

After Action Reports of the 40th Tank Battalion (7th Armored Division) August 1944 - June 1945

Transcribed from the original documents in Box 15719 (7th Armored Division 607-TK(40)-0.1 to 607-TK(40)-0.7) of Record Group 407 (Adjutant General's Office) at National Archives II in College Park, MD by

- Barry A. Wells, son-in-law of Maurice McCoy of Company "C", 40th Tank Battalion - December 1944, January-February 1945, Part II of March 1945, April-June 1945
- Wesley Johnston, son of Walter Johnston of Company "B", 38th Armored Infantry Battalion - August-November 1944, Part I of March 1945

The reports are dated either at the end of the report month or in the first days of the month following the report month.

The original spellings and format are generally retained in the transcript. Word wrap in which a line of text continues to the next line is not necessarily as in the original. If there is any question of accuracy, please contact Wesley Johnston (wwjohnston@aol.com) so that the original scanned images can be checked to assure that the transcript does or does not match the original.

S E C R E T

No change of station occurred.

Morale: Excellent

Training Progress: Excellent

The beginning of August prophesized a great month for our Battalion, in that steps taken to modify our tanks and wheeled vehicles forwarned us, that we were getting ready for combat. Although many of our men worked into the wee hours of the morning and under adverse circumstances, inasmuch as lights could not be used, the morale of our men was excellent. This was brought to the surface, it is thought, due to the ever present interest of our Battalion Commander.¹ He stayed with his men no matter how late the hour. His ideas were given at the moment, when the men had stretched their inventive genius to the limit, at storing equipment in the vehicles, where it would be at hand when needed and still have room for the crew to operate. Training at this period was scheduled on subjects suggested by the individual soldier. Schools were still in progress on radio, mines, and booby traps. The grades received at these schools were excellent considering the short period covered by instruction. All vehicles were combat loaded and inspected prior to 6 August 44. The Battalion left Tidworth Barracks motor park, as a unit, by tanks, half-tracks and wheeled vehicles at 0800 7 August 44, enroute to the Marshalling Area in England. Arrived at the Marshalling Area at 1415 7 August 44. Miles traveled 67 miles. All vehicles arrived without any maintenance trouble. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~² were housed in pyramidal tents containing canvas ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in a natural camouflage area, in column, ready to pull out at a moments notice. After all personnel were assigned to their tents, they were given an excellent dinner, of steak

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¹ The 40th Tank Battalion Commanding Officer at this time was Lt. Col. Edward T. McConnell.

² There is crossed out text at this point.

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and everything that goes with it. After dinner, all vehicles were checked and serviced at parking areas. This was completed by 1800 and the vehicles were all set to hit the road at a moments notice. The Battalion remained at the Marshalling Area all day of 8 August 44. After vehicles were completed, the time was covered by personnel washing their clothes and bathing also last minute checks on their equipment and the double checking on their equipment and weapons. While at this area, all men secured a carton of cigarettes, razor blades, tobacco and a days meal of "K" rations. Everybody was given a chance to write home. Letters to be mailed after we had left the area. Two good shows were showing, free, to all personnel who cared to go to the tent show. The name of the pictures were "China" and "The Evening Is Ending". One covered the German occupation of France and the other covered the treatment of the Chinese in the occupied parts of China, by the Japs. A day room was also available for use by the troops. This contained ping-pong tables, dart games and a very nice library. Our assigned strength at this time was 39 Officers, 3 Warrant Officers and 669 Enlisted Men. Eight of the enlisted men were left at the hospital at Tidworth. These men were dropped from our rolls at the Marshalling Area prior to our departure, leaving our assigned strength of enlisted men 661. We left the Marshalling Area, as a unit, at 0450, 9 August 44. Although it was dark, all vehicles pulled out without any confusion, and everyone knew his place in the convoy. The convoy arrived at an area located about two miles from Portland, England, at about 0630 on 9 August 44. Here all personnel were given coffee and doughnuts by the American Red Cross. From this area, we proceeded to Portland, England and lined up our vehicles in front of docks in preparation to loading on the LST'S. At around 0715, the first vehicle entered the gang-plank of the LST. The Battalion was loaded on three LST'S. Hq & Hq Co, Co "A",

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and Med Det were loaded on US LST 530. Company "C", and part of Sv Co were loaded on US LST 507. Company "B", Company "D" and remainder of Sv Co were loaded on US LST 509. All vehicles and personnel were loaded in minimum amount of time and without any incidents. When loaded the LST crafts moved out to their positions in the convoy about ¼ mile off shore. IT should be noted at this time of the noticeable change that came over our men when they found out the boats were United States boats and operated by a crew of US seamen. The flag flying at the mast boosted the morale a hundred per-cent. About seventy-five per-cent of the personnel were supplied canvas type cots, to sleep in, while the remainder of the men slept in their blank rolls, on deck. Most men preferred to sleep on deck in preference to going below deck for cots. The evening meal was served on board the LST. The night of 9 Aug 44 was spent off shore. At about 0700 10 August 44, the convoy sailed. The display of boats in convoy will remain in our men's memories for a long time. We arrived off shore at Visley, France, at 2100, 11 August 44.³ The boats moved in closer to shore at hightide and dropped anchor. We spent the night on ship awaiting the going out of the tide before unloading. At 0925, 11 August 44, the first vehicles started off the gang-plank and onto French soil, at Visley, France. As they were unloaded, they proceeded to an assembly area at La Haye du Puits, France, about 30 miles inland. At this point, vehicles were serviced and all personnel ate their dinner of "K" rations. Left this area at 1500 enroute to an area in the vicinity 5 miles NE of Fougeres, France. Arrived at this point at 1225, 12 August 44. Miles traveled, 87 miles. One Warrant Officer and 12 enlisted men were placed in the Administration Controll⁴ point, rear echelon, this date, and were dropped from our effective strength. Two enlisted men were left with Division Headquarters as truck

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³ Thus far, I have not been able to find a "Visley" along the Utah and Omaha Beach coast of France.

⁴ The spelling "Controll" is as in the original.

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drivers. Upon arrival at bivouac, slit trenches were dug, camouflage nets were spread over vehicles and vehicles and guns were cleaned and serviced. On 13 August 44, we were only five miles from the front lines. Road blocks were set out and the Battalion Reconnaissance Platoon was kept busy on scouting and patrolling. One of the eight enlisted men left at Tidworth hospital returned to duty this date. Left bivouac area 5 miles NE of Fougères, France 2330, 13 August 44 and arrived at bivouac area at St Pierre, France 0830 14 August 44.⁵ Travelled 66 miles and had no enemy contact. Left this area at 2000⁶ 14 August 44 and proceeded to bivouac area at south of Tille, France arriving there at 1300 14 August 44.⁷ Travelled 53 miles. Company "A" contacted enemy at this point and lost one Medium Tank, one man killed⁸ and three wounded in action. This was our first loss of vehicles and men by enemy action. Left this area at 1600 15 August 44 and arrived at new bivouac area 2 miles from Senoches, France at 2100. Travelled 48 miles. Three miles from this area, the Battalion moved into a position for combat. All tanks were lined up in a wheat field ready to move on the town of Senoches, France. After a wait of about two hours in this position, orders came over the radio, that the infantry⁹ had everything under control and would not need the tanks. The Battalion moved from this position at 1130 15 August 44 to a bivouac area at Mittainville, France, travelling 20 miles.¹⁰ This town will be long remembered, because at 0800 on 16 August 44, we were shelled while still in bivouac, by German 88MM guns. There was no loss of vehicles or personnel in this shelling, but it was an excellent sight to see how well our former training came to the aid of our men in that they at once spread their vehicles to a greater interval and returned all fire. One of our tanks knocked out the enemy's observation point which was located in a church steeple in the town, about 2 miles to our front, with his second shot from his 75MM gun.

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⁵ This may be St. Pierre-sur-Orthe, which is on the main road from Mayenne to Le Mans.

⁶ The time is given as 2000, but this must be an error, based on the other times.

⁷ Thus far, I have not been able to find "Tille" which is probably between Le Mans and Senonches.

⁸ Page N43 below identifies this man as T/4 William V. Vitez and gives the location as Senonches.

⁹ This probably refers to the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

¹⁰ This is probably Mittainvilliers, just N of the Senonches-Chartres road, about 12 miles W of Chartres.

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This particular tank was at that moment, undergoing the replacement of an oil line and could not move.

Left this area at 1900 16 August 44 arriving at bivouac area at Ecrosnes, France at 0200 17 August 44.¹¹ Travelled 14 miles. During this move, one lone enemy plane dropped a bomb about 100 yards from the front of our column. No fire was returned and as it was around 2130, it is thought the pilot did not know of our column and left the area. In our bivouac area at Ecrosnes, France, we had a chance to clean up. For the first time all personnel had a chance to take a bath, from their steel helmets, and at that time, we were so in need of one that the personnel enjoyed it as much as if it was taken from a regular bath tub. At about 1400, 17 August 44, while still in this bivouac area, two enemy planes came over and fired on us. Within one minute, all 50 caliber guns of our vehicles were going full blast at them and the planes were seen to smoke and fall on the horizon. Next day, two enemy pilots were picked up a short distance from our bivouac area. On the night of 17 August 44, our assault platoon made contact with the enemy and gave a good account of themselves. Left this area at 1800, 18 August 44, arriving in bivouac area 2 miles NW of Dreux, France at 1300, 19 August 44. This bivouac area was one of our most exciting bivouac areas, in that all day of 19 August 44, the artillery was firing a barrage over our heads. A platoon of our medium tanks fired their 75MM guns from 1400, 19 August 44 to about 2400. All this concentration was being done on the enemy entrenched in caves about three miles south of Dreux, France. Eight enemy planes flew over our bivouac area at 1800 this date but no hits were made as the planes were at a high altitude. They left after a very short time. On 20 August 44, we were still in bivouac area 2 miles NW of Dreux, France, the artillery with the aid of a platoon of our tanks, were still shelling the enemy positions on the other side of

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¹¹ Ecrosnes is about 12 miles NE of Chartres. So they were encircling Chartres from the north.

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Dreux, France. This position was also bombed by US aircraft at noon, 20 August 44. At 1900, 19 August 44, our light tank company¹², engaged the enemy for two hours and a half in the vicinity of Le Ferre, France. At 2130, a strong concentration of enemy artillery forced them to withdraw to the vicinity of Flannville, France.¹³ The following is our total losses for the first week in combat:

Killed in action: 1 enlisted man

Wounded in action: 4 enlisted men (3 by enemy fire, 1 by our fire).

One officer and three enlisted men were evacuated to hospital as non-battle casualties. Our light tank company, in their skirmish with the enemy on 14, 16, 18 and 19 August 44, killed twelve enemy personnel, captured 47 prisoners, destroyed 14 rifles, 2 carbines, 1 schmizer and 2 pistols. They received no loss in personnel or vehicles. The Battalion was still in bivouac at Dreux, France, on 20 August 44. It rained pretty heavy on this date. Constant artillery fire was still in progress, both by the artillery and our 75MM guns. Left Dreux at 0730, 21 August 44 arriving at Allanville, France at 2130, 21 August 44.¹⁴ Travelled 49 miles. It rained on and off during this move, no contact being made with the enemy. The night of 21 August 44 was quite except for the firing, on the enemy, of our 75MM guns. Left this bivouac area at 0900, 22 August 44 marching about 2 miles. Our vehicles were extended into battle line over a cultivated field and advanced on the town of Arpajon, France. Contacted enemy who was in this town an 1030. Engaging small enemy troops at times until 1300. The town was cleared of enemy troops at 1315, 22 August 44. Our vehicles had a little hard going over the cultivated land due to the rain of the night before. Marched through town at 1400 to an area about 2 miles west of the town. Serviced our vehicles and guns

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¹³ There is a "la Ferrette" about 10 miles W of Dreux and a tiny "le Verger" about 4 miles N of Dreux. Flonville is about 1 miles N of Dreux and near le Verger.

¹⁴ This is Ollainville, just W of Arpajon.

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and ate our noon meal. On checking personnel and vehicles, it was found we had suffered no loss. Left this temporary assembly area at 1700, 22 August 44 and contacted enemy at 1800 at Ponthierry, France.¹⁵ Kept in contact with enemy about eight hours. Our losses from this action was one officer, wounded, two enlisted men killed in action¹⁶, four enlisted men lightly wounded. Three medium tanks were damaged from enemy shell fire. The Battalion bivouaced in the town of Ponthierry, France at 0200, 23 August 44. Vehicles were parked on the side streets and the men laid their sleeping bags right on the side walk. The town seemed deserted of all civilians. It was not until around 0800 the next morning, 23 August 44, that the civilian population showed themselves. At this time, our men were shaving and cleaning up in preparation to move out. The Battalion moved out of the town of Ponthierry, France at 1200, 23 August 44. While moving, the enemy artillery set up an artillery barrage. No damage was done by this. Our light tank company was attached to Division Headquarters at about 0100, 23 August 44. The Battalion left the area one mile outside of Ponthierry at 0700 24 August 44 and crossed the River Seine over a pontoon bridge, constructed by the Division Engineers, on the night of 23 August 44. During the crossing of the river, there was no enemy action whatever. All vehicles made the crossing of the bridge without any incidents. Although it was raining and causing a short delay in climbing the embankment on the far side of the river, one of three engineer bull dozers kept the approach to the embankment leveled out after about every fifth vehicle crossed it. About three miles from the River Seine, and south of the town of Seine Port¹⁷, enemy mortar shells were falling around us and enemy snipers wounded one of our tank commanders. The Battalion went into bivouac at this position. Company "A" and Company "B" tanks were sent forward to destroy the enemy in the town of Seine Port. During this skirmish, Company A destroyed two German Tiger Tanks.

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¹⁵ Ponthierry is just north of Tilly, both of which are several miles NW of Melun, along the Seine River.

¹⁶ Pvt. Elmer G. Gordon (Company B) and Pvt. Delbert J. Longworth (Headquarters Company) were killed 22 August 1944.

¹⁷ Seine-Port is a short distance across the Seine River from Tilly.

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A civilian notified our CO at this time of two German 88MM guns that were in an emplacement and had been in this emplacement for the past four years. The coordinates of the position of these guns were passed on to the aid¹⁸ corps who bombed these positions. It is believed the guns were destroyed. Personnel of Company A and Company B came upon an area that had been used as an enemy GHQ and had been vacated in a hurry by the enemy. This decision was reached after the observation of the German equipment scattered around the area. A German scout car carrying a Major and Captain, passed over the road in the vicinity of our bivouac and was shot up by our infantry. The Major was killed, the Captain wounded. The scout car destroyed. On 24 August 44, it was still raining pretty heavy. Our artillery kept up a constant fire on the enemy all day. We left this bivouac area at 1900 25 August 44. Travelled 8 miles to a position 1 mile east of Voisenon.¹⁹ Arrived there at 2400 25 August 44. Went into bivouac. Company "A" captured 7 prisoners and Company "B" captured 12. They were evacuated at once. Left this bivouac area 1300 26 August 44 and arriving at bivouac area 4½ miles north of Province, France at 2030, 26 August 44. While enroute, Company "C" captured 42 prisoners. The Battalion received its first mail from home while outside Seine Port. It was the first mail the men had received since they left England, so the morale was lifted to the top notch. Left bivouac area at Province²⁰ at 1000, 27 August 44. Hq Co, Sv Co, Co "B" and Co "C" were placed under the command of Major BROWN and proceeded over a different route, while Hq, Co "A", one company of the 814th Tank Destroyers, two companies of Infantry²¹ and one battery of the 489th FA Bn proceeded on a separate route. Arrived in Chateau-Thierry at 2330 27 August 44, travelling 77 miles on this move. We bivouaced in the streets of Chateau-Thierry and on the road entering the city, it was noted the large number of German vehicles, both horse drawn and coal and gas operated vehicles, periodically

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¹⁸ Clearly this should have been "air".

¹⁹ Voisenon is about 1 mile directly N of Melun, on the east side of the Seine River.

²⁰ This is probably the city of Provins, well to the E of Melun.

²¹ Probably from 48th Armored Infantry Battalion

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littering the sides of the road. A great number of German dead was also noted. Left Chateau-Thierry at 1000 28 August 44, proceeded to bivouac area at Fort Brimont, 2 miles northwest of Reims, France. Arrived at this area at 2230 28 August 44. Left Reims France at 1400 29 August 44. Arrived at Neufchatel about 1600, 29 August 44.²² At this bivouac area, prisoners were being brought in to our area about every 15 minutes. We had collected about 200 or 300 prisoners. While in this bivouac area, three German planes flew over our vehicles and strafed our personnel, injuring no personnel nor damaging any vehicles. It is thought that these while not knowing where we were in this location, came up on us accidentally and were more surprised than we were. Our 50 calibre machine guns opened up on them at once and they left in a hurry. We left this area at about 1300, 30 August 44 and stopped at an area in the vicinity of Beine, France.²³ Stayed in this area for three hours, moving out about 2000 and proceeded to a bivouac area 6 miles southwest of Verdun, France. Left this bivouac area about 0830, 31 August 44 and marched in the city of Verdun, France. About four miles from the city of Verdun, we were shelled by German mortar and 88MM shells. The vehicles were at once moved into an old French fort, Fort De Choune, in this location. The old fort was built of iron and stone and came in handy at the moment for shelter for our vehicles and personnel. While in this position, our second column could be seen moving on Verdun over the improved road about three miles north of us. Advance elements of south column entered Verdun at 1200. Enemy fire soon began to cease so the remainder of our Battalion moved in on the city of Verdun. We closed in the city at 1500 31 August 44. At this time, all signs of the enemy had disappeared from the city. All our companies joined us at Verdun with the exception of Co "D" and Co "B". These two companies were still attached to the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion. Steps were

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²² Neufchâtel-sur-Aisne is about 12 miles due N of Reims.

²³ Beine-Nauroy is about 8 to 10 miles due E of Reims.

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taken at once to guard all outlets of the city and all bridges. Vehicles were concealed under all available trees. Our casualties totaled as follows: one officer killed, five enlisted men killed and four enlisted men seriously wounded.²⁴ The officer killed was our first officer killed in action. From observation of the civilian population of the city of Verdun, it would seem that the war was over. Our men were treated excellently by the civilians and they were very co-operative towards all military personnel. At 1700 on 31 August 44, the civilians presented our Commanding Officer²⁵ with the medal of Verdun. This was done with much ado and it seemed like everybody in town gathered around. This was presented on the steps of the Verdun Monument. The last day of August came to an end in a most exciting manner for our Battalion. While still parked in Verdun, we were expecting to move out of the city at once, rumors had it that we were going to stay a couple of days to hold the city. It would be proper at this time to express or note the excellent work performed by our Division Military Police. They performed their duties, as guides and also evacuating 83 prisoners, in an excellent manner all through our move across France. Our medical detachment performed their duties both in handling the wounded of the enemy as well as our own wounded, in a superior manner. The training they received back in the States was brought to the surface in an excellent manner.

HIGH SPOTS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

Our first engagement with the enemy occurred about 1900 14 August 44.

Our first casualty, killed in action, T/4 Vitez, William V., 36 119 669, Company "A", 40th Tank Battalion, which occurred about 1920 14 August 44 at Senouches, France.

Our first vehicle to be destroyed by an enemy action was at 1920 14 August 44. A medium tank was hit by an 88MM shell.

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²⁴ The officer is later identified as A/40's 2nd Lt. George K. Hogan, killed August 31. The enlisted men thus far identified are: HQ Company Recon Platoon on August 28: T/5 Edward J. Clinton, Pvt. Henry George Lemke; unknown company on August 26: Pfc. John L. Mordo. This leaves two enlisted men.

²⁵ Lt. Col. McConnell was still in command at this time.

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Our first officer to be killed in action occurred at about 0900, 31 August 44, 6 miles south of Verdun, France. He was 2nd Lt HOGAN, GEORGE K., O 536 756 assigned to Company "A", 40th Tank Battalion, killed by a German 88MM shell blowing off the top of his tank turret.

The following is a brief detail on the enemy property captured, enemy personnel captured and number of enemy personnel killed and vehicles destroyed. While these figures are not entirely accurate, due to the figures being taken immediately after the heat of battle and during the suspense of expecting a counter-attack from the enemy, the figures were taken from day to day from the platoon commanders and platoon sergeants and totaled weekly:

<u>Enemy Personnel Killed</u>	<u>Enemy Personnel Captured</u>	<u>Enemy Tanks Destroyed</u>	<u>Enemy Wheeled Vehicles Destroyed</u>	<u>Enemy Vehicles Captured</u>	<u>Enemy Weapons destroyed</u>
906	384	27	169	11	8-88MM 4-155MM 5 76MM 6 20MM AT Guns 10 Machine guns heavy 1 57MM 2 80MM mortars 2 50MM 3 76MM 24 Rifles 2 Carbines 1 Schmirer 2 Pistols

Our losses in weapons and vehicles were as follows:

<u>Tanks</u>	<u>Half-tracks</u>	<u>Wheeled Vehicles</u>	<u>Weapons</u>
14	0	1 - 2½ ton truck 6x6 w/trailer	37-30 Cal M.G. 7-Sub-machine gun M3 12-75MM 12-50 Cal MG 1-Carbine

During the month of August, the following battle and other losses occurred:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Killed in Action</u>	<u>Wounded in Action</u>	<u>Non-battle casualty</u>	<u>Missing in action</u>	<u>Left at hosp Tidworth England, non-battle</u>
Hq	0	0	0	0	0
Hq Co	3 EM	2 Off 4 EM	4 EM	0	1 EM

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Sv Co	0	2 EM	1 EM	0	3 EM
Co A	10 EM	13 EM	3 EM	0	1 EM
Co B	3 EM	5 EM	3 EM	1 EM	0
Co C	0	1 EM	0	0	0
Co D	0	1 EM	0	0	0
Med Det	0	0	0	0	0
Total For Bn	16 EM	2 Off 32 EM	12 EM	1 EM	7 EM

Total losses:

2 Officers
0 Warrant Officers
68 Enlisted Men

During the month of August, the following personnel were received:

1 Officer assigned 28 August 44.
1 EM returned to duty from Hospital, Tidworth, England, 13 August 44.
13 EM (Replacements) received at Seine Port, France, 25 August 44.
5 EM (Replacements) received 28 August 44

Total gains:

1 Officer
0 Warrant Officers
19 Enlisted Men

Total assigned strength for the period ending 31 August 44:

35 Officers assigned, 1 Officer attached.
3 Warrant Officers
624 Enlisted Men

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R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. S. ARMY

/jap

30 September 44

SUBJECT : After Battle Report

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

1. Reference: AR 345-105

2. Operations:

a. 00011 September 44 to 13452 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "B" and "D".

Attached: 489th FA Bn, A/48th Inf. 1 platoon, a/814th TD Bn.,²⁶ 1 platoon, A/33rd Engineers.

Outposted Verdun and protected bridge crossing over Meuse River. Approximately three (3) enemy bombers attacked at 2300. Casualties - three (3) killed, 14 wounded, no vehicles.

b. 13452 September 44 to 1330 6 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "B" and "D".

Attached: 489th FA Bn., a/48th Inf., 1 platoon A/814th TD Bn., 1 platoon A/33rd Engineers.

Moved to bivouac area vicinity of Bras, France. Personal hygiene, care and cleaning of clothing and equipment and first echelon maintenance was performed. Casualties-none.

c. 13306 September 44 to 10007 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "B" and "D".

Attached: 489th FA Bn., A/48th Inf, 1 platoon A/814th TD Bn., 1 platoon A/33rd Engineers.

Moved from vicinity of Bras, France east through Verdun, Etain toward Metz. Strong enemy resistance met at St Privat. AT guns, automatic weapons, bazookas, riflemen, mines and road blocks in the form of craters and trees were well coordinated. Infantry closely supported by tanks and artillery overcame their resistance by 10007 September 44. Casualties-3 Enlisted Men killed, 1 Enlisted man missing in action, 1 Officer and 10 enlisted men wounded in action, 3 medium tanks (one by mines and two by AT guns) and one 105MM Assault gun (by mines).

d. 10007 September 44 to 18008 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "B" and "D".

Attached: 489th FA Bn., A/48th Inf, 1 platoon A/814th TD Bn., 1 platoon A/33rd Engineers.

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²⁶ Note that the lower case company letters in this month are all as in the original.

R E S T R I C T E D

Moved from St Privat, France to the northeast, toward the Moselle River and halted in the vicinity of Silvange, France because of heavy artillery and mortar fire. Remained in this position receiving fire periodically. The 40th Tank Battalion except S-3 half-track and Company "C" remained in this area until 060015 September 44, under periodical fire. Casualties-1 Enlisted Man killed, 3 Enlisted Men wounded, 3 medium tanks (one by bazooka fire and two by AT guns), 1 light tank (bazooka)

e. 18008 September 44 to 090010 September 44:

1. Task force - S-3 halftrack, C/40th Tank Battalion, 489th TA²⁷ Bn., and Company "A" 48th Infantry Battalion.

Moved from vicinity of Silvange to position west of Roncourt with mission of assisting 1st Bn., 2nd Infantry attacked from the southwest from the vicinity of Habonville. The attack was launched at 13150 September 44 but was stopped by extremely heavy AT and artillery fire. At least part of AT guns and artillery were located in strong concrete fortifications and emplacements which surround the city of Metz. Casualties-1 Enlisted Man killed, 7 Enlisted Men missing in action, 1 Officer and 8 Enlisted Men wounded in action, 6 medium tanks (AT guns).

f. 090010 September 44 to 141511 September 44:

1. Task force - S-3 halftrack, Company "C" 40th Tank Battalion, 489th FA Bn., A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Moved from vicinity west of Roncourt to vicinity of Habonville with mission of assisting 1st Bn, 2nd Infantry to seize Amonville²⁸ by attacking in coordination with them on their right flank. Attack launched at 1800 10 September 44. Tanks were met with heavy artillery and AT fire. Tanks were able to penetrate to the outskirts of Amonville but were forced to withdraw because Infantry could not move in with them. Casualties-1 Enlisted Man missing in action, 2 Enlisted Men wounded in action, 3 Medium Tanks (AT Guns).²⁹

g. 141511 September 44 to 221514 September 44:

1. Task force - 489th FA Bn., C/40th Tank Battalion, A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Moved from vicinity of Habonville to position west of Roncourt with mission of seizing fortified enemy positions north of Amonville, in conjunction with "CCR" on our left. Tanks were not used in this mission until 150014 September 44 when one platoon of Company "C" was committed in one attempt to rescue one platoon of "B" Company, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion³⁰ which was cut off. Casualties-1 Officer and 6 Enlisted Men missing in action, 2 Enlisted Men wounded in action, 2 medium tanks (Bazooka)

h. 221514 September 44 to 205015 September 44:

1. Task force - 489th FA Bn., C/40th Tank Battalion, A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

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²⁷ This should be FA for Field Artillery. The typo is retained as in the original.

