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HEADQUARTERS
800th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230

1 January 1945

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports.
TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.

1. In compliance with AR 345-105 the following report is submitted for the month of December:-

- 1 Dec - This Bn atchd 99th Inf Div,
Co A occupied positions vic HUNNINGEN in Southern Div sector. Co B occupied positions vic KALTERHERBERG in Northern Div sector. Co C occupied positions East of ROCHERATH in the Central Div sector. The 1st plat occupied indirect fire positions. This plat fired 30Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires, unobserved.
- 2 Dec - 3rd plat of Co C fired 30Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires, unobserved.
- 3 Dec - Enemy planes strafed and bombed vic Co B. 3rd plat Co C fired 30Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires at five targets.
- 4 Dec - 3rd plat Co C fired 30Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires at six targets, unobserved.
- 5 Dec - 3rd plat Co C fired 326rds HE interdiction and harassing fires at six targets, unobserved. Six rds 88mm arty fire landed in Co B area. No damage resulted.
- 6 Dec - 3rd plat Co C fired 162rds HE interdiction and harassing fires at five targets, unobserved.
- 7 Dec - 3rd plat Co C fired 160Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires at four targets, unobserved. The 1st Rcn plat was atchd to Co B with the mission of outpost security for the Co's left flank. An enemy pillbox located South and East of MONSCHAU on commanding terrain was destroyed by using 100 lbs of explosives.
- 8, 9 & 10 Dec - No change in Co positions.
- 11 Dec - Co A received orders for direct support of 394th Inf Regt. This Co remained and continued present mission but selected indirect fire positions for survey. Co B atchd 395th Inf Regt at ~~0900A~~. This Co remained and continued present mission but selected indirect fire positions for survey. Co C atchd Div Arty; and further re-atc'd 372nd FA Bn. 1st Rcn plat atchd Co A. 2nd Rcn plat in mobile reserve vic HUNNINGEN.
- 12 Dec - Co B moved to indirect fire positions vic KRINKELT. 1st and 2nd plats Co A moved to pre-selected indirect fire positions East of HUNNINGEN. 3rd plat remained in AT defense of Div Southern flank.
- 13 Dec - 1st and 2nd plats Co A fired 43Ords HE interdiction and harassing fires in support 394th Inf Regt. Relieved of support at 1430A. The 1st and 3rd plats occupied positions of AT defense Southeast of HUNNINGEN. 2nd plat placed in mobile reserve vic MURRINGEN. 1st and 3rd plats Co C fired 36rds HE interdiction and harassing fires. The 2nd plat remained in AT positions East of ROCHERATH.
- 14 Dec - Two guns from 2nd plat Co B moved to 2nd Bn, 395th Inf Regt vic FOREST MONSCHAU, with mission to assist in destruction of a pillbox which presented difficulties to the Inf. Due to the type of terrain these guns could not obtain field of fire to their
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target without exposing themselves to observed small-arms and mortar fire. KRINKELT received an air attack by enemy planes which dropped what was believed to be 1000 lb bombs. Three of these projectiles landed approximately 100yds from Co B CP. No casualties or damage resulted.

15 Dec - 1st and 3rd plats Co B fired 46rds registration and 61rds HE interdiction and harassing fires at one target.

16 Dec - 1st and 3rd plats Co C fired 259rds HE, reduced charge, interdiction and harassing fires. Co C relvd fr attachment to 372nd FA Bn. 2nd and 3rd plats moved to vic MURRINGEN to give additional security to Div's East and Southeast flanks. The 1st plat remained in mobile reserve vic ROCHERATH. Seven casualties were caused by enemy arty fire on these gun positions.

Co B received enemy arty on their gun positions. One man was killed and another seriously wounded. One gun tire was destroyed.

The 2nd plat Co A was given AT mission of reinforcing 3rd plat in depth, generally South and East of HONSFELD. The 1st Rcn plat as outpost for 3rd plat Co A reported to the plat leader that an enemy patrol of about one Co had progressed along the railroad tracks, taking shelter in railroad cars. The plat leader immediately displaced one gun forward so that fire could be brought upon these cars. The 3" gun fired HE shells resulting in approximately twenty enemy killed. The Rcn plat also fired four rds 37mm HE. The boxcars were completely demolished. Later in the day this plat of Co A received heavy arty fire resulting in the damage of one halftrack, one 1½ton, and two 1/4ton vehicles. One man was killed and one seriously wounded. The 2nd Rcn plat was then atchd to Co A and occupied positions as outposts on the South flank of the 2nd plat of Co A. Enemy arty greatly increased at this time. Arty and mortar fire was received along the entire Div sector. The 3rd plat, Co C, moved to vic BULLINGEN in mobile reserve.

