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HEADQUARTERS, 610TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION WAN/r1

APO 403, U. S. Army
10 January 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for Month of December, 1944.
TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25 DC.
(Thru Channels)

1. Attached is the After Action Report of the 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion for December, 1944.

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DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE *Aug* 1945
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HEADQUARTERS
610th Tank Destroyer Battalion
APO 403

7 January, 1945.

SUBJECT: After action report for month of December, 1944.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D.C. (Thru Channels).

At the beginning of the month of December, the enemy forces had been forced out of his defensive positions in the MAGINOT line fortifications and was fighting a series of delaying actions N and E of ST AVOLD from some hastily constructed field fortifications and some prepared tank traps. Harassing our forward elements with with slight to medium artillery fire and manning strong points in towns, edges of woods and easily defended natural obstacles. Enemy patrols were active and enemy activity was reported in the rear areas caused by troops coming out of the deep MAGINOT fortifications where they had remained hidden when our forces moved through. Small numbers of tanks were reported at various places throughout the Division zone. On the 1st of December one (1) tank was observed in the vicinity FREYMING and PW's reported that there were six (6) or seven (7) Tiger tanks the vicinity FAREBERSVILLER on the 29th of November.

On the 2nd December the enemy continued his defensive organization. The 1st Battalion, 37th Regiment of the 36th Division was reported by the 5th Infantry Division to have withdrawn to prepared positions S of FORBACH and MARIENAU while the trains were reported in woods S of STIRING WENDEL. Enemy artillery fire slightly decreased during the period.

Artillery fire increased in Division sector during the 3rd of December. The 3rd Combat School Troops of the 36th Infantry Division were contacted in vicinity MERLEBACH. They were reported to have relieved elements of the 89th Regiment on the 2nd December. Five (5) enemy tanks were reported at LAUTERBACH and PW's stated there were 4 Tanks and 4 AG at EBRINGEN kept in barns. The CP of the 1st Bn 3855 Regiment is reported to be at EBRINGEN.

The enemy resisted the Division attack on the 4th December from positions on the east bank of RR tracks at PFARREBERSWEILLER but were encircled and cut off. The enemy resisted with small arms and AT fire in TREDINGEN AND KOCHERN. TREDINGEN, KOCHERN and PFARRESWEILER were cleared of enemy troops. The 3rd and 4th Companies of 17th SS Rcn Battalion were identified vicinity FAREBERSVILLER supposedly equipped with assorted guns. The 10th and 11th Companies of the 38th SS Regiment and the 17th SS TD Bn were identified at TREDINGEN. The enemy placed interdictionary artillery fire on PFARREBERSWEILER. After we had seized the town. (8) eight tanks were reported at LOUPERSHOUSE and one (1) observed entering FORBACH. Higher Headquarters reports a tank column at WITTRING.

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(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610t TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45 cont'd):

The harrassing artillery fire lessened somewhat after midnight 4th and 5th December and 2nd Cavalry Group chased enemy from FREYMING, MERLEBACH, NANWEILER, and ROSSBRUCKEN. A map captured by 6th Armored Division reveals the enemy establishing a defensive line along high ground from GROSBLIEDERSTROFF- LIXINGEN-KERBACH-DETING. The 17th SS Division Bdry on N is (QB631) to (Q4963). New identifications on the front included the 7th company of 118th Regiment, 36th Division and the 14th Company of 118th Regiment. The Battalion CP located N of ST AVOLD had been under intermittent artillery fire ever since it had been at that location. Fire was 150MM coming from due north. At 2300 hours the building 75 yards east of the Battalion CP was completely destroyed by a German delayed action bomb. The Bn CP immediately evacuating the building in which they were located and the personnel of the CP assisted the Pioneer platoon of Reconnaissance company in evacuating the injured and had from the demolished building. The building was occupied by CP of the 633rd AAA Bn and some personnel of the 10th Infantry of the 5th Division. During the day "C" company destroyed three (3) enemy anti-tank guns 1000 yards east of THEDINGEN.

