

HEADQUARTERS
824TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 758
US Army
19 January 1945

SUBJECT: Organizational History of 824th Tank Destroyer Battalion
for the period of 28 November to 31 December 1944.

THRU : Commanding General, XV Corps, APO 436, US Army.

TO : Commanding General, Seventh Army, APO 758, US Army.

1. Inclosed herewith battalion history of this organization for
the period of 28 November 1944 to 31 December 1944 inclusive.

For the Commanding Officer:

EUGENE D MAYERS
1st Lt, FA
Adj.

6 Incls:

- 1-Annex "A" - Narrative Account of Operations (4 copies)
- 2-Annex "B" - Original Unit (4 copies)
- 3 - Annex "C" - Strength- Commissioned and Enlisted (4copies)
- 4- Annex "D" - Losses in action- Officers and Men (4copies)
- 5- Annex "E" - Unit Journal (1 copy)
- 6- Annex "F" - Supporting Material (4 copies) 29 Inclosures

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824TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

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NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF BATTALION
OPERATIONS

Upon order from XV Corps battalion prepared to move from Baccarat, France (V264848) to Sarrebourg, France (Q528161). The main body crossed the I.P. at 0730 closing in assigned march halt position southeast corner of Sarrebourg at 0945. Battalion Commander reported to G-3 of 100th Infantry Division and received instructions (Operations Instructions Number 36) for the employment of the battalion. Companies A and B were attached to Combat Team 397 and attached to 45th Division. C Company remained in Corps Reserve. After contacting CP of CT 397 at Dossenheim, CP and Companies A and B left for Dossenheim and closed out at Sarrebourg by 27 1450. Battalion CP group closed in at Dossenheim 1905. On 28 November orders were received from 45th Division assigning Companies A and B. C Company occupied reserve position in Getzweiler as rear echelon established itself in Artzweiler.

During the morning of 28 November (0350)(hours) orders from 45th Division placed the battalion (-C Company) under 645th TD Bn for operations. The companies were alerted; ready for movement. At a conference with Division AT Officer, Battalion Commander received plan for employment of the divisional Tank Destroyers. Company Commanders were giving necessary instructions whereupon companies moved out to designated assembly areas ready to consolidate position of self propelled on call, at 1500 hours upon verbal order of the 45th Division Commanding General Battalion CP group moved to and established Command Post at Bouxwiller from assembly area. Companies displaced forward and occupied Anti-Tank Defense position under cover of darkness, closing at 2400.

The battalion received its first baptism of fire the 29th November with "A" Company sustaining the total number of the days casualties. At 1715 it was reported that one member of the third platoon gun crew was killed and three wounded by Mortar fire at Mulhausen. At 2235 three enlisted men (including gun commander) were killed by artillery fire at Nieffern.

On 29th of November B Company, 1st Platoon moved from Ringendorf to Ringeldorf on recommendation of Commanding Officer, 645th TD. A Company reported forward displacement of 1st platoon to Rothback and one section of the second platoon to Offwiller.

30 November Battalion CP displaced to Schillersdorf closing at 1510 hours. At Engwiller one gun in 1st platoon of "A2 Company fired 10 rounds APC at a machine gun strong point killing six of the enemy and reducing the stronghold. Further displacements forward by A and B Company platoons to provide anti-tank defense to Infantry.

Hq. 824th TD Bn. sub: "Narrative Account of Battalion Operations" (contd):

On the 1st of December platoons of A and B Company occupied new positions moving forward behind the Infantry advance. Guns were always close-in on MIR. Upon order of Commanding General, 100th Infantry Division "C" Company moved to Struth at 0600 hours. Enemy artillery fire (tree bursts) produced two casualties in A Company. An order relieving battalion from attachment to VI Corps and attaching it to the 100th Division and XV Corps upon arrival received.

On 2 December the Executive Officer, upon reporting to 100th Division, was oriented as to plan for Division's employment. The Division had been concentrating in the area about Struth. "C" Company moved from Struth to Petersbach. Meanwhile at 1900 Battalion (-B Company) was released from 645th TD Bn control, and at 2100 received orders to move to Petersbach the next morning, reverting there to 100th Infantry Division control.

On 3 December under light rain the Command Post and "A" Company moved from Schillersdorf to Petersbach. At the time "C" Company, plus the 2nd Reconnaissance platoon, moved to LaPetite Pierre, where a Command Post was established and disposition established as follows: 1st platoon at road blocks south of Puberg; 2nd Platoon at road blocks at Zittersheim; and the 3rd Platoon held in mobile reserve. C Company had been attached to the 398th CT. A Company was being held in mobile reserve.

