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HEADQUARTERS
808th Tank Destroyer Battalion

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AFO 403, D
1 June 1945

Date Initials

SUBJECT: After Action Reports
Against the Enemy

FROM: 01 May 1945
TO : 31 May 1945

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

- SECTION I - SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.
- SECTION II - INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, USE OF SECTIONS, ETC.
- SECTION III - LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURE, PROBLEMS.
- SECTION IV - PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION.
- SECTION V - COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

SECTION I. SUMMARY OF DAILY OPERATIONS AND ACTION.

1. 1 - 8 May 1945. During this period the battalion continued to be attached to the 65th Infantry Division and XX Corps, United States Third Army. On the 1st the Division came out of Corps Reserve and went on line again joining the pursuit of the enemy. The line companies were placed in support of the infantry regiments: "A" Company supporting the 260th, "B" Company supporting the 261st, and "C" Company supporting the 259th.

No resistance was encountered until the battalion reached the INN RIVER. There on 3 May in PASSAU and SCHARDING the battalion had its last real engagement before cessation of hostilities. On that day the 3d Platoon of "E" Company with part of the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon, formed a portion of a task force consisting also of the 2d Battalion, 261st Infantry and "C" Company, 748th Tank Battalion. The task force was assigned the mission of taking the city of PASSAU and establishing a bridgehead over the INN RIVER.

The assembly point was two miles west of the city along the DANUBE RIVER. At 1000 hours "E" Company of the Infantry was dispatched to encircle the city and drive home an attack from the Southwest. At the same time the balance of the task force, with the reconnaissance elements in the lead, advanced along the South bank of the DANUBE into the city. Behind the reconnaissance elements the task force was deployed with Company "C", 748th in the lead, carrying "F" Company of the Infantry. The Tank Destroyer, carrying "C" Company, brought up the rear.

Scattered resistance was met on the march into PASSAU, but was quickly overcome. Entrance into the city met with no resistance at all. The streets were deserted, the big city seemed devoid of all life but us. Friendly troops on the North bank of the DANUBE R notified our troops that the bridge across the INN RIVER was prepared for demolition and heavily mined. The platoon had pro-

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ceded about four or five blocks from the edge of the city when it paused to reconnoiter. Reconnaissance elements brought back with them eight prisoners who stated that a strong enemy force was located in the South and Southwest side of town.

It was decided that the tanks and TD's, with the tanks leading, would make a dash for the bridge in an attempt to save it from destruction by the enemy. Unloading the infantry the reconnaissance platoon leader started out, running ahead in his jeep to observe the bridge approaches and warn the rest of enemy activity. The Reconnaissance Platoon Leader came back and advised that the bridge had been blown. The tanks withdrew back to a large turnaround, firing about fifteen rounds of HE at active enemy sniper posts who were blazing away sporadically at our forces by this time.

A squad of infantry was sent out to check over enemy positions in the South and Southwest positions of the city. They went about two blocks, met heavy enemy machine gun and small-arms fire which wounded two of their men, and withdrew, leaving their wounded lying in the street. Two German and one American medical aid man attempted to reach the two wounded infantrymen; they were all fired upon by the enemy troops and were all hit. One of the Germans was killed.

Just after the squad had departed, three infantry 1 1/2-ton trucks, dragging 57 millimetre anti-tank guns, accompanied by one 2 1/2-ton 6 x 6 and one jeep, drove on up the street, turning right on the square containing the turnaround where the tanks were stationed. They had gone about a block when a group of enemy riflemen opened up on them from a barracks at the end of this street. Two of the trucks and one gun were quickly destroyed, another was badly damaged.

The Tank Destroyer Platoon Leader ordered two of his four M-36 Destroyers forward to a point near where the tanks were assembled. Employing one destroyer to cover the other, he advanced the lead destroyer to a position near where the infantry anti-tank elements had met disaster. As he was performing this maneuver, the reconnaissance platoon leader set up an CP and three sniper posts on the South side of the street near the same spot. The Destroyer fired fifteen rounds of HE shell into the building from which the enemy had struck at the trucks, simultaneously spraying them with .50 calibre machine gun fire. At the same time, the men manning the sniper posts placed heavy, accurate fire upon all visible enemy positions, protecting the destroyer from panzerfaust-attack and forcing the enemy to abandon several houses from which he had been fighting. The combined result of this action neutralized the enemy fire until the infantry anti-tank elements were able to evacuate their movable vehicles and their personnel. As soon as this had been accomplished the tank destroyer platoon leader backed his destroyer down the street about a hundred yards and went in search of the infantry battalion commander to learn his future plans. He was unable to locate the battalion commander so he returned to his position.