The following is a summary of units identified during the preceeding week and the strength of the units on the Division sector:

NEW UNITS:

- 37th SS Pz Group Regiment)
- 38th SS Pz Group Regiment)
- 17th SS Pz Rcn Battalion } --(17th SS Pz Gr Division
- 17th SS Pz Engr Battalion }
- 17th SS Pz Sec Company)

ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF UNITS ON DIVISION FRONT:

2 Bns 87th Gr Regt 36th VG Div.....	300
2 Bn 118th Gr Regt " " "	400
2 Bns 165th Gr Regt " " " 1.....	350
36 Div Fues Co " " "	50
*17 SS Pz Rcn Bn 17th SS Pz Ser Div.....	300
*3rd Bn 38 SS Pz Gren Regt 17th SS Pz Div...	500
*1st Bn 38 SS Pz Gren Regt " " " "...	500
*1st Bn 37th SS Pz Gr Regt " " " "...	400
*2nd Bn 37th SS Pz Gr Regt " " " "...	350
17th SS Sec Co " " " ".....	70
Total estimated strength.....	3220

*Above units have a combined total of 25 tanks or assault Guns.

ARTILLERY UNITS:

268th Arty Regt 36 VG Div	22 X 105MM Hows
	12 X 150MM Hows
	18 X 75MM AT Guns
17th SS Pz Arty Regt 117th SS Pgd	18 X 150MM Hows
	24 X 105MM Hows
	12 X 150MM Hows
17th SS AT Bn 17th SS PGD	6 X 88MM AT Guns
	7 X 75MM AT Guns

(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610th TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45 cont'd):

On the 5th of December, the Battalion was relieved of attachment to the 80th Infantry Division and ordered to support the attack of the XII Corps with "A" Company attached to the 26th Infantry Division. "B" Co attached to the 35th Infantry Division and the Battalion minus attached to the 9th TD Group.

The enemy front lines on the SII Corps front on the 6th December ran roughly from FORBACH (Q3965)-FOLCKLING (Q3861)-Q4461)-(Q4860)-WELFERDING (Q4957)- along SAAR River to WITTRING (Q5640)-ACHEN (Q5949) SINGLING (Q6249)-BINING (Q6448). The enemy was offering stiffening resistance against the advancing troops of the Corps north of SARR-GUEMINES the 4th Armd Div met increasing Artillery and 20MM fire. The 35th Infantry Division was meeting very light resistance in mopping up remnants of the 37th and 38th SS Regts. The 26th Division was meeting small arms fire from pillboxes and light Artillery fire. The 4th Armored Division on the right was engaged in house to house fighting in SINGLINE and street fighting in BINING. An armored engagement developed 3000 meters north of ROHRBACH les BITCHE during the day and lasted from 0900 to 1400. The enemy was forced to withdraw.

From prisoners captured during the 6th and 7th of December the larger units in contact on the Corps front are the 559th Division, the 188th Regiment, 111th PG Regt, Arty of 11 Pz Division. It is believed that the enemy Divisions have displaced slightly south about 5 Km. This Battalion turned into higher Headquarters a shoulder strap identified as the 709th Artillery Battalion (GHQ) found in a house in WILLERWALD. The enemy continued to improve his defense during the 7th December. Some enemy activity on the east bank of SARRE River. North of WITTRING was reported by the 35th Division. Enemy forces withdrew from ETTING during the day but harrassed advance elements of 26th Division with mortar, Machine Gun and Artillery fire south of LE GRAND BOIS vicinity WEIDESHEIM. Enemy was reported moving north through ACHEN and he continued to fight in SINGLING but was forced out of BINING. The estimated troops opposing the advance of XII Corps is as follows:

35th Div.....	1000
17th SS Pz Div....	3000
11 Pz Div.....	4000
25 Pz Gr Div.....	2500
130 Pz Div.....	4000
Misc	2000
Total....	16500

Tanks and assault guns.....100

The enemy was not aggressive on the 8th December, but attempted to improve his defensive positions in areas not under direct attack.

REF ID: A66000

(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610th TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45 cont'd):

No counterattacks were launched during the period. A Company supporting the attack of the 26th Infantry Division was credited with neutralizing 8 enemy pillboxes including 2 forts.

Enemy forces continue fighting a delaying action covering their withdrawal behind the SIEGFREID fortifications. Sniping by SS troops in civilian clothing was encountered in SAARGUEMINES while the enemy practically broke off contact in front of the 26th Infantry Division with WOELFLING and WEISVILLER clear of enemy. Corps estimated 2 enemy Divisions now opposing our advance into Germany. The 36th Division on the north with an estimated 3,000 men. South of that is the 17th SS Division with an estimated 3,000 men and in the southern sector of the Corps the 11th Pz Division with a mixture of CT's and miscellaneous units totaling 8,000 men. Tanks and assault guns estimated at 65.