On 4 December Division Operations Instructions received in the morning showed that objective of Division attack was Bitche. During the evening of the day C Company had one of its 2nd Platoons guns and 1 1/2 ton truck at Zittersheim hit by artillery fire. B Company remained under attachment to 645th TD Bn in the 45th Division area, reports that its platoons had displaced slightly to the North. Two prisoners were captured by 3rd Platoon, B Company.

On the 5th of December A and C Companies engaged in reconnaissance for new positions in support of 398th and 399th Infantry.

On the 6th of December Battalion CP with one section of 1st Reconnaissance Platoon moved from Petersbach, closing in to the new CP at Zittersheim at 1415 hours. At same time A Company CP moved to Puberg and C Company CP to Rosteig. B Company reverted to Battalion control. CP moved from Zutzendorf to Ingwiller, its 1st Platoon to Ingwiller, the 2nd Platoon from Gungrechtshoffen to Rothback, the 3rd Platoon making no changes. So far as "C" Company's Platoons were concerned, the 2nd Platoon was disposed at Volksberg, the 1st Platoon in the vicinity of Puberg, and the 3rd Platoon reconnoitered in Soucht and was prepared to move there. The mission of "A" and "C" Companies, which both had accomplished during the day, was strengthening the AT defense of the division along its left flank.

On the 7th of December the Battalion CP moved from Zittersheim and closed in Götzenbruck at 1600 hours.

On the 8th of December C Company CP moved from Rosteig to Soucht, otherwise no substantial change in company position. B Company being in march halt enroute to taking up AT defense positions in Mouterhouse.

On the 9th of December no substantial change was effected as the Infantry continued to fight for Lemberg. B Company's CP and 1st Platoon moved to Mouterhouse, the 2nd Platoon moved from Lichtenberg to Reipartswiller and the 3rd Platoon moving from Zinswiller to Lichtenberg.

10th of December, following the capture of Lemberg in the morning, "C" Company reconnoitered cor CP and gun position in Lemberg so as to cover roads north and east out of Lemberg, and made plans to move in the following day. The 1st Platoon of "B" Company fired at enemy installation north of Mouterhouse at 1500 hours in the afternoon. "A" Company 2nd Platoon also reconnoitered positions in Lemberg with plans to occupy during the night. "A" Company also discovered that six Polish laborers were gathered in the basement of its CP and promptly turned them over to the 399th PW Collecting Point. The Laborers had been used by the Germans for working on the Lemberg-Mouterhouse Road.

11th of December- Positions in Lemberg were reconnoitered and occupied by day by 1st Platoon of "A" Company, the 2nd Platoon having occupied positions in the same town the night before. "C" Company also moved into Lemberg with its CP and its 1st Platoon, the 2nd Platoon being in position in St Louis and the 3rd Platoon staying in mobile reserve. The 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon was employed in clearing mines from roads and gun position areas in conjunction with the occupation of position in Lemberg for the "C" Company Platoons. In Mouterhouse "B" Company received 88 and 105 mm artillery fire. The 1st Platoon of that company fired on an enemy observation post totally destroying the house and inspection, accomplished at a later date, showed that firing resulted in six enemy casualties occupied by the CP. Interesting enemy information turned over by Battalion S-2 to Division were two enemy maps found by "A" Company 1st Platoon Leader in St Louis. The maps were overprinted with Maginot defenses as altered by the enemy and disclosed his complete disposition across the Division front.

12th of December - Light artillery and 40 mm flak fire received at various times of the day in Lemberg.

13th of December - Two Platoons of "C" Company moved forward to approaches just before Bitche. The 2nd Platoon moved from St Louis in the morning, went into march halt position in Lemberg and then moved on into Reyersviller. The 3rd Platoon moved its 2nd Section from Mobile reserve in Lemberg to an area just east of Reyersviller. The Company CP and 1st Platoon remained unchanged. A new field order was received from Division indicating that the new plan for Division was the breach of the Maginot line and this developments of the Siegfried Line. The mission of the 824th TD Bn - to be prepared to meet tank threats from Nouseviller, Hanviller and Sturzelbroum. 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon engaged in reconnoitering routes running north of Reyersviller and west of Bitche. One of the Infantry Battalions took Freudenberg Farms. In the night, the 3rd Platoon of A Company, under the direction of Division Artillery, fired illuminating shells over Bitche and northwest of Bitche.

Hq. 824th TD Bn, sub: "Narrative Account of Battalion Operations" (contd)

15th of December-Reports submitted on effectiveness of illuminating shells. According to Third Sound and Flash Company (1) quantity wasn't great enough; (2) the time of illumination wasn't long enough; and (3) the burst was too high from the ground to be effective. On the other hand, according to the 398th Infantry Regiment, the flares lit the objective well enough so that Infantry troops could fire. Evidently, conclusions as to the value of the shells is in dispute. During the morning the 3rd Platoon of C Company took two prisoners who had deserted from the enemy four days before. Battalion Commander attended conference at Division CP at Meisenthal in the afternoon.

