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HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APC 45, U S ARMY

6 May 1944

Subject: Battle Report April '44

To : Commanding General, Fifth Army, APC 464, U S Army.

Map Reference: Sheet #158, 1/100,000, Italy.

SUMMARY OF OPERATION

1. No direct fire was brought on enemy tanks since their activity was nil during daylight hours. Some tanks were reported firing on our troops at night, but none were close enough so that our direct fire guns could observe them. Three tanks were knocked out by our indirect fire battery.
2. Our four gun battery (935264) fired 101 observed and 69 unobserved missions. Reconnaissance Company OP's did practically all the adjusting. Our OP's also adjusted the Field Artillery on a number of missions.
3. The Naval Star Shell proved to be very satisfactory. This shell is very accurate and gives excellent illumination. Our telescopic sights are now illuminated. It is believed these used in conjunction with the Star Shell will be very effective against night targets.
4. Reconnaissance Company sent a man out with Infantry Reconnaissance platoon periodically, in order to inspect for tank approaches.
5. The Pioneer platoon was busy preparing alternate positions as well as new positions. Blasting was tried but proved unsuccessful, due to type of clay soil.
6. Officers and Enlisted Men were sent to the 45th Infantry Division Pioneer Reconnaissance, Gas, Bomb Disposal and Automotive Schools. Six officers are taking a course in Air Observation. All units while in the rear area conducted training in subjects most needed by their respective companies.
7. On the night of 21 April at 2215 B hours, one M-10 of Company B, this unit, was moved from a covered position at 889284 to a firing position at 890287 without being heard by the Infantry in front of them. The distance covered was 300 yards and two right angle turns were involved in the movement. The firing position was 25 yards to the rear of a front line infantry squad. The M-10 was moved in second gear at 500 RPM. There was a slight head-on breeze. The movement took twenty minutes to complete. The officer in charge, 2nd Lieutenant FRED A. BARRITT (O-1823040), was approximately twenty-five yards in advance of the M-10 during the move and all he could hear was a slight drone. The most noise was in starting the engines. The engines were warmed up five minutes before moving. 1st Lieutenant HOLMES, R.H.S. Regiment, in charge of infantry in firing position area, discovered the M-10's presence as a result of noise made by the TD officer moving on foot near the tank destroyer position. The British officer came over to investigate and found the tank destroyer, which he stated neither himself or his men had heard move in.

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BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

8. The companies were on the line for approximately two weeks, then pulled back for about a week's rest. The platoons in fire positions were shifted by Company about every three days. All Company Commanders agree that this is the best plan of relief.

9. The Malaria Control Officer has been very active; checking mosquito breeding places, ascertaining that every man is using a mosquito bar and headnet; burning grass huts and insisting that every man take atabrine. Only one case of malaria has appeared in this Battalion.

10. The Special Service Officer has kept the morale at a high level by arranging programs for units coming out of the line.

11. The Battalion Commander and Staff inspected personnel and organizational equipment at the end of the month.

II

OPERATIONS FOR PERIOD BEGINNING 1 APRIL AND ENDING 30 APRIL 1944

- 1 April: One jeep of Company B was demolished at House #1. Company B moved a tank destroyer up diagonal road southwest of PADIGLIONE and fired in vicinity of House #27. The artillery fired Phosphorous Shells to illuminate the house but the house could not be seen. Company C fired 342 rounds on enemy personnel at Houses #67, #66 and #15.
- 2 April: The Naval Star Shell was experimented with. The target was House #25. All three shells burst about 1500 feet above the target. The house could be seen very plainly. Company C blasted enemy personnel and houses with 144 rounds.
- 3 April: Company C fired 193 rounds in registration and interdiction. The Battalion CP was bombed. Gas and Oil Dump (1200 gallons of gas, 40 gallons of oil, 120 pounds of grease) and one 2½-Ton truck were set afire.
- 4 April - 13 April: During this period Company C fired a total of 1577 rounds on enemy personnel, tanks, houses, assembly areas and mortars.
- 14 April - 17 April: Company C expended 828 rounds on enemy tanks, vehicles, personnel and interdiction. One Mark IV tank was set afire as well as one medium vehicle.
- 18 April - 22 April: Company C continued firing on enemy tanks, vehicles, personnel, OP's and harassing missions. 1799 rounds were expended. One Mark IV tank was set on fire.

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE MISSIONS MONTH OF APRIL 1944 BY FOUR GUN BATTERIES OF COMPANY "A" AND COMPANY "C", 645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION.