The enemy continued his delaying tactics on the 10th of December using dug in Infantry and small numbers of tanks. The Battalion destroyed 5 enemy tanks during the day, one at a range of 4,200 meters.

The major unit in contact on the 11th of December was the 11th Pz Division. Elements of the 107th LEHMAN Battalion were located in BELLEVUE Fm and it was reported that there were 100 SS men in BOIS DE BLIES BRUCKEN with mission of seeing that German troops fought. The Battalion was credited with 3 tanks destroyed, 2 probably destroyed, and 1 pillbox neutralized. In the 35th Division sector the enemy was driven back to the BLIES R. where he increased his artillery, mortar, and small arms fire.

On the 12th and 13th of December very little activity was reported. There was very little activity in the North of the sector and harassing fire continued in sector of the 87th Infantry Division which had relieved the 26th Infantry Division. On the 13th December B Company was relieved of its attachment to the 35th Infantry Division and reverted to Battalion control.

Enemy withdrew in right half of sector during the 14th of December and were forced back in the left of the sector. Tanks in small numbers are reported on front firing from roving positions. The unit in contact on the 87th Infantry Division front was the 110 Pz Gren. Regt with an average company strength of 40 - 50 men. 1 Company of the EINHEIT HELDMAN Battalion which consisted of remnants of all Companies of the Battalion.

The enemy launched a counterattack at 0900 hours the 15th December from MERTZENWALD WOODS with 3 tanks and an undetermined number of Infantry. The attack was dispersed without loss of ground. PW's report the line of retreat is to the SIEGFREID LINE with the 110th PGR general line of retreat towards MEDELSHEIM, and the 111th PGR toward HORNBAACH.

During the day the Battalion destroyed 5 enemy tanks, 2 of which were MKVI tanks.

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(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610th TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45. Cont'd):

The delaying action continued during the 16th and 17th of December. Enemy defended in small numbers from strong points and harassed forward elements with artillery and mortar fire. The Battalion at 2 tanks on the 16th of December, destroying one and also fired at enemy vehicles with unknown results. Company "C" destroyed MK IV tank and an enemy machine gun in the vicinity of Walsheim on the 17th of December.

During the 18th to the 20th of December enemy activity remained much the same. No new identifications were noted, and no great change in character of resistance. The sporadic artillery and mortar fire continued and some slight resistance from small arms around dominant terrain features. Enemy air activity has increased from zero to a few strafing attacks by ME 109's and reports were received of some Focke-Wolf's over the area. On the 20th of December the Battalion was relieved of attachment to the 87th Infantry Division.

The 610th TD Bn traveled to Luxemburg on the 21st of December, and upon arrival, were again attached to the 80th Infantry Division.

On the 22nd December the Division shoved off in the attack. Rapid progress was made by our troops. An estimated 300 enemy in vic ETTLEBRUCK initially opposed our advance with severe small arm fire. In the central sector of the Division Zone the surprise which the attack achieved was evidenced by PW statements that the 352nd Infantry Division (with 915 Regt. on right, 916 on left and 914 in reserve were attacking SW in the direction of ARLON with mission of enveloping city of LUXEMBURG from the NE when hit. The 352nd Infantry Division was ordered to face left and dig in when hit by our attack. Co C destroyed one artillery piece and destroyed 2 buildings housing enemy installations.

The attack continued on the 23rd December. The enemy had reinforced his troops in MERZIG with some assault guns but the town was cleared. Troops advanced during the night to HEIDERSCHEID and cleared it during the day. A counterattack supported by 17 tanks was received here at 231200 but was repulsed. Enemy resisted our attack on ETTLEBRUCK and reinforced his troops there. An armored column attacked our forces SW of KEHMEN but were driven off. During the various activities of the day, "A" Co destroyed 7 enemy tanks, 3 half-tracks, 1 AT gun, 1 MG nest and an ammo dump while "B" Co destroyed a large calibre HD artillery piece.

