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HEADQUARTERS
808th Tank Destroyer Battalion

APD 403
31 October 1944

File No.

SUBJECT: After Action Reports
Against the Enemy

From: 25 September 1944
To : 31 October 1944

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. 25 September 1944. On orders of XII Corps battalion attached to 80th Infantry Division and relieved 810th Tank Destroyer Battalion on line. Division engaged in consolidating positions East of Moselle River covering front approximately from Pont-A-Mousson to Monteny. One company in direct support each combat team, providing AMCzd defense: "A" Company (-) Direct spt 317th, "B" Company direct spt 318th, "C" Company direct spt 319th, 1st and 3rd pltns "A" Company occupied indirect fire positions under supervision Division Artillery.

2. 26 September 1944--6 October 1944. Companies continued in spt of CP's providing AMCzd defense and firing direct and indirect missions. Co's changed and improved positions as required by tactical situation. All pltns in direct fire positions subjected to mortar and arty fire. 2d and 3d pltns "C" Co, dug in positions in woods, found tree bursts made positions untenable during fire so overhead cover was built for all guns; guns were dug in and sand bags used to build up sides to make revetment, then logs and earth were placed on top. On 27 Sept, 1st Rcn pltn attached to "A" Co; on Sept 29, 2d Rcn pltn attached to "C" Co. Initially these pltns employed to provide local security; then established and manned CP's reporting enemy information to Co's and CP's. Pltn Sgt, 1st Rcn pltn, adjusted fires of arty. 26 Sept 1st and 3d pltns Co "A", occupied new indirect fire positions on hill above Maulx under supervision of 313th P.A. Bn. 29 Sept, 1st pltn "C" Co occupied indirect fire positions. 1 Oct "C" Co supported local attack of 319th Inf on Renaissance Farm and Les 4 Fers. 1st pltn fired indirect on Farm while 2d pltn and 2d Rcn pltn fired direct. Preparation lasted 10 minutes, 113 rds HE being expended by 1st pltn, 50 rds HE and 38 rds APC by 2d pltn, and 50 rds 37mm APC and 20 rds 37mm HE by 2d Rcn pltn. Infantry advanced under fire to take farm and Les 4 Fers. Our fires virtually destroyed Farm and killed at least 13 Germans. During period 26 Sept - 6 Oct a total of 9 missions direct fire and 146 missions indirect, both observed and unobserved were fired. 228 rds HE and 60 rds APC were expended on direct fire missions; 235 rds HE were expended on indirect fire missions. Direct fire missions included: The town of Boisvion, church steeple at Moreville, pill box on Mt. S. Jean, town of Benicourt, water tower at Renaissance Farm, Renaissance Farm, town of Lixieres, Les 4 Fers, church steeple at Manoncourt. All fire was accurate and effective.

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3. 7 October 1944 — 9 October 1944. Supported attack of Division to push line generally along Seille River including taking of Mt. Toulon and Mt. St. Jean by delivering direct and indirect fires and providing Amczd defense. The plan and execution thereof:

a. "A" Company - under Division control until Mt. Toulon and Mt. St. Jean were taken. On 8 October from 0600 and 0630 1st and 3d pltns fired 210 rds HE indirect fire on Mt. Toulon and Mt. St. Jean from positions above Faulx; 2d pltn at same time fired 149 rds HE and 48 APC at pill boxes and troops on Mt. Toulon from positions above Belleau. When infantry took objective 1st pltn moved to Amczd positions NW side Mt. Toulon. 3d pltn going into assembly area. On 8 October "A" Co ordered to direct spt 319th to their objective of high ground East of Manoncourt, they to spt 317th to their objective vic Chenicourt. 319th accomplished objective and on 9 October "A" Co went in direct spt 317th, taking up Amczd positions in their sector on Division South flank.

b. "B" Company, direct spt 318th Inf. On 8 Oct from 0600 and 0630 "B" Co fired 312 rds HE direct fire at Manoncourt. As CT advanced to take Manoncourt "B" Co followed advance taking up new Amczd positions on 9 October.

c. "C" Company, direct spt 328th Inf, (26th Div) which was attached to 80th Division and took over left flank sector of Division. This CT held ground and organized for counter attack. The night of 7 - 8 October all guns of "C" Co except 2d sec 3d pltn moved from Amczd positions and took up indirect positions vic Atton. The morning of the attack from 0600 to 0630 fired 600 rds HE Indirect at Eply, Raucourt, and St. Jure as diversinary fires. At 0630 all guns moved back into direct fire positions.

