

HEADQUARTERS 805TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 302, United States Army

319.1
(15-4-43)

In the Field
15 April 1943

Subject: Report of Combat Activity.

To : Commanding General, II Corps, A.P.O. 302, U. S. Army.

Through: Commanding Officer, First Tank Destroyer Group.



Report of combat activity of this organization covering period 16 March - 11 April 1943 follows:

RECORD OF EVENTS:

16 March - In bivouac 13 miles SE AINE BEIDA

17 March - Battalion marched at 0601 hrs to vicinity of THELEPTE airport via TEBESSA in compliance with F.O. #4, Hq. 1st TD Group, 16 March 1943. Mission: To protect THELEPTE airport from mechanized attack. Closed in assembly area 0845 hrs. Battalion moved at 1900 hrs to FERRIANA, in compliance with F.O. #5, Hq. 1st TD Group, 17 March 1943. Mission: To provide local defense of Headquarters, II Corps, U. S. Army. By 2330 hrs. necessary roadblocks, night time listening posts, and gun positions were established by all companies, covering 260° arc around FERRIANA.

18 March - By 0930 hrs. daytime gun positions and necessary minefields were established by all companies.

20 March - Battalion moved from FERRIANA at 1245 hrs. and closed in assembly area 1 mile NW of SHEITLA 1700 hrs. in compliance with F.O. C.O. 1st TD Group. Mission: To support 9th Inf. Div. in static defense of SHEITLA-KASERINE area in conjunction with 894th TD, 1 Bn. 47th Inf. Column strafed by three (3) enemy planes 2 miles NW SHEITLA 0430 hrs. - casualties 2 killed, 6 wounded, 3 vehicles and guns damaged and 1 - 3/4 ton mtd vehicle destroyed. At 1600 hrs. battalion came under command of C.O. 894th TD Bn. At 2300 hrs. forward C.P. and gun positions established 2-3 miles from SHEITLA on road to MADJEB EL AJOUN. Reconnaissance are established 8 miles NE of SHEITLA.

21 March - One company established gun positions 2 miles east of SHEITLA on SIDI BOU ZID road, prior to 1200 hrs. Recon. outposts established at T5186, T5581 and T5166 (TURKISH 1/200,000 MAP: SHEITLA). Contact also was established w/Derb, Yecounry and Recon. elements of 34th Inf. Division. No enemy contact.

- 22 March - At 2135 hrs. gun position on SIDI BOU ZID road was re-inforced by one platoon as per verbal orders of C. G. 894th TD Bn., based on unconfirmed report of enemy tank column moving west of FAID.
- 23 March - Laid minefields.
- 26 March - Bn. departed SBEITLA approx. 2200 hrs. in compliance w/radio message C. G. Div Arty., 9th Div. received 1100 hrs., 25 March 1943.
- 27 March - Orders changed enroute by authority contained in phone message from C. G., II Corps relayed thru Hq. 9th Inf. Div. placing 805th TD Bn. under command of C.G., Corps Artillery, II Corps. Battalion closed 0800 hrs. in ass'y area 2 mi. NE of GAFSA on MAHASSY road. Mission: To provide anti-mech. defense for Corps Artillery. C.P. and gun positions occupied 2000 hrs. in radius 4 miles SE of EL GUETTAR along road to GAFES.
- 29 March - Random enemy shellfire landed in area. Attacked by dive bombers at 1630 hrs. - no casualties.
- 30 March - Enemy planes dropped flares and bombs over area at 0300 hrs. Casualties - 1 killed, 1 vehicle damaged.
- 31 March - Departed EL GUETTAR 1300 hrs. in compliance w/VOCG II Corps. Closed in ass'y area SEMED STATION at 1700 hrs. Mission: To provide secondary defense line against mechanized attack from the north, northeast or east, under command of C.G. 1st Armored Division. 2 enemy planes dive bombed IP at 1330; no casualties.
- 1 April - Departed ass'y area at 1300 hrs. and occupied position of readiness 1730 hrs. 4 mi. NW SEMED STATION (in compl. w/ltr CG 1st Armored Division 31 March 1943 as amended verbally). Mission - unchanged. 8-10 mile recon. radius established and close cooperation with Berby. Reconny effected.
- 2 April - Preparation of alternate gun positions continued. SEMED PASS patrolled and guarded.
- 4 April - Departed SEMED STATION 1400 hrs. by infiltration in compl. w/VOCG 1st Armored Division, placing this organization under the command of Col. J. J. Williams, Force Comdr., operating under II Corps. Closed in reconnoitered C.P. and gun positions at T-2715 with A Company in position at T-2735 (TUNISIAN 1/200,000 MAP: SBEITLA). A and Recon. Companies removed from control of commanding officer 805th TD Bn.
- 5 April - This battalion (minus A and Recon. Companies) departed T-2715 at 1300 hrs. in compl. w/VOCG II Corps and closed in ass'y area 7 miles N. of GAFSA at 1530 hrs. At this time VCG II

