

HEAD QUARTERS 805TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 464, United States Army

Battalion History, 1 April - 30 April 1944

1. A patrol sent out last night by 1st Regiment to House 13 with instructions to hold thru the day repelled an attempted ambush about 0100 by an estimated company, disposed in House 14 and on the North flank of 13. We fired a concentration at 0100 in support, reported effective. By dawn enemy was well organized about 14, while 1st Regiment had successfully installed reinforcements about 13. When we attempted adjustment on 14, the enemy put down a smoke screen; the adjustment was completed by the patrol commander to whom a wire had been laid. He also adjusted on the enemy company's supporting weapons, disposed to his rear and flank. Enemy snipers inflicted some casualties. At 1030 patrol commander called for cessation of fire, hoping enemy activity would disclose his positions and intentions. The incident aroused considerable response. At 1540, after a wandering adjustment, OP achieved some effect on personnel about a digout on enemy's MLR. At 1640 "B" was adjusted on a house buzzing with vehicular activity indicative of a CP, and inflicted casualties requiring an ambulance. Mission was interrupted by counterbattery, severing all lines in and out of B's FDC, and inflicting 1 serious and 2 light casualties. Battalion dispatched last sensor and "Fire for Effect" by motorcycle messenger, tho' repeated shortly by radio. At 2400, aircraft dropped demolition and AP bombs in B. Sabotino; a stick of AP's, possibly intended for "B", fell wide.
2. Yesterday's CP on House 14 proved a mistake; we should have plastered it. From this excellent CP, enemy adjusted a 170 mm on 13, killed 2, wounded 2, and repelled our patrol. During the morning we harassed 14 and surrounding buildings. In the afternoon we smashed yesterday's CP, and started a fire in an 88 battery position. Fifth Army ATG visited with the sad news that we will probably be made self-propelled, with either T70's or T71's. Battalion Commander asked that his official view be considered as unfavorable. The Battalion has had no real test in an anti-tank role. The men have mastered this gun and are fond of it. It is more stable, more accurate and mechanically more reliable. We appreciate our simplified maintenance, fuel, transport, and ammunition supply problems. Guns are never out of action because of vehicle deadline. It can be better dug in for protection and concealment. Five replacement officers were attached for a 30-day training period.
3. Fired one observed mission with doubtful effect. Lt. Waldman, Reconnaissance Officer, departed under Rotation Plan. A valuable officer, his loss will be felt; however, he was most deserving of rotation.
4. Adjusted B's oldest and newest guns (some 700 rounds difference) on #12 Grand Ave., obtained target hits with both at same quadrant elevation. Lyons, S-3, promoted to Major. Battalion initiated an extensive training program. Reconnaissance and plans made for reinforcing the AF front in depth with all IF guns, if necessary.
5. Nothing noteworthy.

- 6 "A" leveled tower in Sessuno (042240) with 60 rounds 122, FD. This eliminates much Jerry observation as 8" Howitzers have knocked down the Littoria towers.
7. "B" and "A-2" fired 310 rounds unobserved harassing interdiction and counterbattery in Littoria Area. Rear Echelon moved to M110512, near Pozzuoli.
- 8 Fired 282 rounds unobserved. Brigadier General Ramey, VI Corps ATO, visited to review AT plans in the light of the coming dry weather. It is believed only a major coordinated attack for a bridgehead could force tanks across the Canal, in which case organization in depth is indicated. A more likely mission will be to knock out tanks and SP's shelling canal defenses from distance. Guns on Canal bank can combat this though they are exceedingly vulnerable and attract intense counterbattery, to the dislike of the infantry. Ellerbe, S-4, promoted to Captain.
- 9 Easter Sunday. Many men attended services; also cooked up many adopted fowl. One observed mission on personnel covered area. Battalion Commander reconnoitered Canal banks for better AT positions.
- 10 S-3 began a school for attached officers in direct and indirect fire, forward observation, use of SOI, etc.
- 11 Fired one TOT, a cub mission on a tank, and usual harassing. An air counterbattery program was cancelled by bad flying conditions. Completed reconnaissance and made plans for putting a gun on East Canal bank, near Bridge #5. Plan necessitates removal of mines in bank, preparing a perfectly camouflaged position, and moving gun across a jeep bridge 3 inches narrower than outside of danks. OP #2 was established across canal on Short Road, using House 3 by day, and returning to MIA by night. Communication by wire and radio. Lt. Sabo, Communications officer, is running it. C.O., Company "C", visited C.P.
- 12 Severe shelling of digging parties, visible by moonlight, prevented some guns being emplaced in the selected dry weather positions, forcing the occupation of alternate positions. Men are in need of rest, as their exposed positions prevents leaving the gun pit by day. No training can be done. Lt. Thompson initiated a mine school.
- 13 OP 2 was shelled by an SP, with a few hits on house. He located the gun and silenced him with "B" Company. He spotted and covered two other gun positions. Hits on a suspected OP caused withdrawal of one enemy. Vocation OP saw a tank fire from Tank Road and withdraw into woods near 022167. Rather than shell the woods we waited for tank to reappear. Reconnaissance made to place a gun across Bridge 2 in support of a proposed raid. Last night's enemy raid on beachhead was heaviest in month. AP bombs narrowly missed Rear C.P. AA reports 10 destroyed, 7 probables, some damaged. Lt. Behm, Malaria Control Officer, and Surgeon are getting under way in the mosquito war.

Last night's CB program included 2 one-hour periods of silence by our artillery while A 20's se robed enemy battery targets of opportunity. Results have been reported effective.