²⁸ The correct spelling is Amneville, which is along the Moselle NE of Roncourt and St. Privat.

²⁹ In fact, C/40 men Sgt. Homer Bryan, Sgt. Jack Lewis, Pfc. Florian Wallace, Pvt. Peter Polifka, and Pvt. Bernard Glazier were incinerated in their tank on 9 September. They were reported MIA as of 9 September in the Morning Report of 13 September. Their remains were never recovered.

³⁰ Based on 38AIB records, especially Morning Reports, it is more likely that it was C/38 than B/38.

R E S T R I C T E D

Moved from³¹ vicinity of Roncourt to assembly area, vicinity of Xonville, France. Here, 40th Tank Battalion reformed. Casualties-none.

i. 205015 September 44 to 070018 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".
Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Moved from vicinity of Xonville east across Moselle River to position on high ground near Arry. Received periodical artillery and mortar fire. Launched attack on town of Marsieulles³² in conjunction with 48th Infantry reenforced.³³ Town captured about 160017 September 44. casualties-1 Officer and 3 Enlisted Men killed in action, 2 Enlisted Men missing in action, 1 Officer and 10 Enlisted Men wounded in action, 2 medium tanks (one by mines and one by AT guns).

j. 070018 September 44 to 190019 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".
Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

After being relieved at Marsieulles by elements of 5th Infantry Division, battalion reenforced, assembled vicinity of Lorry. Casualties-none.

k. 190019 September 44 to 023025 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".
Attached: B/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Moved from assembly area vicinity of Lorry toward Sillegny to relieve elements of "CCR" which had suffered heavy casualties in there³⁴ attempt to capture Sillegny.³⁵ Relief was made at night. Attack launched at 160020 September 44 to secure crossing over Seille River south of Sillegny. The attack progressed well until it reached the river at which time it came under extremely heavy artillery and mortar fire from across the river to the east, from the north and from the south. At least part of their artillery fire was from fortified concrete fortifications and emplacements which our artillery could not neutralize. No air was brought in to assist and after being driven back our forces dug in and remained under heavy periodical artillery and mortar fire for the remainder of the period. Casualties-2 Enlisted Men killed in action, 1 Officer and 2 Enlisted Men wounded in action, 3 medium tanks (one AT and two artillery).

l. 023025 September 44 to 093726 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".
Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Battalion was relieved by elements of the 5th Infantry Division and ordered to withdraw back across the Moselle River to a position vicinity of Xonville, France. Casualties-none.

³¹ The incorrect spelling is as in the original.

³² The correct spelling is Marieulles.

³³ The incorrect spelling is as in the original.

³⁴ The incorrect spelling is as in the original.

³⁵ This was primarily the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, which had 3 Battalion commanders killed and one wounded on 19 September 1944.

R E S T R I C T E D

m. 093726 September 44 to 060029 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion

Moved as a Battalion for the first time during the month of September from Xonville to Vutch, Belgium. Time here spent in personal hygiene, care of clothing and equipment, first echelon maintenance and rest. Casualties-none.

n. 060029 September 44 to 151029 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion.

Moved to assembly area vicinity of Terp, Holland where orders were received for move to attack position vicinity of Oploo for attack on Overloon and thence south. Casualties-none.

o. 151029 September 44 to 240030 September 44:

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".

Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion, 1 platoon A/814th TD Battalion

Moved to attack position near Aploo³⁶ where force remained for entire day making plans for the attack on Overloon. Received artillery fire. Casualties-none.

3. Modifications: No modifications have been made in France because of any specific conditions but modifications of ammunition racks to make the ammunition more accessible and to carry more ammunition were made in Tidworth, England. This modification was the removal of the left sponson rack and placing it at an angle in front of the loader. Ammunition could still be placed in the left sponson.

4. Armor against strongly fortified positions: Armor was employed against heavily fortified positions both north and south of Metz with little infantry support which was unsuccessful and resulted in heavy tank losses.

5. Infantry in support of tanks: It is believed that more Infantry must support tanks or tanks must support more infantry when heavy AT guns or fortified positions are encountered.

6. Use of Engineers Units: Engineers units attached to Battalion were used to remove demolitions from the bridge across the Meuse River at Verdun, France and to help guard the bridge. They were used to remove mines and road blocks at St Privat, France and in some instances to take prisoners to the rear.

7. Indirect fire missions: Tanks were not employed at any time in indirect fire missions.

8. Use of Tank Destroyers: Tank Destroyers were used to establish road blocks and to cover exposed flanks.

³⁶ The correct spelling is Oploo, as in the prior entry.

R E S T R I C T E D

For the Commanding Officer:

(signed)
Leo G. CARLSON
Major Cav
Acting S-3

40th Tank Battalion

Casualty report for the month of September:³⁷

Sep:	KIA	MIA	SWA	LWA	NBC	LIA	RTD ³⁸
1				1 EM ³⁹			
2					1 Off 2 EM		
3					1 EM		1 Off 3 EM
4					1 EM		1 EM
5				1 EM			
6					1 EM		
7	3 EM	1 EM	1 Off 3 EM	7 EM	2 EM		
8	1 EM		1 EM	2 EM			
9	1 EM	7 EM	1 EM	6 EM			1 EM
10			1 Off 1 EM	5 EM	2 EM	1 EM	
11		1 EM	2 EM		3 EM		1 EM
12					1 EM		1 Off
13							4 EM
14		1 Off	1 EM 6 EM	1 EM	2 EM		
15					6 EM		
16							
17	1 Off 3 EM	2 EM	2 EM	1 Off 8 EM	1 Off 3 EM	1 EM	
18					8 EM		1 EM
19							1 EM
20							
21	2 EM		1 EM		3 EM	1 EM	
22					3 EM		5 EM
23					3 EM		
24					2 EM		
25							5 EM
26							
Forwarded ⁴⁰							
	1 Off 10 EM	1 Off 17 EM	3 Off 12 EM	1 Off 31 EM	2-Off 43 EM	0 Off 3 EM	2 Off 22 EM

³⁷ The original of this is done in landscape format and not the portrait format used here.

³⁸ KIA = Killed in Action. MIA = Missing in Action. SWA = Seriously Wounded in Action (i.e. life-threatening). LWA = Lightly Wounded in Action (not thought to be life-threatening). NBC = Non-Battle Casualty (most frequently as "Slightly Sick"). LIA = Lightly Injured in Action. RTD = Returned to Duty.

³⁹ EM = Enlisted Man. Off = Officer.

⁴⁰ The "Forwarded" is on the same line as the officers in the original but is place separately here, due to the shift from the original landscape to this portrait orientation.

Casualty report for the month of September for 40th Tank Bn. (Con't) ⁴¹

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>SWA</u>	<u>LWA</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>LIA</u>	<u>RTD</u>
Brought Forward ⁴²	..... 1 Off	..... 1 Off	..... 3 Off	..... 1 Off	..... 2-Off	..... 0 Off	..... 2 Off
	..... 10 EM	..... 17 EM	..... 12 EM	..... 31 EM	..... 43 EM	..... 3 EM	..... 22 EM

Sep:

27	.....	.....	.....	.....	..... 1 EM	.....	..... 2 EM
28	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
29	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
30	..... 2 EM	.....	..... 5 EM	..... 5 EM	..... 2 EM	.....	.....

TOTALS	..... 1 Off	..... 1 Off	..... 3 Off	..... 1 Off	..... 2 Off	..... 0 Off	..... 2 Off
	..... 12 EM	..... 17 EM	..... 17 EM	..... 36 EM	..... 46 EM	..... 3 EM	..... 24 EM

(signed)
 PAUL M. RAGLA
 1st Lt Inf
 Adjutant

⁴¹ The original of this is done in landscape format and not the portrait format used here.

⁴² The "Brought Forward" is on the same line as the officers in the original but is placed separately here, due to the shift from the original landscape to this portrait orientation.

SECRET

/jap

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. S. ARMY

31 October 1944

SUBJECT: After Battle Report

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

1. Reference: AR 345-105

2. Operations:

a. 00011 October 44 to 08006 October 44

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".

Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion, 1 platoon
A/814th Tank Destroyers Battalion.

An attack begun by this force on 30 September 44 in vicinity of OPLOO, HOLLAND, with a mission of taking OVERLOON, HOLLAND, was resumed at 06301 October 44. Operating in conjunction on with another task force on its right, this force moved south-east on the north side of the OPLOO-OVERLOON road to approximately one mile northwest of OVERLOON, where it held without material change of position from the night of 1 October 44 through the night of 5 October 44. During that period, to reach and maintain its position, this force made attacks against strong opposition on the mornings of 1-2 and 3 October 44, co-ordinated with the Task Force on the right and, on the first two mornings, following artillery serendades on OVERLOON. Opposition included heavy anti-tank, artillery, small tanks, mortar and nebelwerfer fire. Enemy occupied dug-in positions in woods. Our tanks operated in close co-ordination with infantry. At night, tanks were outposted by infantry and Company "A", 814th Combat Engineers (in support of CC"A"). Mortar platoon was in close support. Assault guns were attached to C/40th Tank Battalion. Extensive artillery support was received. Tank Destroyers were employed to protect rear and flanks of force. For first time in history of battalion an air force pilot riding in tank, directed fighter planes on at least six tactical missions. Force was relieved in early morning hours on 6 October 44. The Task Force, which began the operation with a total of 26 medium tanks and 4 assault guns (105MM) lost three medium tanks and one assault gun. Losses were attributed to anti-tank guns and tanks.

b. 08006 October 44 to 16007 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less companies "A" and "D".

Attached: A/48th Armored Infantry Battalion, 1 platoon
A/814th Tank Destroyers Battalion.

Force moved from vicinity of OVERLOON, HOLLAND, via OPLOO and ST. ANTHONIS to rest bivouac, three miles east of ST ANTHONIS, HOLLAND where attachments reverted to parent units and battalion status was restored. Casualties-none.

c. 16007 October 44 to 15008 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion

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Battalion moved from vicinity of ST ANTHONIS, HOLLAND, via ST ANTHONIS, GEMERT, BEEK, HELMOND, GELDROOP, HEEZE, MAARHEEZE, HOLLAND to bivouac two miles south of MAARHEEZE, preparatory to taking up defensive position east of WEERT, HOLLAND.

d. 15008 October 44 to 120010 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Company "A".
Attached: Company "B" 48th Armored Infantry Battalion,
platoon A/814 Tank Destroyers Battalion.

Force moved from vicinity of Maarheeze, Holland to outpost positions east of WEERT, HOLLAND. Battalion Headquarters located two miles east of TUNGEL-ROOI, HOLLAND, and outpost organized near STEENWEG, at EL, at ZWARTBOEK and one mile north of EL. Each of three of the positions were occupied by a platoon of B/40th Tank Battalion and the fourth by the Tank Destroyers platoon. In addition each position was occupied by a platoon of B/48th Armored Infantry Battalion, including its anti-tank platoon. Mission of the force was to defend on a front west of the WESSEN CANAL between the WEERT-ROERMOND highway and a line approximately from STAMPROOI to GROTHEM. Remainder of the force was held in reserve in vicinity of Battalion Headquarters. Plan effected was for infantry to outpost tank strong points at night and for tanks to clear area between line of outposts and canal during the day. Enemy activity consisted of patrols, small arms and mortar fire.

e. 120010 October 44 to 120017 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Company "A".
Attached: Company "B", 48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Defensive mission in same sector is continued, with Company "C", 40th Tank Battalion replacing Company "B", 40th Tank Battalion and the assault guns (105MM) replacing the Tank Destroyers, which reverted to their Battalion. In addition, infantry patrolled daily, between outposts and canal. Company "B", 40th Tank Battalion was laid for indirect fire and fired intermittently. Company "D", 40th Tank Battalion sent one platoon daily to occupy additional outpost positions. Mortar platoon fired numerous missions and supporting artillery also fired frequently. Remainder of battalion was engaged in training, showers, recreation and care and cleaning of equipment. Enemy activity consisted of patrols small arms and mortar fire. Of 27 medium tanks, 18 light tanks and five assault guns, vehicle casualties were one assault gun (mine action) which later was recovered and two medium tanks (by bazooka). A platoon of Company A, 33rd Engineers Battalion, sent to clear mines in the ELLBURG woods, suffered 16 casualties by mortar fire.⁴³

f. 120017 October 44 to 120020 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Company "A".
Attached: Company "B", 48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Company "C", 40th Tank Battalion and the assault guns were replaced on outpost duty by Company "D", 40th Tank Battalion, which operated four light tanks at each position. Platoon of A/33rd Engineer Battalion (attached to "CCA")

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⁴³ A/38's Morning Report for 14 October 1944 has this Record of Events entry (location " Altweert, Holland VK 5895"): "Maintained bridges and roads in this vicinity. Reconnoitered mined and booby trapped areas. Enemy artillery, motar [sic] and machine gun fire in mined area, 13 men wounded." None of the 13 men listed as wounded on the Morning Report appear on the 33 AEB list of WWII deaths.

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constructed booby traps on bridge in sector and around outpost positions. Formal instructions in scouting and patrolling was begun for selected men not on line duty. Otherwise, general situation was unchanged.

g. 120020 October 44 to 1200 27 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Company "A".
Attached: Company B, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Company "B", 48th Armored Infantry Battalion was replaced by Company "B", 38th Armored Infantry Battalion on four outposts that the Task Force had been operating 8 October 44. General situation remained unchanged. Casualties: one man wounded.

h. 120027 October 44 to 070031 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "A" and "C".
Attached: Company "B", 38th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Patrolling and operation of four outposts was continued without change, except for detachment of Company "C", until relieved by force of "CCB" at 200030 October 44. One light tank on patrol was lost by mine action. Casualties: one man wounded.

i. 070031 October 44 to 240031 October 44.

1. 40th Tank Battalion less Companies "A" and "C".

Force moved from vicinity of TUNGELROOI, HOLLAND, via WEERT, MAARHEEZE, LEENDE, HEEZE AND ZERMERON to assembly position one mile south of ZEMERON, prepared to attack west or southwest on order.

3. MODIFICIATIONS: None

(signed)
CARL M. CORBIN
Captain Inf S-3

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/jap

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. s. ARMY⁴⁴

1 November 44

October:	KIA	MIA	LWA	SWA	LIA	NBC	RTD ⁴⁵	Total
1	1 EM		6 EM		1 Off	1 EM		1 Off 8 EM
2		1 Off	1 Off 3 EM	4 EM				2 Off 7 EM
3						1 EM		1 EM
4		1 EM	3 EM			1 EM		5 EM
5							1 Off 2 EM 1 EM	1 Off 3 EM
6								
7						1 EM	1 EM	2 EM
8						1 EM		1 EM
9								
10						1 EM	1 EM	2 EM
11						2 EM		2 EM
12						1 EM		1 EM
13						2 EM	12 EM	14 EM
14						1 EM		1 EM
15	1 EM	1 EM		3 EM				5 EM
16						1 EM		1 EM
17						2 EM	5 EM	7 EM
18								
19			1 EM				1 EM	2 EM
20						1 EM		1 EM
21						1 Off 3 EM	2 Off 2 EM	3 Off 5 EM
22							1 EM	1 EM
23			1 EM				1 Off	1 Off 1 EM
24						1 EM	1 Off 4 EM	1 Off 5 EM
25							2 EM	2 EM
26								
27							1 EM	1 EM
28		1 EM						1 EM
29				1 EM				1 EM
30						1 EM	1 EM	2 EM
31								
(Totals)	2 EM	1 Off 3 EM	1 Off 14 EM	8 EM	1 Off	2 Off 23 EM	4 Off 33 EM	8 Off 83 EM

(signed)
PAUL M. RAGLA, 1st Lt Inf ADJUTANT

⁴⁴ The format is similar to but not exactly the same as the original.

⁴⁵ KIA = Killed in Action. MIA = Missing in Action. SWA = Seriously Wounded in Action (i.e. life-threatening). LWA = Lightly Wounded in Action. NBC = Non-Battle Casualty (most frequently as "Slightly Sick"). LIA = Lightly Injured in Action. RTD = Returned to Duty. EM = Enlisted Man. Off = Officer.

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. S. ARMY

/jap

2 December 1944.

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of November 1944.

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

Tank-Infantry co-operation under varying circumstances characterized the two extended combat operations in which the 40th Tank Battalion participated during November 1944.

In the first, from 2 November through 7 November, the Battalion was employed in its more familiar role as part of an inter-divisional task force commanded by the Battalion Commander. This operation involved driving the enemy from the northeast sector of an intersection formed by the crossing of the Canal DU NORD and the Canal AVID WILLEMS northeast of WEERT, HOLLAND. It was accomplished by the Battalion operating in conjunction with another task force and both coordinated under the combat command.

In the second extended operation, begun 23 November and still in progress at the end of the month, the Battalion functioned detached from the 7th Armored Division and assigned successively to two Infantry Divisions. It was given missions by the Infantry Divisions of supporting regimental defenses around GEREONSWEILER, GERMANY and later supporting infantry regiments in their attacks to the north, to take LINDERN, GERMANY, and adjacent high ground.

Functioning with the infantry regiments produced several problems not usually experienced by the Battalion when it operated as part of a tank-armored infantry team. Troops of the infantry regiments were not familiar with the intended use and the limitations of tanks. Communications were difficult. Tank companies in direct support of infantry battalions did not - in comparison with past experiences - prove to be as workable a team as a task force commanded directly by a task force commander familiar with both tank and infantry tactics. However, despite the disadvantages, the battalion performed well and received high praise. The commanding officer of the regiment which captured LINDERN attributed the success of the attack to the 40th Tank Battalion.

During the interim between the two extended operations, the Battalion was occupied at different times with training, movement to assembly or concentration areas, rest and maintenance.

A day by day summary of operations follows:

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HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. S. ARMY

/jap

2 December 1944.

AFTER BATTLE REPORT
NOVEMBER

1 November 44: Having moved on 31 October 44 to an assembly position west of canal ZVID WILLEMS and two miles south of ZOMEREN, HOLLAND the 40th Tank Battalion less "A" and "C" Companies, remained in position ready to attack on order. Combat Command "A", of which the Battalion was a part, had been moved from the vicinity of WEERT to an assembly area south of ZEMEREN in preparation for cleaning out a pocket of Germans east of the canal ZVID WILLEMS and north of the canal DU NORD. Already Task Force FULLER, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, reinforced by "A" and "C" Companies, 40th Tank Battalion, also under "CCA" control, held a bridgehead east of the ZVID WILLEMS about three miles north of Canal Du Nord. Approximately 3000 yards east of the bridge, at a peat factory, a squad from the 15th Scottish Reconnaissance Regiment held an outpost reinforced by a platoon of Company B, 40th Tank Battalion. The Scotch, on our left (east) flank were driving south east toward MEIJEL. Combat Command Reserve held the west bank of ZVID WILLEMS to Canal DU NORD, and Combat Command "B" held the west bank below Canal DU NORD.

2 November 44: Task Force BROWN, commanded by Commanding Officer of 40th Tank Battalion, whose promotion to Lieutenant Colonel was announced on this date, was composed of the Battalion less "A" and "C" Companies (which were attached to Task Force FULLER (38th AIB), 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, platoon of "A" Company, 33rd Armored Engineer Battalion and platoon of "A" Company, 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Effective tank strength was, "A" Company 13, "B" Company 13, "C" Company 10, "D" Company 16 (Lights), Hq 2, 105MM Assault Guns 5. Co-ordinated with Task Force FULLER on its right (west) flank, Task Force BROWN was ordered to attack south as far as the Canal DU NORD to clear that area of enemy who had taken the ground when they counter-attacked during October in the vicinity of MEIJEL. Control of that area was necessary to eliminate a threat to the Scotch west flank in the drive toward MEIJEL. About a mile north of HORICK, the task force attacked south at 1100 after the unit commanders had been given available orientation on the ground. The front was approximately 600 yards wide, its west boundry being about a mile east of the canal ZVID WILLEMS. The infantry lead the attack, closely supported by B/40, which was complete after a platoon of D/40 relieved the platoon of B/40 on outpost at the peat factory.

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 1944 (Con't.)

Engineers cleared mines for tanks to proceed. Company "D" 40 less one platoon, the assault gun platoon and the Tank Destroyer platoon, in order mentioned, took up defensive positions on the east flank as the force proceeded south. Mortars supported initially from position near bridge. Many mines were encountered and heavy artillery received from south of Canal DU NORD and from the east. By dark, against stiff opposition, Task Force BROWN and Task Force FULLER had advanced as far as an east-west line through HORICK, where they took up the defensive for the night. Tank losses were, "B" Company, 1 (AP fire) "C" Company 2, (AP fire), "D" Company 1 (AP fire).

- 3 November 44: The co-ordinated attack by Task Force BROWN with Task Force FULLER, continued at 0645 with the same situation and plan of the day before in effect. By mid-day, the Canal DU NORD was reached and Task Force BROWN was ordered to turn left and attack west to drive the enemy from the north bank of the canal DU NORD for approximately 4000 yards. Task Force FULLER was ordered to move abreast of Task Force BROWN'S new north flank, passing through the defenses that Task Force BROWN had left in position on the drive to the south. With the two task forces co-ordinated, FULLER on the left and BROWN on the right, the attack continued to the east and advanced as far as 500 yards from new line of departure. In addition to artillery and mortar fire, most of which came from south of Canal DU NORD, the infantry encountered extensive anti-personnel mines. No tanks were lost.
- 4 November 44: Orders to move the objective line an additional 2000 yards to the east were received. The co-ordinated attack by the two forces continued at daylight. Light tanks, assault guns and tank destroyers were moved to protect the south flank and rear of Task Force BROWN in the drive to the east. Artillery, mortar and anti-tank fire, mostly from south of Canal DU NORD, and mine action held up attack 2000 yards from objective. One "B" Company tank was lost as a result of AP fire. Companies "A" and "C", attached to Task Force FULLER, were left in assembly positions near the ZVID WILLEMS canal.
- 5 November 44: Advance of Task Force BROWN made impossible because of anti-tank guns and artillery fire from south of Canal DU NORD. A plan was evolved at a meeting of force commander with the Combat Commander for Task Force BROWN to hold its position while Task Force FULLER turned his front line to the south, effecting a coverage of the objective by fire from the two forces. Attempts of Force FULLER to accomplish this were held up by extensive anti-personnel mines and machine guns in swampy area to its front. "A" Company was moved to

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 1944 (Con't.)

vicinity of Task Force FULLER'S CP for use on call. "C" Company remained in assembly area near ZVID WILLEMS. In static position, infantry attached to Force BROWN, were placed in defensive positions, with Tanks, assault guns and Tank Destroyers in strategic but protected positions to support. Mortars took position to cover main routes. No tanks were lost.

- 6 November 44: The 48th Armored Infantry Battalion was relieved in the early morning hours by the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion. Otherwise, situation for Task Force BROWN, and remainder of 40th Tank Battalion continued unchanged.
- 7 November 44: Responsibility for sector was given to 23rd Armored infantry Battalion and the 40th Tank Battalion was relieved at 1600, with attachments reverting to parent organizations. Mortar fire was received as Battalion withdrew from sector. Battalion moved via NEDERWEERT and WEERT to "CCA" assembly area, four miles northwest of WEERT.
- 8 November 44: Rest, maintenance and showers were the order of the day. Tank strength at end of day was: "A" Company 14, "B" Company 13, "C" Company 12, "D" Company 17 (lights), Hq 2, 105MM Assault Guns 5. Orders were received to move 9 November 44 to Division concentration area southeast of MAASTRICK, HOLLAND.
- 9 November 44: Battalion moved via WEERT, STAMPROII, MAESWJCK, MAASTRICK, HEER to Division concentration area four miles southeast of HEER, HOLLAND, Rest and maintenance were accomplished.
- 10 November 44: Rain and mud hindered maintenance work. Limited recreation and pass privileges to MAASTRICK were instituted. Training schedule through 14 November 1944 were drawn up.
- 11 November 44: Installation of track extension was begun, despite difficulty of mud and rain. Officers and first three grade non-commissioned officers attended "CCA" sponsored meeting at EKKELRADE where treatment of German civilians was discussed.
- 12 November 44: Maintenance, training and recreation program continued. Rain and mud hindered activities.
- 13 November 44: "A" Company participated, during the morning, in a tank-infantry problem conducted by Combat Command "A". In the afternoon "B" Company participated. Maintenance, training and recreation continued.

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 44, (Con't.)

- 14 November 44: "C" Company participated in a tank-infantry problem conducted by Combat Command "A". Maintenance, training and recreation continued. Executive Officer and S-3 attended staff meeting of 113th Cavalry Group at SITTARD, HOLLAND.
- 15 November 44: Maintenance, training and recreation continued. Battalion commander and staff attended meeting of 113th Cavalry Group Staff at SITTARD, HOLLAND.
- 16 November 44: Dozer blade was installed on a "C" Company tank, "D" Company participated in a tank-infantry problem conducted by Combat Command "A". Marking the first occasion of its kind in the Battalion, Staff Sergeant KENNETH F. RIDER, of "B" Company was promoted to the grade of Second Lieutenant. Battalion Commander attended staff meeting of 113th Cavalry Group at SITTARD. Dance for Enlisted men was sponsored by Battalion in MAASTRICK. Reconnaissance platoon selected an area for bivouac west of HEERLEN, HOLLAND in anticipation of attachment of Battalion to 113th Cavalry Group.
- 17 November 44: Detached from Division, the Battalion moved to VOERENDAAL, HOLLAND to become part of Task Force BIDDLE, which was constituted by XIII Corps to consist of 40th Tank Battalion, 113th Cavalry Group (113th and 125th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons), "A" Company of 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 7th Armd Div artillery, "C" Company of 171st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Battalion of 405th Infantry Regiment and "A" and "B" Batteries of 203rd AAA Battalion. The force was to have the mission of protecting the Corps' north flank in a proposed attack to the west which would include the capture of GEILENDERCHEN, GERMANY and a bridgehead of the ROER RIVER at LINNICH. For the first time for the Battalion, considerable use was made of buildings in and around a town for Headquarters and sleeping purposes. Use of buildings was at the invitation of owners, and proved a successful experiment.
- 18 November 44: Recreation, maintenance and training were followed. Plans were made for participating in operations of Task Force BIDDLE.
- 19 November 44: Recreation, maintenance and training continued. Officers of 1st Battalion, 405th Infantry Regiment, visited this Battalion and were oriented in tank-infantry team work. Later in the day, that Battalion was relieved from Task Force BIDDLE and replaced by 3rd Battalion, 407th Infantry.
- 20 November 44: Recreation, maintenance and training continued, though hindered by rain. Officers of 3rd Battalion, 407th Infantry, visited this Battalion for orientation in tank-infantry team work. An exercise, that was to include a company of infantry, scheduled for the afternoon was cancelled when Task Force BIDDLE was dissolved.

