



**R E S T R I C T E D**  
HEADQUARTERS SPECIAL TROOPS  
12TH ARMY GROUP

APC 655  
7 July 1945

314.7 (S-1)

SUBJECT: Unit History



TO : Commanding Officers, All Units and Detachments, Special Troops

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5-7-62

1. This headquarters is preparing a final after action report to be included in the history of 12th Army Group. In order to cover fully the activities of Special Troops units, each unit and detachment commander will submit to this headquarters on or before 15 July 1945 a report on the history and accomplishments of the organization from date of joining Special Troops to present date.

2. As the history of many of the units which have been located with 12th Army Group Headquarters will be somewhat similar, the reports for those organizations should place emphasis on the accomplishments of their units, e. g., miles of wire strung by signal units and exceptional jobs, amount of mail handled by postal units, miles driven by transportation companies, etc.

3. Reports should not exceed 2,000 words and should be submitted in duplicate, double-spaced. They should be lively in tone and may include charts, graphs, or diagrams which may be in color and may be submitted in one copy only.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL HARRIS:

PIERRE D. BOY  
Lt Col, Infantry  
Adjutant

DISTRIBUTION  
"A"

**R E S T R I C T E D**

## BATTALION HISTORY

## 825th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION



The 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. Rudolph H. Mieding, was assigned to the 12th Army Group on 15 September 1944, at Verdun, France. The organization was entrusted with the mission of furnishing perimeter defense for 12th Group installations; and was charged with the responsibility of providing an escort for the personal protection of the Group Commander, during his frequent inspection tours of the fighting front. In addition to the above, Company "A" was placed on detached service and sent to serve with "T" force, of the 12th Group.

The allocation of local security for vital signal installations was quickly accomplished by the battalion Commander; and due to the make-up of the Group communication system, this move necessitated the deployment of small segments of the organization over an area that included France, Luxembourg and Belgium. This division of troops naturally presented complex problems of Supply and Maintenance; but these obstacles were always overcome, through the efficient and co-operative efforts of the entire battalion. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the transportation companies were destined to travel a total distance of approximately 200,000 miles, in servicing the many distant outposts of the unit; many times, hauling supplies through heavy enemy gun-fire.

During the month of October, the battalion transferred its CP from Verdun to Luxembourg City. Shortly after arriving at this point, the city was subjected to shelling by heavy German artillery (thought to be a 280 MM railway gun); but no casualties were inflicted upon military personnel. In the meantime, Company "A" had located itself in LaReid, Belgium, where it was engaged in the important task of plotting the German V-1 to points of origin.

The counter-offensive launched by the Nazis on 16 December, alerted all elements of the command for immediate action; and the 2nd Reccon. Platoon prepared

BATTALION HISTORY (825 TD Bn.) Cont'd.

to evacuate the Commanding General from his CP, in the event of an emergency. Two days later, Lt. Jack Doherty of Company "A" engaged the enemy with two (2) of his gun crews, at Stavelot, Belgium. An armored spearhead appeared on the scene in this sector, and Doherty and his men took up firing positions beside a small bridge. Fighting against heavy odds, the two (2) gun crews succeeded in delaying the Panzer column for six (6) hours, until American reinforcements arrived. The accurate fire of this unit knocked out four (4) "Tiger Royals" during the engagement; and was highly instrumental in stalling the German advance in that sector.

Further East, other elements of Company "A" had also contacted the enemy, in Stavelot. Here, the Germans had set up machine guns at vantage points in houses, and were directing heavy fire into our ranks. Sizing up the situation, Capt. Joseph Dibert placed one (1) 3" gun so as to direct fire into the fixed enemy positions, and succeeded in setting fire to six (6) houses, while causing heavy damage to ten (10) others. At this point, the enemy brought their armor into play, and another section of the company took the tanks under fire. Two (2) squads trained their guns on the Panthers, and in the ensuing battle each crew knocked out two (2) tanks. A "Tiger Royal" then appeared on the scene, and after firing several rounds into the monster, one gun disabled it with a well-directed shot into the turret. In seeking to withdraw to safety, the tank ran blindly into a nearby building and became pinned in the wreckage. Three (3) days later another enemy attack was launched in the same sector, and in this battle the guns of Company "A" again spread havoc through the enemy ranks; accounting for several transports and one (1) Mark VI tank, besides inflicting heavy casualties. In addition to this, a number of American vehicles were re-captured from the Germans.

