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HEADQUARTERS
804th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

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By Authority of:
C.O. 804 TD Bn
Initials JK
Date 12 Apr 45

314.7

APO 464, US Army,
12 April 1945

SUBJECT: Battalion History for March, 1945.

TO : Commanding General,
Fifth Army,
A.P.O. 464, U. S. Army.

On 1 March 1945, elements of the Battalion, attached to the 88th Infantry Division, were disposed as follows:

Battalion Forward CP in the vicinity of Sabioni, Italy.
Company A in the vicinity of Casoni, Italy.
Company B in the vicinity of La Guarda, Italy.
Company C (less 3rd platoon) in the vicinity of Monzuno, Italy.
3rd Platoon, Company C, in reserve near La Posta, Italy.
Headquarters Company, Battalion Rear CP and Battalion Aid Station in the vicinity of La Posta, Italy.
Reconnaissance Company, attached to the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, in the vicinity of Stanco di Sopra, Italy.

The gun companies were employed throughout the month as artillery and self-propelled guns, firing from both direct and indirect positions astride Highway 65 and in the sector to the left of the Highway.

On the night of 1-2 March, an experiment was conducted to determine the accuracy of a night sighting device which was developed within the battalion. This night sight was developed to enable the Destroyers to place direct fire on any target at night provided that the target was illuminated either by bright moonlight or by illuminating flares. The results demonstrated that the device was successful in that all rounds fired hit the target when the target was illuminated by either moonlight or flares. Two guns in each company were equipped with the night sight to perform this type of mission.

Company A fired a direct mission on the night of 22 March by first illuminating the target with illuminating shells and then firing HE from the same gun using the night sight successfully.

Several missions were fired by our guns in artillery positions with Air OP adjusting fire. Results were so successful that a regular flight was scheduled with ACP for the unit. On 8 March 1945 Lt. Col. Rowell was slightly injured while returning from an observation mission when the plane crashed upon landing.

The 3 inch illuminating shell was used to light targets at night on three occasions in conjunction with the Air Force on night bombing missions. The targets were well lighted but due to lack of direct communication with the bombers, some targets were not bombed. Results were conclusive from an experimental standpoint. With proper air-ground liaison this type of night bombing can be successful.

On 5 March the Battalion, less Reconnaissance Company, was relieved from attachment to the 88th Infantry Division and attached to the 34th Infantry Division. Companies A and B were attached to the 168th Infantry Regiment and Company C was attached to the 133rd Infantry Regiment. The 34th Infantry Division developed a harassing direct fire plan in which our M-10s at numerous scheduled times placed direct fire on known enemy positions and occupied houses. Many caves, dugouts and houses were destroyed and casualties inflicted on the enemy.

On 1 March Reconnaissance Company, attached to the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, moved from Stanco di Sopra to Stanco di Sotto and took up Infantry defensive positions. On 8 March they moved into reserve positions in the vicinity of S. Mr. Madda. On 11 March the company moved into frontline positions in the vicinity of La Quercia, relieved elements of the 135th Infantry Regiment, and took over outpost positions, strongpoints and listening posts. This front was very active at night. Numerous patrols, both friendly and enemy, were out between the lines at night and firefights frequently broke out. The Germans raided one outpost during the night of March 16-17 and wounded three men, Pfc W. A. Richards, Pvt Ralph Dilday and Pvt Wayne Hooker. The raiding party was driven off by calling down all defensive fires. One man who had been captured escaped and returned to our own lines. On 23 March the company moved into reserve defensive positions and remained in these positions for the remainder of the month performing patrol duties.

On 23 March the reserve platoon of Company C moved from La Posta into artillery positions in the vicinity of Mazzuro. All other elements of the battalion remained in the same positions throughout the month.

Sgt Walter W. Snyder, Company B, was awarded the Purple Heart on 8 March at the 56th Evacuation Hospital, Italy, for wounds received 5 Feb near La Guardia.

Pvt Frank A. Moore, Company B, was awarded the Purple Heart on 9 March at the 8th Evacuation Hospital, Mt. Nemi, Italy, for wounds received 8 March near La Guardia.

Pvt Ralph A. Dilday, Reconnaissance Company, was awarded the Purple Heart 29 March at the 24th General Hospital, Florence, Italy, for wounds received 17 March near La Quercia.

Pfc William A. Richards, Reconnaissance Company, was awarded the Purple

Heart 20 March at the 24th General Hospital, Florence, Italy for wounds received 17 March near Ia Quercia.

On 1 March 1st Lieutenant Ronald H. Hatchens and 1st Lieutenant Eber H. Peters, Jr. departed for the United States on temporary duty and rotation, respectively.

1st Lieutenant John J. Drabic was assigned and joined as a replacement for Lieutenant Peters on 21 March and was assigned to Company B. 1st Lieutenant Michael Brodmalny was relieved from Reconnaissance Company on 19 March. Captain Clifton E. Armstrong was transferred from Company B to 6796th Headquarters Company on 27 March and placed on duty with AFV Section, Headquarters Fifth Army. 1st Lieutenant Benjamin H. Zuber, Jr. assumed command of Company B.

Ammunition expenditures during the month were as follows:

<u>3 inch</u>		<u>Mortar</u>	
HE	10,814	81mm, light	250
HE R/C	4,325	81mm, heavy	341
AP	86	81mm, smoke	12
Smoke	261	60mm	605
Illuminating	237		
Smoke R/C	91		

FRED G. ROWELL,
Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry,
Commanding.