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 44: (Con't.)

- 21 November 44: Recreation, maintenance and training continued.
- 22 November 44: Battalion continued training and maintenance, and prepared to celebrate Thanksgiving on 23 November 44. Turkeys were baked in bakery shop at VOERENDAAL. At approximately 2100 orders were received to alert Battalion for movement after 0830 on 23 November 44 and Battalion Commander was ordered to report to the Command Post of the Second Armored Division near UBACH, GERMANY.
- 23 November 44: Verbal orders were given to Battalion Commander, at Headquarters Combat Command "B" Second Armored Division, at BEGGENDORF, GERMANY, to move his Battalion immediately to GEREONSWEILER, GERMANY, to relieve the Second Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment, prepared to support the 335th Infantry Regiment (102nd Infantry Division) in the event it received a counter-attack. The Battalion with "A" Company 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached, began moving at 1300 via HEERLEN, HERZOGENERATH, UBACH, BASEWEILER, SETTRICH, PUFFENDORF to GEREONSWEILER. Because the march was made without prior planning and without sufficient route reconnaissance or guides, over a crowded and complicated road network, the Battalion marched with less than the usual orderliness to which it is accustomed. Enemy artillery interdiction on the GEREONSWEILER, PUFFENDORF road immobilized a Tank Destroyer, killed three men, injured eleven and temporarily snarled traffic. The town of GEREONSWEILER was in shambles when the Battalion moved in and continued to receive frequent artillery fire from the directions of LINNICH, LINDERN and BEECH. "A" Company was placed in direct support of the 3rd Battalion, 335th Infantry, which held the right portion of the regiment's sector and "C" Company was placed in direct support of 1st Battalion, which held the left sector. One infantry battalion was in reserve south of the town. On a radius of about 1500 yards, the infantry line arced west from the GEREONSWEILER, LINNICH, road to the 93rd co-ordinate. The regiment had on its left the 3rd Battalion of the 405th Infantry Regiment (84th Infantry Division) and on its right the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment (Second Armored Division). The Second Armored Division was being relieved in the sector for operations further south. Tanks of "A" and "C" Company were placed outside the edge of town, largely to help the morale of the infantry. "B" Company was held in reserve in the south edge of town. "D" Company, in the center of town and the Assault Gun Platoon in between "A" and "C" companies. The tanks took advantage of available cover and defilade, which was slight, and were tied-in closely by communications and contact among themselves. The infantry and the adjoining troops were also tied - in closely by communications with the tanks. The Tank Destroyer company placed a platoon covering routes from the northeast, one covering routes from the northwest and one in reserve. Because the town was already crowded, mortars, Headquarters vehicles and A-trains were left in SETTRICH.

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT) Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 1944: (Con't.)

Effective tank strength was: "A" Company 14, "B" Company 14, "C" Company 14, "D" Company 18 (lights), Hq 2, 105MM Assault Guns 6.

- 24 November 44: Artillery continued all day. Tank companies in support of Infantry improved their positions. "A" Company lost two tanks by AP fire from a distance, the fire coming from the northeast. Tanks were used to fire on pillboxes forward of infantry lines.
- 25 November 44: On the right flank, the 407th Infantry Regiment (102nd Infantry Division) replaced the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment. The 2nd Battalion, 407th Infantry, was on the regiment's left flank and was supported by "C" Company, 771st Tank Battalion, with whom "A" Company, 40th Tank Battalion made contact and co-ordinated defenses. Artillery received on the town was extensive. Two tank destroyers on the northeast outskirts of town were hit by AP fire from the northwest, disabling one and demolishing the other and causing six casualties. The tank dozer of "C" Company was used to improve streets of GEREONSWEILER and remove debris.
- 26 November 44: Because of clear weather, the first since the Battalion moved into GEREONSWEILER, friendly observation planes effected a considerable reduction in the amount of artillery that had been falling on the town. P-47 planes and corps artillery were reported to have destroyed three enemy tanks between LINDERN and BEECH. One of the Company "A" tanks that had been hit two days earlier and the tank destroyer that also had been disabled on the following day, were recovered. Effective tank strength was: "A" Company 12, "B" Company 14, "C" Company 14, "D" Company 17, Hq 2, 105MM Assault Guns 6, Tank Destroyers 8.
- 27 November 44: The 335th Infantry Regiment was relieved by the 405th Infantry Regiment (102nd Infantry Division), which was supported by the 771st Tank Battalion. The 40th Tank Battalion was attached to the 102nd Infantry in the Battalion's present location. Plans were under discussion providing for the Battalion to support the 335th Infantry in a proposed attack to the north through the present defensive lines. "A" Company, 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was detached and reverted to parent unit, Commanding General, 7th Armored Division, visited the Battalion Commander and viewed ground to the north from an observation post.
- 28 November 44: Relieved from attachment to 102nd Infantry Division, the Battalion was attached to the 84th Infantry Division. The plan was for "A" Company to be in direct support of the 3rd Battalion, 335th Infantry which was to attack north to take LINDERN and for "C" Company to be in direct support of 2nd Battalion, 335th

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 1944: (Con't.)

Infantry in taking high ground between BEECK and LINDERN. Chief obstacle contemplated was an anti-tank ditch extending from BEECK to LINDERN. The infantry was to begin its attack at 0630 from the defensive line, to be followed by the Engineers. When passages across the ditch had been cleared of mines, the tanks were to move on order and support the drive on the objective. "B" and "D" Companies and the Assault Guns were to remain in reserve in town. On the right (east) flank, the 102nd Infantry Division was to push its line approximately 2000 yards to the east, and on the west flank the 113th Cavalry Group was to make a demonstration on BEECK.

29 November 44: The attack began at 0630. The infantry in the left zone was held up by artillery, mortar and small arms fire, a short distance from the line of departure. "C" Company was ordered at 1100 to advance as far as the anti-tank ditch to reduce obstacles to the infantry's advance. The flatness of the area made defilade impossible and "C" Company was forced to pull back because of direct fire from BEECK. One tank was disabled. Heavy artillery was received continuously. Reports on the progress of the 3rd Battalion, 335th Infantry which was attacking in the east zone, were lacking until a message was received about 1300 to the effect that "K" Company had been in the southeast section of LINDERN since 0745. Realizing that such a small number of troops were in grave danger of being cut off, the Tank Battalion Commander ordered "A" Company to disregard the possibility of mine obstacles and the absence of infantry support and to move immediately into LINDERN. Screened by smoke, the company found a clear passage near the east end of the anti-tank ditch and proceeded into the town. One platoon contacted "L" Company and led it into town. The tanks continued to the north, passing through the town and crossing the railroad. They were forced back by anti-tank fire, which soon developed into a tank-infantry counter-attack. When the counter-attack was reported, the Tank Battalion Commander, cognizant of the necessity of holding LINDERN - that it was the key to the projected plan to bridgehead the ROER at LINNICH - ordered "B" Company to rush to the support of "A" Company. "B" Company's rear and flanks during the move were protected by the assault gun platoon. The quick arrival of "B" Company stemmed the counter-attack. Anticipating the night coming on, the tank battalion commander, about 1600, informed the infantry regimental commander that the infantry in LINDERN were insufficient in number to hold the town, and that the tanks would have to be withdrawn if more infantry did not arrive. The Regimental Commander sent his executive officer with direct orders to the 1st Battalion, 335th Infantry, to move into the town and hold it at all costs. The 1st Battalion arrived about 2000, too late to clean out the town and set

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 44: (Con't.)

up adequate defenses. In order to provide as much defense for themselves as possible, the tank platoon were organized into leaguers covering routes of advance into LINDERN, and the crew members were used to outpost the vehicles. "C" Company, 40th Tank Battalion and the Assault Gun Platoon returned to GEREONSWEILER. At the close of day, the front line excluded BEECK to our forces, included LINDERN, then extended in an arc southward approximately 3000 yards northeast of GEREONSWEILER. "D" Company's light tanks were used successfully to send ammunition and other supplies to infantry and tanks in LINDERN, after dark. Light tanks, because of their speed and quietness, were more suitable than medium tanks for the job, and because of their armor, more suitable than wheeled vehicles. Their use in this function was the first such attempt in this battalion, and proved quite worthwhile. The light tanks towed trailers loaded for the infantry and also transported infantry Battalion Officers and forward observers who were needed in LINDERN. Tank losses in this Battalion were: "A" Company 2, "B" Company 1, "C" Company 1.

30 November 44: Infiltrating strong patrols into LINDERN, the enemy counter-attacked at 0430. They used bazookas against tanks and in some instances enemy infantry attempted to climb on the tanks, in which the tankers had taken refuge during artillery barrage that preceded immediately the counter-attack. In such cases, tanks were forced to fire machine guns at nearby tanks to drive off the enemy. By daylight, the counter-attack was brought under control, largely through the effect of artillery called for by observers in tanks. One light tank which was in LINDERN on a supply mission was among the losses, resulting from bazooka action. Enemy artillery continued throughout today. Mark V or Mark VI tanks were northwest and northeast of LINDERN in strength reported up to 15, and possibly more. Six were under observation by "B" Company, 40th Tank Battalion, northwest of the town, covering approaches from the south to BEECK and LINDERN. Two and possibly more enemy tanks were destroyed by 90MM tank destroyers of which "C" Company, 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion had four in LINDERN. Results of our tank fire on the enemy tanks was undetermined. "C" Company, 40th Tank Battalion was to support 1st Battalion, 334th Infantry, to take high ground east of BEECK in an attack scheduled to begin by the infantry at 0730. The tanks moved as far as the anti-tank ditch, but failed to locate the infantry at the appointed place. However, the tanks did find a number of enemy infantry who had infiltrated through the line and occupied fox holes. When direct fire made the position untenable, the tanks were withdrawn toward GEREONSWEILER to defilade. When the infantry moved toward the appointed position later in the day and was pinned down, "C" Company again went forward in the same area and again was forced back by direct fire from the northeast of BEECK,

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AFTER BATTLE REPORT, Hq 40th Tk Bn 2 December 1944: (Con't.)

from the east and from defiladed tanks directly behind openings across the anti-tank ditch. One tank was disabled as it attempted to force the ditch. In the afternoon, an assault gun (105MM) en route to LINDERN with supplies was blown up as a result of AP fire from the northeast, resulting in several casualties and the death of an infantry Captain being transported to LINDERN. During the morning, the 102nd Infantry Division on our right flank also suffered a tank-infantry counter-attack. Efforts by the air force officer in a medium tank in LINDERN to use air support against enemy tanks was not possible because of the nearness of the tanks to friendly troops. At night, the light tanks again carried supplies to LINDERN. Tank losses were: "A" Company 2, "B" Company 1, "C" Company 1, "D" Company 1, 105MM Assault Guns 1. Two counter-attacks during the day kept our troops engaged and prevented proper cleaning out of town and arranging close infantry support for defense at night. Tank crews were warned to expect a counter-attack in the morning.

JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Col. Cav
COMMANDING

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CASUALTY REPORT
NOVEMBER
40TH TANK BATTALION

<u>Nov 44</u> ⁴⁶ :	<u>LWA</u>	<u>SWA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>LIA</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>RTD</u> ⁴⁷	<u>RPL</u>
1					1-O 2 EM			
2	1-O 2 EM	2 EM						
3		1 EM				7 EM	2 EM	
4	1 EM	2 EM						
5		1 EM		1 EM				
6						1 EM		
7	1 EM	3 EM			1 EM			
8					1 EM			1 EM
9				1-O		1 EM		
10					3 EM			1-O
11					2 EM	1 EM		3-O
12					4 EM			1 EM
13		1 EM			4 EM	1-O		
14					3 EM	1 EM		1-O
15					2 EM	2 EM		
16					4 EM	3 EM		6 EM
17					2 EM	1 EM		1 EM
18	1-O				4 EM			1-O
19					1 EM	1 EM		1 EM
20					1 EM	1 EM		3 EM
21					2 EM			
22					1 EM			1 EM
23						1 EM		
24	1 EM	2 EM	1 EM					
25					2 EM			
26		1 EM			1 EM	1 EM		
27					3 EM			2 EM
28					4 EM	1-O 1 EM		1 EM
29	1 EM			1 EM	4 EM			
30	1 EM	3 EM	3 EM		4 EM	13 EM		
Totals	2-O 7 EM	14 EM	6 EM	1 EM	1-O 1EM 55EM	2-O 35EM	6-O 18 EM	

(signed)

PAUL M. RAGLA, 1st Lt Inf ADJUTANT

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⁴⁶ Actual text is "November 1944" which is shortened here to fit, since the page orientation is also shifted from landscape to portrait.

⁴⁷ KIA = Killed in Action. MIA = Missing in Action. SWA = Seriously Wounded in Action (i.e. life-threatening). LWA = Lightly Wounded in Action. NBC = Non-Battle Casualty (most frequently as "Slightly Sick"). LIA = Lightly Injured in Action. RTD = Returned to Duty. EM = Enlisted Man. Off = Officer.

[MAP]
Operations of
40th Tank Battalion
1 Nov 44 - 7 Nov 44
Holland
1:100,000

[MAP]
Operations of
40th Tank Battalion
17 Nov 44 - 22 Nov 44
Holland-Germany
1:100,000

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X
X   A F T E R   A C T I O N   R E P O R T   X
X
X           D E C E M B E R           X
X
X           1 9 4 4           X
X
X           P A R T   I           X
X
X   D a y   b y   d a y   a c c o u n t   o f   a c t i o n   i n v o l v -   X
X   i n g   4 0 t h   T a n k   B a t t a l i o n .           X
X
X           P A R T   I I           X
X
X   A c c o u n t   o f   s e p a r a t e   a c t i o n   o f   C o m p -   X
X   a n y   D ,   4 0 t h   T a n k   B a t t a l i o n           X
X
X
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S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. #257, U. S. ARMY

/jap

31 December 1944

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of DECEMBER 1944.

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

AFTER ACTION REPORT - DECEMBER 44

PART I

1 December 44: Rushed into LINDERN, GERMANY on 29 November 44 and therefore making possible the capture of the city. Companies A and B, 40th Tank Battalion continued to support the 1st Battalion, 335th Infantry Battalion and elements of the 3rd Battalion, 335th Infantry, Battalion, 84th Infantry Division, in holding the town against counterattacks. The holding of LINDERN, GERMANY was significant because projected operations to the bridgehead the ROER RIVER would not be possible if LINDERN was in enemy hands. This mission of XIII Corps, of which the Battalion was a part, was to protect the north flank of the Ninth Army in a drive across the ROER RIVER. The battalion, detached from the 7th Armored Division, was assigned to the 84th Infantry Division, which at that time was without its own normally attached tank battalion. The 102nd Infantry Division on the right of the 84th Infantry Division had pushed its line to the LINDERN-LINNICH road. On the west, the 334th Infantry held south of BEECK, GERMANY. The area south of LINDERN was under direct fire that came from high ground north-east of BEECK, and across the LINDERN-LINNICH road.

Counterattacks and excessive sniper and artillery fire during the day of 30 November 1944 had not permitted a cleaning out of the town and the organizing of proper defenses. However, the situation was in better control than it had been when a counterattack had come at 0430 on 30 November 44. The troops were warned to expect on 1 December 44, a counterattack to follow an artillery barrage. Tank crews were dismounted except for one man in the turret. The expected barrage came at 0600 and at the same time, the enemy infantry attacked, many being killed by their artillery. However, patrols in strength of 60 men infiltrated through the defenses and fired bazookas at the tanks causing considerable superficial damage and disabling one Company A tank. Most bazooka fire seemed to be HE.

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The counterattack was brought under control by daylight. In some cases, tanks were used to clean out the enemy from houses by firing into the buildings where sniper fire was detected. Company A was requested to make a demonstration to the east to assist an attack by the 2nd Battalion, 333rd Infantry to push the line north of the LINDERN-LINNICH road. This was not possible because movement of the tanks outside of town placed them in jeopardy of direct fire from AT guns and Mark V or VI tanks. However, Company A did support the attack by fire. At night, Company D light tanks resupplied the troops in LINDERN, and towed out two trailers loaded with prisoners for the 335th Infantry. Verbal orders were received early in the evening from the Commanding Officer of "CCR" who commanded the Corps Reserve, for the 40th Tank Battalion less Company B to withdraw at 2330 to an assembly area three miles east of BASE ADLER, GERMANY. The Battalion (-B) was attached to "CCR" at 2000. Companies C and D and the Assault Gun Platoon, with the Battalion CP, were at GEREONSWEILER, GERMANY, Headquarters Company and "A" Trains were at SETTERICH, GERMANY. The Battalion, following Company A, withdrew from the line, moved to the new area without incident and closed at 0100 2 December 44. The Battalion, in Corps Reserve, was held ready for use on 30 minutes alert notice in the event of a counterattack.

2 December 44: Battalion moved into houses near the position near the position it had moved to on 1 December 44. Maintenance was performed. Feet were inspected and showers provided. Battalion remained in Corps Reserve on thirty minute alert status. Company B still in support of the 84th Infantry Division, underwent the heaviest artillery barrage it had received to date. The Air Corps pilot assigned to the Battalion was reported MIA after he had left his tank to visit a forward observer and failed to return. Parts of a body that had received a direct artillery hit was believed to be his. At night, Company B was withdrawn to HEIMDORF, GERMANY, but remained in support of the 84th Infantry Division. During the day, the Commanding General visited the Battalion and complimented officers and men on their performance at LINDERN, GERMANY.

Effective tank strength was: Company A (11), Company B (13), Company C (13), Company D (16), Headquarters (2), Assault Gun Platoon (5). During the entire GEREONSWEILER-LINDERN action, the Battalion suffered 10 Medium and 2 light tanks

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disabled or destroyed. Five men killed and sixteen wounded.

- 3 December 44: Maintenance continued. Four men of Company B were presented awards by Lieutenant General SIMPSON Army Commander on recommendation by the 335th Infantry Regiment. Commanding Officer of "CCR" visited the CP. The Battalion continued on 30 minutes alert. Church services were held.
- 4 December 44: The day was spent in maintenance and final installation of wire for camouflage on tanks. Battalion took typhus shots given by Battalion Medical Personnel. Colonel DWIGHT B. ROSEBAUM, Commanding Officer "CCA" and Major Fred C. Sweat, S-3, "CCR", visited the CP and discussed our operation in LINDERN. Company remained in support of the 84th Infantry Division in Division Reserve at IMENDORF, GERMANY. Remainder of Battalion continued on 30 minute alert status.
- 5 December 44: Maintenance and installation of wire for tank camouflage was continued. A small percentage of the Battalion went to take showers. Colonel RYAN, Commanding Officer Wrought, Lt. Colonel HODGSON, G-4, Major WHALEN and Captain WILSON, "CCA" Headquarters visited the Battalion CP. Lt Colonel BROWN, our Commanding Officer, was requested to attend a conference at Wrought Headquarters at 0830 6 December 44. After Action Reports were submitted 1800 to "CCR" on action at GEREONSWEILER, GERMANY and LINDERN, GERMANY, including company reports. Lieutenant MERRIAM of the Division Historical Service visited the CP and discussed the GEREONSWEILER, LINDERN GERMANY action with the Company Commanders. Company B status remained the same. The Battalion was still on 30 minute alert status.
- Effective tank strength to date: Headquarters (2) 75's; Company A (9) 75's, (1) 75 with dozer, (4) 76's; Company B (10) 75's; 5 76's; Company C (7) 75's, (1) 75 with dozer, (7) 76's; Company D (18) 37's; Assault Gun Platoon (5) 105's. Battalion total (18) 37's; (28) 75's; (2) 75's with dozer; (16) 76's; (5) 105's.
- 6 December 44: The Battalion Commanding Officer went to Wrought Headquarters for a meeting, on his return, he reported that probable move to SCHERPENSEEL, GERMANY tomorrow, to rest area there. The Battalion Commanding Officer instructed billeting detail to leave at 1300 to find suitable quarters for

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all. At 1600, S-3, "CCR" informed us that B/40 was released to the 40th Tank Battalion, and for the Battalion to be prepared to move at 0845 7 December 44. At 1945 orders were received by Liaison Officer for movement.

- 7 December 44: The Battalion prepared for movement to Division Rest Area at SCHERPENSEEL, GERMANY. At 0850 the Battalion started to roll and crossed IP at 0856. Order of march was:- Companies A, C, B, Assault Gun Platoon, Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company (-), Company D, Trains, and Battalion Maintenance. Battalion closed into area at 0940. Remainder of day spent in getting CP's and companies set up and maintenance. At 1530 Colonel ROSEBAUM, Commanding Officer, "CCA" visited Battalion CP.
- 8 December 44: Maintenance and personal care continued. At 1300 Lt Colonel BROWN had officers' call. Men were given privilege of taking showers and attending a movie. Tank Strength remained the same.
- 9 December 44: An officers' meeting was held at 0900 to emphasize trench foot prevention. Maintenance and personal care continued. A training schedule was inaugurated. Two shows were presented by a group from Division Special Service in Battalion CP.
- 10 December 44: No training was scheduled. Religious services were held. A final show was presented by Division Special Service.
- 11 December 44: Training, rest, and maintenance continued.
- 12 December 44: Training, rest, and maintenance continued.
- 13 December 44: Training, rest, and maintenance continued.
- 14 December 44: Training, rest and maintenance continued.
- 15 December 44: Training, rest, and maintenance continued.
- 16 December 44: The Battalion made plans to exchange positions with the 31st Tank Battalion, which occupied quarters this Battalion left to come to SCHERPENSEEL, GERMANY. The move was planned to place "CCR" in the rest area at SCHERPENSEEL, GERMANY, and "CCA" in UBACH, GERMANY, which would comply with a Corps directive to keep a balanced combat command east of the WIRM RIVER. The Reconnaissance Platoon and representatives of each

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company went to UBACH, GERMANY to arrange billets. A meeting of officers and Tank Commanders called for 1800 to discuss the second of two demonstrations conducted by the 2d Armored Division and the 30th Infantry Division on Tank-Infantry cooperation. At 1800 a telephone message from "CCA" cancelled the prospective move to UBACH, GERMANY. The Battalion was ordered to send a billeting detail to "CCA" at 2000 and to be prepared to move at 0530 on 17 December 44. At 2300, the time of movement was changed to 0700. Destination was unknown, but direction was to the south.

17 December 44: Written orders were received from "CCA" for the Battalion to move at 0840 via HEERLEN, VALKENBURG, STAVELOT, TROIS PONTS, to the vicinity of VIELSALM, BELGIUM. Order of march was: Companies B, C, A, Assault Gun Platoon, Company D, Headquarters, Headquarters Company and Service Company. The march was made without incident, the Battalion closed into a muddy field in mountainous country at 1905, two miles west of BEHO, BELGIUM.

Effective tank strength was: Company A (13), Company B (13), Company C (15), Company D (17), Headquarters (2), Assault Gun Platoon (5).

Returning from "CCA", the Battalion Commander brought information that in the area north of ST VITH, which had been the sector of the 106th Infantry Division, the enemy had broken through, isolating portions of two regiments and capturing considerable equipment. Company D, 40th Tank Battalion went under "CCA" control and outposted the towns of DREYFELDT, QURTHE, and GOUVEY, BELGIUM. (See Part II) The rest of the Battalion was kept on alert.

18 December 44: On order from "CCA", the Battalion was kept ready to attack on 30 minutes notice. At 1015 The Liaison Officer brought instructions from the Battalion Commander at "CCA" Headquarters for Company C to move to the BEHO crossroads to receive further instructions. Company B, Assault Gun Platoon and Company A, in that order, followed. Under "CCA" control, an advance guard under Lt Colonel BROWN was organized of Company C, 40th Tank Battalion and Company C, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion. The main body consisted of the 40th Tank Battalion less Company C and the 48th Infantry Battalion less Company C. The Combat Command had a mission of attack northwest from ST VITH astride the road to POTEAU, to clear the enemy from that area. "CCB" was to attack north from ST VITH. Information of friendly and enemy troops, because of the

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confusion caused by the enemy breakthrough and the suddenness of our move to the new area, was extremely vague. Lieutenant GERALD E. REEVES'S platoon was the point of the attack. A platoon of infantry formed the advance party, and the remainder of the Tank Company and the Infantry company made up the support. The infantry dismounted approximately 400 yards before reaching POTEAU. The advance guard fired on assault guns to the right of the road, and received heavy fire from them. An obstacle to the advance was a clearing on the right side of the road about 300 yards from POTEAU which gave the enemy observation of the road at that point. Enemy assault guns held the commanding ground overlooking the road. After the advance party had cleared the opening, the enemy assault gun demolished a "CCA" Headquarters halftrack. About 1600 Lieutenant REEVES'S platoon with infantry, moved into the town of POTEAU. Remaining tanks dashed across the clearing as space became available. Lieutenant CLINE'S platoon occupied high ground overlooking the town. Lieutenant SPARING'S platoon remained on the road. Companies A and C of the infantry outposted the tanks. Companies B and A, less two platoons and the Assault Guns, 40th Tank Battalion, remained in bivouac about two miles east of POTEAU. A platoon of Company A protected "CCA" Headquarters and another platoon formed a roadblock north of SARTLEX ST VITH. About 1230 Company D called for assistance, reporting that enemy reconnaissance vehicles had approached GOURMAY⁴⁸ and fired on the town. The Mortar Platoon went to Captain HUGHES'S assistance and Lieutenant DAVID of Company A, 40th Tank Battalion took one tank that had been left behind for maintenance and the dozer of Companies B and C into CHEVAN to outpost the town. (For further details Task Force HUGHES see Part II).

At night, Company B pulled into a close leaguer for its own protection, and at the same time covered an approach from the northeast. Likewise, Company A, less two platoons, and the Assault Gun Platoon, covered roads from the south and southwest.

19 December 44: At daylight, Lieutenant REEVES in POTEAU, reported hearing a column of tanks on his left flank. The artillery and assault guns were registered in. About 1100, Company C reported enemy infantry had infiltrated to their rear, and the Battalion Commander requested that the squad of infantry who were guarding "CCA" Headquarters be sent to him. One squad was sent, and the infantry were driven out. Artillery, 489th Field Artillery Battalion, and the Assault Gun Platoon in indirect fire disabled two enemy assault guns. Company B, 48th Armored Infantry

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⁴⁸ The "R" in this name may be a mis-reading. The original is faint.