4. 10 October 1944 — 31 October 1944. During this period Division occupied and improved defensive positions East of Moselle River and West of La Seille River. 328th Infantry relieved of attachment to 80th Infantry Division. Our companies placed in direct support CT's: "A" Company with 319th, "B" Company with 318th, "C" Company with 317th, providing Amczd defense. One platoon of each company occupied indirect fire positions under fire control responsibility of following F.A. Bn's: "A" Company under 315th, "B" Company under 974th, "C" Company under 512th. On 29 October "B" Company placed under fire control responsibility of 315th. On 15 October one gun from indirect fire platoon of "A" Company placed in proglongation of road between RAUCOURT and NOMMEY with mission of delivering harassing fires on road. On 16 October one gun from indirect fire platoon of "B" Company placed on progation of road vic RESSAINCOURT and SECOURT with same mission. A total of 646 indirect missions fired during the period with an expenditure of 5907 rds HE. On 30 October Rcn pltns relieved of duty on OP's and assigned missions of reconnoitering La Seille River for possible fords. Four direct fire missions delivered: at church steeple at ROUVES, NOMMEY and ABAUCOURT, expending 129 rds HE (including 10 CP TL05 fuzes) and 31 rds APC. 1st and 2nd Rcn pltns alternated manning OP's vic NOMMEY and CHENICOURT, reporting information to Battalion. Training conducted during the period, emphasis being placed on firing of rocket launcher and rifle grenade, and attack of fortified areas with other arms. All elements subjected to arty and mortar fire during the period. Canabalized German 7.5 cm Pak 40 and fired approximately 30 rds HE and 10 rds APC on direct harassing missions vic NOMMEY and RAUCOURT.

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SICRON II. THE RECONNAISSANCE PLATOONS, USE OF RECONNAISSANCE PLATOONS.

1. 16 September 1944. On orders of the XII Corps, Battalion relieved the 60th Tank Destroyer Battalion on line running between Pont-A-Mousson Southeast to Monteny. The 1st Rcn Platoon was attached to "A" Company for reconnaissance work and established a tank warning net; 2d Rcn Platoon was held in battalion reserve.

At this time all enemy information was received from the Division G-2 and the S-2 of the 60th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. 20 September 1944. The 2d Rcn Platoon was attached to "C" Company, 1st section with 1st section of 2d Platoon, "C" Company, 2d Section with 2d section of 2d Platoon, "C" Company to aid in securing the platoons' positions. Enemy information was reported to the S-2, 319th Infantry.

Up to this time very little was known of any enemy armor in our sector.

3. 8 October 1944. 2d Rcn Platoon was then attached to "B" Company to establish observation posts and listening posts in their sector. Machine gun positions, mortar positions and troop movement East of the Seille River was reported by this platoon. Fire was directed on most of the positions.

4. 14 October 1944. Both Reconnaissance Platoons were then placed under direct control of the S-2. Observation posts were set up on Hill 216 and the high ground Southeast of Nomeny by the 1st Rcn Platoon, 2d platoon held in reserve. Platoons changed positions every two days then later every four days.

5. 30 October 1944. Both platoons were held in battalion reserve.

Sources of information and intelligence during this period:

- a. 1st and 2d Reconnaissance Platoons.
- b. TD Companies
- c. Division G-2 Reports.
- d. Division Engineer's reports.

Maps used during this period:

24 September 1944--battalion received partial initial issue of maps from XII Corps consisting of:

- a. Road map: 1:250,000; 1:500,000.
- b. Topographical map: 1:50,000.
- c. Battle map: 1:25,000; 1:20,000.

Battle map 1:20,000 was discontinued and the 1:25,000 map was used for operations.

Codes used during operations:

- a. Division map code.
- b. Slidex (radio communication).

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SECTION III. LOGISTICS, SUPPLY PROCEDURE, PROBLEMS.

1. Logistics.

a. Ammunition expended during period:

37 mm H.E. M63	80
37 mm Cannister	20
37 mm M51	80
3" APC M62	1,060
3" HE	10,979
3" Smoke	206
Cal .30 (for M1 Rifle)	2,688
Cal .50 MG	1,000
Grenades, Hd Frag. M111	300
Grenades, Hd Smoke W.P.	9

b. Gasoline expended during period: 13,250 gallons.

c. Ration percentage consumed:

"B" Ration	20%
"D in 1"	80%
1 day reserve "C"	100%
1 day reserve "K"	100%

2. Procedure.

a. General:

- (1) S-4 in this organization is a member of the Forward C.P. This allows him closer contact with companies and gives more opportunity for intelligent anticipation of present and future supply needs.
- (2) Company Supply Sergeants remain in the Rear Echelon with Battalion Supply. There they keep abreast of the general supply picture while still maintaining contact with their units by personal visits and messengers.

b. Class I.

