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HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
AFC 464, U. S. Army

3 April 1944

OPERATIONS IN ITALY, MARCH 1944

The beginning of the month of March found "A" Company at 913213, "B" Company at 912215, and "C" Company at 920211, all forward positions where they were awaiting the order to attack up the Liri Valley. The first two weeks of weather during the month were wet and disagreeable. The Battalion Commander several times planned to move the Companies back to a rear area but due to the uncertainty of the situation they remained in forward positions.

One request was made to the Commanding General, Combat Command "B", to move companies but it was evidently not favorably considered because no reply was received.

The Battalion Commander and Staff checked the Companies on several different occasions and also spent a good deal of time perfecting plans for the forthcoming operation. Traffic Controls Posts were checked and several Company Commander meetings were held to be sure that all orders and plans were fully understood.

On 14 March at approximately 1930, the Battalion was alerted by Liaison Officer from Combat Command "B", that the attack was to take place the following day. The field order was received and plans for the next days activities were made by the Battalion Commander and Staff.

At 0730 on 15 March, the Battalion Command Group began its movement to the forward Command Post at Cervaro. At 0845 all elements of the Command Group closed into the new command post. A message center was established and communications were immediately set up with our Companies and Traffic Control Headquarters. All officers who were to maintain Traffic Control Posts reported to the CP to be dispatched to their regular stations as they were called for.

From 0835 to 1200 continuous flights of American Bombers bombed Cassino. Some bombs were dropped in the area occupied by our Company "C". One load of bombs was accidentally dropped near Cervaro.

Friendly artillery began its concentration at noon. Companies "A" and "B" reported their missions complete at 1247. Company "C" reported that no targets of opportunity had been picked up consequently they expended no ammunition.

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Orders were received from the 3-2, Combat Command "B" that all traffic control stations up to Co. 1 would be manned by 1500. Forward control posts were to be manned as the situation progressed.

Captain Kinnison, Lt Hawk, Lt Witten, and Lt Gould left the Command Post to man their assigned Traffic Control Posts.

The Battalion Commander and S-3 left the C to occupy Traffic Control Headquarters. While at the Headquarters the Battalion Commander contacted Major Jenkins, the New Zealand Provost Marshal, and personally inspected all traffic control posts on Highway 6.

At 1709 it was reported that the Indians were on the hill west of Hill 193.

At 1825 a message was received from our Liaison Officer that tanks were 75 yards from objective Quisling. Further advance was impossible without engineer aid. Hand to hand fighting and small arms fighting was taking place in Cassino and on Montecassino.

Combat Command "B" called intermittently during the night to give the situation and to keep us posted on any forward movements. Officers manning control posts stayed on duty throughout the night. Their positions were shelled intermittently during the night. During the day the Battalion expended 744 rounds of H.E. on observed targets.

At 0541, 16 March, Combat Command "B" called and said that the bridge on Highway 6 had been finished and that certain reconnaissance elements had gone across.

The Battalion Commander and S-3 spent most of the day at Traffic Control Headquarters keeping up with the situation. Traffic Control Posts were relieved and re-manned to give the officers needed rest.

At 1000, a flight of B-25 American Bombers dropped bombs in Company "C"'s area. One man was injured, Sgt James T. Boyd, 38060677, one M-10 was damaged to the extent that it had to be evacuated. The tank was evacuated during darkness and a replacement sent in the following day. During the day Co "B" expended 21 rounds of H.E.

The Battalion Commander and S-3 spent most of the day, 17 March 1944 at Traffic Control Headquarters. From this point in the early afternoon they directed "A" and "B" Companies fire on an enemy nobelwerfer.

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At 1700 the Battalion Commander and S-3 returned to the Battalion Command Post. Traffic Control Posts on Highway 6 were subjected to intermittent shell fire during the day.

At 1715 the Company Commanders reported to the Command Post where the Battalion Commander ordered that the Company Commanders should spend more time with the gunners. He stressed that Company Commanders should emphasize the closing of shafts.

Before the Company Commanders returned to their Companies an enemy artillery shell struck the Command Post. Several others were close-in. No one was injured.