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Battalion moved up toward POTEAU and dug in along the road to the east of the rear of Company C, 40th Tank Battalion. About 1100, Lt Colonel CHAPUIS, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, took over command of the Infantry, and Lt Colonel BROWN remained in command of the tanks. "CCB" held the line east of ST VITH and arcing left as far as the north-south road out of SARTLEX ST VITH. There the responsibility of "CCA" began, and extended through POTEAU. "CCR" was in the vicinity of VIELSALM. At 1530, a friendly column consisting of a light tank, two armored cars, and two ¼ ton trucks was seen moving into POTEAU from the direction of VIELSALM. Our artillery held fire, but enemy fire opened on the column and it turned and withdrew. Later, about 1725, warning was received to be on the alert from "CCR" coming in the same direction. At 1845, a patrol from "CCR" contacted, then returned in the direction of VIELSALM. The mission of "CCA" was to hold the sector it occupied. The situation continued critical. An air corps pilot in a tank arrived, but too late in the afternoon to be of use.

20 December 44: Because the day was clear and air support was expected, the air-corps officer in his tank was sent forward early. About 1000, a column of approximately 10 enemy tanks was seen moving toward POTEAU from the west. The Battalion Commander ordered the road kept clear at all costs and to bring the tanks under fire. Company C opened fire on the enemy tanks but was unable to determine the effect immediately because the enemy tanks laid a smoke screen. Then the smoke cleared, Company C continued to fire, the tanks having to move out of cover at times to find a firing position. By noon, four and possibly five enemy tanks had been disabled by AP fire from our 75MM and 76MM tanks. Later in the afternoon our fire set ablaze four of the disabled tanks. Heavy artillery concentrations were laid on the enemy infantry seen in the hills and woods around POTEAU, causing them to pull back. Two tanks of Company B were placed to block a trail leading from the north into the area held by Company B, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion. Company D with the Mortar Platoon in support, passed to Division control in the afternoon. The situation remained critical, with the artillery falling on ST VITH and SARTLEX ST VITH, where the Battalion Aid Station was located. Headquarters Company less detachments was located at BEHO. Service Company was moved from BOVIGNY rearward toward LARROCHE. Engineers laid mines to strengthen the roadblocks set up by Companies A and C. An ammunition truck dispatched 19 December 44 failed to return because the road was vut⁴⁹ by enemy paratroopers. At

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⁴⁹ This spelling is as in the original.

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night, Company A dozer went to Company C and was used to dig in positions for the tanks. No tank losses were reported.

21 December 44: The Combat Commander with the two Battalion Commanders, during the night formulated a plan first to send Company C of the Infantry across the VIELSALM-RECHT road to occupy the high ground immediately northeast of the POTEAU road intersection, and then move Lieutenant REEVES'S tank platoon to the same vicinity. Lieutenant REEVES reported that the mission was accomplished at 0020. By the move, eight 8 in. howitzers that had been left by retreating friendly troops were recovered. At 1130 a strong enemy patrol was reported to have cut the road (at 804889) between our medical aid station at SARTLEX ST VITH and "CCA" tactical headquarters (at 792908). A platoon from Company B, 40th Tank Battalion was dispatched to clean it out. Three ¼ ton trucks and a light tank were found on the road, disabled by bazooka and small arms. Further investigation disclosed eight more ¼ ton trucks on a side road on the north side of the main highway. One officer of "CCA" was found dead.⁵⁰ Missing were a score of men and four officers, none of whom were from this Battalion. None of the patrol was found. Company B tanks were placed in sections along the road to cover it with fire. Meanwhile, small arms fire continued in the POTEAU area, some of it from enemy in American uniforms. Early in the evening our troops were warned of enemy tank and infantry units moving south against ST VITH. Service Company lost three trucks ambushed at the intersection of MANHAY-HOUFALLEE road with SAMAREE-SALMCHATEAU road.

22 December 44: Shortly after midnight a section of Company A on a road block, put in on the trail where the eight ¼ ton trucks had been found on 21 December 44, opened fire on an enemy patrol moving from south to north. After the patrol had been broken up, three of the officers and seven enlisted men who had been captured during the morning ambush, escaped, and reported to the tanks. They were evacuated by a medical corps ¼ ton truck to the aid station. They reported that they had been held prisoner by the patrol, described as 300 strong, on the south side of the ST VITH-POTEAU road, and were being escorted through our lines to the north when the tanks opened fire.

At 0930 Lieutenant BORCHERS of Company A, who had his platoon on a road block at (809897), reported a strong infantry attack. About the same time, tanks and infantry were reported attacking the half-tracks of

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⁵⁰ 1st Lt. Daniel J. Murphy, per John Durba (CCA veteran, 9 Sep 2001): A couple hundred yards up from Poteau, a large group of 70-80 Germans came out of woods and stopped Murphy's peep. Murphy tried to grab the machine gun on the mount and was killed. The rest in peep were captured. The Germans broke up and scattered. Frank Wickerham, one of the men captured, was carrying another wounded GI. Wickerham talked the Germans into giving up at an American outpost.

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Company B, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, in the town of SARTLEX-ST VITH. Lieutenant RIDER'S platoon, Company B, 40th Tank Battalion, was dispatched to help protect the vehicles. He reported seven enemy tanks moving toward the village. Company A sent Lieutenant FIELDER'S platoon to help, and later the Assault Gun Platoon was ordered out of its indirect fire position to lend assistance. At 1100, the medical detachment reported they could not flee toward the Battalion Headquarters because they would come under direct fire. Our tanks took the offensive and the enemy tanks pulled back. Then the medical aid station was able to escape. Lieutenant BORCHER'S platoon could not be contacted by radio after 1300. Captain WOLFE, of Company B, 40th Tank Battalion moved out to take command of the tanks and assault guns. The combat command gave orders for its elements to withdraw through POTEAU to PETIT THIER, while holding at POTEAU. In the late afternoon, the move began, with "CCA" Headquarters leading, followed by the infantry, less Company C; Company A; Assault Gun Platoon and finally Company B, 40th Tank Battalion. Company B, 40th Tank Battalion withdrew after a smoke screen had been laid. Company C, 40th Tank Battalion and Company C, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion continued to hold at the POTEAU crossroads, with Company B, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion on the north of the defensive line, Company A, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion in reserve; Company B, 40th Tank Battalion covering the northeast approaches and Company A, 40th Tank Battalion covering the southeast approaches. The defenses were coordinated with "CCR", which was already established in the valley to our rear at PETIT THIER. By 1915, the new defenses were reported well set. About 2200 Company C reported that a strong enemy foot patrol sneaked up the road and opened fire with bazookas at close range disabling two tanks. The patrol was closely followed by enemy tanks carrying enemy infantry. The position was caught by surprise and completely disorganized. Then Captain ROY W. NELSON ordered the platoon that was southeast of the POTEAU bridge to cross and rejoin the remainder of the Company around the town, and cross road and hold this position at all costs.

23 December 44: Ten enemy tanks were reported moving toward POTEAU on the roads from ST VITH and RECHT. The day was clear, but air support was not available. Shortly after noon, Company C tanks were engaged in a fire fight with the enemy tanks, and at 1312 reported that three panthers had been knocked out. The enemy moved in under cover of smoke. It was necessary for Company C to hold at all costs to cover the withdrawal of the Combat Command through the outposts of "CCR", which was scheduled to begin at 1530. Company C was running short of AP ammunition. Corporal NORMAN D. JENKINS of Company B, under fire delivered a

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quarter ton truck load to the tanks needing it. The enemy fired POTEAU, making it almost impossible for Company C tanks to use the buildings for cover. When the withdrawal began, the infantry pulled out first, followed by Company C tanks, Company A tanks, Assault Guns and finally Company B. Smoke was used to cover Company C's disengagement. After a last enemy assault with tanks engaging the enemy at 100 feet and enemy infantry at very close range, because of the withdrawal of all friendly infantry.⁵¹ As each company came out, the company to follow it covered the withdrawal, until all elements were within the defensives of "CCR". The Battalion did not suffer any losses during the withdrawal, despite heavy enemy tank and infantry pressure at POTEAU. The last element cleared PETIT THIER at 1620. The Battalion, less Company D, moved without incident via VIELSALM, LIERNIEUX, and HARZE to billets in the vicinity of LES BATY, closing at 2115.

Tank losses during the action east of VIELSLAM 18 December 44 - 23 December 44 totaled: Company A (4), Company B (2), Company C (3), Company D (7). Personnel losses were Company A (6 MIA), Company D (6 MIA) and Service Company (1 MIA).

24 December 44: At 0330 the Executive Officer of "CCA" arrived at the Battalion CP with instructions that Task Force CORBIN, to consist of Company B 40th Tank Battalion; Company A, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion; a platoon of 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion and a platoon of Company A, 33rd Engineer Battalion, would move out immediately to insure the holding of MANHAY, and to block the roads leading into the north-south highway through MANHAY, at MONT DERRIEUX and TRI-LE-CHESLAING. The force moved out at 0700. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Battalion had been alerted and followed the force. The force was in position and made contact with the defense platoon of the XVIII Corps (Airborne) in MANHAY at 0900. Orders were received from Division for the force to contact the 82nd Airborne Division in MALEMPRE. On instructions from Commanding Officer, "CCA", the whole force less the Tank Destroyers moved into MALEMPRE, took over responsibility from elements of the 9th Armored Division there, and established defenses around the town. The force then was dissolved. A platoon of light tanks attempted to patrol to FRAITURE in an effort to contact the 82nd Airborne Division, but met fire in the thickly wooded area and was forced back. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Combat Command was placed in position in the MANHAY-MALEMPRE area. Company C 40th Tank Battalion, with an

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⁵¹ This sentence is as in the original.

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infantry company and the Mortar Platoon, was in the vicinity of GRANK-GOTTA, and Company A with two tank destroyers and infantry was at FOND-DE-LA-JUSTICE. Company D, was in reserve and the Assault Guns were in support position north of MANHAY. At approximately 1800, "CCA" issued instructions to prepare to withdraw to a defensive position that would be set up along the line GRANDMENIL-MANHAY-TRI-LE-CHESLAING. The move was ordered by higher headquarters at the request of the 82nd Airborne Division, which felt it was necessary to move back to shorten the defensive lines. The 82nd Airborne Division, was on our east flank and the 3rd Armored Division and elements of the 75th Infantry Division on the west. The plan for the withdrawal was for the engineers and light tanks in MALEMPRE to come out first; followed by the Mortar Platoon; then Company A of the infantry; followed by Company B, 40th Tank Battalion; then the infantry which was with Company C; then the remainder of the infantry less 16 men to remain with the tank destroyers in the vicinity of Company A, 40th Tank Battalion less two tanks to remain with the two tank destroyers and the 16 men as the last element to leave. The men were to ride out on the tanks and destroyers. Movement was to begin at 2230. Company B, 40th Tank Battalion was to go into position to support the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion on the high ground between MANHAY and TRI-LE-CHESLAING. Company A and C, 40th Tank Battalion were to support the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, with Company C near MANHAY, and Company A on its right. The light tanks and mortars came out as planned. Then Company A, 40th Tank Battalion reported tanks moving near them. Because elements of the 3rd Armored Division were known to be in his front and right, it was thought that the tanks were friendly. Company A then reported that it had lost four tanks almost simultaneously by bazooka fire. Although no report was received Company A, finding themselves without adequate protection from bazookas, withdrew. Before their identity could be established, an attack in force, including enemy tanks and infantry with bazookas was underway. The tank destroyers and Company C were trapped. They fought the enemy as well as they could, they were well dug in, but the enemy was in the shadow of the trees on their right flank by the time that they were discovered to be enemy and all that they could see to fire at were gun flashes. At least one Tank Destroyer was destroyed by bazooka. All of Company C was lost by AP fire. The enemy continued to roll into MANHAY, some of them mixed

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in column with friendly forces. The Battalion S-3 half-track evacuated MANHAY when the tanks approached. The Battalion Commander remained, and was joined by the Company Commander of Company A with Lieutenant FIEDLER. With other forces defending MANHAY, they fought the enemy. One Panther tank was definitely knocked out by the Battalion Commander's tank and it is believed that at least two other tanks destroyed. Company D, pulling out of town with "CCA" Headquarters suffered three tanks knocked out, and a fourth, the tank of Captain WALTER J. HUGHES, struck a friendly mine when he pulled into a defensive position north of MANHAY, resulting in his death. Captain MALCOLM O. ALLEN JR was captured in the town. Realizing that the situation was very serious, Lt Colonel BROWN set up a road block with his Assault Guns on the high ground north of MANHAY. On the arrival of the withdrawing infantry, this was used as the nucleus for the new defensive line. Lt Colonel BROWN was dazed by concussion when blown out of a tank which was hit by AP fire. When he recovered control he was with elements of the 3rd Armored Division on our right flank. He was out of contact with the Battalion from approximately midnight until about 0300 on 25 December 44. The Battalion main CP near HARRE was alerted by the S-3 personnel for movement, and later moved to LES BATY. Captain WOLFE led Company B out of MALMPRE on the road toward BRA, later coming into the MANHAY road at WERBEMONT. He did not lose any vehicles or personnel. On completing his withdrawal he was placed in a reserve position (Combat Command Reserve) about 400 yards north of the roadblock .

25 December 44: About 0300 the Battalion Commander arrived at the road block. He checked the position of the Assault Guns and other defenses and then reported to Combat Command Headquarters. All other available medium tanks in the Battalion were placed under Company B control. Of these, two under Lieutenant BORCHERS of Company A were sent south of the road block to cover a straight section of the MANHAY road, and two under Lieutenant GOLDIE were sent to the east to support infantry positions of the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion west of VAUX CHAVANNE. The Mortar Platoon went into position between Company B and the road block. At night, the 3rd Battalion, 424th Infantry, sent a company to outpost Company B. The Reconnaissance Platoon outposted the Assault Guns. During the day, the air-corps pilot in a tank was active in directing planes against targets such as dug-in tanks. In the MANHAY action, personnel losses were: Company A (12 evacuated), Company C (2 MIA

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4 evacuated including 2 officers), Company D (1 officer KIA, 3 evacuated).

Tank losses were: Headquarters (1), Company A (8), Company B (0), Company C (9), Company D (4), 105MM Assault Guns (0). Captain ALLEN escaped from the enemy at MANHAY and returned to the Battalion and was evacuated with Pneumonia.

- 26 December 44: Air support regulated by a pilot in a tank continued. Enemy tanks and infantry were reported in MANHAY, and tanks were concentrating south of the town. The enemy placed smoke in the vicinity of the Assault Gun Platoon. Lieutenant MC CORQUODALE was placed in command of the separate tanks covering approaches. Dozers were used to dig-in the tanks. At night, men of the Battalion who were without vehicles were used to outpost Company B tanks. Reorganization of crews was begun.
- 27 December 44: Troops were instructed to carry gas masks on orders from Division. Friendly planes, apparently misled by red smoke put down by the enemy, straffed in areas of friendly troops. Defensive position were improved. Men of the Battalion without vehicles outposted Company B tanks.
- 28 December 44: Orders were received for the Battalion to prepare to move to a Division concentration area after relief by the 750th Tank Battalion. The order later was cancelled. Company B was outposted in the same manner as on 24 December 44.
- 29 December 44: Reconnaissance of trails in the area were made. The Maintenance Officer of Company A was sent into MANHAY to recover equipment. Plans were made for relief by 750th Tank Battalion and move to a concentration area under "CCB" control in the vicinity of ERNENHEID, BELGIUM.
- 30 December 44: Battalion began moving at 1005 after outpost tanks had concentrated on Company B. Battalion closed in new area at 1030, and passed to "CCB" control. Vehicles were dispersed and camouflaged.
- 31 December 44: All companies were immediately engaged in maintenance of vehicles, weapons and equipment and reorganization of the platoons and companies. The Reconnaissance Platoon and certain company officers were detailed to reconnoiter roads and terrain in the combat command area. Major LEO G. CARLSON, the Battalion Executive Officer was transferred to Division Headquarters and Major CARL M. CORBIN, Battalion S-3 was transferred to Combat Command Reserve. Major

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FRED C. SWEAT joined the battalion S-3 and Captain EMMERSON J. WOLFE, Company B Company Commander was transferred to Battalion Headquarters and made Executive Officer. Sixty-nine well trained replacements were received thus relieving a serious personnel shortage. The Battalion was transferred to Combat Command Reserve.

END

PART I

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ACTIONS OF COMPANY D AND THE MORTAR PLATOON

PERIOD 17-23 DECEMBER 44

PART II

- 17 December 44: Company D, with Battalion Mortar Platoon attached, moved from Battalion area under direct command, Commanding Officer "CCA". Captain WALTER J. HUGHES, Company Commander, with the Headquarters Section and 3rd Platoon moved to GOUVY, BELGIUM and established the Company CP and took up positions in the NE part of town. (See overlay No. 1 to Part II). The 2nd Platoon moved to positions in QURTHE. The 1st platoon in DREYFELDT moved into position. All platoons were in communication by radio with Company Headquarters. On arrival in GOUVY, the following troops and installations were found there: QM railhead; 92nd Ordnance; 168th Engineer Battalion; Service Company of an AA outfit and some MP's and 750 PW's. The 1st and 2nd platoons had no activity during the period.
- 18 December 44: Battalion Mortar Platoon moved into position in DREYFELDT supporting the 1st platoon Company D. The Mortar Platoon set up a mine field at crossroad in southwest GOUVY and a road block covered by a bazooka team. All quiet until 1430 when the enemy attacked GOUVY placing mortar, machine gun, and direct fire from either a tank or armored car on the town. Three or four vehicles moving down the road were knocked out. The Mortar Platoon was immediately ordered to move into position in GOUVY. At this time, most of the QM railhead and 92d Ordnance evacuated the town abandoning some vehicles and equipment and setting fire to the ration dump. The entire 168th Engineer Battalion except for about eight (8) men remained in town and offered to help. Abandoned vehicles with weapons were immediately put into firing positions. The fire was put out by the Company Headquarters Section, the 3rd Platoon and the attached medics assisted later by some Service troops. Enemy fire continued throughout the above activity. Captain HUGHES immediately took command of the town and reorganized. About 20 MP's guarding PW's left the town on a truck to get help, leaving 2 officers and 10 EM to guard the 750 prisoners. The 20 MP's never returned. Upon learning of this situation, Captain HUGHES ordered the evacuation of the PW's by marching them down the road to BEHO. The MP's present were assisted by the personnel of the Company

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Command half-track using the vehicle weapons to cover the marching PW's. The guard was doubled for the night 18-19 December 44. The day was quiet in the 1st and 2nd Platoon positions.

- 19 December 44: The situation was quiet during the night. In the early morning enemy foot troops were observed in the direction of LUNERLE. One platoon of the 33rd Armored Engineer Battalion, 7th Armored Division arrived during the morning and set up mine fields, road blocks and booby traps. Mortars were laid on all approaches from southwest and east. It was understood that Task Force JONES would arrive in the town during the day but this did not take place. An FO from the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion arrived at the Company position and adjusted the Battalion on several points including the southwest part of the town of GOUVY. The southwest part of GOUVY were shelled by the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and harrassing fire continued throughout the night. First and second platoons had no activity during this period.
- 20 December 44: Captain HUGHES checked 1st and 2nd Platoons positions. Three assault guns from the 18th Cavalry commanded by Captain MEADOWS moved into NE part of GOUVY and took up positions reinforcing Company D defenses. The day was generally quiet around GOUVY except for some enemy patrol activity on which artillery, mortar, and Assault Guns fired, killing and wounding quite a few. One PW reported that all but nine (9) in his company were killed or wounded. Some enemy artillery fell on the town apparently trying to knock out our mortars. No casualties resulted. The 7th Armored Division took over the ration dump and began moving it to the rear. Plans were made for an attack on Southwest GOUVY but did not materialize this date. The 1st and 2nd Platoons had no activity during the day. Late in the afternoon Company D reinforced by the Mortar Platoon came under command of Task Force JONES, 7th Armored Division.
- 21 December 44: The 7th Armored Division completed movement of the ration dump from GOUVY. The attack in southwest GOUVY was executed at 0900. Captain HUGHES and Lieutenant PERKINS with the 1st section, 3rd Platoon advanced around the southwest part of GOUVY and entered the town from the west (See overlay No. 1 to Part II). No enemy fire was received and eight (8) enemy wounded were driven out and captured. The attacking troops returned to original positions.

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During the morning the defenses of the town were reinforced by 3 M36 (90 MM) Tank Destroyers from the 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion. In the afternoon vehicle movement was observed vicinity of LIMERLE moving toward GOUVY. Visibility was poor and identification doubtful. Other elements of Task Force JONES moved into GOUVY late in the afternoon. Late at night some enemy opposition was encountered. The other elements of Task Force JONES moved back to high ground north of GOUVY. Information was received that there was a German CP and about 1200 troops (Volksturm) in LIMERLE. Some enemy patrols were fired on. The 440th Armored Field Artillery continued harrassing fires throughout the night. Captain HUGHES ordered the 1st section 3rd Platoon to move back to the NE side of the railroad through GOUCY⁵² and take up positions. The Tank Destroyers and Assault Guns remained in positions. The 1st and 2nd platoons, Company D had no enemy activity.

22 December 44: Company D with the Mortar Platoon attached, were ordered withdrawn to the high ground NE of GOUVY. At 0800 the force was in position with a good view of the valley. An enemy column was observed moving through LIMERLE and artillery fire was placed upon it by the 440th Armored Field Artillery. The 2nd platoon, Company D was ordered to withdraw from QURTHE to the same position as the 3rd platoon. The 1st platoon, Company D immediately commanded by Staff Sergeant STEWART, was ordered to move to crossroads near BEHO. (See overlay No 1 to Part II). After occupying this position the platoon was ordered to move back to original positions at DREYFELDT. The 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion FO had difficulty getting fires requested due to the large number of FO's at the position calling for fires. About 1700 a perimeter defense was set up by Task Force JONES and positions were taken up for the night. The 3 Assault Guns and 3 M36 Tank Destroyers moved to set up a road block at the road junction at BEHO. Three medium tanks were sent to reinforce Company D. They were placed in positions covering the road north out of GOUVY. The situation remained quiet.

23 December 44: No enemy activity during the night. The enemy column was again observed and difficulty again experienced in getting fire missions due to the heavy demand on the 440th Armored Field Artillery. Some missions were fired but effect could not be determined. Captain HUGHES received orders from Task

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⁵² This spelling is as in the original.

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Force JONES in the morning to be ready to pull out by 1500. At 1230 the movement was started with peeps and the mortar half-tracks leading. Route northwest to SALM CHATEAU and west to vicinity GRAND SART. Orders were given by Task Force JONES to destroy any vehicles disabled south of SALMCHATEAU. The 2nd Platoon, Company D was ordered to withdraw to the cross roads at BEHO to to reinforce the Tank Destroyer road block there. At 1400 Captain HUGHES and the 3rd Platoon commanded by Staff Sergeant SWADER and the 3 medium tanks moved toward the cross road at BEHO. At the same time, the 1st Platoon was ordered to move to BOVIGNY to support Tank Destroyer road block in that vicinity. Throughout this movement, elements of the 106th Infantry Division were moving toward SALMCHATEAU. The 3rd Platoon, commanded by Staff Sergeant SWADER was ordered to move to the head of the column and establish a road block between BOVIGNY and SALMCHATEAU (overlay). During this time, Germans were reported at SALMCHATREAU and Lieutenant PERKINS was ordered up front to investigate. After some discussion, the order was given to Lieutenant PERKINS and Staff Sergeant SWADER to run the road block that the Germans had at SALMCHATEAU. This attempt was made by Lieutenant PERKINS and Staff Sergeant SWADER. The attempt was stopped by direct fire from enemy tanks and heavy machine gun fire. There being no cover to take and Lieutenant PERKINS being knocked out and tanks burned, Staff Sergeant SWADER ordered his tank crews over the bank and ordered the crew to leave. Staff Sergeant SWADER was then wounded in the hand. After being pinned down by heavy machine gun fire for five (5) hours in the river we again reached our Company. A search was made for Lieutenant PERKINS and his crew but they could not be found. During this time, Captain HUGHES was making plans on another route out. Also during this action, the rear of the column was attacked by enemy tanks. During this time Staff Sergeant SWADER who commanded the 1st Platoon was fighting a rear guard action with three Tank Destroyers and one medium tank. The last tank of the 1st Platoon was knocked out and the driver was reported as missing. The rest of the crew made it to safety in the low ground to the right of the road. The road we were on had a high bank and a very steep grade

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on the other side. Being unable to move on the road due to road block at SALMCHATEAU, flank guards were put out to hold back the enemy as long as it could. The Tank Destroyers joined our column and were destroyed by a German tank firing from a hill on our right rear. Tank Force commander JONES had given us instructions to destroy any vehicles or supplies that couldn't be saved. Word came to destroy an oil dump so men from the first platoon were sent back with mattocks to destroy the dump. The dump was destroyed and the men returned to their tanks. The medium tank was knocked out and shells were dropping on and near the road. Staff Sergeant STEWART gave instructions to his men to move to the right side of the road and to return to their tanks as soon as the firing let up. There were two more tanks hit and were burning. The shelling didn't let up and the direct fire was coming right down the column. Instructions were given to the crews of the knocked out vehicles which direction to go. The two remaining crews stayed with their vehicles until ordered to destroy them. The crews joined the column as it started down a back trail led by Lieutenant HORN and an officer from the 106th Infantry Division. Traveling about 500 yards another road block was encountered from there. Lieutenant HORN went cross country until they reached a stone fence and the column continued on. Lieutenant HORN continued to move cross-country and finally reached a highway which was outposted by the 82nd Airborne Division. Near SALMCHATEAU mines were removed to allow the column to pass. An officer from Task Force JONES led the column to VILLETES where we spent the remainder of the night. The next morning we moved to WERBOMONT where we gassed up. The extra men were sent to the rear. From there, Captain HUGHES was ordered to join the Battalion.

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Col. Cav
COMMANDING

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S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
A.P.O. 257, U. S. ARMY

31 January 1945.

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of JANUARY 1945.

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

Period 1 JANUARY 45 - 11 JANUARY 45

On 1 January 45 the Battalion, under the command of Combat Command Reserve, moved from assembly area vicinity ERNONHEID, BELGIUM (530025) to assembly area vicinity ONEUX, BELGIUM. "A" and "C" Company was billeted in the town of HAYEMONT, BELGIUM; Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Service Company were billeted in the town of ONEUX, BELGIUM; "B" and "D" Company were billeted in the town of BELLE ROCHE, BELGIUM.

On 2 January 45 the Battalion was placed on a one hour alert status for movement on order to repel counter-attacks anywhere within the Corps Zone. During the remainder of the period, the Battalion conducted training, maintenance, rest and rehabilitation of all personnel.