16th of December - Plans made to replace two of C Company guns in position to fire directly on Maginot Line pillboxes.

17th of December - C Company gun, 3rd Platoon, Commanded by Sergeant Weigold, fired a total of 74 rounds at Maginot line forts and succeeded in knocking out one of them. Three others were also fired on and hit, but not reduced. Although the gun remained in position during the day, it drew no fire. A section of the Third Platoon, A Company, fired illuminating shell mission for Division Artillery again, firing 50 rounds throughout night with Bitche, Camp de Bitche, and the area north of Bitche as its objectives. First and Second Platoons, B Company, fired indirect missions using up a total of 17 rounds of smoke and 14 HE.

18th of December - Previous night first and Second Platoons, B Company, fired interdiction fire on areas east of Equelshardt. Total of 540 rounds fired. Firing continued during this day with sector shifted to the east. C Company assigned mission of securing 398th Regimental area against counter-attack from any direction in Freudenberg Garm area.

19th of December - First and Second Platoons, B Company, continued interdiction fire during the night previous and during this day, the Third Platoon remaining in AT positions. The Platoons and CP were under harassing enemy fire throughout the day. First Platoon of C Company displaced forward taking up AT position. No change for the other two Platoons of C Company or for A Company.

20th of December- First and Second Platoons, B Company continued firing interdiction fire through night and day. Two guns of first Platoon, A Company, fired illuminating shells for Division Artillery again in the night at 2200, 2400 and each hour thereafter. A total of 73 rounds were fired.

21st of December- A Company attached to 106 Cavalry Group, and at 1700 hours moved from old position and closed in in new position at 1930 hours. For the balance of the Battalion plans were formulated for a short move to the west. C Company submitted recommendation for gun position to 398th somewhat to the west of their present positions and recommendations were accepted.

22nd of December- Battalion CP moved 8 miles from Goetzenbruck to Sierstal, closing in new position at 1400 hours. C Company also moved its CP to Sierstal, and its Second Platoon moved to new position north east of Sierstal. This Platoon received heavy artillery fire early in the afternoon, and the first Platoon received mortar fire at about the same time. A Company's First Platoon fired indirect mission on targets in the vicinity of Waldeck.

23rd of December - A Company moved to west with 106th Cavalry to new sector on 7th Army's left flank, with the Company CP located at St Avold. B and C Companies continued to organize in new areas. New Field order received from Division showed Division going on defensive with the Battalion assigned the mission of assuming position of readiness in the vicinity of Enchenberg for the purpose of countering armored threat from direction of Rimling-Velmünster-Scherbach-Bitche. B Company's Second Section of Second Platoon occupied AT defense positions. C Company's Second Platoon reconnoitered and selected positions.

24th of December- A Company CP moved to Ludwiller. Battalion CP moved to Montbroun. B Company had its Platoons at Rehbach, Guising and Bettwiller. C Company made plans for moving its CP to Enchenberg and Platoons to Lemberg, Enchenberg and La Petite Rederching.

25th of December - Company A with two of its Platoons attached to Reconnaissance Squardons and the other in reserve, moved to positions blocking likely avenues of Tank approach into the 106th Group Position. Operational instructions indicate that Battalion is assigned mission of reinforcing the AT defense of Infantry Regiments as requested by the Regimental Commanders.

26th of December- No change in position of Companies. B Company received artillery fire at Bettviller and La Petite Rederching. Arrangements made between Divisions Artillery and C Company for latter to fire illuminating shell mission. C Company fired mission - 16 rounds fired.

27th of December- Arrangements made for illuminating shell mission between Division Artillery and C Company. Reconnaissance Platoon conducted route reconnaissance.

28th of December- 1st Reconnaissance Platoon detached from A Company and brought back to Battalion control. Reports of C Company's illuminating mission of previous night conflicting. One burst too high, two others fair, other good but shell burned out early. Information from enemy PW's that there is good possibility of employment of gas by enemy, followed by Corps order that all troops will carry gas masks at all time.

29th of December- B Company set up AT defenses in accordance with Plan Tennessee. Increased enemy patrol activity in Huddleson Task Force sector on Battalion's right flank.

30th of December - Gun of 1st Platoon, B Company, fired 22 rounds (20HE, 2 APC) at two buildings in Guderkirch, one a church-steeple, both possible OPs. All hits but damage could not be clearly ascertained.