OBSERVED MISSIONS

Enemy personnel	45
Enemy mortars	3
Enemy tanks (destroyed 3)	15
Enemy MG emplacements	2
Enemy field piece	6
Enemy vehicle and vehicular traffic	18
Enemy OP	4
Enemy supply and assembly area	3
Star Shell	<u>5</u>
TOTAL OBSERVED	101

UNOBSERVED MISSIONS

House harrassing Interdiction	21
	<u>48</u>
TOTAL UNOBSERVED	<u>69</u>

TOTAL FIRED 170

AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES FOR MONTH OF APRIL 1944

<u>HE</u>	<u>SMOKE</u>	<u>TIME SHELL</u>	<u>STAR SHELL</u>	<u>AFC</u>
7023	437	66	18	118

III

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 1944

The morale of the officers and men was excellent. The Battalion supply was satisfactory. One Officer and five (5) enlisted men were rotated to the United States during this period. The Battalion received three officers and three enlisted men as replacements for officers and men rotated to the United States. Rest Camps were maintained by the Fifth Army for officers and enlisted men. Six decorations were awarded to one officer and five enlisted men by the Commanding General, 45th Infantry Division. Five officers were attached to the Battalion for training for a period of thirty days. The following changes in duties were made during the month of April: Captain JERRY B. MORGAN to Commanding Officer, Co A; Captain RICHARD B. KOCIS, to Commanding Officer, Co B; Captain WILLIAM A. CLYDE, to Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company; Captain WILLIAM E. WESTFALL, to Battalion S-4; Captain RICHARD B. WILDER, to LNO; Lt. WILLIAM H. BARLOW, to Executive Officer, Company A; Lt. JACK W. LINDBERG, to Platoon Commander, Co. C; Lt. JAMES G. GABLE, to LNO; Lt. PAUL M. STEPHANI, to Communications Officer; Lt. JOSEPH P. DICK, to Platoon Commander, Co. A; and Lt. PAUL F. GRIFFIN, to LNO.

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BATTLE CASUALTY SUMMARY

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>ORG</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
Robert A. Desimone	33487814	Co A	Pvt	10 April 44	Wounded
Angelo J. Petrucci	32263863	Co B	PFC	13 April 44	Wounded
Edward J. Hamilton	31059837	Co A	PFC	14 April 44	Wounded
Edward J. Blayne	3511185	Rcn Co	PFC	*16 Feb 44	Injured
Gilbert C. Hodgson	20834074	Co B	Sgt	22 April 44	Injured
Charles W. Scranton	38017964	Co C	Opl	24 April 44	Wounded
Bernard Frygier	35111874	Rcn Co	Sgt	26 April 44	Wounded
John R. Wise	13059584	Rcn Co	Pvt	27 April 44	Wounded

* Not reported on previous Battle Casualty Summary.

ALEX "A"

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

EDWARD L. AUSTIN, Battalion Commander was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. 9 April 1944. The Personnel Section of the Battalion remained in the same location as the previous month, at BACOLI, ITALY.

Edward L. Austin
EDWARD L. AUSTIN
Lt. Col., Field Artillery
Commanding

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Annex "A" Battle Casualty Summary
Annex "B" Battle Report Overlay

Intelligence Summary
Operation Journals

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HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

LIC 45, U S Army
1 May 1944

SUBJECT: Intelligence Summary, Supported Units (45th Inf Div and 3rd Inf Div) Sector
1 April to 30 April 1944
Annex to Battle Report for April 1944
Maps: 1stlay, Sheet 158, I, II, III, IV

This unit maintained Anti-tank Defense of the sector from the 89 to the 97 grid line. The sector was held by the 45th Inf Div from 1 April to about the 15th April and by the 3rd Div from 15th April to 30 April.

Enemy front lines for the period: 1st April- 890289 to 915290 to 915310 to 930318 to 961323. On the 13th April- 914285 to 917310 to 922319 to 960320. On the 16th April- 890295 to 908300 to 927325 to 950310 to 971323. On the 19th April to the end of the period- 890295 to 898296 to 906299 to 914313 to 926324 to 941319 to 948325 to 957324.

Actually, there was little if any change in enemy front line defenses for the period. Our troops did improve their positions by edging their lines out a little further into "no man's land" between the 89 and 92 grid lines.

