

**DOWNGRADED TO:
RESTRICTED**

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG H.S.

HEADQUARTERS 636th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander

APO 464, U. S. Army
7 March 1944

3 Dec 45

Date

H.S.

Initials

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.

TO : Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO 464, U. S. Army.

1. Pursuant to instructions contained in Letter, Allied Force Headquarters, dated 20 April 1943, File AG 314.7/389 C-2, Subject: Historical Records and Histories of Organizations, transmitted herewith Operations in Italy, February 1944 of this Battalion.

2. Conclusions:

a. Subject: The Dual Mission of the Tank Destroyer.

The primary mission of the tank destroyer is apparent by its name, that is defense against enemy armor. In carrying out this primary mission even in an offensive situation, the tank destroyer seeks by the exploitation of terrain and cover to maintain an advantage over its heavier armored enemy, the tank. Speed in the occupation of positions, fields of fire covering probable avenues of approach, concealed and dug in positions have become the tried and accepted tactics of successful "tank killers".

Now an entirely new field for the tank destroyer has been tried and proven in the campaign in Italy. That is its secondary role as artillery. In that this role is played by the tank destroyer a much greater percentage of its time in this theater, it is well to consider the characteristics of the weapon and how it can be made to fit both its primary and secondary missions.

The greatest danger of the tank destroyer's employment as artillery is that it will not be positioned and ready in the path of the enemy armored attack. This is absolutely essential and rightly recognized as tank destroyer tactics. Not to place the tank destroyer in this direct fire position prematurely is to expose it to unnecessary casualties from enemy fire and to sacrifice its tremendous fire power in its secondary role as artillery.

Now to how the dual mission can be accomplished successfully. The flat trajectory, high velocity 3" gun on the M18 mount must be posi-

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tioned behind very little mask so that the minimum elevation will enable it to fire at close-in targets. The usual artillery piece will occupy a position behind a mask from which a destroyer can only be fired at its maximum ranges. This means that positions suitable for artillery are not usually suitable for the tank destroyer.

On the other hand the destroyer's primary mission demands that it be further forward near good routes and close to its previously selected direct fire anti-tank positions. So it is believed that if careful consideration is given the tank destroyer in the selection of its indirect firing position, that it can perform its secondary role without danger to the successful accomplishment of its primary one. These are the fundamental rules:

- (1) That the indirect position be well forward and as near the probable avenue of approach of enemy armor as the terrain permits.
- (2) That this position afford at least flash defilade or concealment, but a very low mask in order to exploit the close as well as maximum ranges of the gun.
- (3) That good routes lead from the indirect position to the direct position.
- (4) That the ammunition requirements of the direct and primary mission be constantly in mind.
- (5) That the capabilities of the 3 inch gun fired indirectly by forward observer methods, at fairly close ranges, using delayed fuse, at enemy pill boxes, bunkers, and stone houses be thoroughly understood.

If these rules are known and practiced the tank destroyer can accomplish its dual mission and completely justify its existence and its extremely high cost to our government.

In rule (5) above the registering of one gun of each platoon of the battalion on a common base point and closing the sheafs, enables the battalion commander to fire one gun or mass the fires of thirty-six in a very small area with terrific effect.

Van W. Pyland
VAN W. PYLAND
Lt Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

1 Incl:
Narrative of Operations for the month
of February 1944, with attached annexes

[REDACTED]

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

3 March 1944

OPERATIONS IN ITALY, FEBRUARY 1944

As the month of January 1944 closed the Battalion was in indirect fire positions situated at strategic points on the 36th Division front along the Rapido River, from which artillery missions could be fired and also the primary mission of protecting the Division against an armored thrust, could be performed. Our forces were temporarily on the defense in this sector and consequently the Battalion Commander was utilizing the Battalion to destroy pill boxes and enemy strong points opposite the Division sector by observed indirect fire.

Numerous observation posts, as near the enemy lines as possible, had been established, some of them being coordinated with the front line infantry battalion observation posts in order that the battalion might take advantage of information gained by the infantry patrols.

On the 1st February the Battalion continued its indirect fire on observed enemy targets across the Rapido. The Division Artillery reported that enemy truck vehicles had been observed on the road between Fignatara and Cassino. Harassing fire was promptly placed on this road.

