

COMPANY "A" 820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
A.P.O. #339, US ARMY

AFTER/AFTER BATTLE REPORT

DECEMBER 1944

1 December 1944. On the move to Hees, Belgium with Battalion. Company left Bivouac area near Danville, France at 0900 hours and arrived in Bivouac area near Laon, France at 1730 hours.

On December 2 the Company traveled to Charleroi, Belgium, arriving at 1600 hours and bivouacing for the night. We left Charleroi on 3 December at 1000 hours and arrived at Hees Belgium at 1700 hours on the same day.

Company attended to usual maintenance duties in preparation for combat until 9 December. On 6 December, Captain Nash, Staff Sergeant Lacey O. Taylor and Staff Sergeant Joseph J. Schlecht visited "A" Company, 821ST Tank Destroyer Battalion in their positions at Koslar, Germany returning the same day.

Company moved to Crombach, Belgium on 9 December arriving at 1300 hours and attended to usual duties until the 11th. Platoon leaders, Platoon Sergeants and Platoon Guides went to Manderfeld, Belgium on the 10th to reconnoiter the positions of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

On the 11th the Company moved into the following positions: 1st platoon Merlscheid, Belgium. 2nd Platoon with 2nd Recon Platoon attached- Lanzareth, Belgium. 3rd Platoon- Berterath, Belgium. The two Recon Platoons were attached from the Battalion to "A" Company, but the First was in turn attached to the 18th Cavalry Squadron at Krewinkel, Belgium. The Company was attached with elements to the 18th Cavalry Squadron as of 2400 hours, 11 December 1944. 13 men of the 1st Platoon with two (2) three inch guns, under command of Sergeant Joe Fiscus were attached to "A" Troop 18th Cavalry Squadron at Roth, Germany. The Company CP was located at Manderfeld, Belgium.

The 12th, 13th and 14th were spent in improving gun positions and getting oriented on the situation. There was moderate patrol activity and shelling by the enemy on all positions except those at Manderfeld and Lanzerath.

On the 15th the Third Platoon sent out a eleven (11) man patrol from Berterath to Hergersburg, Belgium to try to obtain prisoners. Patrol lasted from 1800-2400 hours. No enemy activity noted.

On 16 December all Platoon positions began to report artillery and mortar fire on their positions at 0515. The same was true at Manderfeld. The shelling was heavy until 0720. Communications were cut between platoons and the CP at 0530 hours which was restored at 0630 by three borrowed M-8's from Headquarters Troop, 18th Cavalry Squadron. The First and Third Platoons were being attacked by Infantry at 0730. Contact with outposts of 99th Division on left revealed an attack in their sector. The Second Platoon was withdrawn to Manderfeld at 0940 plus Second Recon Platoon to protect

from tank attack on the South-East. The last report from the section at Roth was at 0900. They had received a direct hit on one gun position, casualties unknown, and had destroyed two (2) tanks. No other word has ever been received from this section.

The Third Platoon repulsed several frontal attacks, but were being enveloped by greatly superior Infantry forces. Shelling was periodic throughout the morning. At 1045 the Third Platoon was ordered to withdraw to Fockert which was accomplished by fighting through the German forces, South East of Manderfeld.

The First Platoon was surrounded by an estimated battalion of Infantry by 0900 hours. The Platoon inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy on two frontal assaults by them from 0730 until 0830. The forces withdrew and laid heavy mortar and artillery fire while enveloping the position. The Platoon fought through the ring around them and occupied the high ground 800 yards west of Merlschied. At this time they were subjected to an attack on their right flank by the forces which had by-passed Berterath. At 1030 they withdrew to positions 500 yards East of Manderfeld, where they made contact with our Third Platoon. These positions were consolidated and held until 1330 when Cavalry reinforcements arrived.

At 1300 Captain Nash was given the North West corner of Manderfeld to organize for defense. On arrival of "C" Troop of the 32nd Cavalry, an assault gun platoon plus two Recon platoons of "C" Troop were deployed behind the First and Third Platoons positions. No further advance was made by the enemy until Manderfeld was evacuated at 1545 hours.

Company was ordered to withdraw all elements except Second Platoon which would cover entire withdrawal to Herresbach, Belgium. Withdrawal was completed without confusion and closed in Herresbach at 1655 hours. Company organized defense of western part of town with three inch guns commanding all main approaches from the North and east. The 18th Cavalry had moved to Wereth, Belgium, so Company was attached to 32nd Cavalry Squadron at Herresbach.

Company, with Second Platoon covering, withdrew with 32nd Cavalry Squadron to Neider-Emunels, Belgium. On 17 December Company was attached to the 14th Cavalry Group at this place. The three (3) remaining three inch guns went into position at 1330, but Company evacuated Neider-Emunels with group and went to Petit-Thiers. Only three (3) guns employed so balance of Company which was out of rations, clothes and ammunition was withdrawn to Vielsalm to reorganize.

The Second Platoon put 3 guns into positions east of Petit-Thiers at Pateau at 1600 hours commanding the approaches to Recht and Saint Vith. Two guns were moved 800 yards up the road toward Recht at 2300. These were moved back to the original positions at Pateau at 0200, 18 December. They were again moved at 0630 to fall in behind "E" Troop of 32nd Cavalry Squadron to go to Born, Belgium. As column moved out they were ambushed by an undetermined number of tanks and foot troops. One (1) half-track was destroyed in this action, with gun. One gun was ordered left by Group Executive Officer, as a blind, and one gun was evacuated by a Cavalry M-8. Orders were given to withdraw and Platoon joined Company which had since moved to Houffalize. Company with Battalion rear echelon moved to Rondeaux, Belgium, closed 2000.

On 19 December two Recon Platoons were detached from Company and re-equipped from Company supplies and sent to Vielsalm to join Battalion forward CP. Company furnished road patrols between Rondeaux and Laroche.

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AFTER/AFTER BATTLE REPORT (CONTINUED)

On 21 December at 0030 hours our road patrol was fired on by United States Engineers with Light machine Gun Cal. 30 Fire was returned until recognition was mutual. This resulted in no loss to our patrol, but two casualties in Engineer Platoon.

At 0900 a Recon patrol was sent to Hotton, Belgium to determine the safety of roads, but was ambushed at Hampteau resulting in no casualties, but the loss of one jeep. Company moved to Ciney, Belgium. Closed 1600 hours.

On 22 December left Ciney at 100 hours and arrived Newville En Condroz at 1300 hours. Left Newville 23 December at 1600 and arrived at Esneux, Belgium surrounding Esneux and guarded L'Ourthe River bridge.

December 24 to 27 December, Company maintained road patrols between Esneux and Tiliff, Belgium.

LOSSES DURING CONFLICTS

Manderfeld, Belgium-

Four men wounded in action
Thirteen men missing in action
Nine- Three inch guns
Six- Half-Tracks
One- One and one half ton truck
Two- One quarter ton truck

Pateux, Belgium-

One- Three inch gun

Rondeux, Belgium-

One- One quarter ton truck