Corps placed this organization under command of the G. O. the 1st Ranger Bn. Mission: To prevent enemy mechanized thrust into GAFSA from Southwestern tip of DJIBEL BERDA. Daylight recon, southeast of MEDILLA was executed at 1630 hrs. for night occupation of position.

- 6 April - Forward G.P. and gun positions SE of MEDILLA occupied at 0500 hrs. At 1230 hrs. withdrew from MEDILLA area in compl. w/VOCG II Corps and returned to assembly area 7 miles NE of GAFSA on GAFSA-SIDI BUKZID road. Ordered to BEITLA there to report to Col. J. J. Williams by CG II Corps. A and Ron. Companies remained detached.
- 7 April - Closed in temporary bivouac 2 miles east of BEITLA at 0200 hrs. As of 1200 hours B and C Companies were removed from control of this Battalion and attached to force protecting airfield at T-2735. Battalion G. O. given mission of coordinating activities of rear echelons of WILLIAMS FORCE. During afternoon CG, CGA 1st Armored Division assumed command of this force.
- 8 April - Battalion ordered by CG, CGA to position of readiness at T-5751. Mission: To prevent enemy detachment from FAID area. Battalion closed new area at 1900 hours. A and Ron. Companies reverted to Battalion at same time. Two men wounded by anti-personnel mines.
- 9 April - Enemy minefields in and about SIDI BUK ZID cleared by this organization. One officer wounded by enemy anti-personnel mine in SIDI BUK ZID. Observation post on DJIBEL KAIRA occupied by Ron. elements of this organization prior to 1730 hrs.
- 10 - 11 April - Departed SIDI BUK ZID area at 1800 hrs., 10 April 1943, attached to CGA. Mission of CGA: To move to and occupy area at T-5733 by way of pass 5 miles south of FAID. Battalion provided C Company for advance guard and B and Ron. Companies for flank guard of CGA. Battalion closed in area in vicinity of T-5733 by 0200 hrs. 11 April 1943, including companies forming portions of flank and advance guards.
- 12 April - Departed 1900 hrs. in compl. with V.C.G. 1st Armored Div. and closed in bivouac 5 miles NE of YAU CHEKA, reverting to control of Commanding Officer, 1st TD Group.

For the Commanding Officer:

JOHN S. LYONS
Captain, F. A.,

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Comments and Recommendations concerning Employment of this Unit



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- COMMENTS:
1. It is believed that the mission assigned to this Battalion upon arrival in the SEMED STATION area may have been too ambitious - many squaremiles were involved and no supporting or protecting troops were furnished. At this time, it is believed that SEMED PASS was quite vulnerable to enemy infantry penetration.
 2. The assignment of this battalion to the Col. J. J. Williams Force in the SHEITLA-KASSERINE area is felt to have been rather vague. Not only was Col. Williams' or his G.P.'s location not known, nor the specific mission of this battalion understood, but the battalion was divided into three parts; supply, medical aid and evacuation were not provided detached units by this headquarters to which attached. Under these conditions the battalion minus A and Recon. Companies were ordered to GAFSA area. This latter mission might have proved a serious and difficult one.
 3. Casualties were suffered during a daylight march to SHEITLA. The necessity for marching during daylight did not appear apparent at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That this battalion be kept intact as a battalion.
2. That supporting troops be provided for this battalion when separated from division troops.
3. That night marching be utilized whenever feasible.
4. That personnel replacement be coordinated with vehicle replacement. Throughout the period covered by this report, a large number of immobile troops were contained in this battalion.
5. Infantry missions should not be assigned this Battalion.
6. That separate battalions be placed under one permanent administrative authority rather than having such authority change with tactical assignments. This will preclude much duplication of reports which are never useful to the unit to which attached due to constant shifting of Battalion to another force or command. Will also eliminate many

wasted hours in establishing new contacts, source of supplies, etc. It is believed that Corps should always supply such units rather than placing the responsibility on the units to which Battalion is attached. Present system promotes inefficiency, retards normal administrative functions and causes Commanding Officer to be constantly harassed concerning the situation.

For the Commanding Officers

JOHN G. JONES,
Captain, FA,
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