17 Dec - In the very early hours of the morning smallarms, mortar and arty fire greatly increased throughout the entire Div sector. The 2nd section, 1st Rcn plat, was located on the outskirts of HONSFELD acting as outposts for the 3rd plat of Co A. At about 0030A an officer told a Rcn section leader he was from the 18th cav and would bring tanks past the outpost during the morning and not to fire upon them. At 0515A a column of tanks came up this road and stopped in front of the outpost. Before leaving to investigate, the section leader gave instructions to his second-in-command to pull back to the 3rd plat, Co A, in case of his not returning. He then took another man with him to see if the tanks were the 18th Cav. As he walked up to the leading tank and spoke he was struck over the head with a rifle butt and knocked to the ground. His companion escaped under fire and the section leader was taken prisoner. He was immediately taken to the rear of the column where an interrogating officer informed him in perfect English that his section was completely surrounded by infantry and armor. He also told the section leader that he knew the section to be from a TD Bn, and that it would be useless for him to do anything but to surrender. The section leader knowing his section had pulled out, agreed, so they marched him back under armed guard to the area where his section had been. The guards however, remained a few feet behind him. As he approached the spot where his section had been he heard his vehicles pulling away so he informed his guards that they had left. His guards immediately turned him around and started back toward the rear of the column. Seizing an opportunity, the section sergeant pushed the guard and ran between twn moving tanks in the direction of a wooded area. Smallarms fire of all types opened up on him. He finally reached comparative safety by running and crawling. On his way back he notified

the S-3 of an Engineer Bn who was in that vic, of the attack, and related his experiences. By hitching rides on army vehicles he finally found his way back to Bn Hqs. and gave the information. When the section leader left his section to investigate, it was minutes later when they heard much smallarms fire. The second-in-command immediately gave orders to displace and then warned the plat of Co A. When they arrived there they informed the gun plat leader and he instructed them to remain with his plat. Smallarms and mortar fire increased in this area. Security reported that a column of tanks was approaching HONSFELD which was directly to the rear. The plat leader, seeing that they were surrounded and all escape routes cut off, gave orders to abandon and destroy all vehicles. After doing this they left with the plat leader and headed toward KRINKELT. The 1st section of this Rcn plat was never heard from since the time of the attack. They held positions as outpost South of HONSFELD vic HOLZHEIM.

The 2nd Rcn plat located South of HONSFELD covering approaches to this town heard smallarms fire in the vic of HONSFELD at 0530A. At about 0745A four rds from a 3" gun were fired in the immediate vic of their left front. Immediately after that two Mark V tanks accompanied by infantry edged out of the woods and fired on the 3" guns. One of the tanks traversed its turret and fired AP at the 1st Rcn section. The enemy infantry also opened up with MG and rifle fire on the entire plat. One man was wounded. The Rcn plat leader contacted the Bn and notified them of the situation. The Bn informed the plat that HONSFELD was in enemy hands and to head West. Due to the road net in this area the only route of escape for this section was to hit the Southwest outskirts of HONSFELD and turn left. One 1/4ton was destroyed by MG fire so the remainder of the vehicles which consisted of an M8 and a 1/4ton departed with full crews. They entered HONSFELD and turned West. Enemy infantry was contacted and a small fire fight developed. Two MG nests were destroyed and about ten enemy killed or wounded. Farther down the road contact was made with the 2nd section which had proceeded West cross-country as per instructions of its plat leader. One M8 and one 1/4ton were destroyed by enemy fire. A destroyed trailer located in the center of the road prevented these vehicles from progressing further. At that point a cross-country route was selected. Two 1/4tons bogged-down in the mud while smallarms fire was received. These vehicles were abandoned and the occupants proceeded on foot using the M8 for cover. About a mile West the M8 had to be abandoned due to heavily-wooded terrain. Parts of the firing mechanism of the 37mm guns were removed rendering the gun useless. The radio was destroyed and the 30cal MG was taken with the plat as they proceeded generally West to the town of HEPSCHIED where the wounded man was turned over to a medical unit. The plat continued to travel Northwest until an enemy armored column was sighted just East of FAYMONVILLE. The column was heading due West and consisted of about seventeen tanks, six halftracks and other vehicles some of which were American. The plat waited until darkness and then proceeded onward. At about 0630A the following morning American troops were contacted in ROBERTSVILLE. All the information they had was given to the 3rd TD Gp.