31st of December- Battalion's first battlefield appointment, Lt. Magers, reported to Commanding Officer having been commissioned 26 December at Division Rear Echelon. Sergeant McIntosh and his gun crew, 3rd Platoon, A Company, fired on bazooka patrol which had opened up on his half-track. Results of action: 2 enemy killed, 1 captured. On questioning prisoner stated mission of patrol was to destroy enemy equipment.

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ORIGINAL UNIT

- (1) Designation - 824th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed)
- (2) Date of Organization - August 10, 1942
- (3) Place of Organization- Camp Gruber, Oklahoma
- (4) Authority for Organization- Headquarters, Third Army
General Order Number 81
dated 27 July 1942
- (5) Sources from which personnel was obtained-
Draftees and transfers from other organizations.

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STRENGTH* Commissioned and Enlisted:

- (1) At beginning of period 31 Officers 2 Warrant Officers
728 Enlisted Men
- (2) Net increase during period - 1 Officer 0 Warrant Officer
36 Enlisted Men (Replacement)
- (3) Net decrease during period - 0 Officer 0 Warrant Officer
40 Enlisted Men
- (4) At end of period - 31 Officers 2 Warrant Officers
724 Enlisted Men.

ANNEX "C"

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LOSSES IN ACTION - Officers and Men.

KILLED

Thiele, Fredrick A.	Sgt	32696144	C Co.	Died in Hospital - Non Battle
Buchholz, Thomas A.	Pvt	42090916	A Co.	Killed in action - Battle
Lowry, Curtis A	Pvt	33122410	A Co.	Died in Hospital - Battle
Lucas, Edward P.	Sgt	32698481	A Co.	Killed in action - Battle
McElligot, William	Pvt	33714388	A Co.	Killed in action - Battle
Qualey, William A Jr.	Pvt	33714158	A Co.	Killed in action - Battle

WOUNDED

Russo, Angelo P	Pfc	33777775	C Co.	
Geist, Harry I.	Pfc	3688 9410	A Co.	
Hicks, David C.	Pvt	34896660	A Co.	
Kolakowski, Victor W.	Pvt	42101992	A Co.	
White, Jack E. Jr.	Pvt	32680443	A Co.	
Lucas, Wesley R.	Pfc	42081680	A Co.	
Knoll, Carl A.	Pvt	36299504	A Co.	
Foss, Francis	Sgt.	33146386	B Co.	
Lantz, Beverly J	Pvt	33660589	B Co.	Self inflicted wound.

MIA

RIZZOTTI, JOHN W.	Cpl.	MIA	A Co
WESCOTT, SYLVESTER M.	Tec 5	MIA	A Co

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SUPPORTING MATERIAL:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Headquarters and Description of Material</u>	<u>Time</u>
1	Hq. 824th TD Bn Overlay of AT Defense Positions	251800
2	Hq. 824th TD Bn Overlay of AT Defense Positions	241550
3	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of Company guns as of 1800 hours and fields of fire and fire plan.	241630
4	C Co. 824th TD Bn - Disposition of guns and field of fire.	241645
5	C Co. 824th TD Bn- 1st Platoon-Disposition of Guns.	231603
6	C Co. 824th TD Bn- Company Disposition	221630
7	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Alternate positions for the 1st platoon (Reserve) plus firing positions of 1st section 2nd platoon.	21 Dec.
8	C Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition and enemy situation in C Company area.	201640
9	1st Platoon, C Co. 824th TD Bn.-Disposition of guns	191630
10	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition.	170700
11	C Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of guns.	121550
12	C Co. 824th TD Bn -Disposition of Company	111750
13	A Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of Guns.	110920
14	A Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of guns.	10 Dec.
15	824th TD Bn - Overlay of disposition of Companies and guns.	081800
16	A Co. 824th TD Bn - Disposition of guns.	072130
17	B Co. 824th TD Bn - Disposition of Company.	071630
18	C Co. 824th TD Bn.- Disposition of Guns.	071550
19	1st Platoon, C Co. 824th TD Bn- disposition of guns	071552
20	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of Platoons.	061800
21	A Co. 824th TD Bn- Disposition of guns.	051800
22	2nd Platoon C Co. 824th TD Bn- Overlay of proposed positions.	051645
23	B Co. 824th TD Bn - Disposition of guns.	042000
24	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Company employment.	011800
25	Hq. 645th TD Bn- AT defense overlay	020001
26	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Company employment.	301200
27	B Co. 824th TD Bn- Company employment.	301600
28	Hq. 645th TD Bn - AT defense overlay	300800
29	Hq. 645th TD Bn - Employment of 645th TD Bn (-B Co) SP and 824th TD Bn (-C Co) Towed.	280645