Fire was also coordinated with observers of the 143d Infantry and known enemy strong points opposite that sector were fired on. One of our forward observers located an enemy machinegun and Companies "B" and "C" placed concentrations on these positions.

A plan to support the Division in a river crossing operation, the execution of which depended on the success of the operations in the 34th Division sector had been prepared. At 1635 hours the Division G-3 notified the Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Ryland, that the plan would not be put into effect that night.

During the day the Battalion completely destroyed four houses known to be occupied by enemy, silenced several machine guns, mortars and submachineguns, and fired a number of harassing missions.

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Due to the appearance of the general situation, the Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, felt that any movement forward would be on Highway 6 before entering the Cassino area. So on 2 February he ordered the Company Commander, Reconnaissance Company, to cause the roads north of Highway 6 toward Cassino and Cairo to be reconnoitered. Captain Rodenshiller, the 1-2, also checked Company positions for camouflage discipline, as visibility was excellent.

During the morning, the Battalion fired on a number of machine guns, mortars, and nebelwerfers, some of which were reported by our observers, and some by Division Artillery and forward infantry elements. The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, called Division Artillery late in the day and requested the assistance of an air observer to register the Battalion on points beyond the visibility of our ground observers. Arrangements were made for this work and Division Artillery promised to notify the Battalion when a plane would be available. At 1345 hours Division Artillery called and notified us an observation plane would be available and we promptly alerted Company "A" to be prepared to fire concentrations on enemy tanks that were moving along the road between Pignataro and Cassino.

The observation plane adjusted fire and reported two fires started in the target area. Upon the completion of the first mission the air observer assisted the Battalion in registering on Pignataro and later on an enemy artillery battery. That concluded the missions fired by the observation plane and the Battalion continued to fire with the use of ground observers, placing counterbattery fire on enemy gun positions and harassing fire on other targets assigned by Division Artillery.

At 1642 hours the Company Commander, Reconnaissance Company, returned to the Battalion Command Post and gave Captain Austin, The Battalion Executive Officer, a report of road conditions north of Highway 6, and pointed out on the map several likely observation post positions.

At 2130 hours the Division Commander called Lt Colonel Pyland, the Battalion Commander, and told him that the Battalion would probably be attached to Combat Command "B" of the 1st Armored Division, if the 34th Division effected an immediate break through on the Cassino line.

On the morning of 3 February 1944 at 0150 hours the Division Artillery Commander notified the Battalion Commander that the Battalion should be prepared to move on two hour notice anytime after daylight. All Company Commanders were notified and told to be prepared for a sudden movement order. At 0925 hours the Company "C" forward observer located an enemy vehicle and Company "C" placed fire on it. The Company "C" observer reported the vehicle destroyed by a direct hit. Throughout the morning the Battalion placed concentrations on a number of houses known to be occupied by the enemy and other installations identified by the defense overprint supplied by the Division G-2. The Battalion observation post was shelled by enemy mortars at 1235 hours.

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During the afternoon the Battalion continued to fire on targets located by our observers and those reported by Division Artillery and other units. At 2037 hours the Division G-2 called and reported that 30 enemy tanks had been located in a 1000 yard square the center being at 795203. Companies "B" and "C" were promptly alerted to fire this mission, and during the next 50 minutes, 1,200 rounds were placed on the thousand yard square. The 34th Division was notified that the firing had been completed.


At 0200 hours on 4 February, our Liaison Officer to Division Headquarters brought the Division Field Order No. 45 which contained details of the plan to exploit the bridgehead which the 34th Division was to establish. The Battalion Commander conferred with the Staff to make plans for complying with the Division order.

The Battalion Commander ordered the Destroyer Companies to continue placing fire on all targets that could be picked up by our observers and on such targets that were reported by Division Artillery and the infantry observers. During the day several enemy nebelwerfers were located and concentrations placed on them. Company "B" forward observer reported that a large column of smoke appeared after Company "A" had fired on one nebelwerfer position. Company "B" completely destroyed a house in which enemy had been observed and later placed fire at a point where enemy vehicle motors had been heard. An enemy tank was located at 855197 and Company "B" fired on it. Smoke came from the turret after the concentration was completed.

At 1812 hours our Liaison Officer to the 143d Infantry called and reported that British troops were to replace the 143d Infantry in that sector.

