

UNIT REPORT
(After Action Report)

403
OPD
Eto-1

Number 9

From: 312400 January 1945
To : 282400 February 1945

Unit : 702nd Tank Destroyer Bn.
Date : 28 February 1945
Place: Otzenrath, Germany

MAPS: GSGS 4336, 1/100,000; Sheet 59, 1/50,000; Sheet 19, 1/50,000; GSGS 4414, 1/25,000; GSGS 4040, 1/50,000.

DECLASSIFIED
DOD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
NCWN by [signature] date 6-19-78

I. ENEMY:

1 February 1945 to 7 February 1945: No contact with enemy.

7 February 1945 to 28 February 1945, only contact with enemy was through artillery. Artillery ranged from light to medium all through this period, causing light casualties to troops in indirect fire positions west of JULICH, GERMANY. During this period, the Luftwaffe was very active in reconnaissance patrols and light personnel bombing missions. The enemy continued to build up his defenses on the ROER and also continued to shift his defenses so as to meet the threat of a bridgehead across the ROER at the most logical sites in accordance with his estimation. Mines were used extensively and effectively due to the long period of preparation and due also to the enemy's knowledge of the terrain and all possible avenues of an initial assault.

To meet the first assault, the enemy used Infantry and up to 28 February 1945, only light resistance was met by our Infantry and very light armored defenses was used. Dug in AT guns caused light losses to first armor across ROER RIVER. In addition to the enemy infantry that were in static positions on the ROER, elements of the 9 Pz were identified in vicinity of JACKERATH, GERMANY, 27 February 1945. The enemy appeared to be still doubtful as to just where the major offensive to the RHINE RIVER would be and therefore could not utilize his forces to the best advantage.

On the night of 27-28 February friendly troops attacked North from JACKERATH, GERMANY and met very light resistance. During advance 28 February such light resistance was met that small villages were taken where civilian inhabitants were still in process of evacuating east and north, away from the attack.

The enemy still seemed to be doubtful as to where to shift his troops to meet the attack. So far the enemy had made no strong coordinated counter attack against our rapid advance.

II. OUR OPERATIONS:

The 702d TD Battalion under 2nd Armored Division control remained in LINGE, BELGIUM (K502148) reorganizing and training after action with the Division at CINEY and HOUFFALIZE, BELGIUM (K610721), from 012400A February 1945 until 031935A February 1945. Maintenance and training of platoons in Infantry-Tank-TD tactics accomplished.

The Battalion moved with the 2nd Armored Division from LINGE, BELGIUM (K502148) to the vicinity of EPEN, HOLLAND (K717435), closing in area 040330A February 1945. The entire Battalion remained in the vicinity of EPEN, HOLLAND (K717435) until the 7 February 1945, completing maintenance and making preparations for coming operations with the 2nd Tank Destroyer Group.

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On the 071900 February the battalion moved via AACHEN, GERMANY (K980430) to the vicinity of ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY (K980560) under control of 2nd Tank Destroyer Group, closing in new area 072400 February 1945.

The Battalion Forward CP remained in DURBASLAR, GERMANY from the 7th to the 25th of February maintaining wire and radio communications with companies; supported units and higher headquarters. Battalion Rear CP remained in EFEN, HOLLAND (K717435) to maintain communication and liaison with the 2nd Armored Division. During this period the battalion conducted a school for replacements assigned to the organization.

On the 26 February 1945 the Battalion Forward CP moved across the ROER RIVER at SCHOPHOVEN, GERMANY (K058540 to NIEDEIZIER, GERMANY (K106550) with companies "A" and "B".

Company "A", on arrival at ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY (K980560) 072230A February 1945 placed their platoons in position in the vicinity of PIER (K062324) and KIRCHBERG (K030560) to support the attack of the 30th Infantry Division across the ROER RIVER in that sector. The First Platoon took positions below the high ground South of KIRCHBERG, GERMANY (K030560); the Second Platoon was placed in indirect firing positions in the vicinity of LOHN, GERMANY (K995538) and the Third Platoon occupied positions East of PIER, GERMANY (K062524).