The 3rd plat of Co A occupied gun positions Southeast of HONSFELD covering the main roads. At about 0500A this plat heard armor moving up the road on their right flank. Security reported that it was M3 light tanks. When they reached the road junction they halted. Security picked up the sound of German and English being spoken. They then reported that Mark IV tanks were behind the M3 tanks and the column was enemy. The plat leader gave orders for the gun crews to swing their guns to the right and to fire on the enemy. The infantry which had been riding the backs of the tanks picked up the sounds of the gun crews moving their guns and opened fire upon them with machine pistols and MGs. Due to the lack of armor of the 3" guns the crews had to resort to returning the fire with their own smallarms. The tanks immediately turned their turrets and opened fire causing damage to the 3" guns and also wounding personnel of the gun crews. The plat leader gave the order for the men to fall back to the railroad track while one crew covered the withdrawal of the other. The tanks immediately followed up their own infantry and sprayed the withdrawal of the platoon. Upon

reaching the other side of the railroad tracks the plat leader gave instructions to the gun sergeants to take their crews and head back to the Co CP. Casualties were inflicted on both sides during this smallarms fight.

At 0400A the 2nd plat of Co A with three 3" guns reported to its Co Hqs that one American light tank with German occupants had slipped by its gun position and a bazooka team consisting of the plat leader and two men were trying to intercept the tank and destroy it. As the bazooka team moved down the road they noted a convoy of German tanks and vehicles had joined up with the American light tank and all were heading in the direction of HONSFELD. It was also noted that the Germans on the light tank were speaking English. This column halted right by the plat leader's hidden position. All of the tanks had infantrymen riding on their backs. As the convoy started forward the plat leader with his two men edged his way out and returned to his plat position and notified his Co CP by radio. On their way back to the plat CP they were surrounded by a small German patrol but due to the blackness of the night they evaded it. At the plat CP the plat leader was told that his 3" gun had been over-run by enemy infantry infiltrating thru the woods. Small arms and mortar fire had been increasing in this sector. The infantry could be seen advancing thru the woods toward the guns. They were also using hand grenades and bazookas. The plat leader immediately ordered the guns destroyed and for the men to head back to the Co CP. Friendly infantry which had occupied positions in front of this plat on the day before was never seen or heard from. The darkness of the night also made it impossible for the gun crews to see the enemy tanks. The plat leader gave instructions to each crew to meet at a rendez-vous point. The crew using the best possible route met at this designated place. An officer with a column of tanks asked the plat leader if he would give his column some security until he arrived in BULLINGEN. The plat leader gave this information to his men and they formed squads of infantry as a point and flank guard. When they arrived in BULLINGEN they met friendly infantry. Thanking them the officer advised the plat leader to take his men and head for KRINKELT.

At about 0400A the 1st plat of Co A received heavy arty and mortar fire. Their location was East of HUNNINGEN with the mission to protect the routes into KRINKELT. At daylight one section was moved to the West of HUNNINGEN to fire upon enemy tanks and halftracks which were proceeding to HONSFELD and to BULLINGEN. They destroyed four Mark IV tanks and one halftrack of the approaching enemy column. This section received heavy counter-battery fire in which the plat leader was wounded. At 1300A the 1st plat moved to the vic of MURRINGEN and took up positions to defend this town from the South and Southwest. One 3" gun was put out of action when it received a hit from enemy arty fire.