Tank Strength: As the period opened, the Battalion strength in tanks was as follows:

18 Medium Tanks 75MM guns
5 Medium Tanks 76MM guns
5 Medium Tanks 105MM guns
10 Light Tanks 37mm guns

During the period 1 January 45 to 11 January 45, the following tanks were drawn by the Battalion:

19 Medium Tanks 75MM guns
11 Medium Tanks 76MM guns
1 Medium Tank 105MM gun
4 Light Tanks 37MM guns

This brought the Battalion tank strength up as follows:

37 Medium Tanks 75MM guns
16 Medium Tanks 76MM guns
6 Medium Tanks 105MM guns
14 Light Tanks 37MM guns

In the move to the assembly area vicinity ONEUX, BELGIUM quite a bit of difficulty was experienced by tanks in negotiating the icy roads. Additional traction was needed and during this period, cleats were welded to all

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medium tank tracks for this purpose. The cleats were made by putting track extensions as supplied by Ordnance and welding them vertically inside the track extensions, 13 to a track.

Grousers or barsteel were placed on all light tank tracks. The cleats aided materially but it was found that they could not take the beating on hard ice or cleared hard roads. Many broke off or bent under. Others split or broke off the track extensions to which welded.

The training conducted during this period included exercises for the purpose of demonstrating the close co-ordination required for the successful operation of small Tank-Infantry-Engineer Teams operating over close terrain on secondary roads and trails. Each team consisted of an infantry company, medium or light tank platoon and a squad of engineers. Various formations were used in the exercises.

Other training included a refresher course on Defense against Chemical Warfare, Forward Observer Methods of Adjusting Artillery Fire, and Test Firing of Weapons.

Period 12 January 45 - 19 January 45

On the morning of 12 January 45 the Battalion began movement by infiltration to an assembly area vicinity WEGNEZ, BELGIUM (642217) where it remained until 20 January 45.

During this period another effort was made to add traction to tank tracks. Cleats previously placed on tanks were repaired or replaced and steel bars were welded to all steel block tracks. Some grousers were welded to steel tracks. This improved traction greatly and seemed to be the best solution for negotiating icy roads. The bars welded to the tracks, however, required frequent repair, because the steel available was not hard enough to stand up under the pounding of a tank on hard surfaces. Nevertheless, they aided materially in negotiating icy roads with steel tracks.

During this period, all tanks were camouflaged with white wash (Lime, salt and water solution) for operations in snow covered terrain. Training was continued to include a course on Non-Fraternization for all personnel, readings of the Articles of War, and Test Firing.

Period 20 January 45 - 21 January 45

The Battalion began movement early on the morning of 20 January 45 to an assembly area in XHOFFRAIX, BELGIUM (817079) and placed on alert status for movement to a forward assembly area on short notice. A reconnaissance of all routes was conducted. The Battalion was still under the command of Combat Command Reserve which was Division Reserve in an operation of the Divisions to the south from ELVANGE and MONTENAU, BELGIUM toward BORN and ST VITH, BELGIUM.

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22 JANUARY 1945

On 22 January 45 the battalion was alerted for movement on order after 0900. At 0830 orders were received to move one medium tank company to vicinity WAIMES, BELGIUM (845030) to be employed in a supporting role under direct command of Combat Command Reserve. "B" Company moved out at once and under command of Combat Command Reserve moved to forward assembly area, one platoon in ELVANGE, BELGIUM (962972) and two platoons in MONTENEAU, BELGIUM (853967). "B" Company was in supporting position for other troops in the line from AMEL, BELGIUM (887962) to high ground (870928).

The remainder of the Battalion moved out from XHORFFRAIX, BELGIUM about 1000 and assembled in the WAIMES, BELGIUM and BRUYERES, BELGIUM. The Command Post was established in WAIMES, BELGIUM.

23 JANUARY 1945

The plan at the time was for Combat Command Reserve to pass through Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B" troops after taking HUNNANGE (845899) with the mission of seizing ST VITH. "B" and "D" Companies were attached to the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) and moved to assembly areas vicinity NEDER EMMELSER HEIDE, BELGIUM (830915) for operations against ST VITH. "A" Company was moved to positions to support the 508th Infantry Regiment (AB) from the same positions occupied by "B" Company which was relieved from this mission when attached to the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized). The plan for the operation of Combat Command Reserve against ST VITH was changed, but "B" and "D" Company remained in position at NEDER EMMELSER HEIDE, BELGIUM and "A" Company remained in position at ELVANGE and MONTENAU in support of relief of the 508th Infantry Regiment (AB) by 424th Infantry Regiment of the 106th Infantry Division in the Combat Command Reserve assigned zone.

24 JANUARY 1945

Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company moved to ELVANGE, BELGIUM during the afternoon of 24 January 1945. The Battalion, less "B" Company was relieved from attachment to Combat Command Reserve and attached to the 424th Infantry Regiment at 1410 for an attack early of the morning of 25 January 1945.

The plan for the attack on 25 January 1945 was as follows: (See operations Instructions No. 1, Hq CT 424, 241645 January 45).

- a. A/40 attached to 2nd Battalion 424th Infantry Regiment for attack to seize MEDELL (885925) high ground (895917) and in conjunction with 3rd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment seize MEYERODE (899933). Time of attack 0715.
- b. B/40 attached to 3rd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment for an attack to seize the high ground (894943) thence in conjunction

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with 2nd Battalion 424th Infantry Regiment seize MEYERODE (899933).
Time of attack 0715.

c. D/40 in reserve ELVANGE, BELGIUM.

Details for the attack were completed and reconnaissance of positions was conducted. "C" Company was moved from WAIMES to AM KREUZ, BELGIUM (865982) in preparation for the attack.

Period 25 JANUARY 45 - 27 January 45

The attack was launched 250715 January 45 after a fifteen minute artillery preparation. By 261000 January 45 all objectives were taken and the positions organized for defense. "C" Company was in position in MEYERODE and "A" Company was in position in MEDELL, BELGIUM. Both companies remained in position throughout the period until relieved.

"D" Company moved to assembly area in ELVANGE, BELGIUM during the morning 25 January 45. "B" Company was still under direct command of Combat Command Reserve moved from NEDER EMMELSER HEIDE to assembly area MONTANEAU.

Following are detailed accounts of the action 25-27 January 45 as concerned Companies "A" and "C" and the Mortar and Assault Gun Platoons, 40th Tank Battalion. Map references 1/25000, Sheets 5602, 5603.

ACTION A/40 25 JANUARY 45 - 28 JANUARY 45

The plan was for "A" Company initially to support the attack of the 2nd Battalion of the 424th Infantry Regiment by fire. The company moved into position at 0600 25 January and the attack jumped off at 0715 after a 15 minute artillery preparation (See Arty Plan accompanying Operation Instruction No.1, CT 424 241645 January 45).

The tanks carried 20 extra rounds of ammunition on the rear decks for the initial supporting mission. The Infantry was pinned down by small arms fire shortly after jumping off and requested tanks to help clear the enemy strongpoint at the corss road (837924). The first platoon moved forward at approximately 0930 for an attack on the CR with the reserve infantry company. The infantry could not clear the enemy troops from the houses at the cross road so tanks moved forward and fired into the buildings. This fire, including white phosphorus, did not dislodge the enemy from the buildings so the tanks closed on the cross road. One tank had been knocked out by two bazooka hits on approaching the CR. No casualties resulted. The remaining tanks in the first platoon, now about out of ammunition, were pulled back and the second platoon passed through to continue the attack. One tank in the second platoon was knocked out by AT fire from the west edge of MEDELL but the cross roads was taken. One man was killed and one wounded when this tank was hit. The AT gun was destroyed and the tanks of the second platoon

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started moving into MEDELL, BELGIUM with the infantry covered by the third platoon from the high ground west of the cross road. The advance of the second platoon was met with direct fire from a towed AT gun in the town. The AT gun withdrew slowly through the town and finally pulled out in the direction of MEYERODE. Air support was requested to help reduce the AT fire coming from MEDELL. At 1315 a dive bombing and strafing attack by force of our planes reportedly drove five enemy tanks NE out of MEDELL.

The third platoon was moved forward to continue through the town with the second platoon with the infantry. At 1415 MEDELL, the first objective, was cleared and the first platoon was moved into town along with the remaining infantry. The AT gun and only a few enemy infantry were found in the town.

The town was organized for defense for the night. Enemy mortar and artillery fire began falling intermittently.

On 26 January 45 at 0800 the 2nd Battalion, 424th Infantry attacked to secure the second objective high ground (895917) (See Operations Instruction No.3, Hq CT 424 231900 January 1945). The tanks remained in MEDELL as it was planned not to use them in the attack due to the nature of the terrain at the second objective - high wooded hill. A man in the company accompanied the infantry in the attack to act as a guide in case tanks were required. At 0915 the infantry was on the objective after encountering only light enemy resistance consisting of small arms fire. However, the infantry called for tank support to repel a counter-attack which developed soon after their arrival on the objective. A tank section was sent forward on this mission. They quickly scattered the enemy infantry and remained on the second objective with the infantry until the troops were relieved. Intermittent artillery and mortar fire continued on MEDELL.

On 27 January 45 a section of tanks and a platoon of infantry were sent over the MEDELL-MEYERODE road to gain contact with the troops of the 3rd Battalion and "C" Company, 40th Tank Battalion now in MEYERODE. Contact was made but the movement drew direct fire from the high ground east of the road and also some indirect fire.

On 28 January 45, "A" Company was relieved from attachment to 2nd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment and began movement under 40th Tank Battalion control to new assembly area.

Action C\40 25 JANUARY 45 - 28 JANUARY 45

The plan for "C" Company initially to support the attack of the 3rd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment by fire. The Company moved into position (873943) at 0600 25 January 45 at 0715 after a 15 minute artillery preparation. The tanks carried 20 extra rounds

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of ammunition on the rear deck for the supporting fire from the initial position.

The Infantry was on the first objective (894944) by 1000 after meeting only light resistance and moved to the second objective (898950) without opposition. Twelve prisoners were captured in the action. The tanks remained in the initial position until 1200 when the 3rd platoon moved forward to join the infantry on the objective. This platoon had difficulty in finding the infantry due to limited visibility. The Infantry sent guides back and lead them to the first objective. The second section of the second platoon followed the third platoon to the objective. The remainder of the company covered all movement from original position. During the afternoon the remainder of the second platoon moved forward to the first objective and the positions were organized for defense for the night.

At 260800 January 45 the attack for the third objective (MEYERODE) jumped off with two companies of infantry and the two platoons of tanks. The objective was taken by 1000. Very light resistance was encountered and twenty prisoners were taken. The tanks drew direct fire as soon as they were in the town. Heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire began coming in.

The positions were consolidated and prepared for defense. No tanks were lost during the entire operation.

The Infantry and tank company remained in the objective until relieved at 281200 January 45 when "C" Company was relieved of attachment to the 3rd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment and began movement under 40th Tank Battalion control to new assembly area.

Action of Mortar Platoon 25 JANUARY 45 - 28 JANUARY 45

The Mortar Platoon supported the attack initially from positions (861934) and fired 100 rounds in support of the attack on 25 January 45. On 26 January 45 the platoon displaced forward to high ground west of MEDELL (867928) and fired 50 rounds in support of the attack. Defensive fires were planned for the remainder of the period and a forward OP was established in MEDELL. No other activity during the period until platoon moved out to new assembly area. There was one casualty to frost bite. Total number of rounds fired were 150.

Action of Assault Gun Platoon 25 JANUARY - 28 JANUARY 45

The Assault Gun Platoon supported the attack from position (862949). A total of 245 rounds was fired in support of the attack. No casualties were suffered.

All the committed troops were relieved by 281200 January and the entire Battalion under command of Combat Command Reserve began movement to an assembly area vicinity EUPEN, BELGIUM (729268) where the Division came under command V Corps.

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29 JANUARY 45 - 31 JANUARY 45

The remainder of the period was devoted to maintenance of vehicles weapons and radios; rest and rehabilitation of personnel; and a study of terrain for operations within the V Corps Zone.

SUMMARY

The Battalion's primary activity during the month of JANUARY 1945 was movement to the assembly area and conducting training and maintenance until 24 JANUARY 45 when the Battalion moved to vicinity of ELVANGE, BELGIUM where it participated in operations under command of the 424 Infantry Regiment from 250700 JANUARY until 281200 JANUARY 45 when relieved. The Battalion then moved to EUPEN, BELGIUM and began plans for operations within the V Corps Zone.

Two medium tanks were lost in action during the month and there were two personnel casualties as a result of enemy action - one killed and one wounded.

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Colonel O 315 210
Cavalry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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S E C R E T

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X PART I X
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X (a) Period 1-3 February 1945 X
X (b) Period 4 February 1945 X
X (c) Period 5-28 February 1945 X
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X PART II X
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X (a) Action B/40 5-6 February 1945 X
X (b) Action C/40 5-12 February 1945 X
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S E C R E T

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HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
APO 257 US ARMY

/jap

28 February 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of FEBRUARY, 1945

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

PART I

- (a) Period 1-3 FEBRUARY 1945
- (b) Period 4 FEBRUARY 1945
- (c) Period 5-28 FEBRUARY 1945

(a) Period 1-3 FEBRUARY 1945:

The period opened with the 40th Tank Battalion in assembly area in EUPEN, BELGIUM, under command of Combat Command Reserve, Seventh Armored Division. Training, maintenance and physical examinations were conducted for all personnel.

At 030920 FEBRUARY 1945, the Battalion was placed on a four hour alert for movement status. Preparations for movement were completed and the Battalion Commander and Company Commanders went on a personal reconnaissance of the area WITZERATH (992248) - KESTERNICH (004240), GERMANY where the pending operations were to take place.

(b) Period 4 FEBRUARY 1945:

On 4 FEBRUARY 1945 the Battalion received orders for the Combat Command Reserve attack 5 FEBRUARY 1945 to secure STRAUCH, GERMANY (011260), STECKENBORN, GERMANY (024262), and HECHELSCHIED, GERMANY (035270). (See Operations Instructions, Headquarters, Combat Command Reserve, Seventh Armored Division, EUPEN, BELGIUM, 040830 FEBRUARY 1945.)

B/40 was attached to the 3rd Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment under command Combat Command Reserve, 7th Armored Division for the Operation and moved out 041030 FEBRUARY 1945 from EUPEN, BELGIUM to assembly area SIMMERATH, GERMANY (985241). A detailed account of B Company's operations appears in PART II below.

C/40 was attached to the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, 7th Armored Division under the command of Combat Command Reserve, 7th Armored Division for the operation and moved out 042200 FEBRUARY 1945

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from EUPEN, BELGIUM to assembly area SIMMERATH, GERMANY (985241). A detailed account of C Company's operations appears in PART II below.

The Assault Gun Platoon from position (990248) NE of SIMMERATH, and the Mortar Platoon from position (993264) SW of ROLLESBROICH, GERMANY supported the attack of Task Forces LUTZ and MC DANIELS initially but were not further needed because of the light enemy resistance. Both platoons were pulled back into the Battalion assembly area.

The 40th Tank Battalion less B and C Companies and with the troops shown below attached, composed Task Force BROWN and Combat Command Reserve.

- A/87 Cav. Rcn. Sq. (Mecz)
- C/33 Armd Engr. Bn. (-1 plat.)
- B/814 TD Bn. (-2 plats)
- D/203 AAA (AW) Bn.

Task Force BROWN began movement from EUPEN 050400 FEBRUARY 1945 to assembly area IMGEBROICH, GERMANY (957206) in Combat Command Reserve closing 0655.

(c) Period 5-28 FEBRUARY 1945:

See PART II for actions B/40 5-6 FEBRUARY and C/40 5-12 FEBRUARY 1945.

On 5 FEBRUARY 1945 Task Force BROWN moved to assembly area in SIMMERATH, GERMANY. Attached troops were employed on order CO, Combat Command Reserve which ultimately depleted Task Force BROWN to the 40th Tank Battalion less B and C Companies. B Company rejoined the Battalion on the afternoon of 12 February 1945. At this time it was thought that Combat Command Reserve would move back to EUPEN, BELGIUM to rejoin the remainder of the 7th Armored Division in that area but the condition of the roads after the thaw, were such that unnecessary movement was forbidden. The Battalion remained in SIMMERATH, GERMANY throughout the remainder of FEBRUARY 1945.

On 8 and 9 FEBRUARY 1945 the tank dozers of B and C Company worked with the 78th Infantry Division in clearing mines in the vicinity of SCHMIDT, GERMANY. While on this mission, one tank received a direct hit by either mortar or artillery seriously wounding one officer from B Company and slightly injuring one man from C Company. This occurred while the two tanks were in SCHMIDT.

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On 12 FEBRUARY 1945 orders were received to organize a work detail of 300 men plus officers and drivers and necessary vehicles for doing engineer work on the roads in the vicinity of MALMEDY, BELGIUM under the supervision of the 164th Combat Engineer Battalion. This detail departed on the afternoon of 12 FEBRUARY 1945 for MALMEDY and began work in that vicinity 13 FEBRUARY 1945. The detail was later reduced to 260 men plus officers and drivers and moved back to SIMMERATH so as to be closer to the road work which was along the IMGEBROICH (957206) - KALTERHERBURG (926147) highway. The work was completed and the detail was released at the completion of work on 28 FEBRUARY 1945.

During this period the white wash snow camouflage was removed from all vehicles; first and second echelon maintenance was conducted; summerfeld wire matting for holding natural camouflage was welded on all tanks; steel rails were welded around the rear decks of all medium tanks for riding infantry; training was conducted on basic subjects; reconnaissance was made of probable areas of operations; equipment was restowed on all vehicles; and rest and rehabilitation of all personnel. On 16-17 FEBRUARY 1945 The Battalion staff participated in a CPX conducted by Division. The exercise was over terrain between the ROER and RHINE RIVERS.

The two tanks lost to mines were replaced and three 105MM Assault tanks were exchanged for the M4A3E8 105MM Assault Gun. Prior to this time two 76MM M4A3E8 tanks had been received by the Battalion. At the close of the period the Battalion was at full strength on all vehicles except one light tank was authorized as a tank retriever.

END PART I

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PART II

- (a) Action B/40 5-6 FEBRUARY 1945
- (b) Action C/40 5-12 FEBRUARY 1945

(a) Action B/40 5-6 FEBRUARY 1945:

B Company, 40th Tank Battalion was attached to the 3rd Battalion 310th Infantry Regiment (78th Infantry Division) under command of Combat Command Reserve, 7th Armored Division. The Company moved from assembly area SIMMERATH, GERMANY to attack position KESTERNICH, GERMANY (005240) 050715 FEBRUARY 1945 as part of Task Force LUTZ.

Mission of Task Force LUTZ - To secure ground (first objective) (013255) initially and support by fire the attack of the force on the left to secure STRAUCH, GERMANY (011260); thence to seize and secure STECKENBORN, GERMANY (023263) (2nd objective).

Plan of attack - two infantry companies abreast both closely supported by B/40 under direct command CO B/40. To be cross country directly to objective #1 and #2 because the road from KESTERNICH to STECKENBORN goes through STRAUCH which was also under attack by another force and because the roads were all heavily mined and in places blocked by snowdrifts.

The attack was launched at 0700 and the first objective (ground at 013255) was taken without opposition except for extensive minefields encountered immediately outside KESTERNICH. Most of the mines were layed on top of the ground and were uncovered by the melting snow. Task Force MC DANIELS on the left succeeded in moving into STRAUCH with very little opposition as Task Force LUTZ was ordered by CO, Combat Command Reserve to proceed to STECKENBORN the second objective. STECKENBORN was taken against light opposition, approximately 35 prisoners being taken in the operation. On the eastern outskirts of STECKENBORN, is a line of "Dragons Teeth" anti-tank obstacles covered by numerous pill boxes on the commanding ground beyond the line. Most of the pillboxes were manned. However, the enemy offered only a token resistance when attacked and surrendered readily when fired on by the tanks and 90MM Tank Destroyers. Extensive mine fields were again encountered here and one tank was lost to mines. No personnel casualties were suffered. At the end of the day, the first and second objectives had been taken and the Siegfried Line defenses in the vicinity had been reduced. Approximately 75 prisoners were captured in the operation.

On the morning of 6 FEBRUARY 1945, the 2nda Platoon of B Company supported the infantry in an attack to secure HECHELSCHIED (035271) beyond the Siegfried defenses breached the previous day. Enemy troops

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occupied the town but surrendered immediately as the force moved into the town. Approximately 40 more prisoners were taken by the force.

At 061200 FEBRUARY 1945, B Company was relieved from attached to the 3rd Battalion of the 310th Infantry Regiment and reverted to control of the 40th Tank Battalion in SIMMERATH, GERMANY.

(b) Action C/40 5-12 FEBRUARY 1945:

C Company, 40th Tank Battalion was attached to the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion (7th Armored Division) under command of Combat Command Reserve (7th Armored Division as part of Task Force MC DANIELS.

Mission of Task Force MC DANIELS - To seize STRAUCH (011260), organize it defensively, prepare to assist attack of task Force LUTZ on STECKENBORN (024262).

Plan of attack - two infantry companies abreast supported by C/40 under direct command CO C/40. The attack to be astride the main road from SIMMERATH TO STRAUCH.

The attack started at 050700 FEBRUARY 1945 as Companies B and C, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion passed through elements of the 78th Infantry Division at WITZERATH, GERMANY (992248). Company C, 40th Tank Battalion moved in close support of the attacking infantry. Enemy resistance was negligible as he withdrew from the town to the pill boxes on the commanding ground NE of town. The enemy once again had placed extensive minefields on top of the ground but they were uncovered by the melting snow. One tank was lost to mines with no loss of personnel. On the eastern edge of STRAUCH is a line of "Dragons Teeth" anti-tank obstacles covered by numerous pill boxes. Here is where the enemy elected to fight. After STRAUCH was taken, the first platoon, C/40 under command of Second Lieutenant ROBERT M. SCHULTZ, moved into firing position astride the STRAUCH - SCHMIDT road and engaged two pill-boxes at a range of 800 yards. Concentrated fire of the platoon drove eight or ten of the occupants of the smaller pill-boxes to a larger pill-box to the rear. The gunner from the Company Commander's Tank fired two rounds from his 76MM gun through the embrasure of the large pill-box and destroyed a 75MM anti-tank gun inside the pillbox causing the surrender of 17 occupants, killing two and wounding two. This is the first time an anti-tank gun has been encountered by this unit inside pill-box of the Siegfried Defenses.

At 1630 1st Lt JAMES L. SPARING with two tanks and an infantry Platoon moved out astride the STRAUCH-SCHMIDT highway to gain contact with friendly elements of the 78th Infantry Division on the left. This

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small force captured two more occupied pill-boxes and 18 prisoners before being stopped by anti-tank fire. After being stopped here, Task Force MC DANIELS took up defensive positions for the night. These positions were maintained until 8 FEBRUARY 1945 WHEN C/40 was assembled in Task Force Reserve in STECKENBORN. On 10 FEBRUARY 1945 a reconnaissance by fire across the ROER LAKE was conducted by one tank platoon but it failed to draw a reply from suspected enemy positions. The platoon was withdrawn to STECKENBORN before dark.

On 12 FEBRUARY 1945 C/40 was relieved from attached to the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion and reverted to control of 40th Tank Battalion in SIMMERATH, GERMANY.

END PART II

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S U M M A R Y

During the month of FEBRUARY, the 40th Tank Battalion participated in only one operation - the operation that resulted in the capture 5-6 FEBRUARY of the German towns of STRAUCH, STECKENBORN and HECHELSCHIED, all situated in the middle of the Siegfried Line Defense.

Although the enemy strength in these towns was approximately 200 men and he occupied positions from which it would have been difficult to dislodge him, he did not have the desire to fight but was willing to surrender after a token resistance. Approximately 185 prisoners were taken in all the operation. During this operation a total of two tanks was lost to mines with no personnel casualties. Three casualties were suffered by the Battalion during the month as a result of enemy action; one officer was seriously wounded and one man slightly wounded when a tank dozer received a direct hit by artillery or mortar while on a mine clearing detail in SCHMIDT, GERMANY; one man killed by a mine explosion in the billeting area in SIMMERATH, GERMANY.

After the operation of 5-6 FEBRUARY 1945 the Battalion was primarily engaged in engineer work on the roads within the area.

END

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Colonel O 315 210
Cavalry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
APO 257 US ARMY

/jap

2 April 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of MARCH 1945.

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

PART I

- (a) Period 1 - 7 MARCH 1945
- (b) Period 7 - 22 MARCH 1945
- (c) Period 23 - 31 MARCH 1945

(a) Period 1 - 7 MARCH 1945:

During this period the 40th Tank Battalion was in assembly area in the vicinity of SIMMERATH, GERMANY, under the command of Combat Command Reserve. Training and maintenance of vehicles and weapons was carried on during this period.

The Battalion received orders for an attack at 021400 MARCH 1945. Three task forces were set up and A/40 and 1/D/40 were attached to TF CHAPPUIS. The remainder of this period was spent in planning, preparation for movement, reconnaissance of routes to attack positions, individual and crew training, continued maintenance of vehicles and weapons, and general preparations for combat. Telephone message received from the C.O. Combat Command Reserve relieved all attachments as of 2120 5 MARCH 1945 and also ordered the Battalion to reconnoiter to find the most favorable route between SCHMIDT (061300) and VLATTEN (159286). At 062000 MARCH 1945 the 40th Tank Battalion received Operations Instructions from Hq. CC-R, 7 AD to move to an assembly area vicinity WOLLERSHEIM, GERMANY (172310). A/40 was attached to 38th Armored Infantry Battalion.

(b) Period 7 - 22 MARCH 1945:

The Battalion CP at SIMMERATH, GERMANY (983242) closed at 0735 and opened at LANGENDORF, GERMANY (208314) at 1100. The Battalion with the exception of A/40 was billeted at LANGENDORF, GERMANY. A/40 was billeted at WOLLERSHEIM and A/38 was attached to us and billeted in LANGENDORF. At 072300 MARCH 1945 the Battalion was placed on a one hour alert and A/38 reverted to 38 A.I.B. and A/40 returned to 40th Tank Battalion.

On 8 MARCH 1945 the Battalion received Operations Instructions, Hq. 7 AD, dated 080700 MARCH 1945. This relieved the 40th Tank Battalion from Combat Command Reserve and attached the Battalion to Combat Command

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B and also called for movement to a new assembly area vicinity HEIMERZHEIM, GERMANY (418358). At 1415 the Battalion received orders that it was on a one hour alert. On 090935 MARCH 1945 he Battalion started to move from LANGENDORF, GERMANY and arrived at HEIMERZHEIM, GERMANY at 1440.

On 10 MARCH 1945 reconnaissance party reported to 440 Armored FA Bn at ROTTGEN, GERMANY (533315) at 0815 with a mission of finding appropriate indirect firing positions for the Battalion. The Battalion was placed on a 30 minute alert for movement to HEIDGEN, GERMANY (493315). At 1330 the Battalion crossed the I.P. and closed into new assembly area vicinity HEIDGEN, GERMANY at 1515. Further reconnaissance for suitable indirect firing positions was made and it was found that practically all available space within range was already occupied by artillery. For this reason it was difficult to find a defilade position for the tanks. Firing positions were chosen which enabled our tanks to be within range of the designated enemy targets with as good cover and concealment as possible.