- (1) Using the strength of companies reported in Morning Reports S-4 forwarded ration requests to Division Quartermaster daily and, for R.A.C. kits, weekly.
- (2) Battalion Supply drew rations from Division Quartermaster and brought them to Rear Echelon. Company kitchen trucks, combining run for water, mail, and rations, picked up rations from Rear Echelon. In cases where it was possible for Company trucks to return, S-4 delivered rations to unit C.P.
- (3) Companies were required to keep two day's rations in reserve. In the event the reserve was depleted, separate requests were submitted to Division Q.M. to bring balance to the required load.
- (4) Daily delivery of mail was made to Company Mail Clerks at Rear

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Echelon when they came back on Ration Truck. Only authorized individuals handled the mail.

c. Water.

- (1) Water was drawn from Engineer Water Point by company Kitchens. Locations of water points were taken off Daily Engineer Overlay and distributed to the companies.
- (2) Companies were supplied with an adequate supply of calcium hypochlorite for use when water was not available at established water points
- (3) All containers (canteens, water cans, etc.) for potable water for drinking or cooking purposes were sterilized.
- (4) By using discarded Air Force gas tanks, kitchens carried an additional 154 gallons of water, thus necessitating but one trip a day for water.

d. Class II.

- (1) Informal requisitions were accepted from units. Company Supply Sergeants, in the Rear Echelon, checked through the informal requests, corrected nomenclature, and consolidated by company.
- (2) Battalion Supply edited, consolidated, and forwarded requisitions to appropriate Divisions Special Staff Officer.
- (3) Battalion Supply backordered all items not filled on initial requisition.
- (4) Items received were broken down and issued to company supply sergeants, then sent forward with ration or ammunition truck.
- (5) Companies worked through the Communications Officer on all items of Signal equipment. This was done by a request brought in by company messengers. This information was consolidated and a requisition was made up one each week, except in an emergency. Upon receipt the items were distributed by the Communications Officer. A surplus of needed items, such as tubes, batteries, and mast sections were held by the Communications Officer for emergency use of the battalion.
- (6) Instructions regarding disposition of individual and organizational OWS clothing were compiled with as follows:
 - (a) Individual equipment including gas masks, protective, etc., were stored near the rear echelon.
 - (b) Dust respirators, decontaminating apparatus, and other organizational equipment was retained by units.
 - (c) Individuals were instructed to retain and use as ordinary clothing the impregnated clothing on hand.
- (7) Duffle Bags:
 - (a) Duffle bags were brought forward by Transportation Platoon and made accessible to men brought back to rear echelon to was, change clothes and send in laundry.
 - (b) Duffle bags of men killed in action were inventoried by an officer. All possible use was made of Government-issued clothing to outfit replacements. Personal effects were forwarded to QM Effects.

e. Class III.

- (1) Daily reports of gasoline on hand were made to Division G-4,

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and the Battalion received allotments in accordance to requirements.

- (2) Companies returned empty cans to Battalion Class III Dump. Whenever possible a can for can exchange was used. When impossible empty cans were held until exchange for full cans at Divisions Class III Distributing Point.

f. Class IV. None.

g. Class V.

- (1) Basic ammunition load was maintained at all times.
- (2) A Battalion Forward Ammunition Dump was maintained as near the companies as practicable which stocked 3" ammunition to meet anticipated needs.
- (3) Transportation vehicles and any other 6 x 6 's necessary were used by Battalion Supply to pick up Battalion load.
- (4) Companies used one 1 1/2 -ton to run back to Battalion Ammunition Dump. Whenever possible the platoon 1 1/2-ton delivered ammunition from company C.P. to platoons. In some cases this was not possible and the only vehicle which could get in without being observed was a 1/4-ton.

h. Maintenance Procedure.