The general situation was such that the Battalion Commander felt sure a movement of the Battalion to positions near Cervaro was eminent, so on the morning of 5 February he took the S-1 forward on a reconnaissance of that area to select a command post site and check for positions for the Destroyer Companies. The area both sides of Cervaro was carefully studied especially the slope of the hill north and west of Cervaro, which faced Cassino and the Monastery Hill. A suitable house for the Command Post was selected and a guard placed in it. A short distance below the house positions were found for two companies and just above the house another company position was located.

While the reconnaissance was being made the Battalion continued firing on targets which appeared across the Rapido. Enemy artillery fire was particularly heavy throughout the day. Telephone lines were destroyed and it was necessary to keep the line crews on them constantly.



[REDACTED]

Upon returning to the Battalion Command Post, the Battalion Commander found that the 36th Division had ordered the Battalion moved to the Cervaro area so he ordered the S-1 to take the Executive Officer and S-3 to the points selected by him earlier in the day. The Battalion Commander then ordered the Company Commanders to meet him and he carried them to the sites selected for their companies. The S-4 accompanied the Battalion Commander to the new area also.

After the reconnaissance by the Company Commanders and Staff was completed, plans were made to move the Battalion on the following day. The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, ordered the Command Post to be moved by infiltration and directed that the S-4 obtain clearance for the rest of the Battalion.

On the morning 6 February advance elements of the Battalion began movement to the new Battalion area northwest of Cervaro. By 1145 the forward echelon of the Battalion Command Post was established at 918209 and vehicles had been camouflaged. All personnel began digging in well under orders of the Battalion Commander since enemy artillery fire was expected in that forward area.

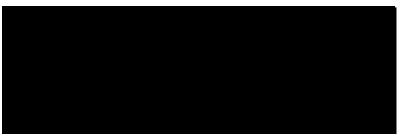
In the meantime word had been received that no daylight movement was permitted and it was necessary for the Battalion Commander to rescind orders to move the Destroyer Companies during the day. He issued orders for the movement to begin at 1730 hours.

Since a night move was anticipated it was necessary to check the route the Destroyer Companies were to take so the S-2 went back over the route that had been selected. At 1500 hours our Liaison Officer to Division arrived with information that clearance had been obtained for a movement during the daylight hours, but it was impossible to get instructions to the Destroyer Companies in time to speed their movement therefor the Battalion Commander ordered the march to continue according to the last plan.

Movement into the new area was personally supervised by the Battalion Commander, S-1, S-2, S-3, and the S-4, and all positions were carefully selected and camouflaged. All companies had closed into their areas by 2400 hours.

On 7 February the Battalion Commander and S-3 inspected the positions occupied by the Destroyer Companies the previous night and the Battalion Commander located an observation post near the Company "B" position. Wire communications were established to all Companies and the new Battalion observation post, and the Destroyer Companies were registered on a base point by the Battalion Commander.

[REDACTED]



The Executive Officer obtained permission from Division Headquarters to move Reconnaissance Company into an area in the vicinity of 929203 and that Company had closed into that area by 1420 hours that afternoon.

The S-1 and S-4 made a reconnaissance of the area around S. Vittore, to select areas into which the Personnel Section and Service Trains could be moved. Sites were selected and plans made to move these installations the following day.

The Destroyer Companies fired on several observed targets on 8 February, reporting one house demolished in which enemy machine guns had been active, and two enemy machine guns silenced at another position. Harassing artillery fire fell in several of the areas during the day.


The Battalion Commander attended a conference at Division Headquarters during the afternoon and ordered the Company Commanders to report to the Battalion Command Post for a meeting. At the meeting the Battalion Commander oriented the Company Commanders and Staff on the situation and plan for establishing the Cassino bridgehead. The Battalion was to support the operation by fire from its present positions and move across the river with the armor when the bridgehead had been established.


The Personnel Section and the Service Trains were moved to S. Vittore area during the day.

Throughout the 9th February the Battalion fired observed fires on targets in the Cassino area and further out in the Liri Valley. The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, directed the fire from the Battalion observation post. Major General Walker, with his aide, visited the Battalion Commander at the Battalion observation post during the afternoon and observed the firing. Four houses occupied by the enemy were demolished and several concentrations were placed on two Nebelwerfer positions, silencing them. Two enemy vehicles, identified as tanks, and one ammunition truck were destroyed later in the day.