The company commander whose squad had attempted the reconnaissance asked the Tank Destroyer leader and the Tank officers to assist him in the rescue of the two wounded infantrymen who were still lying in the street a block and a half South and West of the lead destroyer's present position. A platoon of

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infantry, two destroyers, and two medium tanks, with the destroyers leading and the infantry working along both sides of the street flanking the armor, were formed for the rescue. They intended to clear out about five enemy occupied houses to enable our medical personnel to reach the wounded men.

The two destroyers, with the tank destroyer platoon leader in command, drove to a point near where the two wounded men lay and the lead destroyer placed both 90 millimetra and 50 calibre machine gun fire upon the enemy positions. The tanks did not leave their assembly area at the turnaround. The infantry platoon accompanied the destroyers to the point from which the destroyers were to support them in cleaning out the enemy positions. The infantry formed on both sides of the street, advancing from house to house and alley to alley. The infantry on the left side of the street were able to work within 25 yards of the destroyer, but the infantry on the right were unable to advance, being pinned down by machine gun fire. At this time the destroyer and the OP both spotted the enemy fire, which was immediately neutralized by 90mm and Caliber 50 MG fire. Other targets were spotted on the left and taken under fire by the destroyers. This effectively neutralized most of the enemy fire in the vicinity.

At this point the Inf Coy Commander received orders not to go forward as negotiations were under way for surrender of the town and the infantry withdrew and took cover. As soon as the enemy saw this he opened up with everything he had. From the OP and the sniper posts set up our men were constantly engaging enemy machine gunners, riflemen, and panzerfaust teams. The OP spotted an observer with a BC scope in a small opening by a large clock on a public building. The first round of 90mm HE hit the clock dead center. The loud noise and the dust created by the activity made accurate observation difficult; the lack of supporting foot troops for the destroyers made them very vulnerable to panzerfaust attack. The Tank Destroyer Company Executive Officer brought some personnel of the company headquarters platoon to give the destroyers flank protection from panzerfaust teams. He had spotted some enemy sniper positions and occupied one destroyer and directed fire upon them until their fire was reduced.

After this had been accomplished one of the OP's spotted an enemy Mark IV tank that had moved into position just back of a street intersection some two hundred yards in the front of the lead destroyer, from which position it was screened from observation by the tank destroyer platoon leader and destroyers. It was planned to leave the lead destroyer where it was and move the other destroyer a block South and a block East to a position between two buildings from which he could dart forth and engage the enemy tank if opportunity presented itself to catch the enemy unawares.

The encircling destroyer proceeded about halfway to his new position under heavy sniper and machine-gun fire, then it was charged by six enemy rocket grenadiers. In attempting to back into position from which to ward off this attack the destroyer driver dropped the vehicle into a large shell crater, temporarily immobilizing it. The assistant driver and loader left the destroyer and made their way back to the Tank Destroyer Platoon Leader, to whom they reported the incident. The Tank Destroyer Platoon Leader ran under heavy enemy fire to the shell crater to determine the extent of the damage. Before he arrived, however, the gunner had fought off the grenadier attack, killing all six of the

sneaky, firing both Caliber .50 MG and 90mm HE at point blank ranges; and the gunner, destroyer commander, and the driver had managed to extricate the destroyer from the shell crater and proceed to their destination to wait in readiness to attack the enemy tank. The Tank Destroyer Platoon Leader returned to the OP, picking up the destroyer commander along the way, and pointed out to him the enemy tank, explaining in full the plan of attack.

The Mark IV tank then started to fire at the sniper personnel located in the building, and also at the OP. He then switched his fire on the house behind which the Tank Destroyer was located and in which the Platoon Commander and destroyer commander were located. If the Mark IV tank moved out further he would expose himself to the tank destroyer fire and if the tank destroyers moved further forward they would be exposed to his fire. The distance between the tank and the tank destroyers was about 150 yards. During this time small arms and bazooka fire was continual. Panzerfausts were spotted trying to move into position to the rear of the second tank destroyer. A machine-gun and crew were placed in a building so they covered the rear of the tank destroyer, and they were able to keep the enemy down with machine-gun fire and force them to withdraw again to the buildings.