- (1) Thousand and six thousand-mile checks were performed as normal when in a static position; when in movement they were completed at the first opportunity. Company Maintenance performed 1000-mile check and Battalion Maintenance 6000-mile checks.
- (2) Company Motor Maintenance accompanied the company normally; if the tactical situation was such that the 2 1/2-ton could not accompany the company, the Motor Sergeant and one mechanic with the 1/4-ton remained with the company, and the 2 1/2-ton was sent back to the Battalion Motor Officer in the Rear Echelon and added to the Battalion Maintenance Platoon.
- (3) A mechanic was sent to the forward C.P. to handle emergencies which arose there. This man was taken from the Battalion Maintenance Platoon and was rotated weekly. Mechanical Difficulties that he could not handle were sent by him to the rear echelon and taken care of by the Battalion Maintenance Platoon.

i. Evacuation.

- (1) Vehecular.
 - (a) All evacuation was handled by the battalion wrecker crew and at times with the help of company maintenance personnel.
 - (b) Evacuation which was on the front line or within mortar range was made with a half-track taken into the area and used as the evacuation vehicle. The damaged equipment was pulled out of mortar range, and at a convenient spot was picked up with the battalion 10-ton wrecker. All evacuation was performed immediately. The damaged or destroyed equipment was evacuated back to the Battalion Maintenance Shop, and either repaired there, or immediately evacuated to the supporting Ordnance Company.

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- (c) Accidents and breakdowns, outside of danger areas, are picked up directly by the Battalion Wrecker Crew.
- (2) Deceased: Evacuated through Combat Teams which units are supporting.
- (3) Prisoners: Evacuated to Combat Team Prisoner of War enclosures.

3. Supply Problems.

a. Replacements received did not have adequate clothes and individual equipment to meet the needs of combat. With the difficulties involved in obtaining this equipment replacements should be checked and completely equipped prior to release from Replacement Depots.

b. Initial issue of Signal equipment necessary for proper alignment of radio sets was unobtainable, causing:

- (1) Excessive tubes damaged.
- (2) Transmission range cut due to unavoidably inaccurate alignment.

c. Ordnance Property.

- (1) Replacement on tires and tubes was extremely critical. Ten percent of the vehicles in the battalion of necessity were driven without spare tires.
- (2) Replacement of three-inch gun accessories and spare parts was critical.
- (3) Undue difficulties and hardships in keeping up 1st Echelon Maintenance and repair was caused by failure to procure initial issue of vehicular tools and equipment.

SECTION IV. PERSONNEL AND ALLIED ADMINISTRATION (S-1)

1. Replacements.

a. During the period of this report the Battalion has drawn a total of twenty-two (22) men from replacements pools. The method of supply has been adequate to meet the requirements.

b. The Battalion has had three (3) men Killed, ten (10) wounded, twenty-two (22) hospitalized through sickness, seven (7) of which were returned. The Battalion is now eight (8) men understrength, but these men have been requisitioned.

2. Special Service.

a. From 10 October 1944 to approximately 23 October 1944 thirty (30) men from each of the line companies were sent to the rear echelon where they were given improvised facilities for taking baths, shown a movie in the afternoon and then sent on a pass to Pont-A-Mousson for three (3) or four (4) hours. They were then returned to a dry place to sleep for a good night's rest. The following morning they were returned to their own respective companies and other men sent in to take their place. A radio was also obtained to bring in radio programs direct from the States and a loudspeaker system set up.

b. On or about 23 October 1944 the above system was altered somewhat with two companies. To replace the previous arrangement, the motion*

picture projector and a film was sent to the two companies concerned every other day. One company continued to operate under the previous arrangement.

(1) At night the same films were brought to the forward Battalion Command Post and shown to the Medical Detachment, Communications Platoon, and C.P. Personnel.

c. On two occasions the 80th Infantry Division Band was obtained to play for the men brought back from the rear.

d. About one Hundred (100) men were sent to the Marlene Dietrich USO Show and one hundred seventy-five (175) to the USO show on 28 October 1944 at Dieulouard.

e. Three (3) men were sent to Paris for a forty-eight (48) hour pass under 80th Infantry Division quota on 28 October 1944. These men were selected by lot within each of the three companies. Also during early part of the month a few men were sent on pass to Nancy, France.

3. Graves Registration. The three men killed were evacuated through the combat teams to which the companies were attached at the time.

4. Personnel Administration. The personnel section operates in the vicinity of the 80th Division rear echelon and handles a large part of the paper work for the companies and the forward Battalion Command Post. Information to be typed, etc, is sent to the rear where it is completed and returned to the originating company or other proper action taken.

SECTION V. COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. The method of employment of this battalion has been entirely satisfactory. For the most part the companies have been placed in support of the combat teams. When assigned the secondary mission of reinforcing artillery, only one platoon per company has normally been so employed. This has enabled the battalion to perform its primary mission of anti-mechanized defense and at the same time without affecting the primary mission, enabled it to perform the secondary mission, as the reserve platoon has fired indirect fire. This platoon always selects primary positions.