At 0230A Co B received enemy shell fire in the vic of the CP and battery positions. Communications to batteries were lost and as a result the indirect fire missions for the remainder of the night were executed from data sheets. At 0800A they received word the Germans had attacked HONSFELD and that one of the Rcn sections had been fired upon. The 1st and 3rd platoons upon orders of the CO immediately took direct fire positions. The 3rd plat on the East of ROCHERATH and the 1st plat on the West. The 1st section of the 2nd plat rejoined its other section and occupied direct fire positions on the Northeast part of ROCHERATH. Shelling and smallarms fire could be heard from the direction of MURRINGEN and HONSFELD. At 1300A the Co CP moved about 2000yds North of ROCHERATH in the vic of the 395th Inf Regt CP. At 1400A the 2nd plat of Co B was busy establishing gun positions, digging foxholes and setting up wire communications. At 1530A arty again began falling on these gun positions preventing the men from moving out of their halfdug foxholes. The MGs on the flanks set up for security were knocked out by direct hits from enemy arty of the size of 88 and 105mm shells. Arty and

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mo's fire became so intense that the plat leader gave instructions for the men to fall back and take shelter in the cellars of houses nearby. At darkness the gun crews moved their guns and occupied new positions on the outer edge of town. The town at this time was being shelled by direct fire from tanks and self-propelled weapons. The 3rd plat of Co B received occasional shelling in their positions during the remainder of that morning. At 1400A a direct hit was received upon a halftrack. Enemy infantry was over-running his section, so the gun sergeant on his own initiative destroyed the gun and pulled his crew back to the plat CP. With the remaining men of this section the plat leader established security for his other guns. At 1830 this plat defended an area in the vic of the 1st Bn, 9th Inf. The area was under heavy mortar and MG fire. Using all the mines available from the plat halftracks, a field was placed in front of the infantry outpost lines. At 1900A the Germans again attacked these positions. Two tanks were disabled by running over the mines. Other tanks which moved in from the flanks made the guns untenable due to their MG and 88mm fire. An effort was made to reach these tanks with bazookas, but due to the lights cast by the burning tanks, this could not be accomplished. Our arty and infantry warded-off this attack. Later that night an attempt was made to pull the guns out and face them in the direction of the attack. The enemy infantry advanced almost to the guns one of which was destroyed by the section leader throwing a thermite grenade into the tube. The remaining gun in this section was destroyed in the same manner when it became impossible for it to be moved. The gun crews fell back into the woods and held a line with the infantry until the following morning when they received orders to return to their CP with their one remaining gun.

The 1st plat of Co C occupied gun positions East of ROCHERATH. Enemy arty was intense throughout the day. At about 1600A the plat leader reported friendly infantry withdrawing thru his plat area under heavy enemy pressure. Due to the fact that the guns were emplaced for use against armor, it was impossible to fire them since the retiring friendly infantry intermingled with enemy troops within their field of fire. The plat received orders from its CO to rally at a pre-arranged position. During the preparation for rallying the enemy firing increased so heavily, causing casualties, among the gun crew and destruction of two prime movers. The plat leader under the situation ordered three guns to be destroyed and the other gun which was almost coupled to its prime mover to proceed to its pre-arranged place. While this gun was moving out it received direct fire from the enemy infantry. The 2nd plat of Co C was notified of enemy infantry approaching their positions. The C.O. ordered the plat to displace rearward to where the 2nd Div was attempting to establish an MLR. The vehicles and personnel while moving out received direct fire from the advancing enemy infantry. Due to the intense arty fire, it was impossible for the plat to occupy their alternate positions. They were then ordered to retire to KRINKELT. One halftrack and one gun were destroyed by enemy arty fire enroute to this position. Upon entering KRINKELT the plat was unable to set up gun positions because the enemy infantry had already infiltrated thru the lines on the backs of the enemy armor. Upon discovering this the men were organized into groups to fight on as infantry. This plat was able to salvage one halftrack and gun while the remainder was destroyed by crew members. At 0700A the 3rd plat of Co C which had been held in mobile reserve vic BULLINGEN was ordered to occupy AT positions East of BUTGENBACH.

18 Dec - At 0215A the 1st plat of Co A was ordered to proceed to WIRTZFELD thru KRINKELT. Upon reaching WIRTZFELD they met with the 23rd Regt, 2nd Div. There they set up AT defense on

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the North and East side of town with their remaining three guns. The rest of the Co which had lost the majority of its equipment were employed with the infantry.

At 0730A the 3rd plat Co B which had been working with the 9th Inf received another counter-attack by the enemy. Three more Mark IV tanks were destroyed by mine fields. Then they received orders from their Co to proceed on a designated route to CAMP ELSENBORN. At 1100A the remainder of the Co was ordered to move to CAMP ELSENBORN and set up AT defense.