The platoon commander exchanged fire with the enemy tank for quite sometime without result, both being in a position from which they could not be hit by the exchanged fire.

The destroyer commander of number one destroyer was then ordered to move his destroyer in the direction of the enemy tank as fast as possible, come to a halt, race his motor, then withdraw immediately. He was covered by small arms fire from the sniper posts for protection against the Panzerfausts. This maneuver persuaded the Mark IV tank crew to move their vehicle forward in order to get a shot at the destroyer. The destroyer commander of the 2d destroyer was waiting for the Mark IV tank to make this move. He fired a round of HE into the wall above the enemy tank, showering them with a blinding cloud of dust. The tank was so located that it was not possible for the destroyer gunner to place direct fire upon it, so he placed four rounds of APC in front of it on an angle that ricocheted two rounds into the tank and sent it up in flames. The destroyers then withdrew.

The engagement lasted for more than five hours, during which we used virtually all of our fire power. Our machine gunners and snipers killed a known 30 dead and wounded many more with the 90mm. An American soldier who had been captured two days before and held prisoner in one of the buildings in town reported that the first round of 90mm fired in the town went through a doorway of the German barracks and killed 6 and wounded at least 11 more.

The following day PASSAU surrendered, yielding around five hundred prisoners. It was discovered that another Mark IV tank was in the town, abandoned and burned by the crew.

During the engagement at PASSAU the 1st Platoon, "B" Company moved into positions on the West side of the INN R to support the crossing by the 1st Battalion. Our troops were receiving heavy direct fire from across the river in Austria. By nightfall the platoon destroyed one Mk IV tank, 3 '88mm AA-AT guns and one personnel-carrying vehicle. Meanwhile the 2d Platoon, "B" Company supporting the 3d Battalion assisted in clearing woods in the CT sector, delivering supporting fire with both 90mm and Caliber .50.

the 260th, destroyed 2 '88 AT guns and supported the advance of the infantry. "B" Company delivered supporting assault fire, destroying 2 MG's.

On 6 May the Division closed in on the ENNS RIVER with orders to occupy defensive positions and to patrol across the river with the mission of contacting the Russians. "B" and "C" Companies occupied positions on the West side of the River and during the day of 6 May spotted many lucrative targets, including artillery batteries on the move and many field pieces. However, the CT Commanders of the 261st and 259th, gave orders not to fire as surrender negotiations were in progress. However, late in the afternoon when fire from the enemy side became heavy the order to fire was given. "B" and "C" Companies opened up and destroyed 11 '88mm AA-AT guns, 12 20mm flak guns, 2 Mk IV tanks, 3 40mm AA-AT guns, one radar unit, 6 houses with personnel, killing an estimated 50 enemy. The last round was fired at 1831. At 1030 on the 7th word was received from the Division that the German Army had surrendered and that all hostilities would cease at 0900L May.

Defensive positions were maintained until the 10th when all companies went into assembly areas and began a program of maintenance and rehabilitation of personnel. The remainder of the period was spent in rounding up PW's and displaced persons. "A" Company took over the administration of Camp Haid.

SECTION II. USE OF INTELLIGENCE SECTIONS AND RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY.

1. For the period 1 - 8 May 1945 each reconnaissance platoon was attached to a gun company. 1st Platoon attached to "B" Company; 2d Platoon attached to "A" Company; 3d Platoon attached to "C" Company. During the period all platoons conducted route, area, zone, and position reconnaissance in their respective companies. During this period route reconnaissance played the largest part.

From 9 - 31 May all companies aided in rounding up the enemy soldiers in our area.

2. Sources of Information during Period:

XX Corps G-2
65th Infantry Division G-2
Division Artillery S-2
Division Engineers
Gun Companies
Reconnaissance Company

3. Enemy Operations during Period:

From 1 - 3 May 1945 the enemy offered little or no resistance until we reached the INN RIVER. Here the towns of PASSAU and the area in the vic of SCHARDING was heavily defended. In PASSAU the enemy offered stiff resistance for five hours. The enemy was a group of SS troopers. After crossing the INN RIVER only scattered resistance was met until we reached the ENNS RIVER. After reaching the ENNS RIVER the enemy crossed the river to the West in mass.



