOHN H. ARMY

1/25, 1944 - 1944 - 1944, 1944, 1944, 1944
overlay of positions occupied during the month

ALDENHOVEN, 1944 - 1944
1944, 1944, 1944, 1944, 1944, 1944

<u>Altenhof</u>	<u>9756</u>
<u>Youler</u>	<u>0159</u>
<u>Yon, on</u>	<u>0373</u>
<u>Putzdorf</u>	<u>985570</u>
<u>Aldenhoven</u>	<u>9856</u>
<u>Schloiden</u>	<u>952540</u>
<u>Mourhies</u>	<u>015575</u>
<u>Kirchberg</u>	<u>084562</u>
<u>Miersdorf</u>	<u>937563</u>
<u>Mariadorf</u>	<u>915525</u>
<u>Vier</u>	<u>0652</u>
<u>Schophoven</u>	<u>0654</u>
<u>Narven</u>	<u>995615</u>
<u>Kideraars</u>	<u>9755</u>
<u>Puttern</u>	<u>0154</u>
<u>Yden</u>	<u>0352</u>
<u>Murshausen</u>	<u>9860</u>
<u>Freialdenhoven</u>	<u>9459</u>

59

OVERLAY No. 1

GS65 4414

SHEETS: 5003
5004
5103
5104

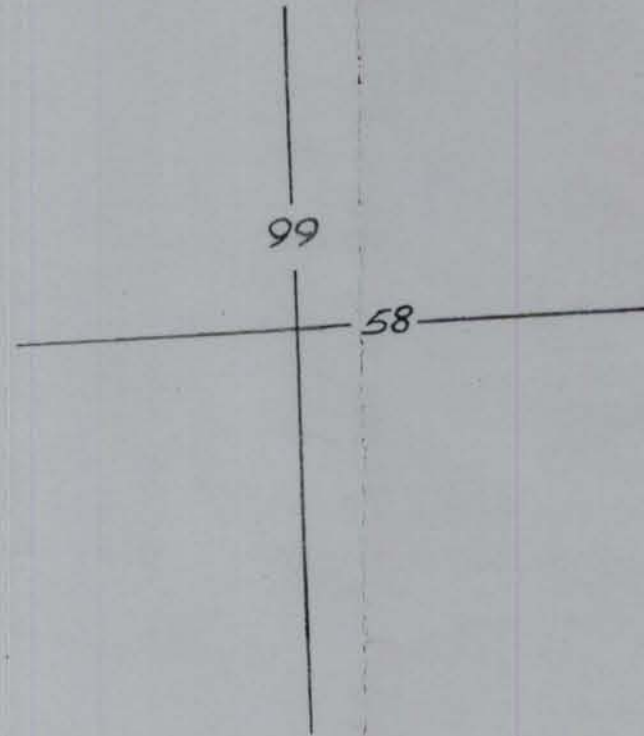
LEGEND

ASS. - ASSEMBLY POSN.
IND. - INDIRECT FIRE
DF - DIRECT FIRE

TD DF
20TH

C TD 821
...
2C IND
...
3C DF
20TH

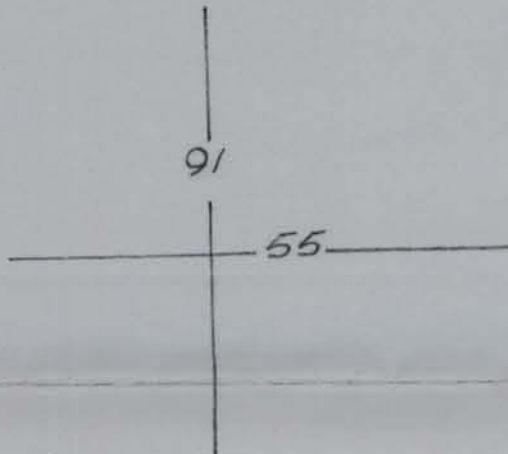
...
21ST



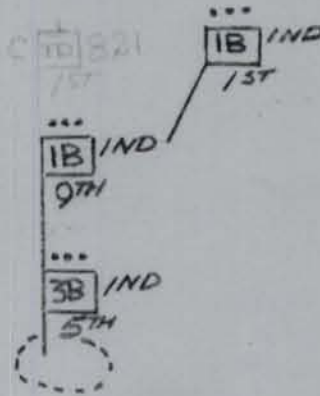
A TD 821
...
3A ASS.
28TH

TD 821
1ST

...
ASS.
1ST



B TD 821
...
3B ASS.
1ST

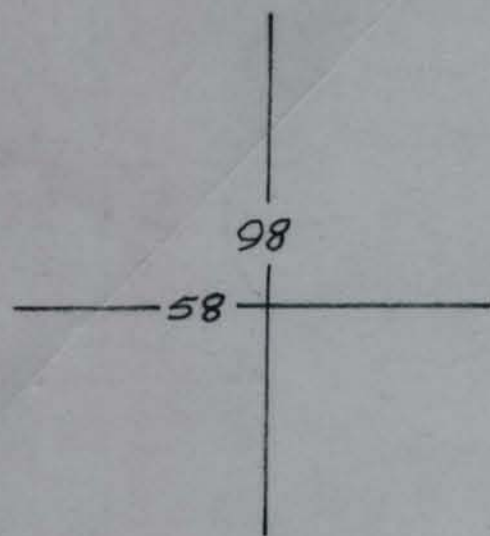


60

...
2A ASS.
1ST

20TH TD 821
|
20TH

...
1A ASS.
21ST



IA DF
1ST

3A DF
1ST

3B ASS
1ST

IC DF
1ST

3B IND
10TH

XC DF
1ST

OVERLAY No. 2

GS GS 4414

SHEETS 5003

5004

5103

5104

LEGEND

OP - OBSERVATION POST

IND - INDIRECT FIRE

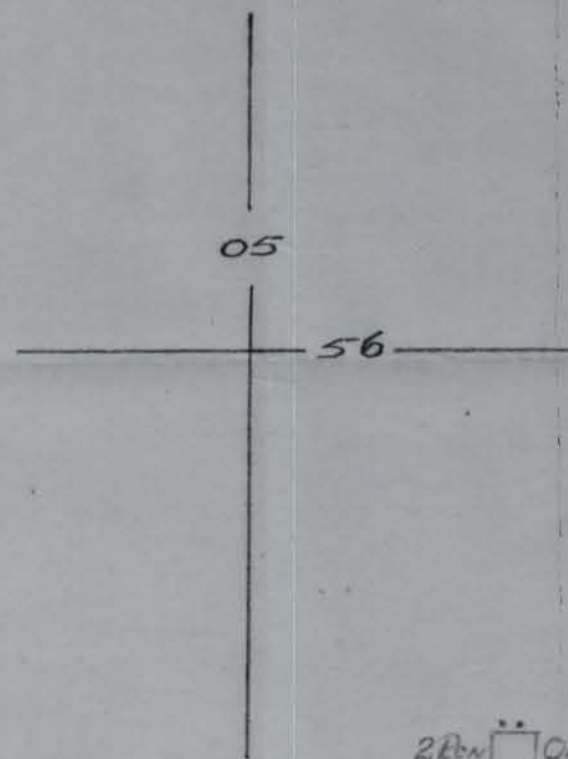
DF - DIRECT FIRE

ASS - ASSEMBLY POSN

2B IND
24TH

BTD 821
24TH
3B ASS
28TH

2B OP
27TH



2B IND
24TH

BTD 821
24TH
3B ASS
28TH

2B OP
27TH

IC DF
25TH

2B OP
25TH

2B OP
25TH

61

DATE 11/15