The Liaison Officer to Combat Command "B" reported that four friendly tanks had gone to Cassino. Their approach to Cassino was observed by all Battalion OP's. Two were witnessed burning from the Battalion Command Post by the Executive Officer. No exact reports were to be had concerning the situation. The Battalion expended 1,631 rounds of A.T. and 48 rounds of smoke on observed targets during the day.

The following morning the Battalion Commander and S-3 took station at the Traffic Control Headquarters. Traffic Control Posts were manned all during 18 March by our officers. The Battalion Commander and S-3 remained at Traffic Control Headquarters throughout the day and on different occasions fired the companies on observed targets. The Company Commanders were called to Traffic Control Headquarters to observe the fires of their Companies and to make adjustment whenever necessary. Intermittent shell fire fell all along Highway 6 during the day. Captain Kinnison, manning Traffic Control Post #3, was subjected to heavy artillery concentrations.

At 0906 hours enemy aircraft dive-bombed friendly frontline positions. The 1st Armored Group forward Command Post suffered casualties from the bombing in both human lives and material destroyed. The Battalion Commander observing the bombing of the group headquarters from his post some 400 yards away made arrangements with the Companies to provide transportation to evacuate the 1st Armored Group personnel to the rear for reorganization.

Several enemy air raids took place during the day. The enemy planes usually strafed Highway 6 in the vicinity of Traffic Control Post #1 located at the Cervaro and Highway 6. Sgt Hipskind, Tec 5 Novelli, and Pvt 1 cl Helms, manning two .50 Caliber machine guns on the Battalion Commanders and S-3 vehicles, stuck to their posts and fired on all enemy planes despite their strafing and bombing.

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The Battalion silenced enemy rebelwarfers and destroyed one enemy S.P. gun by direct fire from Company "C". During this action the Battalion expended 795 rounds of M. 2. and 38 rounds of smoke.

The following morning the S-3 called Combat Command "B" to obtain information on the situation. The only information received was that the enemy had counter-attacked on Hill 193 but no results as to their success had been received. The Battalion Commander, S-3, and S-2 studied recent S-2 reports and maps for possible targets.

The Battalion Commander and S-3 left the S-1 for Traffic Control Headquarters. In the afternoon the Company Commanders were called to Traffic Control Headquarters to witness firing of their Companies.

Several enemy air raids took place during the day, 19 March. There was much bombing and strafing of Highway 6 in the vicinity of Traffic Control Headquarters. Our .50 Cal. machine guns were fired at enemy planes that were within range during the day.

At the end of the day 19 March, the enemy held Hill 165 and our forces were still holding Hill 193.

Enemy artillery fire was active during the night.

Combat Command "B" called the S-1 to report that a telegram had been received stating that 1st Sgt Cole of Company "C" and 1st Sgt Heaves of Company "A" had been promoted to 2d Lieutenants.

During the morning of 20 March word was received that Hills 193, 435, and 242 were in hands of Allied troops.

The Battalion Commander, S-3, S-2, and Company Commanders spent most of the day at Traffic Control Headquarters directing fire at observed targets. The Battalion expended a total of 839 rounds of M. 2. and 50 rounds of smoke on these fires.

The Traffic Control Post #4 manned by 1st Lt. Brock and Traffic Control Post #10 manned by 1st Lt. Witten were subjected to heavy enemy artillery fire during the night. Throughout the night enemy artillery was very active.

In the early morning hours of 21 March, enemy artillery dropped large high velocity shells in the Battalion Command Post area and Reconnaissance

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Company area. One of the shells struck the building in which the Battalion CP was housed wounding three New Zealand Officers in an adjoining room. The Battalion Commander and Staff decided it best to move the command post and the Battalion Commander and S-3 reconsidered a new position. The new position selected was at 927206.

The Battalion Commander and S-2 left for Traffic Control Headquarters. There they were called to Headquarters, 5th New Zealand Armored Brigade where they conferred with the Commander, Brigadier Burrows. Brigadier Burrows asked Lt Colonel Ryland if it would be possible for the Battalion to lay fire safely within 200 yards of friendly troops. Lt Colonel Ryland, the Battalion Commander, stated that he could do so as the Battalion was registered on a building very near the spot on which fire was wanted.

A telephone line was laid from this Battalion to the New Zealand organization and plans were made to support with observed fire the following day.

