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**AFTER ACTION REPORT
for the
MONTH OF APRIL 1945**

**821st TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 339
UNITED STATES ARMY**

329-63.2

Approved by
4/24/45


2 AUG 1945
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NARRATIVE REPORT

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Inclosure No. 1, 8-1 Journal
- Inclosure No. 2, 8-2 Journal
- Inclosure No. 3, 8-3 Journal

MAPS AND OVERLAYS.

(In attached envelope)

- Emergency Road Map - 1/250,000 - Sheet No. K-2
- OSGS 4416 - 1/100,000 - Sheets No. M-5 and N-5
- OSGS 4411 - 1/25,000 - Sheets 4309-10, 4409-10
- Overlays - No. 1 and No. 2 - Military Government
- Overlay - No. 3 - Company "B" - "Rahr Pocket"
- Overlay - No. 4 - Advance to the Kiba River.
- Strip Maps - Administrative Marches - From the Rhine to the Kiba Rivers.

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HEADQUARTERS
821st Tank Destroyer Battalion
APO 339

1 May 1945

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 1945

I SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

1. Phase I: Operations Against the "Ruhr Pocket".

a. Having been detached from the 29th Division Artillery on 31 March 1945, the 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the 29th Infantry Division for operational control. The Battalion remained attached to the 29th Infantry Division until 6 April 1945. On 6 April the Battalion was detached from the 29th Infantry Division and was attached to the 29th Division Artillery. The Battalion remained attached to the 29th Division Artillery through the period ending 30 April 1945.

b. During the period 1 April to 30 April 1945, the 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion moved from the east bank of the Rhine River to the west bank of the Elbe River. A variety of missions were performed and a variety of activity engaged in on the move between the Rhine and the Elbe. Company "B" was committed in the fighting on the north of the "Ruhr Pocket", the entire Battalion participated for thirteen days in rear area security and military government, the Battalion made a 210 mile motor march, crossing the Moser River, to the Division assembly area near the Elbe River, arriving in time to take part in the final mopping up of enemy resistance in the towns and on the roads leading to the west bank of the Elbe River.

c. On 1 April 1945, Company "B" plus the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon was attached to the 116th Infantry Regiment for operations against the pocket of enemy resistance which had been surrounded by the 9th Army on the north and the 1st Army on the South. The enemy resistance was in the Industrial Ruhr Valley, referred to as the "Ruhr Pocket".

(1) In six days operations, 1 April through 6 April 1945, Company "B" plus the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon moved east and south, in general support of the 116th Infantry Regiment, from the vicinity of Kol Brassert, map coordinates 550400, the 1st Platoon to the vicinity of Ellinghausen, map coordinates 782200, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons to the vicinity of Braubauer, map coordinates 804133.

(a) As elements of the 116th Infantry Regiment pushed forward to assigned objectives, Company "B"'s Destroyers provided close in support against enemy foot troops with .30 and .50 cal machine gun fire. When objectives were secured Co "B"'s Destroyers would immediately assume anti-mechanized defense positions against possible enemy counter attacks.

(2) On 6 April 1945 Company "B" was relieved of their operational mission and moved to the Battalion assembly area.

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Cont'd: After Action Report for the Month of April 1945.

2. Phase II: Military Government.

a. The Battalion, less Company "B" until 6 April, remained in assembly position from 1 April to 8 April 1945. On 8 April the Battalion assumed responsibility for the security and Military Government functions of an area bounded on the east by the Coesfeld, (map coordinates 6172) El Nelen (map coordinates 5255) railroad, on the south by the El Nelen, Or Nelen, (map coordinates 5260) Heiden (map coordinates 4559) highway, on the west by the Heiden, Velen (map coordinates 4366) highway and on the south by the Velen, Coesfeld highway, to include all towns mentioned.

(1) On 8 April 1945 Companies of the Battalion moved into areas as shown on inclosed Military Government Overlay No. 1. Each Company maintained guards for routes of communications, bridges, hospitals, factories, displaced persons camps and all civilian installations of military importance, in their assigned sectors. Road blocks were set up to collect displaced persons and allied prisoners of war.

