

**DOWNGRADED TO
RESTRICTED**

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG CEM

HEADQUARTERS
737th Tank Battalion
APO 436

2 March 1945

20 July 45 HSD
Date Initials
SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy Report, After After Action.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.
(Through Commanding General, 5th Infantry Division, APO 5, U. S. Army.)

1. General Summary:

During the first days of February the battalion maintained defensive positions and units performed secondary tank mission of indirect fire in the northern part of LUXEMBOURG. The battalion then regrouped in the eastern sector of the country. From 7 February on the tanks of the battalion supported the 5th Infantry Division in attacking and breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE, in crossing the SAUER, ENZ and NIMS Rivers and driving to the west bank of the KYLL RIVER, East and Southeast of BITBURG, GERMANY.

2. Assignments, Attachments, Support and Reinforcing Fires.

a. Battalion remained assigned to XII Corps (Ltr Hq TUSA, File No. 322 GMMCG, Subject: "Troop Assignment A-23, dtd 13 Aug 44) and attached to 5th Infantry Division (Ltr Hq XII Corps, File No. AG 322(G-3) Subject: "Troop Assignment A-17, dtd 29 Dec 44.)

b. The Companies were attached or supported the following units:

- (1) A Company: Attached to 11th Infantry Regiment on following dates: 1-2 Feb; 4-19 Feb; 26-28 Feb. 1 platoon supported 19 FA Battalion 1 February.
- (2) B Company: Attached to 10th Infantry Regiment on following dates: 4-15 February and 19-28 February. Attached 2d Infantry Regiment 15-16 Feb. 1 platoon supported 46 FA Bn 2-4 February.
- (3) C Company: Attached to 2d Infantry Regiment on following dates: 1-4 Feb; 16-28 Feb. 1 platoon supported 50th FA Bn 1-4 Feb. One section 2d platoon supported 10th Infantry Regiment 9-10 February.
- (4) D Company: 1 platoon attached 2d Infantry Regiment 1-4 February.

c. Assault Gun Platoon, Reinforced (Six 105mm Howitzers mounted on M-4 Tank.)

- (1) Supported 19th Field Artillery Battalion 6-14 February except 1 gun supported 10th Infantry Regiment 7-10 February and 1 gun supported 901st Field Artillery Battalion, 7-10 February.
- (2) 4 Assault Guns, 8th Tank Bn., 4th Armored Division in support of 737th Tank Bn. Assault Guns 9-11 February.

d. Battalion (-) Units attached, remained in Division Reserve.

RESTRICTED

3. Our Operations.

1 February - Battalion Headquarters, B Company and Assault Guns in DIEKIRCH (P864420). A, C and D Companies maintained defensive positions within sector of their respective combat teams. A Company at LIPPESBURG (P815479) with one platoon at (P814509). C Company at BASTENDORF (P873447). One platoon at (P850460) performed secondary tank mission of indirect fire, firing 3 missions and expending 175 rounds. D Company in BISSEN (P797337). One platoon at WALSDORF (P872447). Service Company at MICHELBUCH (P765368).

2 February - B Company relieved A Company, each company taking over the position formerly occupied by the other. Platoon of C Company firing indirect fire, fired 3 missions and expended 168 rounds. Two tanks of D Company moved out with 8 infantrymen and took up outpost positions at (P862508) while the balance of the platoon remained in Walsdorf.

3 February - One platoon of B Company performed secondary tank mission of indirect fire, firing 2 missions and expending 60 rounds. The platoon of C Company expended 168 rounds in 3 missions of indirect fire. Other components of B, C and D Companies continued to support respective Combat Teams in occupation of defensive points.

4 February - B, C and D Companies continued on their defensive missions. B Company platoon fired 4 missions, expending 60 rounds, while the C Company platoon fired 4 missions and expended 197 rounds. At the close of the day all units prepared to move to new area and prepared plans to support attack of 5th Infantry Division across SAUER RIVER. A Company moved to ESCHWEILER (P973253) and D Company assembled at BISSEN.

5 February - Battalion Headquarters, Assault Guns and C and D Companies closed at IMBRINGEN (P888235). B Company moved to BERDORF (L001376). Service Company assembled at OBERANVEN (P933188).

6 February - All units held positions except the Assault Gun Platoon which moved northeast of CONSDORF (L002332) and tied in with the 19th Field Artillery Bn. Plans were completed to support attack.