During the early morning hours of 22 March enemy artillery was heavy in both the forward and rear areas. The visibility was very poor. Lt Gould, one of the Traffic Control Officers, called and stated that his Headquarters had been shelled. The house was knocked down over the cave entrance to his Command Post. It was necessary for him and his crew to dig out. Lt Gould was slightly wounded by falling debris. The Traffic Control Headquarters occupied by the Battalion Commander, S-2 and S-3 was again subjected to enemy artillery and enemy air raids several times during the day.

From 1100 to 1645 hours the Battalion Commander directed fire into the Continental Hotel in Cassino with great effect. Lt Colonel McGaffey, in a tank near the Continental Hotel, also helped adjust the fire. The Battalion's expenditure of ammunition on this mission was 200 rounds of H.E. and 25 rounds of smoke.

In the afternoon Combat Command "A" called to state that the Battalion was temporarily relieved of Traffic Control duties. No further information could be obtained.

The Executive Officer and S-2 attended a unit commanders meeting at Combat Command "B" at 1800 hours. The meeting was called to discuss the general conduct of military courtesy and discipline under the Command "B".

A snow storm covered the area during the forenoon of 23 March. Visibility was very poor.

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Company "C" was stalled out of their Command Post during the night. No casualties resulted. The S-3 called Combat Command "B" and told them about the shelling. Company "C" remained in its position although the Command Post was moved to the base out of the building formerly occupied.

At 1315 hours Combat Command "B" called the Battalion Commander and told him that he was to send four M-10's into Cassino to knock down some buildings and drive enemy tanks out. The Battalion Commander and S-3 discussed with General Allen the feasibility of this plan. The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Ryland, stated that it was against all principles of Tank Destroyer tactics to use M-10's in this manner. He did state however that from the Battalion's present positions he believed the job could be done. Lt Colonel Ryland was ordered to contact General Parkinson, New Zealand Division Commander, for instructions. General Parkinson ordered Lt Colonel Ryland to make arrangements with Brigadier Burrows of the 5th New Zealand Brigade for our M-10's to go into Cassino to perform this mission. Lt Colonel Ryland and the S-3 drove to the 5th New Zealand Brigade Headquarters and conferred with Brigadier Burrows. Combat Command "B" called later in the evening to tell us the plan had been discarded and that we were removed from alert status until 0800 hours, 27 March.

During the day, 24 March enemy artillery was active, harassing both forward and rear areas. No firing was done by the destroyer companies.

Our Liaison Officer reported from Combat Command "B" in the evening hours of 24 March that the Battalion would move back to the vicinity of Sanragliano. The Battalion Commander decided that it would be best to move to the vicinity of Piccilli in order to reorganize and get all elements of the Battalion together. Permission was given by Combat Command "B" to make this move. All Companies were alerted to the fact that they would move at daylight, 25 March.

Reconnaissance Company furnished personnel for AA crews from 20 March to 24 March inclusive. During this time 450 rounds of .50 Cal. ammunition was expended.

Movement began at daylight with Company "C" moving out first. "B", "A", Reconnaissance Company, and the Battalion Command Post moved in that order. The Battalion closed in at the Piccilli area at 1230 hours. At 1545 hours our Liaison Officer to Combat Command "B" reported in and stated that effective 1500, 25 March, we were detached from Combat Command "B" and would revert to control of our parent organization, the 36th Infantry Division.

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The 26th and 27th March were spent in making preparations for the Battalion's movement to an area in the vicinity of L. Gialoni. The Battalion Commander, Staff Officers, and the Company Commanders reconnoitered, and selected a suitable bivouac for the Battalion north-west of Laddaloni.

The first elements of the Battalion started their movement to the Laddaloni area at 0800 hours. The Battalion was closed in its bivouac area at 250776 at 1100 hours.

During the last three days of the month, the Battalion devoted its time to maintaining vehicles and the cleanliness of personal equipment. All personnel were sent through a shower and clothing exchange unit. The Special Service Officer arranged for certain recreational activities.