THE COMPANY'S ATTACHED SUBJECTIVE REPORT...
 THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS...
 ON 2 MAY THE DISTRICT...

4. Codes used during the period:
 - a. Radio Slidex code.
 - b. Coordinate code using a ten-letter word to represent the numbers 1-0. Example: B-R-O-N-N-K-I-T-E-S
 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-0. Regular coordinates are used and the letter substituted for the number.
5. Maps used during period: Terrain and Road map, scale 1:100,000.
6. Known Damage Inflicted upon the Enemy during Period:

Mk IV Tanks - 6	40mm AT Guns - 3
Other vehicles - 4	20mm AA-AT - 6
Guns, AT - 22	Bazookas - 6
Machine Guns - 5	Killed - 65
Radar Unit - 1	Captured - 1309

SECTION III. LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURES, PROBLEMS.

1. Logistics
 - a. Ammunition expended during month of May:

90mm Shell, HE, M71	336
90mm Proj, APC, M82	92
50 Cal., MG	3100
45 Cal. Pistol, Ball	500
30 Cal. Carbine, M1	1600
 - b. Gasoline expended: 30,740.
 - c. Rations consumed:

Operational: "B"	10,480	53%
Companies 10 in 1	9,220	47%
Reserve: "C"	382	58%
"K"	648	100%
 - d. Vehicles and Primary weapons destroyed during period: 1 M-36.
2. Procedure
 - a. General.
 - (1) Battalion Supply continued accepting informal requisitions, editing same, relieving the units of as much paper work as possible. Company Supply Sergeants made a daily run to S-4 to pick up supplies and check on other supply problems.

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- (2) Supply problems, directives, changes in policy and requirements were sent to the companies on administrative messages through command channels and by messenger, radio, or telephone when necessary.
- (3) Companies completed showdown inspections during this period and the results of this inspection was reported to higher Headquarters as Showdown Excess List and Showdown Shortages.

b. Class I.

- (1) Battalion Supply requested rations from Division Class I Supply Point daily for operational rations and on Thursday of each week for EK rations (when available), using the strength of companies as reported on Morning Reports.
- (2) Battalion drew rations from Division Class I Supply Point and Truckhead, and delivered them to the companies at the Rear Echelon.
- (3) Three days' reserve rations were maintained by picking up any reserve rations requested by companies on special requisition from Division Class I Supply Point. Late in the period the allowance was cut to one day's ration, 1/3 "10 in 1", 1/3 "C", and 1/3 "K". All emergency rations above that limit were turned in to the Division Quartermaster.

c. Class II.

- (1) Battalion accepted informal requisitions from companies. They were edited, consolidated, and forwarded to Division Supply Points. In the event items were not received on initial request, Battalion back-ordered for the companies.

d. Class III.

- (1) Companies were maintained by sending gas trucks out either on call or on the basis of estimated needs during a period. Gas trucks went to platoon locations, gassing the destroyers and returning to S-4, where all empty cans were consolidated on the minimum number of vehicles for runs to Division Class III Supply Point.
- (2) On long moves a gas truck was sent with each line company and sufficient extra cans were carried on available transportation to supply Headquarters Company, the Battalion CP and Reconnaissance Company.
- (3) During the middle of the period, when the Battalion was rationed to 700 gallons of gas per day, each company was allowed 50 gallons per day. When the reserve in the Battalion reached 1500 gallons, this amount was used to fill TD's and Half-tracks in the letter companies.

e. Class IV. None.

f. Class V.

(X) Basic ammunition loads were maintained at all times. All ammunition expended was picked up by S-4 and delivered directly to the companies.

g. Miscellaneous.

(1) Motor vehicular maintenance.

(a) All work was done according to schedule, 1,000 mile and 50 hour check by company, and 4000 mile and 100 hour checks by Battalion.

(b) All vehicles that were kept on dead line because of necessity were evacuated to the supporting Ordnance M& Company. (Examples, Engines that used oil, clutches that could no longer be taken up, etc.)

(c) Each company maintenance crew worked directly with its company.