Verbal instructions were received thru Liaison Officer to move the Battalion to firing positions at 102400 MARCH 1945. The Battalion was alerted for movement 0600 11 MARCH 1945. D/40 and Sv/40 remaining in their present position for further instructions. At 0830 the remainder of the Battalion started moving. The Battalion assembled at ANNABERG, GERMANY (555317) and reorganized. The 18 76MM guns were all placed in one company and C.O. a/40 put in command. Two companies of 18 75MM guns each were organized and the C.O.'s of B/40 and C/40 each given command of a company. The Battalion closed into firing positions at 1415 11 MARCH 1945 vicinity BAD GODESBERG, GERMANY and Battalion CP was set up at 591314. A/40 went into position at 587308, B/40 at 578317 and C/40 at 588305. The Assault Platoon went into firing position with B/40.

The 40th Tank Battalion worked with the 440th Field Artillery for this operation and officers from the 440th FA Bn were sent to each company and to Battalion Headquarters to assist in laying the guns, setting up fire direction centers and regulating the firing.

The mission of the Battalion was to fire on probable targets East of the RHINE RIVER, especially on main enemy supply routes such as the Autobahn area East of the RHINE in our zone.

152 missions were fired and 3,502 rounds of 105, 76 and 75MM ammunition was expended during the period 11 MARCH 1945 to 18 MARCH 1945.

D/40 and Sv/40 started moving from HEIDGEN, GERMANY at 1300 12 MARCH 1945 and closed in new area BAD GODESBERG, GERMANY at 1500.

Men not actively engaged in the firing were given training in practical subjects, maintenance of vehicles and weapons, personal maintenance, non-fraternization and basic tactics and techniques.

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At 1900 18 MARCH 1945 the Battalion was relieved of the indirect firing mission and reverted to control of Combat Command Reserve.

On 18 MARCH 1945 a Battalion Gunnery Officer was appointed in accordance with TM #7, Hq. 7th Armored Division and a school was held for the officers in the Battalion on Gunnery (See Training Schedule, 19 MARCH 1945, Hq. 40th Tank Battalion). The material covered in this school was used as a basis for training given to the tank crews on gunnery. Gunnery and additional training was conducted, maintenance continued and all companies made preparations for combat during the period of 18 MARCH 1945 to 22 MARCH 1945. Several officers schools were held on blitz, tactics and tactics of the advance guard. They proved to be of great value as they put the officers in the right frame of mind for the pending operation.

On 20 MARCH 1945 G-2 reported the probability of an enemy paratroop attack on the West bank of the RHINE behind the REMAGEN Bridgehead. The 40th Tank Battalion was given the mission of patrolling an area within the Combat Command Reserve zone (See overlay accompanying Operations Instructions 201800 Hq CC-R), establishing an OP on high ground vicinity 575316 and placing one light tank platoon on an immediate alert status.

The 40th Tank Battalion furnished a Security Guard for the BAD GODESBERG Telephone Exchange for the period 201800 until 231245 MARCH 1945 when relieved by VII Corps.

The Battalion received 4 problems on tactics for the officers of the Battalion to solve. These were solved and returned to the officers with comment and suggestions.

(c) Period 23 - 31 MARCH 1945:

At 1800 on 23 MARCH 1945 the Battalion received orders which called for the movement of Combat Command Reserve to an assembly position East of the RHINE RIVER. The movement to take place the night of 24-25 MARCH 1945. All available time was spent preparing the troops for this movement, studying the area in which we were to operate, and making a thorough reconnaissance of routes to the assembly area. The Battalion drew 6 new M-24 light tanks and 4 new 76MM M4 A3E8 on 24 MARCH 1945.

The Battalion CP at BAD GODESBERG, GERMANY was closed at 2100. The lead elements of the Battalion crossed the I.P. at 2100. The march was uneventful and the Battalion closed into new assembly area vicinity NOTSCHEID, GERMANY (717226) at 0200.

On 25 MARCH 1945 the WEID RIVER (759207) was checked for suitable tank crossing and further studies were made of the terrain to the East. Three task forces were formed in Combat Command Reserve, TF BROWN, TF GRIFFIN,

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TF JORDAN. TF BROWN consisted of 40th Tank Battalion -(A/40 and 2 platoons, D/40) + (A/38, B/38, B/914 -(1 platoon) and 1/C/33) with 440 FA Bn in direct support.

A/40 and 1/D/40 were attached to TF GRIFFIN and 2/D/40 was attached to TF JORDAN. (See Part II)

TF BROWN was organized into two task forces, TF WOLFE and TF SWEAT. TF WOLFE was composed of B/40, B/38, 2/B/814 and 1 squad 1/C/33. TF SWEAT was composed of C/40, A/38, 1/B/814 and 1/C/33 -(1 squad). One battery artillery, Mortar Platoon and Assault Platoon in direct support of the leading task force. All infantry rode tanks with the exception of the anti-tank platoons and Mortar Squads.

The order of march leaving assembly area vicinity NOTSCHEID was, TF WOLFE, Mortar Platoon, Battalion Headquarters, Assault Platoon, A Battery 440, TF SWEAT, remainder 440 FA. TF crossed the I.P. at 0200 26 MARCH 1945 and the line of departure on the Autobahn at WILLROTH (852183) at 0508 26 MARCH 1945. Then proceeded along route "B" to UBACH UBERDORF (895176) where approximately 50 prisoners were taken by an infantry unit that cleared out the town after the tanks passed thru. Column continued on route B and received one concentration of heavy artillery at 905172. At DIERDORF (943165) tanks could not enter the town because streets were covered with debris and there were numerous craters in the roads. It was impossible to bypass close to town because bridge over HOLZ RIVER was blown and covered by anti-tank fire. TF WOLFE was diverted to WIENAU (934178) where a crossing was secured. TF SWEAT was diverted to GIERSHOFEN (948153) where they ran into mortar and anti-tank fire. A C/40 bulldozer tank was hit by a mortar shell in this area. A crossing of the HOLZ RIVER was secured and the two 75MM AT gun positions were knocked out by C/40.

The task forces assembled after this action and advancing in column of Task Forces, TF WOLFE leading, began the pursuit. At 1145 26 MARCH 1945 TF BROWN broke away and continued along route B crossing phase line Elm at BRUCKNACHDORF (961159) at 1200, BIRCH at Selters (015145) at 1240, OAK (095088) at 1320. TF BROWN seized objective OBERTIEFENBACH (275068) at 1540 and TF SWEAT secured this objective. TF WOLFE advanced on to HECKHOLZHAUSEN (300099) and arrived at 1545. TF WOLFE secured this objective for the night of 26-27 MARCH 1945. After breaking the crust of enemy resistance our tank column traveled at such great speed that it overtook enemy columns taking them completely by surprise. Large concentrations of enemy troops were caught in bivouac by our column and with a little machine gun fire they flocked out to surrender. The sudden appearance of such a fast moving column of tanks caught the enemy completely off balance and they surrendered easily. The infantry riding on the rear decks of the tanks proved ideal for this type of fast moving action.

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On 26 MARCH 1945 it is estimated conservatively that TF BROWN overran 10,000 prisoners. They were flocking to the rear of the column for miles not just single file but usually 2 and 3 abreast. One Mark V and two Mark IV tanks were destroyed. 5 75MM SP guns, 100 motor transport, 5 150MM guns, 6 105MM guns, 15 240MM guns, 11 88 AA AT guns, 2 88MM SP guns were destroyed. In addition to the above, over 100 horse drawn vehicles were destroyed/ Many more vehicles were left in the woods because time couldn't be taken to destroy them. Estimated enemy killed 200 - enemy wounded 350.

TF BROWN remained on objectives OBERTIEFENBACH and HECKHOLZHAUSEN until 1145 27 MARCH 1945 when the Task Force moved on VOGG to occupy new objectives KATZENFURT (435245) and DILLHEIM (233448). Only light opposition was met by TF SWEAT. The leading force and the column proceeded rapidly crossing phase line Maud (260194) at 1335, Sue (331217) at 1346, Kate (388218) at 1405 and arriving KATZENFURT at 1520 and DILLHEIM at 1545. Occupied and defended zone around objective - made contact with adjacent units, outposted and established security patrols. TF SWEAT knocked out 2 armored cars, several horse drawn carts and capture approximately 180 prisoners.

At 2030 27 MARCH 1945 TF BROWN was ordered to attack and seize crossings of the LAHN RIVER in Combat Command Reserve's sector. TF BROWN moved out at 0014 28 MARCH 1945 in the following order - TF WOLFE leading, Mortar Platoon, Battalion Headquarters, Assault Platoon, TF SWEAT with the 440 Armd FA Bn following. The night was fairly light and progress was good. Reached RL Amos at NIIEDERFEMP (485278) at 0150. Progress between RL Amos and Andy was held up approximately 30 minutes due to a long column of vehicles, knocked out or destroyed by other means, that was blocking the road. Crossed Andy at 547306 (Erda) at 0325, reached Mutt at FRANKENBACH (590309) at 0353, reached Jeff at REIMERSHAUSEN (650350) at 0505. Entered FRONHAUSEN (676345) at 0625 and after a short fight 30 prisoners were dug out of houses and the column continued the advance. TF BROWN with TF WOLFE leading crossed the LAHN RIVER and seized BELHAUSEN (694345), then moved into ROTH (700370) seizing the town and another bridge over the LAHN RIVER at 0650 28 MARCH 1945. TF BROWN with TF SWEAT leading moved to HACHBORN (745365) and EBSDORF (760378) and seized and secured these objectives by 0900. At 1000 information was received that the Battalion Commander had been ambushed and captured at 733357. Infantry, tanks and TD's from reserve positions were brought to area and eliminated the enemy resistance and the Colonel was released. Several prisoners were captured.

In this action of 28 MARCH 1945 TF BROWN captured 195 prisoners along the route and on the objectives, destroyed 10 motor vehicles, 2 150MM guns, 1 75MM AT gun and 1 tank.

TF WOLFE secured BELLHAUSEN, ROTH and SICHERTHAUSEN (697333) for the night of 27-28 MARCH 1945. TF SWEAT secured HACHBORN and EBSDORF for the same period.

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During the night of 28-29 MARCH 1945 orders were received for TF BROWN to advance to the Northeast and seize AMONEBURG (837450), KLEINSEELHEIM (810459), and KIRCHHAIN (835480). TF BROWN moved out with TF WOLFE leading at 0430 29 MARCH 1945. TF WOLFE seized AMONEBURG and KLEINSEELHEIM by 0700. TF SWEAT bypassed the first task force and struck directly at KIRCHHAIN. Orders were received at 0645 to take all objectives and be prepared to push rapidly to the Northeast. KIRCHHAIN proved to be heavily defended by the 3rd Bn. of the 661 Inf. Regt., 166 Inf. Div., consisting of approximately 700 men which had just arrived from DENMARK. The above unit had well trained automatic weapons and bazooka teams. The bridge approaching the town was mined and covered by small arms fire from deep foxholes and heavy mortar fire. The small arms fire was reduced by the tanks and the artillery silenced the mortars and smoked the town while the infantry pushed out a bridgehead and the engineers cleared the bridge. Once in town it proved to be a matter of clearing every house, as the enemy elected to defend to the last. A new type of long range bazooka was reported used by the Germans as an anti-infantry weapon. One of our tanks was also destroyed by bazooka.

TF BEATTY was attached by the C.O. Combat Command Reserve to help finish the job. An envelopment was made by TF BEATTY and the two forces completed clearing the town at approximately 1800. TF SWEAT was relieved at approximately 1830 and moved to assembly area vicinity BETZIESDORF (782522) and held up for the night there. Prior to this time TF BROWN had received orders to assemble the force as soon as possible and be ready to attack to the North and seize and secure South bank of EDER RIVER in zone. TF WOLFE was assembled vicinity SCHONBACH (790488) and moved out at 1810 to be followed by TF SWEAT. TF WOLFE advanced North with no opposition passing ANZEFAHS (795502) at 1820, RL Syd (782540) at 1855 and RL Slim (790580) at 1915. After crossing Slim and because of the darkness of the night, orders were received to hold up on Slim for the night so TF WOLFE was assembled and security set up North of BRACHT at 786593. TF BROWN moved out at 0600 30 MARCH 1945, TF WOLFE leading, with TF SWEAT gaining contact with the column from the rear.

TF WOLFE reached ROSENTHAL (795645) at 0650. At 0900 verbal instructions were received from Combat Command Reserve to have TF WOLFE continue on past objective and seize the EDERSEE DAM. At 0947 TF WOLFE reached DAINRODE (822751) and continued on mission via FRANKENAU (840777) at 1000, GELLERSHAUSEHN (898820) and NEU BRINGHAUSEN (881868) at 1230. The TF encountered numerous partially prepared road blocks in the form of deep ditches and logs. The tank dozer was placed in the lead and the road blocks were reduced with a minimum of delay. TF WOLFE had orders to get on the EDERSEE DAM as quickly as possible even if they had to walk. Leading elements of B/40 were temporarily held up by AA AT gun fire used against our tanks and infantry. The Assault guns and the battery of artillery with the advance guard went into position at NEU BRINGHAUSEN (881868). This action was an excellent example of cooperation of tanks and infantry and coordination of artillery and tank attack. The artillery liaison plane

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proved very helpful in locating and neutralizing enemy positions, and the aggressiveness of the leading tanks surprised and demoralized the defenders of the dam to such an extent that not one tank was lost. The tanks knocked out 3 40MM and 2 88MM AA AT guns and the tank-infantry team captured approximately 330 prisoners in the action. TF WOLFE seized the dam (925880) at 1330 and a bridge (922868) below it - crossing the river with tanks and infantry and establishing a bridgehead on the North bank of the EDER RIVER. At 1330 operation for the dam were placed under the command of Combat Command B as it was in their zone. TF WOLFE held the bridgehead until relieved at 2300 by Combat Command B. TF WOLFE then concentrated in area South of EDERSEE DAM (923878).

On 30 MARCH 1945 TF SWEAT advanced North, generally behind TF WOLFE. They had experienced some difficulty because of improper classification of roads on 1/100,000 maps. TF SWEAT concentrated vicinity of NEU BRINGHAUSEN (678870). TF SWEAT captured 58 prisoners on their advance to EDER RIVER. TF SWEAT outposted and patrolled the South bank of the EDER RIVER in our zone.

On 31 MARCH 1945 orders were received to concentrate TF BROWN in area vicinity ALTENLOTHEIM (827818). Movement to this area began at 1530 and TF BROWN closed new area at 1800. Local security posted and roadblocks set up.

END

PART I

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PART II

- (a) Action of A/40 25-31 MARCH 1945
- (b) Action of D/40 25-31 MARCH 1945

(a) Action of A/40 25-31 MARCH 1945:

A/40 was attached to TF GRIFFIN 251800 MARCH 1945 as per FOI Combat Command Reserve NOTSCHEID, GERMANY dated 251800 MARCH 1945. Company A moved from the Battalion assembly position at NOTSCHEID to TF GRIFFIN assembly position at LORSCHIED (730719). TF GRIFFIN left LORSCHIED, GERMANY 0230 26 MARCH 1945 and moved swiftly thru route ROSSBACH (773197), crossed Autobahn at EPGERT (826201), then proceeded Northeast to HORHAUSEN (853213) and PLEEKHAUSEN (875225). No enemy contact as yet. Proceeded on route to DAUFENBACH (895210) and HARSCHBACH (900195). Several minor road blocks were encountered (fallen trees). Moving forward, A/40 used procedure of shooting up towns as they moved. Encountered some mortar fire enroute, yet no physical contact. Passed thru MARIENHAUSEN (968182), MARIENRACHDORF (984170) and RUCHEROTH (005179), and MAXSAIN (035161). Ran into enemy trucks, a light tank, and a small AT gun. All were knocked out without damage to A/40. Moved on to HAHN (110140), HERSHBACH (135120), SALZ (158122), FRICKHOFEN (205115), WALDERNBACH (289155) and HOLZHAUSEN (387220). Bridges were secured at SINS (414285) and vicinity. Moved across bridge at SINS. Still moving rapidly and taking prisoners in every town. Then the column went thru DREISBACH (465285), across the river, ROSSBACH (545345) and SEELBACH (590360) where A/40 knocked out enemy trucks traveling on a parallel road to the left.

Column ran into a road block vicinity WOLFSHAUSEN (715378) and received tank fire from the left flank. One tank was hit but not damaged. Passed thru some small arms fire and several doughs were wounded. A/40 then proceeded to KAPPEL (730430) getting tank fire from the right flank. Leading tank hit but round did not penetrate. Three enemy tanks dug in and well concealed held up column here (AILERTCHEN). TD's knocked out 1 tank and the other 2 withdrew.

Set up road blocks at MOISCHT (765423), BELTERSHAVEN (760406), and SHROCK (770435). Numerous prisoners were picked up at road blocks.

A/40 moved to WEIDENHAUSEN (745457) and on to GINSELDORF (762496). Had quite a battle at BURGEIN (765510) and ANZELFAHS (795502). CO A/40 was wounded at the latter place by a sniper. The place was blasted by TD's and artillery. It actually wasn't on the route but enemy fire from that point held up progress.

A/40 occupied NIEDERWALD (205285) and STAUSBACH (982150). At STAUSBACH

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a peep was lost but brought out in good shape.

At BURGEIN the lead tank was hit by bazooka. Progress was held up several hours. Infantry cleared out town. Then the column moved through to REDDEHAUSEN (750540) where A/40 halted for the night.

On 30 MARCH 1945 TF GRIFFIN seized OBERROSPHE (730575), RODA (735650) and HOTTENDORF (755705). Column strafed by 6 enemy planes with no damage. Then moved to WILLERSDORF (782705), DORNHOLZHAUSEN (799740), GEISMAR (788758), LOUISENDORF (800785), ALTENLOTHEIM (828818), and SCHMITTLOTHEIM (815845).

During the course of the march A/40 lost 1 tank by enemy action, had 5 casualties - 2 killed and 3 wounded.

(b) Action of D/40 25-31 MARCH 1945:

On 30 MARCH 1945 the 1st platoon D/40 was attached to TF GRIFFIN and reported to that force for orders. During the period the light tanks of this platoon were used for flank protection and security. On a mission to protect the left flank of TF GRIFFIN one M-24 tank was hit by a bazooka in the front slope plate and disabled. This action took place vicinity BURGEIN (761511).

During the period this platoon knocked out 1 SP gun and 1 AA gun.

On 25 MARCH 1945 the 2nd platoon D/40 was attached to TF JORDAN. On 28 March 1945 this platoon was relieved from the Task Force and attached to Combat Command Reserve for trains protection. The platoon has to its credit one Mark IV tank captured after the crew bailed out on being fired on. The 3rd platoon and Headquarters D/40 remained with the 40th Tank Battalion and was used principally to protect the "A" Trains of the Battalion and as rear guard for the artillery. On 26 March 1945 the 3rd platoon knocked out 10 horse drawn vehicles and 2 tracks. On 31 March 1945 one section of tanks was attached to 440 FA for security in their area. Now located vicinity NEU BRINGHAUSEN (881868).

END

PART II

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SUMMARY

The actions of the 40th Tank Battalion for the month of MARCH was extremely successful. The fast moving spearheads of our columns caught the enemy almost entirely by surprise, causing him to surrender even though he had the means to make our advance difficult. The success of our operations are due to close tank-infantry cooperation (with the doughs riding on the rear decks of the tanks) and to excellent artillery support. The liaison plane proved very valuable in locating enemy positions enroute so that the Battalion could quickly attack them and be on our way again. Both vehicle and personnel losses for the action were light.

The Battalion started the action of 26 MARCH 1945 with a full complement of tanks as follows:

30	75MM Guns
23	76MM Guns
6	105MM Guns
11	M5A1 (Light Tanks)
6	M-24 (Light Tanks)

During the action, 4 tanks were hit. Two of these are reparable. The other two, a 75 and 76MM were evacuated by Ordnance. Three other tanks were evacuated by Ordnance for mechanical failure leaving the Battalion 5 tanks short one of these a bulldozer.

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Colonel O 315 210
Cavalry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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S E C R E T

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HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
APO 257 US ARMY

/jap

1 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of APRIL 1945

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

PART I

ACTION OF TASK FORCE BROWN
1-17 April 45

On 1 April 45 the 49th Tank Battalion, operating as part of the Combat Command Reserve was assembled in the vicinity of ALTENLOTHEIM, GERMANY (G828819) and FRANENAU, GERMANY (G840778). Combat Command Reserve was organized into two task Forces - Task Force BROWN and Task Force GRIFFIN.

Task Force BROWN consisted of the 40th Tank Battalion less A/40 and 2 platoons of D/40; A/38; B/38; B/814 less 1 platoon, and 2/C/33. A/40 and 1/D/40 was attached to Task Force GRIFFIN and assembled in the vicinity SCHMITTLLOTHEIM, GERMANY (G315845). 2/D/40 was attached to Combat Command Reserve for Trains protection and 1 section 3/D/40 was attached to the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion for security and outposts for their firing position at NEU BRINGHAUSEN, GERMANY (G881868). The remainder of D/40 which consisted of Company Headquarters and 1 section of tanks provided protection for 40th Tank Battalion Trains.

Task Force BROWN was organized into two task forces - Task Force SWEAT and Task Force WOLFE. Task Force SWEAT consisted of C/40; A/38; 1/B/814, and 2/C/33 less 1 squad. Task Force WOLFE consisted of B/40; B/38; 2/B/814, and 1 squad 2/C/33. The Assault and Mortar Platoons remained in general support of Task Force BROWN.

The period 1 April to 3 April inclusive, was spent in establishing road blocks and road patrols in the task force area. Civilian control measures were put into effect and enforced and maintenance of vehicles and weapons was carried out as the tactical situation permitted. Task Force SWEAT established a road block at bridge (G918821) to protect our area in the event that the enemy's attempt to break out of the RUHR pocket in the vicinity of WINTERBURG, GERMANY (G556888) was successful. This road block consisted of the Anti-tank platoon of A/38. On 2 April 45, Task Force BROWN

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was given the mission of clearing the woods between FRANKENAU (G840778), NEU BRINGHAUSEN (G882868) and EDERBRINGHAUSEN (G798819) Enemy captured were 29 as a result of the search.

Our civilian control measures, in addition to forbidding civilian travel between towns and regulating civilian movement in town, consisted of picking up all males of military age and bringing them to CIC for investigation. A number of soldiers in civilian clothes were discovered in this group. At 1930 2 April 45, Task Force BROWN was placed on a two hour alert to move to the NW. On 3 April 45 the Reconnaissance Platoon reconnoitered the routes north to KORBACH (G792978) and then west to front line elements. Reconnaissance was completed and front line units contacted at TITMARINCHAUSEN (G642955). Suitable tank routes were found for the Combat Command load.

The section of 3/D/40 that was attached to the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was relieved and returned to D/40 on 3 April 45. At 2300 3 April 45, Task Force BROWN was alerted to move at 0900 4 April 45 to a Division assembly area vicinity SACHSENBERG (G737813).

On 4 April 45, 1/D/40 was attached to the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and relieved from Task Force GRIFFIN. The platoon was later attached to the 400th Field Artillery to be used as security as the Artillery Battalion was moving to forward firing positions. Task Force BROWN crossed the I.P. at 1100 4 April 45, Task Force WOLFE leading and Task Force SWEAT following. The column marched via SCHMITTLOTHEIM (G819842); KIRCHLOTHEIM (G812862); I.P. (G805879); SACHSENBERG (G737813); DALWIGKSTHAL (G738836), and RHADERN (G741863). Task Force WOLFE with Battalion Headquarters, Mortar and Assault Gun Platoons assembled in the vicinity RHADERN, and Task Force SWEAT assembled vicinity of DALWIGKSTHAL. The area of responsibility given Task Force BROWN was divided generally by the 85 grid. Task Force SWEAT was given the area south of the grid and Task Force WOLFE was given the area north of the 85 grid. (See overlay - Area of Responsibility of Task Force BROWN, 4 April 1945). Road blocks were established on all roads leading into the area and mounted patrols were on the roads throughout the area continuously. Local security was established, civilian regulations were set up and enforced and all males of military age checked by CIC.

At 0830 on 5 April 45, a new Division overlay was received which outlined the plan of attack to the north and northwest. (See overlay 4 April 45). At 0900, telephone instructions were received to have A/38 and B/38 check into the Infantry Battalion radio net. At 0905 A/38 and B/38 were detached and reverted to the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion. The elements of B/814 that were in Task Force BROWN (B/814 less 1 platoon) were detached and B/814 was attached to the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion. A/40 reverted to Battalion control in place (SACHSENBERG G737813). The Battalion and 2/C/33 was placed on a 30 minute alert for movement to ZUSCHEN. Movement to take place on the Battalion Commander's order after C/33 cleared the road at SACHSENBERG.

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The Battalion moved at 1400 via SACHESENBERG (G737813); NEUKIRKEN (G688817); BRAUNSHAUSEN (G661801); HALLENBERG (G620797), and ZUSCHEN (G577842). The Battalion closed into new area vicinity ZUSCHEN at 1630. ZUSCHEN was outposted and secured for the night 4-5 April 45.

1/D/40 was relieved from attached to the 400th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and reverted to D/40 at 0600 on 6 April 45. 1st section of 3/D/40 was sent to HALLENBERG (G620797) to guard a radio station with orders to remain on duty until relieved by 1st Army troops. At 1300, 2nd section of 3/D/40 was sent to HALLENBERG to guard two trainloads of V-2 bombs until relieved by 1st Army troops. It was anticipated that the Battalion would move forward so a reconnaissance was made and possible assembly area was found vicinity LANGEWIESS (G508843) and NEU ASTENBERG (G522850). The Battalion moved at 1630 and the last element closed at 1830.

A/40 was alerted at 0907 7 April 45 and moved via OBERKIRCHEN (G448848) to vicinity of WINKHAUSEN (GG422848). A/40 was attached to 38th Armored Infantry Battalion at 1030. The balance of the 40th Armored Battalion moved, one company at a time, to WINKHAUSEN. It was necessary to infiltrate companies because of the crowded road conditions. The 38th Armored Infantry Battalion with A/40 attached, attacked HOLTHAUSEN (G422872) and HUXEL (G418880) on 7 April 45 and took both objectives. On 8 April 45, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion attacked FREDEBERG (G402882) with A/40 supporting. (See Action of A/40, 7-17 April 45).