The period was marked by sharp patrol activities on both sides. The enemy reacted with great sensitivity to our patrols and responded with S/A, artillery and mortars when prodded. The enemy never used greater strength than an estimated company in any of their efforts and that amount only on one or two occasions.

Enemy artillery was comparatively heavy. Mortars were employed in groups for massed fire on forward elements. Most fire was delivered at night. When the enemy suspected an attack imminent, he would let loose with prepared fires covering not only the frontlines but the entire beach-head. Fort facilities, though steadily shelled, did not receive as much fire as they had in previous months. Tanks were used as mobile artillery and Anti-tank guns. Two or three tanks would be brought forward under cover of darkness, fire and withdraw before dawn.

Enemy air was "seen" only at night and was usually preceded by twilight reconnaissance. "Stuka" dive bombers were identified in use over the beach-head for the first time. They lost 25% of the planes sent over to our AAA and night fighters.

Units Opposing- 3rd PGD and 362 Inf Div.

Disposition of enemy units during period: 1st April to 4th April- On the left (179th Inf Sector)- 2 Bn 309 IR, 3 Bn 309 IR; on the right (157th Inf Sector)- 2 Bn 29 FGR, 362 Rcn Bn, 60 Engr Bn, 1 Bn 956 IR. 5th April to 9th April- Left (179)- 1 and 3 Bns 309 IR, 2 Bn 29 FGR; right (157)- 2 Bn 29 FGR, 1 Bn 1028 FGR, 1 Bn 956 Inf. 10th April to 15th April- Left (179)

Intelligence summary 1 April to 30 April (Continued).

2 Bn 309 IR, 1 Bn 29 FGR; right-(157)- 2 Bn 29 FGR, 1 and 2 Bn 1028 FGR, and 1 Bn 956 IR. 16th April to 22nd April- Left (7th Inf, 3rd Inf Div)- 3 Bn 309 IR, 1 Bn 29 FGR; right (30th Inf, 3rd Inf Div)- 2 Bn 29 FGR, 1 and 2 Bn 1028 FGR, 1 Bn 956 IR. 23rd April- Left (7th Inf)- 2 and 3 Bn 309 IR, 3 Bn 29 FGR; right (30th Inf)- 2 Bn 29 FGR, 2 unidentified infantry battalions, 1 Bn 956 IR. 24th April to 27th April- Left (7th Inf)- 1 Bn 8 FGR, 2 and 3 Bn 309 IR, 3 Bn 29 FGR; right (30th Inf)- 1 Bn 8 FGR, 1 Bn 29 FGR, 362 Recon Bn, 1 Bn 956 IR. 28th April to 30th April- Left (7th Inf)- 2 Bn 8 FGR, 3 Bn 309 IR, 103 Tk Bn; right (30th Inf)- 3 Bn 29 FGR, 2 Bn 29 FGR, 1 Bn 29 FGR, 362 Recon Bn, 1 unidentified Bn Inf.

MISCELLANEOUS

Prizes to German Soldiers: In Russia, a prize of 10 marks was offered to each man in 129 FGR if he captured an AT rifle, and a prize of 100 marks for a 7.62 cm AT gun. In Italy a prize was offered to men of 1028 FGR for every captured American gas mask.

Recently after large numbers of British and American PWs had escaped the following rewards were promised to German soldiers apprehending an escape:

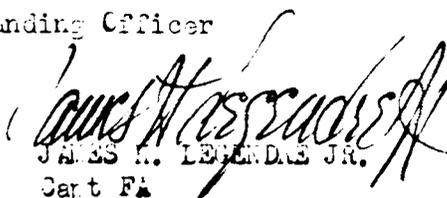
- 21 days leave
- a silver cigarette case
- a fountain pen
- a wrist watch

Use of Hand Flame Throwers: Use was made by the enemy of hand flame throwers in a local attack made 1 April. The weapons were of a portable type worked by a two man team. They were employed in pairs, two being allotted to each of the two attacking platoons. Range believed to be 40 yards, 6 second burst.

Effect of Our Artillery Fire: PW captured 18 April stated that men in his company were somewhat demoralized on account of our artillery; even seasoned fighters being extremely nervous.

Propaganda Leaflets: Leaflets dropped 28 April played up statement made by London paper to the effect that this is "a rich man's war but a poor man's fight". This theme has been played up in many leaflets showing the dough-boy fighting while Wall Street rakes in the cash.

For the Commanding Officer


JAMES H. LEGENDRE JR.
Capt FA
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