Company "A" remained in the vicinity of INDEN, GERMANY (K035520) making preparations for the operation by preparing indirect and direct firing positions for all guns, until 230245A February, when at H-45 (230245A) the First and Third Platoons moved up to firing positions and the Second Platoon fired fifty rounds per hour on the road from HAMBACK (K092564) to NEW HAMBACK (K116575) as directed by XIX Corps Artillery until H plus 210. The two direct fire platoons supported the 30th Infantry attack by firing missions as called by FO's furnished by the 823rd TD Battalion.

During the initial attack and until the 251300A February Company "A" continued to lay direct and indirect fire on main routes and installations in enemy territory East of the ROER RIVER. Two enemy tanks and pillboxes were neutralized by fire. Routes of supply and communication were placed under heavy fire in the vicinity of HAMBACK (K092564) and NIEDERGLIER, GERMANY (K108549), TOLHOUSEN (K150616, OVEREMBT (K180628) and ELSDOFF, GERMANY (K180602) during the night hours.

On the 251300A February 1945 Company "A" under Battalion control crossed the ROER RIVER at SCHOPHOVEN, GERMANY (K058543) and assembled on the West edge of NIEDEIZIER, GERMANY (K106550) awaiting orders to move North of LICH, GERMANY (K123604) with the secondary mission of harassing by fire the bridges spanning the ERFT CANAL.

Company "B" on arrival at ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY (K980560) 072230A February 1945, placed their platoons in the vicinity to support the attack of the 29th Infantry Division across the ROER RIVER in that sector. The First and Second Platoons were placed in indirect firing positions at K955590 and K985568. The Third Platoon remained in defilade in the vicinity of BOURHEIM, GERMANY (K996574) prepared to take up positions on the high ground to fire direct fire in support of the attack.

Company "B" remained in the vicinity of ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY making preparations for the operations by surveying and registering positions. Wire and radio communications were established with supported and higher units. All preparations completed by 222400A February 1945.

At H-45 (230245A) the First and Second Platoons laid fifty rounds per hour on roads leading East from JULICH (K040590) to STEINSTRASH (K125598) and MERSCH (K047634) to FITZ (K080184) until H plus 210. These missions were repeated during D day (23 Feb 45) and at intervals throughout the period until 241145A February on call from XIX Corps Artillery. The towns of RODINGEN (K104638), AMELNA (K088660), SPIEL (K070652) and LITZ (080184) were fired on during the two days 23-24 February 1945. Also fires were laid on roads running into the main road into STEINSTRASS from the South. Two batteries of 150mm guns were unable to retreat due to this fire and were captured intact by our advancing infantry.

On the 241145A February 1945 Company "B" moved from the vicinity of ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY (K980560) across the ROER RIVER at SHOFHOVEN, GERMANY (K058540) taking up positions at NIEDEIZIER, GERMANY (K106550) to fire on towns along the East flank of the attacking infantry and along the ERFT CANAL.

During the night 25-26 February 1945 Company "B" fired 1200 rounds on the towns of ELSDORF (K180602), EECH (K165612), NIEDREMBT, (K161636), KIRCHTROISDORF (K145456) and KLEINTRAISDORF (K135662) GERMANY. On the night 26-27 February 1945 Company "B" fired 1800 rounds on the towns of NIEDREMBT and BELBURG, GERMANY (K185667). During the day of the 27 February 1945 Company "B" fired two hundred rounds on enemy infantry positions (K221656) and (K224644) in support of Omana. XIX Corps Artillery also ordered 600 rounds fired at BEDBURG, GERMANY (K185667).

Company "C" under Battalion control, after reaching ALDENHOVEN, GERMANY 072230A February 1945, placed all three platoons in defalade positions along the river in the vicinity of MERZENHOUSEN, GERMANY remaining in that location until 221200A February at which time the guns were moved forward on the commanding terrain to fire direct fire on targets across the ROER RIVER. All preparations were made for going into secondary mission as soon as direct and flanking fires were masked. Communications by wire and radio with supported and higher units was established.