The morning of 10 February the Battalion Commander requested permission to fire on enemy installations just south of Cassino and it was known that our troops had not reached that point. Permission was granted and observed fire was placed along Highway 6 south of Cassino, and in the area between Highway 6 and the railroad. The 36th Division S-2 called and gave location of several enemy installations on which fire could be placed.

The Company Commander, Reconnaissance Company, reported that the Company area was under constant artillery fire the previous night. There was a





considerable amount of artillery fire around the Battalion Command Post during the day also. Artillery fire could be observed falling in the Company "C" area and at 1405 one of the shells struck an ammunition trailer, setting the ammunition on fire. Another shell made a direct hit on the Company "C" command post but failed to explode. One man was lightly wounded in the Company "C" area during the shelling.

The visibility was very poor throughout the day and it was very difficult to observe the effect of any fire. Several targets were fired on but results could not be clearly stated.

The Battalion was notified by the Division Artillery Commander that the attack which had been planned was to be launched at 1100 hours, and shortly after receiving this information the Artillery Annex to Division Field Order #47 arrived and from it our preparatory fires were planned.

The Battalion Commander ordered the Company Commanders to report to the Battalion Command Post for orders.

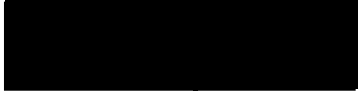
Later in the morning the information we had received indicated that the Battalion would be attached to Combat Command "B" for a future operation was confirmed and Lt Vevers was appointed our Liaison Officer to that organization.

The Battalion Commander conferred with the Staff on the plans for supporting the attack which was to take place at 1100 hours, and when the Company Commanders arrived the Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, gave the orders for laying down preparatory fires and also ordered that the observation posts be manned to select targets of opportunity as the attack progressed.

At 1000 hours the Battalion began a one hour preparatory fire on the missions assigned by Division Artillery and when this was completed targets were selected from the observation posts and engaged as they appeared. The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Pyland, located some enemy vehicles moving toward Cassino and reported them to Division G-2. At 1400 hours the Battalion Commander located a number of vehicles moving toward Pontecorvo, and when it was found that our guns did not have sufficient range to engage them, contact was made with Corps Artillery and a battery of 155 mm guns was placed on this target, our observation post adjusting them.

The 36th Division G-2 called and requested the coordinates of the enemy vehicles which had been located.

At 1623 hours the Battalion Commander located some enemy personnel in a house near the south edge of Cassino and a gun appeared to be firing from the house. The Division granted permission to fire in this area as the attack had not succeeded in progressing that far. The house was fired on and destroyed.



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During the day the Battalion destroyed six houses around which enemy action had been noted, and at 2100 hours harassing fire was laid on areas in which activity had been noted. Several enemy artillery concentrations were placed in the Battalion area during the day and night 11 - 12 February.

Shortly after 0600, 12 February, enemy artillery fire began falling near the Battalion Command Post and between 0630 and 0645 a concentrated shelling was placed directly on the Command Post area. One shell made a direct hit on the house in which the command post was located, killing the S-3, Captain John S. Bodemiller, and the Chaplain, 1st Lt Arvil Teem, and wounding Captain Paul Kimmison, S-2, and Captain Olin W. Cameron, Headquarters Company Commandant. Another shell hit the side of the Command Post truck damaging it by shell fragments while other shells riddled the tarps and shelter tents covering the foxholes of the enlisted men of the Command Post personnel.

Later in the morning the area was repeatedly shelled and the Battalion Commander directed that the Command Post be moved to another location since it was obvious that observed fire was being placed on it.

A new site was selected and at 1100 hours the movement began. By 1500 hours the Command Post group had closed into the new area at 928208. At 2230 hours information was received that the water point that the Battalion had been using had been destroyed by shell fire and two enlisted men, Earl W. Stevens and Joseph O. Phillips had been wounded at that point. The enemy artillery fire was heavier during the night 12 - 13 February.