2. In the selection of positions effort is made to avoid forests and trees because of the effect of tree bursts. Often excellent positions may be found 100 to 300 yards in front of tree lines. If the guns are well dug in and the camouflage nets carefully used, the positions are as well concealed as in the woods. Where the situation requires that positions be taken in woods, every effort is made to provide overhead cover for the guns so that the crews may safely hold their positions during artillery fire.

3. Coordinated direct and indirect fires have been employed with considerable success to support infantry attacks. In one case such fires were delivered by one company enabling the infantry to take its objective. When there is supporting artillery, such fires should be coordinated by the artillery.

4. Considerable difficulty has been encountered with the half-track prime mover in muddy terrain. As a prime mover it is not adequate to negotiate such terrain. It is recommended that a suitable full-track vehicle be substituted as prime mover and in any case, that suitable grousers or a different track be made available. Front pintles have been mounted on our half-tracks, assisting materially in the mobility of the weapon.

5. It is very difficult to observe the burst of 3" HE under any conditions and under unfavorable conditions it is impossible. Army observers have taken as many as 30 rounds to register because of difficulty in seeing the burst. It is recommended that 3" HE contain some smoke or substance to make the burst more readily visible.

6. Graphical Firing Tables for 3" ammunition, normal and reduced charge, should be issued with Fire Direction Set. With the aid of a Topographical Engineer Battalion we prepared a GFT for normal charge. Recently limited quantities of 3" Reduced Charge have been available. With the assistance of the Corps Topographical Engineer Company a GFT for this ammunition is now being prepared.

7. During the period of this report conditions have been fairly static. In addition the consumption of gasoline has been sharply curtailed. Accordingly wire has been the principal means of communication. Experience indicates that the battalion is not adequately equipped in this regard. It is recommended that each company have a 3/4-ton W.C. for laying wire, communications equipment and personnel. At present the companies use 1/4-ton with reels mounted thereon. In addition more W110 wire is needed; W130 is not satisfactory. Each company and battalion should have a switchboard. This is particularly essential for companies employed in indirect fire.

8. Each M-20 and M-8 required 30 gallons of gasoline per day to keep vehicular batteries up with Radio sets SCR 608 or SCR 506. It is recommended that a generator unit for each 608 be mounted on the vehicle and run by a separate motor. This will save gasoline and the vehicle motor.

9. This organization learned from experience that many items of Signal equipment, such as crystals, condensers, battery packs, and bond connector nuts, marked N.S. (No Stock) or zeroed at the depot could be picked up a salvage or Shortage and Issue of Repair Depot.

10. We need a vehicle about the size of a half-track, M-3, armored, with a small boom for front-line evacuation.

11. Shell, 3", HE, M42A1, using Fuze CPT 105 was fired at church steeple being used as enemy OP at 3,000 yards. The shell went completely through the steeple and exploded on the other side.

12. Normal expenditure for indirect fire by battalion in a static situation was 300 rounds.

13. With no radios on and with strict conservation by all, this battalion needed 350 gallons of gasoline per day in a static situation.

14. The T.O. allowance of radio operators is inadequate for 24-hour operation over extended periods of time. We have used the drivers and personnel accompany the vehicle in addition to the radio operator as operators. The remote control system, RM-29, is used extensively for direct C.P. operation. This has proven satisfactory for the C.P. functions, away from vehicle with full access to the radio. RM 29's have also been used in lieu of EEB's, with a Handset TS-13 replacing T-17 and HS-30 for reception and transmission.

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15. The platoons lay their own wire to the Company C.P. The company lays wire to CP's and maintains police of lines. Alternate lines are not to be encouraged because of wire shortage and inadequate personnel to maintain constant police. Experience has shown that dead lines, such as alternate lines, will be wickered up by higher echelon wire crews. All existing wire lines of the Division to CP's are utilized by the Battalion CP to companies. The companies also use CP lines for communication to the CT C.P. and from the platoons to company C.P. The companies have been responsible for the laying of wire only within the Company.

16. The command slidex is used through the battalion. The problem of encoding too many words, encountered when first used, was overcome by having messages encoded by officer sending message.

Robert C. McDonald, Jr.
ROBERT C. MCDONALD, JR.
Lt. Colonel, 898th TD Bn
Commanding

1 Incls

1--Unit Journal for period from
0001 - 25 September 1944 to
2400 - 31 October 1944