The enemy front lines on 24th December ran from ETTLEBRUCK-KEHMEN-(P756476)- W along SURE RIVER. Elements of the 79th VG Division were contacted on the front, the 226th Gr. Regt., the 79th Fus Co., 79th VG Regt. as well as some miscellaneous units such as Hq units of 13th Para Regt of 5 Para Div, 18th Nebelwerfer Brigade and 3 Co Fus Bn, Fuhrer Brigade, Gros Deutschland Div. The enemy aggressively resisted the attack in the Div zone. Two counterattacks W of ETTLEBRUCK were repulsed. Two counterattacks at KEHMEN at 240800 and 241240 were launched. Tanks and Infantry C/Attd HEIDERSCHEID from W, NW, and SW at 240820 but was repulsed. During these attacks "A" Co destroyed 1 cargo vehicle and 1 half-track. C Co destroyed 3 enemy tanks (1 Mk VI).

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(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610th TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45. Cont'd):

The enemy continued his heavy defense action on the 26th of December. Artillery fire was heavy and an estimated battalion of infantry defended Kehmen. An aggressive defense of Ringel with the enemy launching an infantry counter-attack from the high ground to the south east. The attack was repulsed and our troops cleared the town. During the day we destroyed 2 enemy tanks and possibly destroyed another as well as 1 CP, 1 half track, 1 cargo truck and 1 machine gun nest. Enemy air activity had become increasingly active in this area.

The enemy continued his defense of Kehmen on the 25th of December. Our troops were opposed by heavy small arms, machine gun and artillery fire. The enemy laid time fire on the town and high ground to the west. Our troops drove the enemy from Scheidel. Company "B" was credited with destroying 1 tank, 2 anti-tank guns and numerous infantry.

The enemy front line on the 27th of December ran through Welscheid-Scheidel-Kehmen- (P765A78)-Northeast of Ringel- West bank of Sure River-along North bank of Sure River. The enemy was trying to secure the high ground North of Ringel to improve his defensive line but his counter-attack broke down under the pressure of our troops. Heavy artillery and harassing fire continued. The 352nd Infantry Division, badly chewed up by the Division attack has withdrawn from contact apparently being replaced by the 79th V.G. Division.

During the early phases of the enemy break-through against the VII and VIII U.S. Corps the morale of the enemy troops was understandably high. As the attack progressed and reverses were met in most sectors the morale dropped sharply. PW's complained of the lack of warm food and clothing. Our heavy air activity prevented the use of the enemy's few supply lines and the lack of gas was being felt in armored units and motor transportation. The enemy counted on using gas secured from American dumps he had captured and his failure to secure this gas was a serious blow to the attack.

Front lines on the 28th of December were roughly Erpeldange-Welscheid-Kehmen- East of Ringel- North East of Ringel- along North bank of Sure River. The enemy again attempted to retake Ringel, preceding his attack with a heavy artillery barrage. An estimated 150 infantry attacked up the draw North East of Ringel at 281440 but was repulsed. Our troops occupied Ettelbruck and the high ground to the north.

Two companies of enemy troops were observed forming for a counter-attack at 291215 but were taken under fire by artillery and the attack dispersed. The enemy continues to fire harassing and interdiction fire usually on towns within the Division zone. During the past week there have been several instances of strafing by planes identified as P 47's. In all instances so far it has been attributed to misidentification of terrain or troops.

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(After action report for month of Dec 44, Hq 610th TD Bn., dtd 7 Jan 45. Cont'd):

The last two days of the month saw little change in the disposition of troops, Both sides remained on the defensive and improved their positions while heavy patrol activity was conducted by both sides. Enemy continued to harass our positions with Arty and mortar fire. On the 31st Dec 1st platoon C Company fired upon a R R tunnel vicinity BURDEN reported to contain enemy reserves. A large explosion was observed at the tunnel entrance.

Casualties inflicted upon the enemy during the month of December by the Battalion with the exception of personnel are as follows:

<u>TANKS</u>	
MK IV	22
MK V	3
MK VI	7
Total	<u>32</u>
OTHER VEHICLES	7
A T Guns	5
Art'y Pieces	2
PillBoxes	9
M G's	4
C P's	1
O P's	1
Ammo Dps.	1

During the month of December the Reconnaissance platoons of Reconnaissance Company have been broken down to each Gun Company giving them a task force set up. The platoons remain attached to the same companies throughout the operation. This has been found advisable where our employment has been in an attached role rather than in a support mission and on the occasion, as during the past month, when we had Gun Companies attached to different Divisions of the Corps. In this manner each Gun Company is always assured of its own reconnaissance element always being with it and a greater coordination of effort is secured by attaching the same reconnaissance platoon to the Gun Company.


 ROY T. McGRANN
 Capt., 610th T.D. Bn.,
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