(2) The Battalion executed security missions and military government functions in the assigned area until 19 April 1945. During this period a total of 827 Displaced Persons and a total of 1169 Allied Prisoners of War were collected and cared for.

3. Phase III: Advance to the Elbe River.

a. On 18 April all elements of the Battalion were relieved of their security and Military Government mission by the 17th Airborne Infantry Division. On 19 April the Battalion moved by administrative water march from the vicinity of Heiden, map coordinates 4559, to an assembly area in the vicinity of Helmerkamp, map coordinates 7547.

b. The 5th Armored Division, in its rapid advance to the Elbe River, by-passed many pockets of enemy resistance. The 29th Infantry Division, following in the path of the 5th Armored Division, mopped up these by-passed pockets of resistance and relieved elements of the 5th Armored Division on their objectives. Companies "A" and "B" plus the 3rd and 1st Reconnaissance Platoons were attached, on 19 April, to the 116th and 115th Infantry Regiments, of the 29th Infantry Division for the mopping up operations. Company "C", in division reserve, followed close behind the zone of action and maintained defensive positions on the Division's right flank.

(1) In five days of operations, 20 April through 24 April, Companies "A" and "B" plus the 3rd and 1st Reconnaissance Platoons moved with the 115th and 116th Infantry Regiments, in a north easterly direction from positions in the vicinity of Wierum (map coordinates 9821) and Langenbrügge (map coordinates 0071) to the west bank of the Elbe River, in the vicinity of Dannenberg (map coordinates 2925) and Ranzowitz (map coordinates 3109). Destroyers fired direct on enemy self propelled guns, AAA guns, and machine gun positions. Close in support was provided for the infantry, against enemy foot troops, by the use of .30 and .50 . cal machine gun fire.

(2) Company "A" received credit for destroying one self propelled gun, two 20mm flak guns and one 40mm flak gun. Company "B" received credit for destroying one self propelled gun, four rocket guns, and one half tank. A total of 173 German soldiers were taken prisoner.

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c. The Battalion, having been relieved of their operational missions on 24 April 1945, remained in division reserve until 27 April. On 27 April the Battalion assumed responsibility for rear area security and Military Government functions for the area as shown on inclosed Military Government Overlay No. 2. Guards were maintained on routes of communications, bridges, hospitals, factories, displaced persons camps and all civilian installations of military importance. Road blocks were set up to collect displaced persons and allied prisoners of war. The Battalion continued to provide rear area security and operate as Military Government through the end of the period, 30 April 1945.

II BATTLE CASUALTIES

1. As a result of enemy action the following casualties were suffered:

- a. Five enlisted men were killed in action by enemy anti-tank mines.
- b. One officer was wounded in action by enemy small arms fire.
- c. Two enlisted men were wounded in action by enemy AAA fire.
- d. One officer and thirteen enlisted men were wounded in action by enemy anti-tank mines.
- e. One enlisted man reported missing in action.

III AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

1. For meritorious service in military operations against the enemy, from 23 February 1945 to 1 March 1945, the following named officer and enlisted men were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

1st Lt Robert E. Hablitzel O-1996530

Sgt Wilfred J. Bourgoine 37268923

Pvt Waid L. Canterbury 34338697

Pvt Lee F. De Wire Jr 32740330

2. The Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star Medal was awarded to Cpl Leonard T. Keller 36513575 for meritorious service in military operations against the enemy from 23 February 1945 to 1 March 1945.

3. The Meritorious Service Unit Plaque was awarded Headquarters Company for superior performance of duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks, and for the achievement and maintenance of a high standard of discipline, during the period 26 June 1944 to 31 December 1944, in Western Europe.

IV COMMANDING OFFICERS

1. Lt Col Howard H. Artway was in command of the Battalion for the period from 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945.

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2. Company Commanders for the period from 1 April to 30 April 1945,
were as listed below:

Company "A" - Capt Edward A. Burke

Company "B" - Capt Floyd F. Olander

Company "C" - Capt Dale A. Mafziger

Hon Company - Capt Herman H. Von Bange

Hq. Company - Capt Harry G. J. Swoed

Howard H. Arbury
HOWARD H. ARBURY
Lt Col., FA
COMMANDING

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