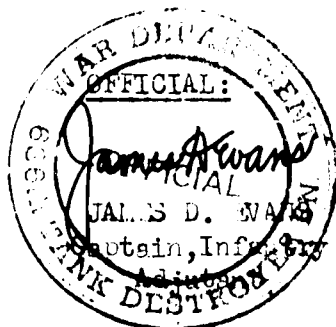
Map Reference: Italy 1:50,000.

Attached Annexes:

1. Copy of Unit Journal.
2. Overlays of Positions.
3. Personnel Casualties during period.
4. Material destroyed or damaged by enemy action.
5. Enemy casualties caused by 6th TD Bn during period.
6. Awards and Decorations.
7. Officers' Roster.

For the Battalion Commander:

James D. Evans
JAMES D. EVANS
Captain, Infantry
Unit Historian



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ANNEX NO. 3.

PERSONNEL BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT

	<u>OFFICERS</u>				<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>			
	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>CAPTURED</u>	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>CAPTURED</u>
16 Mar 44	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
18 Mar 44	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
22 Mar 44	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0

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ANNEX NO. 3

BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT

GRADE	ASN	DATE OF CASUALTY	TYPE OF CASUALTY	PLACE OF RESIDENCE
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HEADQUARTERS

Officers

GOULD, GLENN E.	1st Lt	0-1823729	22 Mar 44	L A	RD #1 Tunnel, N.Y.
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HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Enlisted Men

LARSON, VAUGHN J.	Pvt 1 cl	37146523	18 Mar 44	L A	13th Burleigh St. Wackton, S.D.
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COMPANY "C"

Enlisted Men

BOYD, JAMES T.	Sgt	38060607	16 Mar 44	L A	1134 N. Main St. Laredo, Texas
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ANNEX NO. 4

MATERIAL DESTROYED OR DAMAGED BY ENEMY ACTION

<u>Items</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
1 Carriage, Motor 3" gun M10	16 March 44	Replaced
1 Hood, Car, half track M-2	16 March 44	Replaced

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ANNEX NO. 5

ENEMY CASUALTY REPORT

1. Total expenditure of 3" ammunition during the period was 4880 rounds of HE, 135 rounds of 3" smoke and 61 rounds of A.P.C.

2. Estimated enemy personnel killed: Due to the nature of operations of this unit during this period, no accurate estimate of enemy killed can be made.

3. Enemy materiel destroyed: During this period this organization destroyed 21 enemy occupied houses, 1 SF Gun, and silenced 1 artillery battery, and nine nebelwerfer positions.

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ANNEX NO. 5

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ANNEX NO. 6

DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

For the period from 1 September 1943 to 31 March 1944, the following named members of this organization have been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>RANK OR GRADE</u>	<u>COMP ANY</u>
PEARSON, ALEC P.	0-394225	Capt	Co "A"
GOULD, GLENN E.	0-1823729	1st Lt	Hq Co
BOYSA, ALPHONSE J.	0-1301601	2nd Lt	Co "C"
COLE, WILLIAM H.	0-1703021	2nd Lt	Co "C"
DODSON, ROBERT L.	0-2055900	2nd Lt	Co "B"
MURPHY, RAYMOND G.	20802898	Stf Sgt	Co "C"
SPARKS, OSCAR G.	38035783	Stf Sgt	Co "B"
PATTERSON, ROBERT E.	38038542	Sgt	Co "C"
YOST, EDWIN A.	37146627	Sgt	Co "C"
BENTLEY, HESTER L.	34333328	Cpl	Co "C"
COWAN, JOHN L.	20817342	Cpl	Co "B"
JORDAN, JOSEPH H.	37163668	Cpl	Co "C"
LORANCE, CHARLES G.	20814658	Cpl	Co "C"
O'BRYAN, JOSEPH R.	35484581	Cpl	Co "C"
STERNER, KEMPS E.	13031240	Cpl	Co "C"
WELLBORN, JACK T.	38035985	Cpl	Co "C"
STEDMAN, G. D. (I.O.)	38177868	Tec 5	Co "C"
WARD, ROBERT C.	38039044	Tec 5	Co "C"
SMITH, ROY C.	37419335	Pvt 1 cl	Co "C"
STOKES, CLAUDE H.	38463151	Pvt 1 cl	Co "C"
STOKES, CLYDE T.	38463140	Pvt 1 cl	Co "C"
ANDERSON, ALBERT B.	32767048	Pvt	Co "B"
JOHNSON, ALVIN B. Q.	20805648	Pvt	Co "C"
SCOTT, CHESTER (NMN)	39324290	Pvt	Co "C"