7 February - The 5th Division jumped off in attack to cross SAUER RIVER, enter Germany and breach the SIEGFRIED LINE at 0100. A Company moved out at 0400 to high ground (L030374) south of river and supported attack by direct fire on pill boxes, enemy concentrations and strong points and held their forward positions throughout the night. One Assault Gun fired direct fire missions from a point 1 kilometer east of BERDORF while another gun moved to 1 kilometer south of LAUTERBERG (L034342). Balance of platoon held positions vicinity of CONSDORF. The Assault Guns expended a total of 770 rounds.

8 February - A Company continued to fire direct fire missions. One platoon of B Company advanced along the road running north and south along SAUER River in zone to BOLLENDORF (L010400) giving infantry direct fire support while crossing the river and encountered heavy mortar and artillery fire and extensive mine fields. Two Assault Guns moved to river front (L029380) firing direct fire and destroying one enemy armored vehicle. One gun remained with the 901st FA Bn. A total of 198 rounds were expended.

9 February - 4 Assault Guns, 8th Tank Bn., took up positions with 737th Tank Bn. Assault Guns at (L023365) and all guns, less one which was attached to the 901st FA Bn., continued to support the 19th FA Bn. with reinforcing fire. One platoon of A Company advanced along river road in zone and fired point blank into enemy bunkers and targets, directed by infantry commanders via radio. 5 pill boxes were breached and the infantry captured 54 prisoners.

At 0730 the tanks of B Company carried rations and ammunition to the infantry, along the river. At 1130 one platoon carried 60 smoke pots, 20,000 rounds .30 calibre ammunition, 2 days rations, wire cable, bedrolls, mail, lanterns, kerosene, and 27 assault boats to infantry at river, then fired at small targets and upon the return to tank assembly area evacuated infantry casualties. One tank was disabled by a mine.

Two tanks of C Company, equipped with rocket launchers, moved to (L029348) in support of 11th Infantry and three tanks with launchers moved to (L048348) in support of 417th Infantry (attached to 5th Division for operation.) The tanks in support of the 11th Infantry fired one volley (120 rockets) at a range of about 4000 yards at a hill and forest which had held up the advance of the infantry for several hours. Excellent dispersion was achieved and the infantry was immediately able to capture and secure the enemy strong point.

10 February - A Company performed maintenance. B Company tanks hauled 2 trailers loaded with assault boats to the SAUER RIVER crossing site. The three C Company tanks with rockets in support of the 417th Infantry fired 3 volleys, at 0700, 0830 and 0900, expending 360 rounds. The fire was unobserved but subsequent evidence disclosed that the fire was not only highly effective but substantially demoralizing to the enemy. The Assault Guns (-) fired 17 missions and expended 573 rounds. The one gun remained with the 901st FA Bn. which was in support of the 417th Infantry.

11 February - B Company took up positions prepared to fire rockets, but the additional fire power was unnecessary as the infantry advanced against comparatively light resistance. The Assault Guns fired 28 missions at enemy infantry and artillery as well as harrassing and interdictory fire, expending 283 rounds. The Assault Guns of the 8th Tank Bn. were released at 0800. The gun that had been with the 901st FA Bn returned. During the time the gun was with the 901st FA it moved into position in ECHTERNACH (L058357), fired approximately 500 rounds of direct fire at enemy pill boxes and strong points, using the maximum charge at all times and destroyed 4 pill boxes, several houses and possibly one German self-propelled gun.

12 February - One platoon of A Company crossed the SAUER River under cover of darkness and 11 tanks of B Company crossed at 2400. The tanks of the 737th Tank Battalion were on German soil for a second time, having previously fought their way across the Bleis River in the SARREGUIMINES sector in December. The Assault Guns assembled vicinity of BERDORF (013363) and expended 513 rounds at enemy infantry and in harrassing and interdictory fire.

13 February - Early in the morning the balance of A Company tanks crossed the SAUER River. The 1st platoon supported the 2d Battalion and the 3d Platoon supported the 1st Battalion in an attack to capture the high ground south of ERNZEN (L059388). ERNZEN was set aflame by the tank fire. Mission accomplished and the tanks held outpost positions (057363) for the night and prepared to continue the attack in the morning. B Company supported the 2d Battalion in capturing and securing FERSCHWEILER (L044413) and in the mopping up of small pockets of resistance within sector. The Assault Guns fired 30 missions, expending 374 rounds.



(Action Against Enemy Report, After After Action.)
Hq 737th Tank Battalion, APO 436, 2 March 1945

RESTRICTED

14 February - The 1st and 3d Platoons of A Company continued the attack and cleared ERNZEN. One extra long barreled 88mm AT gun was destroyed and several enemy ammunition dumps were set on fire. The Company's tank recovery vehicle (T-2) assisted engineers in building and maintaining bridge at O29381, by supporting a portion of the bridge by a cable from the boom. B Company held its positions in FERSCHWEILER. Its recovery vehicle (T-2) was struck several times by mortar fire, damaging the boom and final drive. The Assault Guns expended 331 rounds in harrassing and interdictory fire and at enemy infantry concentrations.