At 1700 8 April 45, Task Force WOLFE was organized at WINKHAUSEN and moved to HOLTHAUSEN (G426873) with orders to pass thru Task Force GRIFFIN (after FREDEBERG was cleared and secured) and to move rapidly to HEMINGHAUSEN (G365890) and seize it. Task Force WOLFE consisted of B/40; 1 squad 2/C/33 and 2/B/814. Task Force WOLFE moved out at first light. B/38 joined Task Force WOLFE on 9 April 45 as the task force passed thru FREDEBERG. The doughs mounted the tanks and the force proceeded towards HEMINGHAUSEN (G365890). Five road blocks were encountered. All of these were mined. None of them were defended by fire. The tanks and infantry moved rapidly toward HEMINGHAUSEN, using engineers to clear the road block. If this caused any great delay, the tanks by-passed the blocks where possible, leaving the engineers to clear them. One tank was disabled by a mine. The enemy laid a dense smoke screen in the valley which was the main route of advance.

At G370889, the two leading tanks were fired on by mortar, small arms, and enemy tank fire. The enemy tank was excellently concealed in the defilade of a railroad underpass and easily knocked out the two lead vehicles at a range of less than 200 yards. The crews of these tanks suffered high casualties because of the mortar and short range small arms fire. The infantry proceeded into HEMINGHAUSEN and attacked the town and a mine adjoining it, from the left flank, 27 prisoners were taken and several mortars were captured. HEMINGHAUSEN was completely cleared, outposted and secured by 1915.

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At 1300 the remainder of Task Force BROWN moved thru FREDEBERG to the vicinity of EBBINGHOF (G388872) where I Company, 395th Infantry (99th Infantry Division) was attached to task Force BROWN at 1700. The doughs were mounted on the tanks of C/40 at G381869 and moved out at 1810 along Route A. The column passed thru BERGHAUSEN (G358873); OBR BERNDORF (G346873); NDR BERNDORF (G340888). The Assault and Mortar Platoons were leading Task Force BROWN and went into support positions vicinity NDR BERNDORF, preparatory to a coordinated attack by Task Force BROWN and Task Force WOLFE on MAILAR (G360901). Task Force WOLFE advanced thru defile from HEMINGHAUSEN on MAILAR and Task Force BROWN jumped off from NDR BERNDORF when Task Force WOLFE reached attack position. The town was entered just at dusk and was thoroughly cleared and outposted by 2300. Between 25 and 30 prisoners were taken and 1 armored car with mounted 20MM flak gun was captured. Task Force WOLFE also outposted HEMINGHAUSEN at the other end of the defile and was relieved of this mission at approximately 2200.

At first light on 10 April 45, Task Force WOLFE moved out on Route A while Task Force BROWN moved to NDR BERNDORF and proceeded on route Alternate A. There was a low hanging fog and use of tanks was limited. Task Force WOLFE moved out for DORLAR (G350915) with infantry leading dismounted. Task Force BROWN moved out after MENKHAUSEN (G335905) was taken by the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion. 1/B/814 was attached to Task Force BROWN at 0845 and joined in at NDR BERNDORF. By 0930 the fog had lifted and the attack moved rapidly. DORLAR was taken and 1 Tiger tank was burned by its crew who then surrendered. Just outside of DORLAR at (G343918) Task Force WOLFE ran into a road block. This was quickly cleared and the lead tank knocked out 1 88 anti-tank gun and a large vehicle. Task Force BROWN advanced thru MENKHAUSEN (G335905); GRIMMINHAUSEN (G332914); LOCKTROP (G327927) to FRIELINGHAUSEN (G329935) where considerable small arms fire was received. This fire was eliminated and Task Force BROWN continued on towards BREMKE (G327948). Task Force WOLFE held up at the RJ at FRIELINGHAUSEN and allowed Task Force BROWN to clear.

Task Force BROWN deployed on the high ground outside BREMKE and a coordinated attack on the town was planned. The Corps Artillery was used to place a TOT on BREMKE, then the tanks and infantry entered and cleared the town without any serious resistance. Approximately 15 prisoners were taken.

At this point, Task Force BROWN was given the additional mission to secure and hold the bridge over the WENNE RIVER at G315968. Task Force BROWN moved out towards this objective and ran into considerable small arms fire from houses just NW of BREMKE. A fire fight resulted and doughs dismounted and soon the resistance was eliminated. The tanks moved out as soon as the infantry remounted and seized the bridge at approximately 1600. The bridge and adjacent road net was outposted and the immediate area set up as a tank-infantry strong point.

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Task Force WOLFE followed Task Force BROWN and proceeded to RJ at G315960 where this task force set up road blocks and established a tank-infantry strong point. A force of 2 TD's; 2 tanks, and an anti-tank platoon from Task Force WOLFE remained BREMKE (G315960) and outposted the town and road net.

At 1900 Task Force BROWN was given an additional mission of establishing contact with the 5th Infantry Division at WENHOLTHAUSEN (G312987). The Task Force Commander personally led a section of tanks to WENHOLTHAUSEN and this contact was made at 1955.

On 11 April 45 Task Force BROWN (including Task Force WOLFE) assembled in WENHOLTHAUSEN (G312987). I/395 reverted to control of 395th Infantry Regiment and A/38 was attached at 1830. The evening of 11 April 45 was spent in regrouping troops and organizing Task Force BROWN into Task Force WOLFE and Task Force SWEAT. Task Force WOLFE consisted of B/40; B/38; 2/B/814, and 1 squad 2/C/33. Task Force SWEAT consisted of C/40; A/38; 1/B/814, and 2/C/33 less one squad.

Combat Command Reserve moved out on 12 April with orders to attack to the west and then NW. Task Force GRIFFIN led the combat command followed by 400th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; Task Force BUTLER; Task Force WOLFE; 440th Field Artillery Battalion, Task Force SWEAT.

Task Force WOLFE moved out following Task Force BUTLER. The column moved fairly rapidly thru GRAVENSTEIN (B275007); ALTENHELLEFELD (B252021), and LINNEPE (B235015). Task Force GRIFFIN was held up outside ENDORF (G210992) and the Combat Commander sent a strong reconnaissance force from Task Force BUTLER from LINNEPE SE to RJ at G245001 and then W to approximately G233998. Here they reported small arms and 20MM fire. Task Force WOLFE followed the reconnaissance force and pushed thru them and seized the town of ENDORF (G2210992). Task Force WOLFE moved rapidly thru ENDORF to STOCKUM (G174998). The speed of our movement caught the enemy completely by surprise, in one instance over-running an enemy column on the road and surprising enemy gun positions, causing the crews to abandon their guns and surrender or flee to the woods, in most cases without destroying their weapons. 353 prisoners were captured and 10 enemy killed in the ENDORF, STOCKUM area.

A Tiger tank, hit and set on fire by the point tank, constituted a serious road block at DORNHOLTHAUSEN (G178986). Two tank platoons by-passed the obstacle and the lead platoon went on the secure ENDORF, but the road block had to be removed because this was the only road and the marshy ground just off the shoulders made a by-pass impractical. A bulldozer was used to pull it off the road when the fire and explosions lessened.

The column moved out of ENDORF towards ALLENDORF (G152985). Enemy artillery or mortar fire was received at G168993. Several casualties resulted.

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At ALLENDORF resistance was again met in the form of road blocks and small arms. Corps Artillery was used on ALLENDORF and when our tanks approached, the enemy surrendered without too heavy a fight. Approximately 400 prisoners were taken there.

Task Force WOLFE broke loose at ALLENDORF and moved rapidly, shooting as it went thru ALTENAFFELN (G098972); AFFELN (G085974); EUNTROP (G058985) to NEUENRADE (G034983). The tanks overtook an enemy column between ALLENDORF and KUNTROP and destroyed 30 horsedrawn vehicles; 2 towed guns, 2 tanks, and captured about 150 prisoners. At AFFLEN 700 prisoners were taken; KUNTROP 1200 prisoners, and NEUENRADE 1072 prisoners. Captured at KUNTROP were 1 SP; 2 Half-tracks; 1 flak gun; 5 trucks. Task Force WOLFE captured 2 SP guns; 6 light artillery pieces; 2 maintenance vehicles, and 7 other vehicles at NEUENRADE. Task Force WOLFE secured and outposted NEUENRADE for the night 12-13 April 45. Task Force SWEAT followed Task Force WOLFE to KUNTROP and secured and outposted this town for the night Task Force BUTLER went into position between the two towns. The Mortar and Assault Gun Platoons went into position outside of KUNTROP in general support. One platoon D/40 with the anti-tank platoon A/38 outposted ALLELN. The Reconnaissance Platoon had a mounted patrol in the area.

The success of this operation was due to the movement, surprise, and shock of the fast moving, often firing, tank column. The infantry on the tanks provided the close-in protection the tanks needed on entering towns. There was an abundance of bazookas in each town taken, but very few were fired.

On 13 April 1945, Proclamations were posted, civilian control regulations were enforced, all male civilians of military age were rounded up and checked by CIC, weapons were collected, houses searched out and several hundred more prisoners were rounded up.

Orders were received in the late morning for Task Force WOLFE to push SW out of NEUENRADE and take the high ground at G017974 and G027973. This force started moving out to take this objective at 1230. Just beyond RJ at G024975, the tanks ran into severe tank fire and light mortar fire. One tank was lost and the rest of the tanks were forced to withdraw to the RJ for cover. A counter-attack of medium strength developed with the enemy using tanks and infantry. Corps Artillery and our Mortar and Assault Platoons were used to limit the enemy's advance until our own artillery, which had changed positions to support another attack, were relaid on our front. The enemy continued to probe our position with tanks and infantry until artillery was placed on their every movement. 1/C/40 and 1/B/814 from Task Force SWEAT were sent to NEUENRADE to reinforce Task Force WOLFE and protect the NW flank of the latter force. The counter-attack was halted by 1700. 1/C/40 and 1/B/814 remained in position at NEUENRADE for the night 13-14 April 45.

1st Battalion, 395th Infantry moved in to KUNTROP and outposted that

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town with the remainder of Task Force SWEAT for the night of 13-14 April 45. Task Force BROWN was placed on a 20 minute alert at 1025 on 13 April 45 and preparations and plans were made to seize the Division final objective (See overlay 15 April 45 Hq "CCR"). 14 April 45 was used for this planning and concentration of forces, 1/C/40; 1/B814; Anti-tank Platoon A/38; D/40 were all brought into KUNTROP with Task Force SWEAT.

At 0730 15 April 45 Task Force BROWN moved out to the north with orders to pass through units of the 5th Infantry Division at MENDEN (G032160) and attack to the west to seize and hold the high ground NE of the LENNE RIVER. The order of march was, Task Force SWEAT; Battalion Headquarters; 440th Field Artillery Battalion; Task Force WOLFE; Task Force GRIFFIN; 400th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. The column moved thru KUNTROP (G58985), BLINTROP (G077997); LANGENHOLTHAUSEN (B098014); BALVE (B090038); VOLKRINGHAUSEN (B097068), and west out of MENDEN (B035160) at 0855.

Task Force SWEAT moved rapidly thru HALINGEN (A999180) and the advance guard proceeded SW from that point off the main route of advance by error. The advance guard ran into anti-tank fire and flak fire from woods at A987152. Direct fire was laid on this point and doughs were dismounted to clean up the area. 1 75MM anti-tank gun and 1 20MM flak gun were destroyed and 110 prisoners were taken here. The advance was held up by anti-tank and flak fire from woods at A967163 and A973154. The original advance guard was pulled back to HALLINGEN and fell in on the tail of the task first and 2/C/40 with doughs mounted moved forward into the lead as advance guard and proceeded down the original route to DAHLHAUSEN (890185) and then SW towards GRULAND (A963171).

Enemy flak fire was received just outside DAHLHAUSEN, nevertheless 1 platoon of tanks and 1 platoon of infantry was moved forward to GRULAND. Large caliber enemy artillery fire was received on the rear elements of Task Force SWEAT'S column at DAHLHAUSEN. The two remaining infantry platoons of A/38 were sent out from A977181 S and SW thru the woods at A966163 and then to A958167. They cleared the woods of 205 prisoners and 6 20MM flak guns. Several attempts were made to move from GRULAND to RJ at A952160. But because the road was under direct fire from 20MM flak guns and 88 AA At guns, well camouflaged, and every movement of our doughs brought enemy artillery, it was impossible to push forward even when the tanks brought fire on gun positions and counter-battery fire was laid on the probable enemy artillery locations.

The Commander of Task Force BROWN called on the second Task Force under his command, Task Force WOLFE, to move one platoon from HALLINGEN S and SW to the woods NE of KALTHOF (A959141) and threaten RJ at A952160 from the south. This force moved rapidly, over-running resistance in the form of anti-tank and flak gun fire and went into position in the area east of KALTHOF. After consultations with the Combat Command, Task Force WOLFE was ordered to take KALTHOF in an effort to relieve the pressure on Task Force SWEAT. Task Force WOLFE destroyed 7 88 anti-tank guns; 1 20MM flak gun, and took 240 prisoners

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moving to this position. Task Force WOLFE with doughs of B/38 mounted on tanks of B/40 moved rapidly into KALTHOF after the town had been softened by artillery. The tanks went in shooting and approximately 50 enemy surrendered without serious resistance. Two 88 anti-tank guns; 3 or 4 flak guns, and a battery of artillery were destroyed or captured in the town and behind the railroad embankment.

Task Force WOLFE quickly reorganized and with the doughs mounted on tanks proceeded to RJ A952160. Task Force SWEAT also attacked this objective simultaneously. Both forces held up here for the evening and formed a tank-infantry strong point in the area, by outpostting the roads and covering the probable routes of attack.

The attack continued at first light on the morning of 16 April 45 with Task Force SWEAT leading. The movement proceeded with several roadblocks and 1 flak gun temporarily holding up the column. The town of HENNEN (A940165) and RHINEN (A925163) were taken by 0645 and 350 enemy surrendered. At this time orders were received to hold up the advance as Task Force GRIFFIN, on our left, had received an offer of surrender from all the troops between our position and the LENNE and RUHR Rivers. Terms of surrender were formulated and agreed upon by the Division Commanders representative and the enemy. The 53rd Corps; 190th and 180th Infantry Divisions, and the 116th Panzer Division with elements of the 130th Panzer Division and many separate flak and artillery units surrendered with all their men and equipment. Three prisoner collecting points were set up and the prisoners were to be marched to these points by their officers. Early in the afternoon it was decided to march the men directly to the Division PE Cage at SUMMERN (A975130).

At approximately 1200, Task Force BROWN received orders to move forward and occupy its objectives. Task Force SWEAT lead out and moved without resistance thru VILLIGST (A894153) and ERGSTE (A883130), to objective A at A105865. Task Force SWEAT also occupied GARENFELD (A115848) and BERCHUM (A097862) without resistance. Task Force WOLFE followed Task Force SWEAT and occupied objective B at A880090 and the towns of REH A872082) and ELSEY (A885068) without resistance. Task Force Headquarters plus D/40 occupied ERGSTE and set up a task force collecting point. The principal job of the task force was prisoner control. Bridges over the LENNE River were outpostted and guides were posted on the route, to the rear, to control the movement of the prisoners to the Division cage.

The mass surrender of the enemy and their equipment under the terms of surrender makes it difficult to ascertain just what part of the prisoners and their equipment destroyed and captured, can be accredited to Task Force BROWN. The surrender was made to the 7th Armored Division, but the unit forcing the surrender was Combat Command Reserve, which consisted of Task Force BROWN and Task Force GRIFFIN. Without question, this large concentration of enemy troop and equipment would have fallen to these task forces

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even if the enemy chose to fight. The enemy was numerically superior and had the means to defend itself but they were disorganized and communications were almost entirely disrupted. 20,305 prisoners were taken by the Combat Command, and it is estimated 10,000 of these surrendered on our objectives or in our zone. There were 10 Mark IV; 10 Mark V; 5 unidentified tanks; 34 SP guns; 10 motor transports; 11 artillery pieces, and 2 88 AT/AA guns destroyed in the area. Captured in the area were 19 tanks; 48 SP guns; 950 motor transport; 400 horsedrawn vehicles, and 12 artillery pieces. At least half of these can be accredited to Task Force Brown.

Task Force SWEAT and Task Force WOLFE secured their positions and blocked the LENNE River crossings for the night of 16 April 45. The movement of prisoners to SUMMERIN continued until midnight when all the prisoners in the area were on their way to cages.

Orders were received in the early morning, 17 April 45, that called for the movement of Combat Command Reserve to a Division assembly area NE of KASSEL (C240030). The Battalion was alerted to move at 171200 April 45. On the morning of 17 April 45, proclamations were posted and civilian regulations enforced in the towns where this had not been previously completed.

Task Force WOLFE was relieved in the area by 5th Infantry Division and closed into a Battalion assembly area vicinity ERGSTE (A883130) at 0945. Task Force SWEAT was relieved by the 5th Infantry Division, in its area and closed into the Battalion assembly area at 1045. A/40 was relieved from attachment Task Force GRIFFIN and joined the Battalion on the march at 1235 at ENGSTE. Units attached to Task Force BROWN were relieved at 1000 and reverted to unit control, (A/38; B38; B/814 less 1 platoon, and 2/C/33).

END

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PART II

ACTION OF A/40

ACTION OF A/40 1-5 APRIL 45

On 1 April 45 A/40 was located at SCHMITTLOTHEIM (G325845) as part of Task Force GRIFFIN. One platoon was used as a road block at the bridge (G805879). No enemy activity. On 3 April 45 3/A/40 captured 10 prisoners and seriously wounded one when they discovered the enemy moving through the nearby woods. On 4 April 45, Task Force GRIFFIN moved from SCMITTLOTHEIM to SANCHENBERG (G737813). A/40 reverted to Battalion control 5 April 45 in place.

ACTION OF A/40 7-17 APRIL 45

A/40 was attached to Task Force GRIFFIN on the morning of 7 April 45 vicinity of WINKHAUSEN (G422848) . 2/A/40 supported B/38 in attack on high ground G431868 G427868, HOTLHAUSEN. 1/A/40 displaced forward to NEIDER SORPE to overwatch advance of 2/A/40. 3/A/40 remained in position to displace forward on order. 2/a/40 reached HOLTHAUSEN with light opposition. Fire was received from the right flank. 1/A/40 moved into HUXEL (G418880) with B/38. The forward observer's tank was disabled by our Tank Destroyers after dark. No casualties resulted. 1/A/40 remained for the night of 7 April 45 and aided in the defense of these towns.

On 8 April 45 Task Force GRIFFIN moved into FREDEBERG (G402882). 1/A/40 supported A/38; 2/A/40 supported B/38, and 3/A/40 supported C/38. The infantry of A an C/38 were pinned down by 20MM fire and the tanks eliminated this fire. There was house-to-house fighting in the town. No casualties to A/40.

After Task Force WOLFE passed thru FREDEBERG on 9 April 45, A/40 moved out with Task Force GRIFFIN, 2/A/40 leading. A road block with mines was encountered just outside of town and the tank platoon leader was lightly wounded at the road block. The bulldozer and engineers cleared the block. The column moved thru EBBINGDORF (G388872); BERGHAUSEN (g358873); OBR BERNDORF (G346873, and NEIDER BERGDORF (G340888). Tanks used reconnaissance by fire and only light resistance was met. The column was held up at MENKHAUSEN (G335905) by a road block defended by extremely accurate mortar fire. The road block could not be by-passed by tanks because of terrain. The engineers cleared the mines and the roadblocks, and the tanks advanced toward town to join the infantry already in the first 3 houses. Two tanks were knocked out by direct fire from the edge of town. The rest of the tanks were forced to take cover. One platoon was deployed to the west on the high ground overlooking the town. They fired into the town trying to locate the enemy tank. Darkness overtook the operation and A/40 was ordered to set up an all around defense

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for the night. An enemy tank was heard moving out of MENKHAUSEN toward DORLAR (G350915) on the night of 9-10 April 45. On 10 April 45 A/40 moved into MENKHAUSEN, burning the town down with fire as they advanced. No resistance was met. Task Force GRIFFIN moved on to HENGSEBECH (G318913) and advancing toward BREMSCHIED. A/40 located great enemy activity N of the town. 105's and tanks were used to destroy 4 20MM guns and 2 trucks. Countless enemy killed. One Tiger tank was crippled and withdrew to the woods. The task force moved into HENGSEBECH and then on to ESLOHE (G301950) and the high ground located at G295956, where defense was set up for the night.

On 11 April 45, A/40 moved to MATHMECKE (G302987) and just before entering GREVENSTEIN (B274007), the doughs ran into 20MM fire from the left flank. In order to get into town, 1 platoon deployed and went down a draw of the road, a distance of 1000 yards, firing as they went, until the 20MM fire ceased. A/40 then moved into town and set up for the night at GREVENSTEIN.

A/40 left GREVENSTEIN on 12 April 45 and ran into a route that was almost impassable for tanks, resulting in many chewed up bogies, two thrown tracks, and many cracked connectors. Assembled at RJ B2150004 and rerouted thru LINNEPE (B235015) AND ENDORF (G210992) following Task Force BROWN. Task Force GRIFFIN left route of Task Force BROWN and turned north at AFFELN (G085974) and took HLINTROP (G079990) and GARBECK (B068022) in what amounted to a night operation.

On 13 April 45, 2 platoons of tanks were used to clean out woods near GARBECK. 14 April 45 was used for maintenance of vehicles and personnel.

On 15 April 45, A.40 moved with Task Force GRIFFIN from GARBECK THRU VOLKRINGHAUSEN (B096068) to MENDEN (B035160). The force encountered anti-tank fire at SUMMERIN (A978130), located 6 guns; 1 SP gun; 5 75light artillery pieces; 2 light artillery pieces knocked out. The others were abandoned. The column was raked by 20MM and 40MM flak guns. After Task Force BROWN had taken KALTOF (B958141, the column moved thru KALTHOF again encountering sporadic 20MM; 40MM; 88; 105, and 150 fire moved into REPFLINGHAUSEN (A938132) where 70 prisoners were taken at nightfall.

On 16 April 45 the column moved out of REPFLINGHAUSEN and was met by a delegation from the Commanding General, 116th Panzer Division, 300 yards out of town. Higher Headquarters arranged term for surrender and A/40 moved to LETMATHE (A915077); OSTRICH (A920082), and DROSCHEDI (A945065), leaving one platoon in each town. The rest of the day was spent rounding up prisoners - 187 allied PW's were recaptured.

At 1000 17 April 45, A/40 reverted to Battalion control and moved to vicinity ERGSTE to join the Battalion.

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PART II

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PART III

40TH TANK BATTALION

17-30 APRIL 45

The Battalion moved out of assembly area vicinity ERGSTE at 1215 so as to cross the IP at 1400. The column went thru MENDEN and its head crossed the IP at RJ B081096 at 1358. The Battalion moved Eastward without unusual incident thru MESCHEDE (B380050); the RJ just north of WINTERBERG (G560900); MEDEBACK (G680890); KOBACH (G790975); SACHSENHAUSEN (G890950); KASSEL (C220040); HANNMUSSEN (C340150), and closed into DRANSFELD (C410245) AT 0710 18 April 1945.

The period 18-28 April was spent in the maintenance of personnel and equipment. The men of the Battalion took showers, received clean clothes and generally had an opportunity to clean up and relax. Maintenance of vehicles and weapons was carried on by the entire command. From 23-27 April 45, inclusive, training was conducted for all men not actively engaged in maintenance. Replacement tanks were drawn during this period, to bring the Battalion up to normal tank strength.

The Battalion left DRANSFELD (B406248) at 0730 29 April 45 and crossed the IP at GOTTINGEN (B520285) at 0825. From GOTTINGEN the Battalion moved north thru NORTHERM (B570480); SEESEN (B683687); SALZGITTER (B801870); BRAUNSCHWEIG (X900100) to GIFHORN (X910360). Here the column moved west to the RJ at X722343 where it turned NW to CELLE (X590500). From CELLE the Battalion moved to ESCHADE (X691635); BECHEDF (X570720) to the new Battalion assembly area vicinity BAVEN (X582750), CLOSING INTO THIS AREA AT 1930. The 140 mile march was completed without unusual incident.

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PART III

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SUMMARY

The operations of the 40th Tank Battalion for the month of April 45 were extremely successful. It is estimated that more than 15,000 enemy were captured during the month. The amount of enemy equipment destroyed and captured by the Battalion was so great that it cannot be accurately estimated.

The terrain the Battalion operated on in clearing the RUHR POCKET was very rugged which ordinarily would be unfavorable for tanks, but because of the enemy's disorganization, tanks were used to great advantage.

On 1 April 45, the Battalion had 49 medium tanks, 22 of these were 76MM and 27 were 75MM. During the month, 2 of the 75MM tanks and 3 76MM tanks and 1 2½ ton trucks were destroyed by enemy action. Replacement and exchange of tanks was made during the month leaving the Battalion with a full complement of 53 medium tanks on 30 April 45; 30 of these were 76MM and 23 were 75MM. Also during the month, 5 M24 light tanks were drawn giving D/40 11 M24 light tanks and 6 M5A1 light tanks. One 2 ½ ton truck was drawn to replace the one destroyed by enemy action.

The Battalion suffered 19 casualties for the month of April 45. These consisted of 5 EM killed; 2 EM MIA; 3 EM SWA and 1 Officer and 8 EM LWA.

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Colonel O 315 210
Cavalry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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 HEADQUARTERS 40TH TANK BATTALION
 APO 257 US ARMY

/jap

1 May 1945

BATTLE CASUALTIES APRIL 45

: April	KIA	: MIA	: SWA	: SIA	: LWA	: LIA	: Tot.	:
: 1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 4	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 5	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
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: 8	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
: 9	: 1 EM	: 2 EM	: 2 EM	:	: 1 (O) 5 EM:	:	: 11	:
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: Tot.:	5 EM	: 2 EM	: 3 EM	: 0	: 1 (O) 8EM	:	: 19	:

(signed)
 ARTHUR C. CRISTENSEN
 1st Lt. Infantry
 40th Tank Bn

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HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 250 US ARMY

/jap

2 June 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of MAY, 1945.

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

PART I

ACTION OF TASK FORCE BROWN 1-20 MAY 45

On 1 May 1945, the 40th Tank Battalion was assembled vicinity BAVEN, GERMANY (X580748). Patrols, roadblocks and civilian control measures were enforced. Maintenance was performed on vehicles and weapons.

At 020800 May 45 instructions were received to be prepared to move to a Combat Command Assembly area vicinity GOLDENBOW, GERMANY. A/40 and C/40 were attached to Task Force GRIFFIN and Task Force BROWN was organized with 40 (-A & C), A/48, B/38, 2/B/814 and 2/C/33.

Task Force BROWN was further organized into two Task Forces. Task Force WOLFE and Task Force SWEAT. Task Force WOLFE consisted of B/40 less 1 platoon, D/40 1 platoon, B/38, 2/B/814 and 2/C/33 less 1 squad. Task Force SWEAT consisted of D/40 less 1 platoon, A/48 and 1 squad 1/C/33, 1 plt B/40.