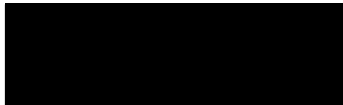
On the morning of 13 February, Company "C" sent out a patrol to attempt to locate an enemy gun which had been reported by an Italian civilian to be firing from an area behind our lines, being manned by Germans in Italian uniforms. The Company Commander of Company "C" reported, when the patrol had returned, that no gun could be located in that area and the report was evidently erroneous.

Our observation post gave the probable coordinates of a 170 mm gun and the Executive Officer passed the information on to Division Artillery and the II Corps counter-battery officer.

The Battalion Commander, Lt Colonel Ryland, attended a conference at the command post of Combat Command "B" and upon returning held a meeting of the Staff to discuss plans for employing the Battalion in the coming operation.

Several observed missions were fired by the Destroyer Companies during the day and one enemy vehicle was destroyed. Enemy artillery fire was light during this period.

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The Battalion Commander and S-2 left for the forward observation post in the early forenoon of 14 February to direct fire. At 0805, 36th Division called and stated that there would be a truce, requested by the enemy, to pick up dead and wounded. This truce was to exist between the hours of 0800 and 1100 hours. The truce was extended later in the morning to include the time up to 1430 hours.

A representative from the 2d Bn, 13th Armored Regt visited the Command Post in the afternoon to discuss with the Battalion Commander coordination of the 13th Armored Regt and this Battalion in the planned armored thrust across the Rapido River.

Visibility during the day was generally poor.


During the forenoon of 15 February, the Battalion Commanders of the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 13th Armored Regiment visited the Battalion Command Post to discuss with the Battalion Commander plans for the coming armored thrust into the Liri Valley. A Company Commanders meeting was held to orient the companies on the present situation. The possibility of the Battalion moving to a rear area was also discussed.

The Benedictine Abbey was bombed by American planes during the early forenoon. Company "B" also fired several concentrations into the Abbey. Shortly after noon several severe enemy artillery concentrations were laid in the Battalion Command Post area and the area occupied by Company "C".

In the early afternoon our Liaison Officer to 36th Division reported with news that the Battalion would be detached from the 36th Division effective 2400 hours, 15 February 1944, and that we would be moved to the vicinity of Mignano upon Corps order.

The Battalion Commander directed the Executive Officer and S-2 to reconnoiter for a Battalion bivouac area in the vicinity of Mignano. After selecting an area the Executive Officer and S-2 visited Combat Command "B" command post to check on the situation. The Commanding General, First Armored Division, informed the Executive Officer that the 68th Tank Destroyer Battalion would maintain its present position on the slopes of Hill 552 to join Combat Command "B" in an armored thrust up the Liri Valley.

During the afternoon our Liaison Officer to Combat Command "B" reported with the information concerning reports that we were to submit to that command.



[REDACTED]

During the night, 15 - 16 February, enemy artillery was very active, with a few shells falling in the Battalion Command Post area.

On 16 February the Battalion Commander conferred with the Commanding General of the First Armored Division regarding our part in the Combat Command "B" operation. Company "A", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion to be attached to the 2d Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment; Company "B", to be attached to the 3d Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment; with Company "C" to be held in reserve. Reconnaissance Company to be used as security and to maintain contact between the flanks. Headquarters Company would establish traffic control posts at pertinent road junctions and river crossings to maintain the proper flow of vehicles during the crossing of the Rapido River. Overlays were made by this Battalion and traffic control posts assigned to officers of Headquarters Company and Battalion Staff. The Battalion Commander was designated to be in charge of all traffic movement.

Visibility was generally poor during the day, however our Battalion observation post reported observing an enemy nebelwerfer firing from 830165. Corps Artillery placed concentrations on the installation, silencing it. The observation post also reported approximately 45 enemy vehicles sighted in the vicinity of 6816 and 6916.

Most of the day was spent in making plans for the armored thrust across the Rapido and up the Liri Valley.

In the early morning hours of 17 February enemy artillery was very active. Heavy concentrations were placed on friendly positions.

The Battalion Commander and Staff started planning and reconnoitering for positions that could be used as traffic control sites for maintaining the control of traffic of the planned armored thrust across the Rapido. At each traffic control post an officer with a 610 radio set would be placed to maintain communication with the Battalion central post. Traffic control posts with 610 radio sets were established at 932142, 905175, 902181, 872205, 869196, 854200 and at each proposed bridge site. This Battalion made an overlay and plan of traffic control which was submitted to Combat Command "B" by our Liaison Officer. They reproduced this same control plan and returned it to this Battalion. Copies were distributed to officers manning the traffic control posts.