15 February - A Company held its position at ERNZEN. B Company remained inactive. 4 Germans surrendered at the B Company CP.

16 February - One section of the "rocket platoon" of A Company fired on an enemy concentration, breaking it up, while the other section took up positions at (LO51406) and fired on NIEDERWEISS (LO87419). At 1800 the 1st platoon, in support of the 3d Bn., took up defensive positions to repel possible enemy counterattack. C Company relieved B Company at FERSCHWEILER. B Company assembled at BERDORF. One C Company tank hit a mine enroute.

17 February - During the night C Company "rocket platoon" supported the 3d Bn. in crossing the ENZ River, while the balance of the company supported the attack of the infantry to the north. D Company moved to BERDORF. Battalion Headquarters and Service Company moved to ALTRIER (P986288).

18 February - 1st Platoon A Company at 0800 supported attack of 3d Battalion in clearing forest North of FERSCHWEILER. Mission accomplished 0930. The platoon returned to ERNZEN and the entire company was frozen for a 2 1/2 hour period for traffic control purposes. C Company tanks moved to SHANKWEILER at 0730. At 1300 the 1st platoon supported the 3d Battalion in capturing and securing high ground vicinity (LO346). One rocket tank supported by a platoon of the 1st Battalion broke up an enemy attempt to retake bridge across ENZ River. Direct rocket fire dispersed the enemy attempt.

19 February - The 1st and 3d platoons of C Company, supporting the 1st and 3d Battalions respectively, jumped off at 0730 and proceeded to objective - woods and high ground north of SHANKWEILER. Mission accomplished and tanks returned to SHANKWEILER before noon. At 1300 the two platoons moved out in support of the 2d Battalion and attacked against stiff opposition toward MUISBACH (LO04471). By nightfall they had advanced just short of the town.

20 February - Battalion Headquarters and Service Company moved to BEAUFORT (P960382). B Company relieved A Company and moved to FERSCHWEILER. A Company assembled at BERDORF.

21 February - 1st and 3d Platoons C Company jumped off 0630, supported attack to North. NALSDORF (LO23487) and STOCKEN (LO31487) cleared of enemy and one platoon held its positions in each of the towns. During the operation the tanks were subjected to extensive Nebelwerfer fire and encountered heavy mud which hindered mobility. At 0830 the rocket platoon fired on the woods north of SHANKWEILER with great success.

22-23 February - All units held defensive positions in respective sectors.



RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

24 February - Rocket platoons of B and C Companies took up positions to support respective CTs in crossing PRUM River.

25 February - B Company crossed PRUM River and moved to PEFFINGEN (O46465). 2d Platoon with 1 section of 1st platoon C Company attacked BETTINGEN (LO40501) and OLSDORF (LO30515) from south at 1700 against light opposition and occupied towns by 1730. Platoon remained at BETTINGEN.

26 February - A Company moved to FREILINGEN (P998487) and the tanks crossed the PRUM and assembled vicinity PEFFINGEN. B Company forded the NIMS River and supported 2d Battalion in attack to East, capturing high ground where positions were taken for the night. During the advance a column of enemy infantry in strength withdrawing from WOLSFELD (LO90460) in a draw was met between the two tank platoons. All the enemy were annihilated except for three wounded prisoners and numerous enemy small vehicles were destroyed. The 1st platoon of C Company advanced with the 2d Battalion into BIRTLINGEN (L101504). The 2d Platoon in support of the 1st Battalion was immobilized by heavy mud.

27 February - A Company advanced to INGLEDORF (LO82490) in the morning. At 1200 the entire company supported by the 1st Battalion, jumped off with the mission of capturing BITBURG (L132532). After advancing about a thousand yards the attack was temporarily delayed by a road block (L118506), made by blowing of a railroad overpass. While waiting for the road block to be cleared the tanks were subjected to direct AT fire from enemy Sps. Tank destroyers silenced one and dispersed the others. After the road block was cleared the tanks battled their way to the CR (L31528) within the city. As darkness set in the tanks withdrew to the south edge of the city (L131526) where they took up positions for the night. B Company fired supporting fire into SCHARFBILLIG (L154487), and the infantry marched into the town without opposition. C Company moved to WESSERICH (L100493). Service Company moved to STOCKEN.