The C.O. of Co C with the remainder of the 1st and 2nd plats moved to ELSENBORN by a cross-country route. Enemy arty fire was intense due to the observed and open terrain which they had to cross.

All of the remaining guns of the Bn, less three in WIRTZFELD, were placed East of ELSENBORN in AT defense. A provisional company was organized from these gun crews and placed under the command of the Co C commander.

The following is a list of destruction incurred to the enemy;

Foot troops killed or wounded....130
Vehicles...Mark IV tanks.....12
Mark VI tanks..... 2
Halftracks..... 1

The following is a list of our combat loss;

3" Guns.....17
Halftracks.....16
1/4ton.....28
1½ton..... 5
1-ton trailers. 6
M8..... 4

The concensus of opinions of the plat leaders and the gun crews are that if it had not been for the fact of the non-mobility of the towed gun and the lack of armor protection for the gun crew and in most cases the over-running of the gun positions by the infantry many more tanks and vehicles could have been destroyed.

19 Dec - The Bn CP moved to vic SOURBRODT. Stragglers reported to the Bn throughout the day. The provisional company still maintained AT positions vic ELSENBORN. Sporadic enemy arty fire was received throughout the day. The cos were organizing for further operation.

20 Dec - The 3rd plat of Co C located Southeast of BURGEBACH fired upon a house which they had seen being entered by an estimated plat of enemy infantry. The house was demolished. Counter-battery was received on this plat killing one man. At 1400A this plat was relieved from this sector and returned to Bn control.

The Bn reorganized into three gun companies.

Co A turned over three 3" guns to Co C, and personnel of this Co were used to supplement personnel in Cos B and C. Co A in process of re-equipping.

Co B(9 - 3" guns) in AT defense East of ELSENBORN.

Co C(10 - 3" guns) in AT defense East of ELSENBORN.

Lt Col DAILEY of the 612th TD Bn received a mission to coordinate all AT defenses in the 2nd and 99th Div sectors. Our guns were immediately tied-in with those of other TD's and a close-in AT defense was set up.

21 Dec-- The Bn C.O., S-3, and C.O.'s of Cos B and C made reconnaissance for new gun positions and improvement of AT defense. Co C received enemy arty fire at 1000A which destroyed one half-track, 2 - 1/4ton and 1 - 2½ton.

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22 Dec - Cos B and C moved to new AT positions under cover of darkness and were ready to fire at 0700A. These gun positions were located, some in the immediate vic of the infantry and others in the open terrain which was under constant enemy observation. The S-3 and C.O.'s contacted the Div ATO and coordinated a wire communication between the guns and also with the adjoining mortar squads and infantry. The reason for tying-in the mortar squads was in case of attack, luminous shells could be thrown in the air to light up the area.

Co A remained in the vic of the Bn CP, reorganizing and equipping.

23 Dec - An order was received by the Army Commander that all gas masks will be worn by all personnel at all times. No change in gun positions or enemy action. Heavy arty fire still persisted in the company areas. Cos B and C were improving their gun positions.

24 Dec - Heavy arty fire was received in the Bn CP with slight damage to equipment. Cos B and C improving gun positions. Enemy arty was constantly received in these areas.

25 Dec - Improvement of gun positions in the forward areas continued. Holes were dug for the 3" guns and sandbags were placed all around and on top for overhead cover.

26 & 27 Dec - No change in enemy action. Enemy arty still received in forward areas.

28 Dec - Co A made reconnaissance in vic HOFEN, preparing to relieve Co A of the 612th TD Bn. Cos B and C received heavy arty fire throughout the day.

One vehicle in the Bn CP was completely destroyed by a direct hit while other vehicles received slight damage. One man was killed.

29 Dec - Co A relvd one Co of the 612th TD Bn in vic HOFEN, taking over eleven 3" guns with accessories.

Co B relvd one plat of the 612th TD Bn in vic BERG and took over four 3" guns with accessories.

30 Dec - No change in enemy action. Arty still persisted in the co areas. Co A improved gun positions.

31 Dec - No change in enemy situation. Improvement of gun positions continued by all cos. Heavy arty still landing in co areas.

E B HORSFALL,
Lt Col, 801 TD Bn,
Commanding.