- 14 Enemy SP guns somewhat active, shelled OP 2 three times. Battalion fired 7 observed missions, a TOT, and usual harassing. Received PASF F.O. #21 for Raid tomorrow.  
A placed one gun on East Canal Bank near Bridge 5 (922102) and one across Canal near Fizzle and Short Roads (029229) with Field of Fire along Tani Road.
- 15 At 0530H ASF with two companies, supported by 1 platoon M-4 tanks, 1 platoon M-5 tanks, 1 platoon M-10's, 1 platoon armored Ron (M-3's) and prepared artillery fire, including smoke screens behind objectives, launched a raid on enemy outposts on Strada Mitroana and Cerreto Alto. First prisoners arrived B. Sabotino 0743. Raid completed by 0940. Harassing fire stopped at 1110. Net results: 61 M's, 45 Germans, some drunk, estimated 15 killed; no friendly casualties; 2 M-4's destroyed by mines; 1 M-10 and 1 M-4 overturned in craters, 1 M-10 and 1 M-8 damaged by mines, all recovered.  
Battalion fired 500 rounds in support of raid plus four missions on targets of opportunity. At 1040, Corps ATO visited, authorized exchange of Companies "B" and "C". During darkness, Company Commanders completed reconnaissance and other arrangements.  
Battalion Commander authorized exchange of personnel, leaving guns in place.
- 16 After dark exchange of two platoons "B" & "C" initiated.
- 17 Exchange of 1st and 2nd platoons "B" & "C" completed 0225H. Fired normal number of observed and harassing missions. Lt. Shaller, a superior officer, departed for rotation.  
0945 - Battalion C.P. shelled, about 20 rounds 105 mm. OP 2 thought he located guns, 69 AFA counterbattered; later, location proved erroneous.
- 18 Exchange of "B" & "C" completed 0225H. Fired 168 rounds in support of raid by one company, 2nd Regiment, on houses 049214 which netted 8 M's without loss.  
0900 - Ron. platoons arrived from Naples. They have 23 of authorized 44 men, are short 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  T's. Lieutenants McClelland and Sabo assigned as platoon leaders, initiated training. 2150H: Officer patrol to vicinity 0518 pinned down by machine gun and tank fire. Patrol adjusted and made its escape; 64 rounds expended. 4 observed missions, usual harassing.
- 19 Executed 2-hour staff radio exercise.
- 20 2120H. Test-fired one round Naval illuminating shell over house 042179. Battalion Commander went with patrol to 033183 to observe. Firing satisfactory but observation diminished by low lying smoke or cloud.
- 21 OP 3 shelled by Hs and propaganda. Fired 7 observed missions; silenced machine gun, destroyed house OP, set another afire, routed enemy from house to dugout to ditch, inflicted casualties.

Lt. Magara, injured in September and marked Limited Service, returned to Battalion, designated Battalion Reconnaissance Officer.

2145 - Enemy launched attacks in British 5th and U. S. 3rd Division sectors. OP's and AT guns alerted. Considerable enemy artillery throughout bridgehead.

- 22 1000 - 1045B. OP's 2 and 3 shelled. Fired 5 observed missions; made direct hits on a machine gun and a mortar position. Direct hits on dugout routed 1 enemy. 12 target hits from 23 rounds on occupied house 05951610.
- 23 B. Sabatino received estimated 100 rounds at 0400 and 50 more at 0540. During airraid at 0410, 4 rounds heavy caliber fell near Battalion C.P. 0905B - 1005B Fired 257 rounds on 05631193 to cover withdrawal of patrol pinned down by machine gun and mortars, suffering casualties. Patrol withdrew, evacuating casualties. Fired 14 other observed missions, 94 harassing rounds for a total of 961 rounds. Destroyed 5 dugouts, observed several casualties, destroyed house; started 2 fires, caused 2 explosions in pits, several in m. field; caused red smoke to rise from mortar pit. 0900 - 1200 Conducted staff radio CFX. 1600 Special Court met.
- 24 6 observed missions; 1 started fire in house C.P., 3 caused enemy to evacuate houses. Continued training; Forward and rear C.P. played soft-ball game.
- 25 9 observed missions; After two casualties were seen evacuated. 31 rounds on C.P. at 062143 scored 5 hits. 59 rounds on house 0613 scored 14 hits.
- 26 Gen. fired M-3 37 mm and machine guns in training. 5 observed, 4 unobserved and normal interdiction missions. Silenced gun, nebelwerfer, dispersed work party.
- 27 Selected Officers and NCO'S attended lecture on combined Infantry-Tank tactics. 2 observed, 2 unobserved missions, 60 rounds harassing.
- 28 7 observed missions; areas reported well covered. Normal harassing. PX rat on included Beer, 2/3 liter per man at Battalion expense.
- 29 Fired 16 observed missions, personnel scattered and casualties seen. A direct hit was observed on an armored vehicle; as it did not burn, it is not claimed. Fired 72 rounds harassing and 60 counterbattery. Location and surveillance of latter obtained from S & F.
- 30 13 observed missions started 3 fires, caused 3 explosions, one accompanied by purple smoke, hit 6 houses containing OP's and MG's. One unobserved mission and normal harassing fires.

2 Incls.


Annex #1, S-1 Journal, Officers' roster, Casualty Report.

Operations Journal, Reports Submitted

Annex #2, F.O., FSSE

G-2 Reports Received

G-3 Reports Received

  
GARDEN L. McCOMBS, L.  
Lt. Col., P. A.,  
Commanding