3. Supply Problems. None.

IV. PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION.

1. Replacements.

a. During the period of this report the battalion has drawn 18 reinforcements consisting of 4 officers and 14 enlisted men. During the month 39 enlisted men have returned to duty from the hospital, four of which had been wounded in action and 35 sick or with non-battle injuries.

b. The battalion has had two enlisted men accidentally killed during the month, no personnel wounded in action, hospitalized, and has had 29 enlisted men hospitalized, either sick or with non-battle injuries.

c. The battalion is now 6 enlisted men overstrength but low one officer of its authorized officer overstrength of four officers.

2. Special Service.

a. During the month the personnel of the battalion were given opportunity to see movies frequently. Several stage shows have been presented for the benefit of the different units of the organization during the month.

b. Quotas for passes and furloughs were received through the 65th Infantry Division to whom the battalion was attached throughout the period. One officer was given a seven-day leave and ten enlisted men were given seven-day furloughs to the Riviera Recreation Area, France.

c. The Battalion PX began operation affording the personnel of the battalion Coca-colas, beer, candy, etc.

d. Each unit has organized base-ball teams and have regular scheduled games throughout each week.

3. During the month one officer and 4 enlisted men were recommended for the award of the Silver Star, one enlisted man for the Soldier's Medal, and one officer and seven (7) enlisted men the Bronze Star for heroic service. No recommendations for award of the Bronze Star for meritorious service were submitted during the month due to the cut in our quota from 5% of organizational strength for period 1 March 1945 to 15 May 1945, given by XII Corps to whom the battalion was formerly assigned, to 1% of organizational strength per month for the period covered by this report.

One officer and 1 enlisted man were awarded the Silver Star and 4 enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service during the month.

4. Graves Registration. Men killed or wounded were evacuated through the combat teams of the Division to which the units of the battalion were attached during the month.

5. Personnel Administration. The Personnel Section operated with the AG Section, 65th Infantry Division, until 13 May 1945, at which time, it began operation with the battalion's own rear echelon.

SECTION V. COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. The battalion was in combat in the ETO for 225 consecutive days. The following is a summary of its action:

a. Vehicles destroyed:

Mk V tanks	5
Mk IV tanks	14
M24 tank (US)	1
SP gun	13
Others (incl 1 M8)	32
Total	<u>65</u>

34 APU

b. Other equipment destroyed:

Gun, AT (75 - 88)	39	Pill Box	157
Gun, 20mm AT - AA	15	OP	61
Gun, 40mm AT - AA	3	Bazooka	6
Gun, Arty	11	Ammunition Dump	4
Machine Gun	56	Radar Unit	1
Mortar	12	Radio Station	1
Nebelwerfer	1	Boats	13

c. PW's captured 3,664

d. Enemy killed 877



e. Ammunition expended:

	APC	Direct	HE Indirect	TOTAL
3" mortar rounds received				
3" rounds in service	587	9,543	27,952	34,495
90mm high and low-battle	1,539	3,849	528	5,916
Total				41,411

37mm				342
Cal. 50				76,090
Cal. 30				54,340
Carbine				16,600
Cal. 45				24,200

f. Gasoline expended: 232,200.

g. Average operational rations consumed:

"P"	52%
10 in 1	43%
"C"	4%
"K"	1%

h. Vehicles replaced:

TYPE	COMBAT LOSS	EVACUATED	TOTAL
1/4-ton, 4 x 4	3	4	7
1 1/2-ton, 6 x 6	1		1
2 1/2-ton, 6 x 6		2	2
Half Tracks			
M-36's	4	4	8
T-2s or M32s	4	8	12
M5 A1 (Light Tanks)		2	2
M1 Wrecker		1	1
M10 Trailer		1	1
3" Gun	2		2
Totals	14	23	37

i. Personnel.

(1) Losses:

Killed in action	14
Died of wounds	5
Accidentally killed	4
Wounded in Action (Hospitalized)	48
Sick and Non-battle injuries (Hospitalized)	186
Transferred out of battalion	107
Total	364

(2) Gains:

Reinforcements received	108
Wounded in action returned from hospital	21
Sick and non-battle casualties ret'd from hosp	128
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Total	257

(3) Strength, (Effective)

Beginning of operations	- 100
End of this period	- 100

ROBERT C. McDONALD, JR.,
Lt. Colonel, 806th TD Bn
Commanding