28 February - A Company continued the attack on BITBURG at 0700 and the entire city was cleared of enemy by 1100. The 1st platoon continued the attack by supporting the infantry in securing the high ground east of BITBURG. They met some direct AT fire, but silenced it and probably knocked out 1 German tank. The tanks also fired into the town of METTERICH (L178540) and it is reported they destroyed a radar station. B Company supported the infantry in capturing ROHL (L173494) by 1130 and in the afternoon fired woods north of SCHARFBILLIG. The 2d Platoon of C Company in support of the 3d Battalion advanced to SWEM (L166475) against no opposition and continued to capture DANLEM (L181469) against moderate opposition. The 1st platoon in support of the 2d Battalion fought its way to IDNHEIM (L164450). Battalion Headquarters moved to BETTINGEN.

4. Results of Operations:

The daily result of the operations might best be characterized by a report of a company commander: "Many Krauts suspended operations against the Allies today." Despite battering against the fixed fortifications of the SIEGFRIED LINE, terrain difficulties, natural river obstacles, lack of roads, heavily mined areas, determined enemy resistance and heavy anti-tank fire, no tanks were disabled by enemy fire, only three were disabled by mines, two enlisted men were killed and eighteen enlisted men and two officers were evacuated as battle casualties.

RESTRICTED

4. Results of operations (continued).

Nine of the casualties, including the two deaths, were caused by enemy mortar fire landing in bivouac area on 23 Feb. Several enemy armored vehicles were probably destroyed, 1 long barreled 88mm AT gun was destroyed together with an undetermined number of other enemy wheeled vehicles, machine guns and small arms. Rockets were used with a high degree of success. "Many PVB have expressed the opinion that our rockets launched from tanks are worse than artillery and extremely demoralizing." (C-2 Periodic Report No. 197, 5th Infantry Division, 26 Feb 45.)

5. Tactics.

a. Employment: Generally tanks were employed successfully. However, the tendency to commit tank companies by platoons continued. After eight months of continuous operations against the enemy it has been found that maximum success was achieved when the companies were used in mass, i.e., that at least two platoons of a company be committed simultaneously to work side by side.

b. Air-Ground Liaison: The following plan was developed for constant communication between cub planes and tanks. SCR 610 in plane on common channel with SCR 508 in tanks. One cub plane on that channel in air at all times during attack. Each tank platoon leader maintains a constant listening watch on that channel. Sector of attack is broken down into zones. Zones used for identification purposes and general location instead of check points. In the event either plane or tank are unable to reach each other, the party desiring communication contacts battalion station which has SCR 608 set on both common channels and on artillery firing channel. The battalion station contacts either plane or tanks as the case may be. Further, when a plane sights enemy tanks, the pilot broadcasts a warning on the Air-Ground Liaison Channel. (See Memo Unnumbered, Hq 737th Tank Bn., 22 Feb 45, Exhibit "A".)

c. Rocket Launchers: During the second week of February, launcher, rocket 4.5 inch, T34 was mounted on 14 medium tanks. The large mass of fire (60 rounds in 22 seconds per launcher) affectively covering an area target of approximately 500 yards square makes it particularly desirable weapon. However, there are many disadvantages such as: immobilizes tanks from being used in their primary role; difficulties of transportation, both in ammunition and in transporting launchers before and after being jettisoned; damages easily from tree branches, small arms artillery, etc.; the difficulty of reinstallation after the launcher has been removed; and additional maintenance problems. After the initial firing of the rockets on 9 February examination disclosed the following: insulation burned out between tubes; necessary to rewire practically all tubes, many latches were bent or broken; a number of the electrical contacts were bad; 6 tubes slid out of position. It is felt that a medium tank is much too costly and important a weapon to carry the launcher and that the disadvantages of mounting the launcher on a medium tank outweigh the advantages. During the month 8 of the launchers were removed. The infantry commanders prefer to have the tanks prepared to fulfill their primary role, rather than be limited to special missions. Experiments are now being made to install the launcher on the M-5 Light Tank. The light tanks have been used comparatively little in the coordinate tank-infantry attack. If the launcher can be successful mounted on the light tank the supported infantry will not lose the offensive power of the medium tank. This will necessitate the installation of an azimuth indicator or some other means of measuring deflection of the rocket firing tanks if they are to be tied in with Field Artillery and fired indirectly. Otherwise only direct fire can be used, which is seldom practicable.