Task Force BROWN was the lead element of Combat Command Reserve. Within Task Force BROWN, the order of march was Task Force WOLFE, Hq and Hq Co/40 and Task Force SWEAT. The possibility of having to fight for the assembly area was considered and it was decided to move to the new area prepared to engage the enemy if necessary. The leading elements of Task Force BROWN started moving at 1315 2 May 45.

The column proceeded as planned thru MUDEN (X605783), RJ at X610870, LINTZEL (X690910), HOLTHAUSEN II (X812880), BOHLSEN (X832890), MELZINGEN (X820935), VELZEN (X895895), TATENDORF (X882983), RJ at S875019, BEVENSEN (S905020), HIMBERGEN (T006040), RJ at T041040, TOSTERGLOPE (T062172), BLECKEDE (T002258), WENDISCHTHUN (T038274), GULZE (T048328), ZAHRENSDORF (T048373), DERSENON (T102362), and RJ at T163381. Task Force WOLFE continued on to WULFSKUHLE (T173455) and went into assembly position vicinity CAMIN (T150458),. Hq and Hq Co/40 held up at WULFSKHUL and Task Force SWEAT assembled at the RJ at T173127, Task Force BROWN closed into this new assembly area at 222315 May 45.

The march went without unusual incident south of the ELBE. North of the ELBE our column ran into thousands of German prisoners walking and in all types of enemy vehicles. This apparently uncontrolled mass movement of

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prisoners to the rear hampered our movement on the narrow roads. In the new area guides were posted at critical points to keep the movement of the prisoners toward the PW cages. We encountered no resistance moving to this assembly area.

At 0415 3 May 45 operating instructions were received and plans were made for Task Force BROWN to be prepared to occupy and clear assigned zone. Written instructions called for Task Force BROWN to move immediately behind Task Force GRIFFIN and the 440th Field Artillery Battalion. "A" Battery of the 440th was attached to Task Force BROWN to follow directly behind the task force.

Verbal instructions were received in the morning calling for Task Force BROWN to split into its two task forces and allow one task force of Task Force GRIFFIN to come between them. The purpose of this change of plan was to enable one task force from Task Force BROWN and one from Task Force GRIFFIN to proceed north from RJ at T133533 at about the same time.

Task Force BROWN moved out at 1115, after the first task force of Task Force GRIFFIN, with Task Force WOLFE leading. Task Force SWEAT followed one task force of Task Force GRIFFIN.

The column proceeded North from CAMIN, thru KOLZIN (T132520), RJ at T133533, KUEESE (T142675) to ROGGENDORF (T171716). Task Force BROWN had orders to hold up here and push reconnaissance thru HOLDORF (T203756) to REHNA (T189813). A light tank platoon from D/40 started on this mission. While this was being done, orders were received to make a reconnaissance of the route thru DEMERN (T149768) to REHNA. This route was also reconnoitered by a platoon of D/40. The route was found suitable for tanks and the task force started moving on Combat Command order. Task Force WOLFE pushed North thru REHNA, VITENSE (T192843), BORZOW (T230900) TO GREVESMUHLEN (T275910) arriving there at 1746 3 May 45. Task Force WOLFE left B/40 less 1 platoon and 1 platoon B/38 at BORZOW. The remainder of Task Force WOLFE and Hq and Hq Co/40 proceeded on th GREVESMUHLEN. Task Force SWEAT followed Task Force WOLFE and arrived into occupying positions in the southern half of Task Force BROWN'S occupational sector. No enemy action was encountered on route. There were many prisoners taken but they offered no resistance. Task Force BROWN closed in the area 1915 3 May 1945.

The task force area proved to be full of German Soldiers, liberated allied PW's, allied displaced persons and German refugees from the East. The towns in the area were outposted, roadblocks were established, patrols were organized, German soldiers were picked up and put in PW enclosures, civilian movement was controlled, and civilian control regulations were enforced.

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PERIOD 4-20 MAY 1945

This period was spent in the collecting of German PW's and the operation of a German PW camp vicinity GRAVESMUHLEN. Allied PW's and allied and displaced German persons were frozen in place and organized into camps and evacuated as soon transportation and arrangements could be made. A comprehensive search of the task force area was made for enemy personnel and equipment. Military Government was set up and civilian control measures were enforced. Maintenance of vehicles and weapons was carried out throughout the period. On 13 May 1945 the Battalion Surgeon began conducting Physical Profile Tests. The film "Two Down And One To Go" was shown to all personnel on duty.

Task Force SWEAT occupied the Southern half of Task Force BROWN'S zone with troops of D/40 and A/48 located in all the principle towns. Task Force CP was located in KIRSH GRAMBOW (T237805) and the troops were located in SIEVERS HAGEN (T267850), HANSHAGEN (T252844), BLIESCHENDORF (T246830) AND WEDENDORF (T230808).

Task Force WOLFE with Hq and Hq Co/40 was all in the town of GREVESMUHLEN with the exception of B/40 less 1 platoon and 1 platoon of B/38 which remained in BORZON.

On 5 May 45 A/48 was released from Task Force BROWN and reverted to 48th Armored Infantry Battalion control. On 11 May 45, the 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was assigned a large portion of the area formerly occupied by D/40. The platoon of D/40 with Task Force WOLFE and the platoon of B/40 with Task Force SWEAT reverted to company control and moved to company area. D/40 moved troops into and assumed responsibility of WOTENITZ (T270885).

On 5 May 45 the German PW enclosure was moved from T270910 to a Malt Factory at T269908 and C/33 was attached to guard the enclosure. On 13 May 45 the PW enclosure was moved to T265922 where we assumed control of the Combat Command "A" PW cage. Because of the greater area covered by the new PW enclosure 2 platoons of B/40 supplemented C/33 in guarding the enclosure. On 14 May 45 C/40 closed into this area with all the PW's from Task Force GRIFFIN'S area. As a result approximately 11,000 PW's were consolidated in one area. C/40 assumed control of the guard for the PW enclosure on arrival and the 2 platoons of B/40 reverted to company control.

On 17 May 45 it was contemplated that within several days Task Force BROWN would also assume responsibility for Task Force GRIFFIN'S area. As a result of a reconnaissance for troop positions was made. On 18 May notice was received that the movement would not take place. At 1800 18 May 45, C/33 was released and reverted to Battalion. Infantry from B/38 was used to

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supplement prisoner guard.

At 1500 19 May 45 we were relieved of responsibility for the area and PW cage by British troops and instructions were received for the movement of the Battalion to a new area North of LEIPZIG, GERMANY. B/38 was relieved at 1200 20 May 45 and reverted to Battalion control.

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PART II

ACTION OF A/40 2-20 MAY 45

A/40 was attached to task Force GRIFFIN in accordance with Operating Instructions Hq CCR 020800 May 45. A/40 moved North from BAVEN (X580748) along the same route Task Force BROWN used to its assembly area vicinity CAMIN (T150458). A/40 closed into this new area at 0020 3 May 45.

On 3 May 45 A/40 as part of Task Force GRIFFIN was given the mission of attacking North and go into position within Task Force GRIFFIN'S occupational zone vicinity GRIEBEN (T185880). Tanks lead and the infantry followed in half tracks. A/40 left CAMIN at 1045 and moved thru KOLZIN (T132520), ZARRENTIN (T111555), SEEDORF (T076627), ZIETHEN (T036709), SCHLAGBRUGGE (T056741), RADDINGSORF (T078813), and SCHONBERG (T110882). At SCHONBERG 3/A/40 proceeded north to SCHWANBECK (T125648). A/40 less 1 platoon moved to GRIEBEN (T185889), by way of RABENSDORF (T140857), RODUCHELSDORF (T146856) and LUBSEE (T170870), MENZENDORF, Arriving at GRIEBEN at approximately 1445. Enroute A/40 liberated approximately 1000 Allied PW's (American, British, and Canadians) at LUBSEE, MENZENDORF AND GREIBEN. A/40 captured in tact the entire Battalion of German soldiers guarding the prisoners.

On 4 May 45 1/A/40 took up positions in MENZENDORF (T162883), 2/A/40 in BLUSSEN and 3/A/40 moved from SCHWANSBECK to GRIEBEN. Each platoon set up Military Government, road blocks and civilian control measures in their respective towns.

On 5 May 45 600 PW's were moved to the enemy PW cage at SCHONBERG. From 6-12 May 45 A/40 remained in the same location and continued to search for enemy personnel and equipment. On 13 May A/40 was assigned a new occupational area. CP was set up in GR SEIMZ (T107849), 1/A/40 AT OLLNDORF (T083825), 2/A/40 at LINDOW (T107826), and 3/A/40 at ROUDUCHELSTORF (T145856). A/40 operated Military Government in their area and enforced civilian control measures. A/40 reverted to Battalion control on 20 May 45.

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PART III

ACTION OF C/40 2-14 MAY 1945

C/40 was attached to Task Force GRIFFIN in accordance with Operating Instructions Hq CCR, 020800 May 45. C/40 moved north from BONSTORE (X560767) thru BAVEN (X580748) along the same route Task Force BROWN used to its assembly area vicinity CAMIN (T150458).

On 3 May 45 C/40 moved North from CAMIN to REHNA (T190812). At REHNA C/40 established road blocks around the town, collected PW's, displaced persons and worked in conjunction with Military Government. C/40 was relieved 0800 5 May 45 and moved to SCHONBERG (T110882) at that time where C/40 relieved one unit of 33rd Engineers guarding and administering Task Force GRIFFIN PW cage.

C/40 remained at SCHONBERG, guarding and administering Task Force GRIFFIN PW cage until 14 May 45. On this date all of Task Force GRIFFIN PW's were moved to Task Force BROWN'S cage at GREVESMUHLEN. C/40 reverted to Battalion control and relieved C/23 and B/40 of their duty of guarding PW's.

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PART IV

40TH TANK BATTALION 21-31 MAY 1945

At 191400 May 45 orders were received calling for the movement of Combat Command Reserve to security area vicinity KOTHEN (D930585) to relieve 415th RCT in its sector of responsibility. (See Operations Instruction Hq CCR 191400 May 45.)

The lead elements of the Battalion passed thru GREVESMUHLEN at 0259 and the CCR IP at RHENA at 0420. The Battalion moved from GREVESMUHLEN thru RHENA, WITTENBURG, NEUHAUS, KATEMIN, DANNENBERG, LUCHOW, SALZWEDEL, GARDELEGE, NEUHOLDENSLBN, MAGDEBERG and went into assembly position just South of this town at BEYENDORF. At this position the advance party contacted the Battalion with definite instructions as to areas of responsibility for each company and installations guarded by 415th RCT. At 0755 the lead company moved out. The column moved thru FORDERSTEDT, CALBE and NIENBURG. By 1130 22 May 45 the Battalion had closed into the new area with all vehicles after having traveled a total of 201 miles. Hq., Sv., and A companies were located in KOTHEN (D930585); B/40 located in GROBZIG (D963505); C/40 located at KL PASCHLEBEN (D860620); and D/40 located at WULFEN (D893662). By 1400 the Battalion had completely taken over all responsibility and guard posts in the assigned sector. Hq/40 assumed responsibility for KOTHEN area. A/40 was Battalion Reserve.

Necessary guard was established by units, patrols began operating throughout the area, motor parks were set up and contact was established with local Military Government. (For areas of responsibility, patrols and guard posts see overlay Hq Tk Bn 22 May 45.)

On 24 May 45 D/40 set up 3 roadblocks at WULFEN (D893663), DIEBZIG (D897713), and DORNBECK (D857683) on roads leading to the division bounding our area.

This period was spent guarding vital installations, patrolling, handling of displaced persons, enforcing civilian control measures, maintaining vehicles, weapons and personnel, and arranging recreational and athletic activities. A Training Schedule was instituted for the reserve company, and other men as available.

On 30 May 45 a Memorial Service was held for all men not on duty. A/40 relieved Hq/40 for responsibility of guard posts and patrols in KOTHEN at 1600 30 May 45. Hq/40 became the Battalion Reserve.

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SUMMARY

Operations of the 40th Tank Battalion for the month of MAY can be classed as entirely successful. Although the Battalion made an attack on 3 May 45 no resistance was met. All enemy personnel and equipment encountered quickly fell into our hands.

Thousands of PW's were taken during the month and part of our efforts were directed to organizing and administering PW enclosures.

The large percentage of German refugees from East and displaced persons of all nationalities in the area of GREVESMUHLEN made the Military Government and civilian control measures there, difficult to enforce. However camps were organized and thousands of displaced persons were evacuated during our occupation.

(signed)
JOHN C. BROWN
Lt. Colonel O 315 210
Cavalry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 250 US ARMY

/jap

2 July 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of JUNE 1945.

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

On 1 June 1945 the 40th Tank Battalion was located vicinity KOTHEN, GERMANY (D930585) with the mission of maintaining security, guarding vital installations and assisting in the Military Government of the area. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Service Company and "A" Company were located in KOTHEN (D930585) - C/40 was Battalion Reserve on a one hour alert to move on order to quell any disorder within the Division zone.

Posts were maintained at vital installations, local security continued, handling of displaced persons, enforcing civilian control measures, and patrols operated throughout the Battalion area. D/40 operated three roadblocks at WULFEN (D893663) DIEBZIG (D897713), and DORNBECK (D857683), on roads leading into the Division area. Maintenance of vehicles, weapons, and personnel and arranging recreational and athletic activities consumed a large part of the time. A training schedule was followed by the Reserve Company, trained one platoon a day on the T26E3 (see attached memo.)

During weeks of 18 June to 30 June 1945, Communications Training was held for all available CW radio operators. Both the Command and Administrative nets were operated on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday of each week from 0900 to 1130.

During the month the I & E progressed as scheduled. A Group Discussion School was held for Company Orientation NCO's and Information Centers were set up in each Company. Two required I&E films "Your Job in Germany" and "On to TOKYO" were shown to all personnel present for duty.

Tank and Small Arms firing was conducted for tank crews and other personnel during the week of 18-23 June 1945. The Combat Tank Range was located in the vicinity of KONNER, GERMANY (O790490). Small arms range was located at EDDERITZ 0915513).

The Reserve Company was rotated each Wednesday at approximately 1200. Units did not move, but remained billeted in the same area. On 6 June 1945 Headquarters Company, 40th Tank Battalion relieved "A" Company 40th Tank Battalion of responsibility for area vicinity of KOTHEN, and "A" Company relieved "B" Company of area vicinity GROBZIG. "B" Company became the Reserve Company.

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On 13 June 1945, "B" Company relieved "A" Company guarding the area and installations vicinity GROBZIG and "A" Company relieved "C" Company of the area vicinity Kl. PASCHLEBEN. "C" Company became the Battalion Reserve.

On 20 June 1945 "C" Company relieved "A" Company guarding area vicinity PASCHLEBEN and "A" Company relieved "D" company of the area vicinity WULFEN. "D" Company became the Battalion Reserve.

On 25 June 1945 "C" Company took charge of guarding three displaced persons camps at LEOPOLDSHALL, GERMANY (D655683). Two platoons and two officers were sent to the above town, set up billets and operated the continuous guard.

On 27 June 1945 "D" Company relieved "A" Company guarding area vicinity WULFEN and "A" Company became the Battalion Reserve.

On 30 June 1945 at approximately 1500, verbal instructions were received that the Battalion was placed under control of Combat Command "B" and would immediately prepare for a movement to the South. Estimated "H" Hour was to be 0600. At 1710 on 30 June 1945 verbal instruction were received to send billeting detail to Combat Command at 2000. Liaison Officer at 1630 was sent to Combat Command.

Initial plans and preparations were immediately made, pending further written orders.

During the month of June, four raids were conducted by the Battalion S-2 on the towns of CORMIGK (D835555); JLBERSDORF (D811527); DOHNDORF (D658555); MOLZ (D860606) and BIENDORF (840585). For reasons, details, and results of raid see accompanying reports.

Three Battalion dismounted reviews were held at KOTHEN STADIUM ON 8-15-29 June 1945.

(signed)
EMERSON J. WOLFE
Major O 316 109
Infantry
40th Tank Battalion
COMMANDING

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HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 257 US ARMY

6 June 1945

SUBJECT: Raid on CORMIGK, GERMANY 6 June 1945.

TO : Commanding General, Hq 7th Armd Div APO 257, US ARMY
(Attention: G-2)

1. Facts leading to the raid on CORMIGK:

Company B, 40th Tank Battalion assumed police and security responsibility of its assigned sector on their arrival in this area. There has been trouble falling in two categories - curfew violations and stealing - involving DOHNDORF, CORMIGK and PREUBLITZ - all small villages. The police reported there was activity between 2300 and 0430, but they were unable to find the source of that activity. Company B set up a trap twice - and on the second attempt caught a German climbing a fence after curfew. This man was arrested and held in the KOTHEN jail pending an investigation, being charged specifically with curfew violation and stealing. In CORMIGK three reports of stealing at night were made. The civilian policeman at PREUBLITZ was investigated and found to be reliable and have a good record. On 1 June he was ordered to make a thorough investigation of the three above towns concentrating on securing the names of party leaders, SS, party meetings and the Hitler Youth. On 5 June his report was received showing that the village of CORMIGK was the center of Nazi activity. In that village were living three party leaders, refugees from Poland, two local leaders, and one SS man. Names of men in surrounding villages - WOHLSDORF and BIENDORF - were given. Obviously this unhealthy situation required immediate action.

2. The raid on CORMIGK:

Company B, 40th Tank Battalion on 6 June was the alert company and it was alerted at 1615 6 June to go into action at CORMIGK at 1830 same day. Entering the town are 7 roads. Company B sent a truck filled with soldiers down each road, stopping at the outskirts of CORMIGK. The soldiers quickly fanned out until a tight wall of steel surrounded the town. Then two 20 men searching parties searched the town, driving all males over 10-12 years of age before it in its assigned sectors. Every house, barn and shed were searched as well as the area in between, with orders to look for weapons, enemy equipment and ammunition. All the males were assembled under guard and turned over to the CIC team taken with the raiding party. The rounding up of males and search was completed in one hour. Patrols were then sent to WHOLSDORF, PREUBLITZ and BIENDORF to pick up the nazi whose names we had secured.

3. Results of the raid:

- a. Enemy equipment: A barn with a small amount of airplane equipment consisting of boxed motors, instruments, and propellers.
- b. Enemy ammunition: 12 Tellermines, and ½ truck load of 75 AP & HE

ammunition in basement of school house. This ammunition was disposed of before leaving CORMIGK.

c. Enemy Personnel: See attached CIC report.

4. Recommendations:

a. This situation indicates that if it exists in a small village it must exist in other villages and towns.

b. The raid was facilitated by previous information on specific men to look for which was most helpful.

c. KOTHEN is a hot bed of the Nazi party from two sources of information received. This would require very careful planning and handling as to how it can be corrected. It is suggested that KOTHEN be divided into sectors depending on the number of US ARMY units in the town. Every available CIC team be brought in to work in assigned sectors on the day of the search. The alert company be used to assist in the search. The above is merely a suggested plan. Undoubtedly, a better plan can be presented when it is known exactly what units are in KOTHEN and the number of men who would be available for such an undertaking.

/s/ William W. Power

/t/ WILLIAM W. POWER

Captain INF

40th Tk Bn.

S-2

OFFICIAL:

DANIEL CROTTY

2D LT. AUS

40th Tk Bn

ADJUTANT

7 June 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: Raid on CORMIGK

1. Between the hours of 1830 and 2200 on the 6 June 1945, Team 62 of CIC Detachment 970, attached to the 507th CIC Detachment, assisted the 40th Tank Battalion in conducting a raid in the town of CORMIGK, GERMANY. Names of certain key figures who had been organizing resistance to American occupation at CORMIGK, and surrounding communities had been obtained by Capt. POWER, S2, 40th Tank Bn. Capt. POWER made arrangements for blocking off the town and the rounding up of all males from 12 years of age and up. CIC, assisted by Dr. Alfred Dressler, Chief of Political Police at DELITZSCH, screened and interrogated male civilians in search for arrests of CI interest.

2. Although CORMIGK is only a small farming village consisting of several hundred inhabitants, it proved to be a hot bed of died in the wool Nazis. A total of 24 men all organizing resistance were arrested, summary of which follows:

Wehrmacht in civilian clothes	8
Waffen SS Obersturmfuhrrer (1st Lt.)	1
Algemine SS Untersturnfuhrer (2nd Lt.)	1
Ortgruppenleiter	2
Ortgruppenkassenleiter	1
Ortsgruppenschulungleiter	1
Ortsgruppenemtsleiter	1
Zellenleiter Party member since 1930	1
Party member since 1930	1
Party member since 1932	1
SA Truppfuhrer	1
SA Scharfuhrer	1
Nazi Burgermeister in Poland	1
Blockleiter Party member since 1932	1
Party member since 1931	1
German Pole	1
Total	<u>24</u>

Townsend Evand
1st. Lt. QMC

A TRUE COPY:

(signed)
DANIEL CROTTY
2D LT. AUS
40TH Tk Bn
ADJUTANT

HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 250 US ARMY

/jap

15 June 1945

SUBJECT: Report of Raid on JLBERSDORF, GERMANY, 14 June 1945.

TO : Commanding General, 7th Armd Div APO 257, US ARMY
(Attention: G-2)

1. REASON FOR RAID:

Special information agents in our security sector reported about ten days ago that the village of JLBERSDORF was peculiar for two reasons. Though the village was small and off the beaten track, it was a favorite overnight lodging place of both German soldiers and refugees, but they could not explain why. A check was made to determine the number of strange people in the village each night and that number varied from 15 to 43. Secondly, prior to 11 April 1945 the village administration was strong Nazi and carrying on in the same manner as it had before the U. S. Army entered. On 11 April 1945 the Burgomeister was relieved and a new man appointed by Military Government.

2. THE RAID:

Company C, 40th Tank Battalion moved out at 0400 14 June 1945 to be in position to surround JLBERSDORF at 0430. Promptly on the appointed hour, 30 men surrounded the village while two searching parties of 20 men each made a house to house search, routing out all males over 10-12 years of age and searching for weapons, ammunition and enemy equipment. All men were rounded up in 35 minutes and the search completed in one hour and five minutes. A CIC team of 4 German speaking soldiers, headed by Lt. EVANS, accompanied the raiding party, screening the male civilians.

3. RESULTS:

- a. Nine German WEHRMACHT EM were found without discharge papers, in civilian clothes. They were brought to WROUGHT MP's for transfer to PW cage.
- b. As a result of civilian interrogations, 3 party leaders were arrested in WEINDORF, adjacent to JLBERDORF, being party leaders of arrest level.
- c. Burgomeister had collected all the weapons. These were collected by the raiding party and disposed of.
- d. No enemy equipment or ammunition was found.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. It is recommended that all companies pick up the collected

weapons from the Burgomeister. This has been ordered in this organization and will be accomplished without delay.

- b. It is recommended that the responsibility of reporting all German soldiers without proper Wehrpas or Discharge papers be placed on the Brugomeister of his community. The Burgomeister to be instructed to lock up the soldier and contact U.S. Army patrols to take the soldier to MP Hqs for further disposition. Only in this manner will the German soldiers who changed into civilian clothes, be entirely apprehended.

/s/ William W. Power
/t/ WILLIAM W. POWER
Captain INF
40th Tk Bn
S-2

A true copy:

(signed)
DANIEL CROTTY
2D LT. AUS
40th Tk Bn
ADJUTANT

HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 250 US ARMY

/jap

18 June 1945

SUBJECT: Report of Raid on DOHNDORF, GERMANY, 16 June 1945.

TO : Commanding General, 7th Armd Div APO 257, US ARMY.
(Attention: G-2)

1. Preliminary Facts:

Information was received that DOHNDORF, GERMANY had been a Nazi center and in view of this fact it was deemed advisable to check this village. Located in the village was a distillery which had been destroyed by advancing American troops, but a small amount of its products remained. By eliminating this stock, that would remove at least one possible source of poison liquor.

2. The Raid:

The raid was made at 1900 16 June by Company C, 40th Tank Battalion. A ring of soldiers surrounded the town and two searching parties of 20 men each drove all males over 10-12 years of age to a collecting point. Every house was thoroughly searched for weapons, ammunition and enemy equipment. All males were rounded up in 35 minutes and the search completed in one hour and a quarter. A 4 man section from the CIC team was taken along to examine all papers and interrogate.

3. The Results:

A. Personnel taken into custody and delivered to MP.

6 WEHRMACHT EM without proper papers.

5 Civilians of arrest level - one of whom a civilian SS member.

B. No weapons, ammunition or enemy equipment was found,

C. The alcohol vats containing only a very little alcohol were entirely drained and destroyed.

D. The raid was conducted efficiently and quickly in a stern and soldierly manner.

4. Recommendations:

None.

A TRUE COPY: (signed)
DANIEL CROTTY
2D Lt. AUS
40th Tk Bn
ADJUTANT

/s/ William W. Power
/t/ WILLIAM W. POWER
Captain INF
40th Tk Bn.
S-2

HEADQUARTERS, 40TH TANK BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander
APO 250 US ARMY

/jap

22 June 1945

SUBJECT: Raid on MOLZ, GERMANY, 21 June 1945

TO : Commanding General, 7th Armd Div APO 257, US ARMY
(Attention: G-2)

1. Preliminary Facts:

Trouble from time to time developed in the village of MOLZ, GERMANY none of which was serious but nonetheless bothersome. This can best be described as a nuisance. Some was traceable to the German refugees and some to a civilian landowner who attempted to run the Burgomeister in the administration of village affairs by telling him the things to do to further his interests. Furthermore, a small amount of liquor in the village was known to have been sold to American troops but due to the extensive quantities of both good and bad liquor in the general area, it could not be definitely known that the specific liquor was poisoned.

2. The Raid:

Company C, 40th Tank Battalion conducted the raid at 1830 21 June 45 in the same manner as previously executed raids. To the orders of search for weapons, ammunition and enemy ammunition was added all liquor. All males were rounded up in 10 minutes and the entire raid completed in 55 minutes. No CIC men were available due to orders from Division urgently requiring their efforts on an important matter.

3. Results:

- a. 4 EM Wehrmacht without proper discharge.
- b. No arms, ammunition or enemy equipment were found.
- c. All liquor was destroyed.

4. Recommendations:

Making the Burgomeister responsible for reporting all German soldiers without proper discharge papers is not sufficient. The wheels of justice thru MG are too slow. For this failure, it is suggested that more effective pressure be worked out.

A TRUE COPY: (signed)
DANIEL CROTTY
2D Lt. AUS
40th Tk Bn
ADJUTANT

/s/ William W. Power
/t/ WILLIAM W. POWER
Captain INF
40th Tk Bn.
S-2