On 23 December, elements of Company "B" working in conjunction with troops of the 335th Infantry, contacted the enemy in Rochefort, Belgium. The battle was launched at approximately 2200 hrs, when Sgt. John Cavanaugh opened fire on about fifty (50) infantrymen, who had attempted to infiltrate into town and



BATTALION HISTORY (825th TD Bn.) Cont'd.

set up machine guns in front of the CP. All light weapons were trained on the enemy simultaneously with Cavanaugh's opening burst, and completely destroyed the initial German assault. Light fire continued at intervals throughout the night, while the enemy waited until day-break to launch another attack. In the morning the battle opened with re-newed vigor, as the Germans poured a heavy curtain of artillery and mortar fire into the town. The Nazis then attempted to take the CP with their armor; but both 3" guns broke up the thrust with several direct hits, which forced the enemy to withdraw. With their guns located in the center of the street, and devoid of any protection other than the gun shields, the crews displayed a courage that was surpassed only by their accurate fire. A direct hit demolished one (1) of the guns, and after caring for the wounded, the remaining members of the crew assisted in the operation of the other gun. Finally, the superior weight of enemy numbers asserted itself; and after more than twenty-four (24) hours of continuous fighting, the men were ordered to withdraw from the town. Statistics of the engagement disclosed an estimated fifty (50) enemy dead; one tank destroyed and another possibly destroyed; and also one (1) locomotive knocked out. Our own casualties listed four (4) wounded, and ten (10) missing in action.

Meanwhile, the enemy breakthrough had seriously endangered both the 12th Group and battalion CP's, in the city of Luxembourg. Faced with the constant threat of parachutists, it became necessary to form several Riot Squads from the personnel of Headquarters Company. Serving under the command of Capt. John H. McCord, these squads worked night and day tracking down all reports of enemy activity behind the American lines; and instituted a pattern of "Bazooka Posts", in the event of an armored entry into the capital city. Although the threat never materialized, these squads proved their worth through the apprehension of a number of suspicious persons, who were subsequently turned over to the GIG.

BATTALION HISTORY (825th TD Bn.) Cont'd.

In January, Company "C" was attached to Task force "REED" at Montfort, Luxembourg. The company took up firing positions to guard possible tank approaches from the East and Southeast, and rotated platoons in harassing and indirect fire from a position East of Oetrange, Luxembourg; from where it expended 1161 rounds. This indirect fire was proven to be very effective. On 27 January, two (2) platoons moved to take up positions on the West bank of the Moselle River at Maternash, Luxembourg; from which point they fired into fixed enemy positions, located on the other side of the river. During the continual exchange of fire, these platoons were subjected to approximately 375 rounds of artillery and mortar fire, until relieved of their mission.

During the period 23 April through 27 April, other elements of Company "C" under the command of S/Sgt. Sam J. Villane, supplemented by troops of Company "L", 311th Infantry, were engaged by the enemy in the vicinity of their post at JIG Radio (WG 5763). The men were successful in preventing this vital communications point from falling into enemy hands; and during the course of the battle, they captured a total of 114 men and killed 3.

This brief summary of battle action attests to the combat efficiency of the organization, in all of its major aspects. Space precludes more than a rough outline of major accomplishments; but events as thus far related in this history, are felt to be indicative of the zealous manner in which this battalion carried out its assigned mission. It is axiomatic that "Actions speak louder than words"; and this organization can feel justly proud of the results which it has achieved, on the field of battle. The honors it has won are worn lightly; and now that the European war has finally come to an end, the battalion looks forward to the future with trust and confidence. The 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion marches into that future, with its Battle Standard waving aloft; jealously proud of the knowledge that her troops have just completed one mission, in the best tradition of the United States Army.