During D Day (23 Feb 45) Company "C" fired direct fire across the river in the 115th Inf Regt sector at assault guns and strong points, neutralizing the enemy fire. Rapid advance of our troops masked the fires of Company "C" during the afternoon of 24 February 1945. Company "C" remained in position, however, to be used in event of enemy armored counterattack.

Reconnaissance Company furnished FO's for Company "C" for the attack across the ROER RIVER. On the 251200A February 1945 the platoons were placed with the three line companies for future operations.

The battalion reverted to control of the 2nd Armored Division at 270700A Feb 45. The 702 TD Battalion (-Companies, A, B, & C) remained under Division control for the coming operations.

At 270600 February 1945 Company "A" reverted to the control of CC"A", 2nd Armored Division and moved with that organization to the vicinity of MERSCH, GERMANY (K049634).

On 28 February 1945 Company "A" moved North with CC"A" from the vicinity of MERSCH, GERMANY attacking toward GREVENEROICH, GERMANY. The First Platoon was attached to the Reconnaissance Company, 66th Armored Regiment; 2nd Platoon to the 2nd Battalion and the 3rd Platoon to the 3rd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment.

On the 271400A February 1945 Company "B" under control of CC"R", 2nd Armored Division moved from NIEDEIZIER, GERMANY to the woods Southeast of JULICH at coordinates K0655/4, prepared to assist in flank protection of the 2nd Armored Division during the drive to the North.

On the 28th February 1945 Company "B" moved with CC"R" toward the North via MERSCH - LITZ - JACKERATH - GARZIWEILER - OTZENRATH. Road blocks were established in the area of JUCHEN, GERMANY (K134793) for protection of the Division left flank.

Company "C" was placed on alert for anti-tank defense until 260800A February 1945 at which time they moved with CC"B", 2nd Armored Division across the ROER RIVER at JULICH, GERMANY (K035590) in support of the limited tank attack in the vicinity of STEINSTRASS, GERMANY (K121598). During the night of 26-27 February 1945 Company "C" placed road blocks at the following coordinates (K125598) (K135628).

On the 28th February 1945 Company "C" moved in the attack of CC"B" toward GREVENEROICH, GERMANY (K185685) in support of the tanks. Company "C" reported probable destruction of one enemy tank, during a fire fight on the night of the 27th February 1945.

III. TOTAL ENEMY MATERIAL DESTROYED:

On the 25th February 1945 Companies "A" and "C" destroyed or neutralized one SP gun, ~~two 81mm mortars~~, numerous pill boxes and OP's. ~~The~~ batteries of 150mm guns were unable to retreat due to our fire and were captured intact by our advancing infantry.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE

a. T/O Strength : 35 Officers, 2 WO, 607 Enlisted Men
 Effective Strength: 34 Officers, 1 WO, 614 Enlisted Men

b. Casualties:

	Hq	Med	Rcn	"A"	"B"	"C"	Total
(1) Killed	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	1 & 0	1 & 0	1 & 0	3 & 0
(2) Sick, gassed & Wounded							
Evacuated	0 & 3	0 & 1	0 & 3	1 & 8	0 & 9	1 & 12	2 & 36
Non evacuated	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0
(3) Captured	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0
(4) Missing	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0	0 & 0

c. Prisoners captured: None

d. Evacuations: Normal

e. Does Not Apply.

f. Status of supply: 150 operational miles of gasoline and oil carried by battalion at all times. One 1/3 units of fire carried.

g. Conditions of roads and circulation: Movements made by this unit operating with the 2nd Armored Division normally carried out on primary and secondary road nets. Some cross country movements made during present operations.

h. Replacements received: 5 Officers and 90 Enlisted Men.

John A. Beall
 JOHN A. BEALL,
 Lt Col, Inf,
 Commanding.