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ANNEX NO. 7

ROSTER OF OFFICERS

<u>Hq and Hq Company</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ARM OR SERVICE</u>	<u>DUTY</u>
PYLAND, VAN W.	0-236089	Lt Col	Inf	Bn Comdr
DUBOSE, REAGAN L.	0-348064	Major	Inf	Bn Ex O
CAMERON, OLIN W.	0-407591	Capt	Inf	Hq Co CO
DANZI, RICHARD A.	0-1822375	Capt	FA	S-3
EVANS, JAMES D.	0-1294639	Capt	Inf	S-1
FERGUSON, JAMES R.	0-418363	Capt	FA	S-4
KINNISON, PAUL (NMN)	0-344051	Capt	Inf	S-2
BROWN, STANLEY G.	0-1289038	1st Lt	Inf	Hq Co Ex O
GOULD, GLENN E.	0-1823729	1st Lt	FA	Ln O
HAUCK, HENRY G.	0-1822567	1st Lt	FA	Com O
STOFFEL, ROBERT L.	0-1168483	1st Lt	FA	Trans O
VEEVERS, FREDERICK O.	0-1171809	1st Lt	FA	Ln O
WHITE, ROY D.	0-403563	1st Lt	Inf	Ln O
WITTEN, GEORGE R.	0-1824263	1st Lt	FA	Motor O
TUCKER, JESSE F.	W-2131525	WOJG		Pers O
<u>Medical Detachment</u>				
BERKSON, ROBERT S.	0-494240	Capt	MC	Bn Surgeon
BURKHART, JEAN M.	0-380858	Capt	MC	Ass't Bn Surgeon
<u>Reconnaissance Company</u>				
DOWNES, GEORGE W.	0-1288024	Capt	Inf	CO
BARRY, JOHN J.	0-1822942	1st Lt	FA	Pioneer O
CONNELLY, HERMAN (NMN)	0-1822964	1st Lt	FA	Flat Comdr
MC KEE, PAUL R.	0-1823909	1st Lt	FA	Flat Comdr
RODGERS, REYNOLDS D.	0-1288125	1st Lt	Inf	Ex O
WALTER, WILLIAM F.	0-1824256	1st Lt	FA	Flat Comdr
<u>Company "A"</u>				
PEARSON, ALEC P.	0-394225	Capt	Inf	CO
DAVIS, MORIS B.	0-1822376	1st Lt	Inf	Flat Comdr
GOLDMAN, BERT M.	0-1168247	1st Lt	FA	Flat Comdr
GRAHAM, ROBERT E.	0-1168254	1st Lt	FA	Ex O
LONG, JAMES W.	0-1823173	2nd Lt	FA	Flat Comdr
REEVES, WILLIAM M.	0-1703022	2nd Lt	FA	Flat Comdr

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Company "B"

BROWN, HENRY P.	0-1168187	Capt	FA	CO
GROOM, KENNETH G.	0-1824174	1st Lt	FA	Plat Comdr
METZNER, ELMER J.	0-1168376	1st Lt	FA	Ex O
RECTOR, ELMO W.	0-1307167	1st Lt	Inf	Plat Comdr
DODSON, ROBERT L.	0-2055900	2nd Lt	FA	Plat Comdr
WRIGHT, WILLIAM E.	0-1703006	2nd Lt	FA	Plat Comdr

Company "C"

BRUECKNER, MORITZ F.	0-1168190	1st Lt	FA	CO
DRI SCOLL, EUGENE J.	0-1175104	1st Lt	FA	Plat Comdr
GERRINGER, LINLEY W.	0-1168246	1st Lt	FA	Plat Comdr
ZIEGLER, MAURICE S.	0-1168535	1st Lt	FA	Ex O
BOYSA, ALPHONSE J.	0-1301601	2nd Lt	Inf	Plat Comdr
COLE, WILLIAM H.	0-1703021	2nd Lt	FA	Plat Comdr
GROMMET, GEORGE P.	0-462575	2nd Lt	FA	Plat Comdr

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