[REDACTED]

(Action Against Enemy Report, After After Action.)
Hq 737th Tank Battalion, APO 436, 2 March 1945

Page #7


5. Tactics (continued)

d. Tank-Infantry Radio Communication: During the month 302 300 radios were installed in the tanks. This radio is not an adequate method of communication between the tank-infantry team. While in combat it is practically impossible to receive communication through this radio. Tank engine and track noises and the reports of the guns make the set practically inaudible.

e. Awards:

2 Silver Stars and 4 Bronze Star Medals were awarded within the battalion during month of February.

For the Battalion Commander:


JAMES I. WICKENS
Major, Cavalry
S-3

Inclosures: 1 - Exhibit "A"

- 8 -

[REDACTED]

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
737th Tank Battalion
APO 436

RESTRICTED

22 Feb 1945

MEMORANDUM)

UNNUMBERED)

AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION

An arrangement has been worked out with the Air Section of Division Artillery of this division in which front line tanks will be able to get air observation on radio call in a manner similar to that which has been employed in the past.

The Corps Air-Ground Liaison Channel has been installed in 7 tanks per company, i.e., Company Commander, 3 Platoon Leaders, 3 Platoon Sergeants. It is on push button No. 9. The Platoon Leader in each platoon will keep one receiver of his 508 on a listening watch on this Air net at all times while operating.

The call sign of any airplane will be at all times "12A". The call word of any tank requesting air observation will be at all times "HOT SHOT".

OVERLAY:

Each officer in a tank company and each observer will be issued an overlay from this headquarters showing the division sector and a certain distance to each side of it, divided up into zones running approximately parallel with division boundaries. These zones will be approximately one kilometer wide and will constitute the sole means of air identification of friendly tanks calling for observation and identification of both observation and firing targets by the tank commander the liaison pilot.

SPEED OF OBTAINING AIR OBSERVATION:

At all times from dawn to dusk a plane will be in the air with his radio set on the air-ground liaison channel. It should be assumed by every tank commander whether he can see the plane or not that air observation will still be available to him, i.e., the plane may be operating on the other side of the division sector and may be out of sight of the tank commander, yet be well within radio range and perfectly capable of coming to any zone that the tank commander specifies.

PROCEDURE FOR AIR OBSERVATION REQUESTS:

When a Platoon leader wishes air observation on the ground directly before him, he will call for it in the following manner:

Tank: "HOT SHOT to 12A", over,
Plane: "12A to HOT SHOT", over,
Tank: "HOT SHOT to 12A, request observation in zone 7, over,"
Plane: "12A to HOT SHOT, Roger, I will be right over."

When a plane comes into zone he will call the tank platoon leaders and notify them that he is flying above him and ask him what specific targets he wishes observed.

- 1 -

EXHIBIT "A"

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

UNUSUAL AND SPECIAL MISSIONS:

If a tank commander should call a plane and be unable to contact him for any reason, such as fog, air accident, etc., he will call 10 Relay (Message Center Relay Station) which will be kept within range of him at all times and request observation through them, giving as complete information as possible and always stating zone in which observation is to be made. 10 Relay will then relay message to station which this battalion maintains in the Division Artillery Air Net and they will contact plane and if mission is urgent, will request a special mission flown.

TANK WARNING:

Immediately upon sighting enemy tanks, the liaison pilot will broadcast a warning on the Air-Ground Liaison Channel, giving coordinates of enemy tanks. The procedure will be as follows:

"Tank Warning to Hot Shot and 'NAN 3' ". 3 enemy tanks at 369126 (or any coordinates concerned)". (NAN 3 is Base Station.)

It is of the utmost importance that platoon leaders keep one receiver on the Air-Ground Liaison Channel at all times while operating so that they can immediately identify coordinates of enemy armor when given.

The platoon leaders must be aware of the fact that even though they cannot see the plane, it is still operating within radio range and is available to come to any sector so full advantage should be taken of this fact.

By Order of the Battalion Commander:

/s/ James W. McIntyre
/t/ JAMES W. MCINTYRE
Capt., Inf. (Armd)
Communications Officer

RESTRICTED

██████████
HEADQUARTERS
737th Tank Battalion
APO 436

RWH

RECEIVED

1 April 1945

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, After After Action Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.
(Through: Commanding General, 5th Infantry Division, APO 5, US Army.)

1. Transmitted herewith Action Against Enemy, After After Action Report for month of March, 1945.

For the Battalion Commander:

Leonard M. Shealer
LEONARD M. SHEALER
1st Lt., Inf. (Armd)
Adjutant

7MIC C-1872

Incls - 2

- Incl #1 - Action Against Enemy, After After Action Report.
- Incl #2 - Original Unit Journal.

936

45

J

APR 5 1945

6144

██████████

Incl # 14