The Battalion Commander held a company commanders meeting to give them the situation. They were told this Battalion would take over the traffic control mission after 0600, 18 February. A message was received by the Battalion Commander from Combat Command "B" at 1746 hours telling us to be prepared to move on two hours notice.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

On 18 February this Battalion remained on an alert status to move on instruction from Combat Command "B". At 0745 hours the 3-3, Combat Command "B", notified the Battalion Commander that two bridges had been constructed at 865199 and 967198. Demolition squads and self dozers had crossed the river and the area was being cleared of mines. The railroad was clear to 862201. No armor had crossed as yet but it was expected that as soon as the mines had been cleared, it would be sent across. Troops crossing the river ran into enemy small arms fire.

The Battalion Commander notified Combat Command "B" that traffic control headquarters would be at 907198.

A bitter struggle took place in the afternoon on the area in which the bridges had been constructed. Friendly troops laid smoke screens to attack behind and visibility in the valley was poor.

The Battalion observer most located twelve gun positions dug in on the slope and crest of Monte Cassino just below the Abbey. Friendly artillery was placing concentrations on these installations.

In the afternoon the Battalion Commander accompanied by his Staff and Company Commanders attended a conference at Combat Command "B" Headquarters to plan for the armored thrust across the Rapido. The Battalion Commander requested that Combat Command "B" place T-2 recovery vehicles at designated points on Highway 6 and near the bridges on the river.

In the late evening the 3-3 of Combat Command "B" called and stated that the Battalion would be on one hour alert status effective 1000 hours 19 February 1944.

The Battalion remained on a one hour alert status on 19 February awaiting instructions from Combat Command "B". At 1035 hours, Combat Command "B" called the Battalion Commander and stated that the Battalion would again revert to a two hour alert status.

In the early afternoon our Company "C" observer called and reported to the Battalion Commander that he had located the enemy artillery battery that was laying artillery concentrations on the bridge recently laid across the Rapido River. The Company "C" observer directed fire for the 937th BA Battalion of II Corps Artillery. The enemy battery was located at 842182. Good results were quickly obtained for soon after concentration was laid in this area, a great deal of movement was observed and the enemy set off colored smoke signals and rockets. It was believed several enemy camouflage vehicles were destroyed.

[REDACTED]

At 1445 hours the Combat Command "B" called the Battalion Commander and informed him that this Battalion had been temporarily taken off the alert. Plans were made to move the Battalion less Company "C" to the vicinity of Mignano for the purpose of maintaining vehicles.

The Executive Officer left in the early morning hours of 20 February to attend a conference at Combat Command "B" and to select a bivouac area for the Battalion less Company "C" to move to. At 1021 hours the Executive Officer called the Battalion Commander and informed him that a location had been secured in which to move the Battalion Command Post. At 1200 hours the Battalion Commander left for the new bivouac area after giving the march order. The Battalion closed into the new bivouac area at 0911 at 1800 hours. Company "C" remained at its present position.

Reconnaissance Company and Destroyer Companies "A" and "B" spent the period from 21 - 24 February in a rear area south of Mignano doing maintenance and clean-up work on destroyers and general purpose vehicles, awaiting orders from Combat Command "B" to take forward positions that would enable them to join the armored thrust through the Liri Valley.

Company "C" remained in its forward positions until Combat Command called and requested that the Battalion Commander reconnoiter for direct fire positions for Company "C" to occupy. The Battalion Commander, Executive Officer, and the Company Commander of Company "C" reconnoitered and selected positions at 090210. Company "C" closed into its new positions 231845 February 1944.

On the afternoon of 23 February, Companies "A" and "B" alerted its destroyers for a move forward, but as the attack was postponed the destroyers remained in the rear area.

During the afternoon of 24 February it was uncertain as to whether the attack would come off during the next twenty-four period. The Battalion Commander directed that the destroyers of Companies "A" and "B" move forward and be in readiness in case the attack did jump off.

Combat Command "B" called the Command Post at 241900 February and informed the Battalion Commander that the attack had been postponed until after the 26 February 1944.

During this period the weather was very poor, with heavy rains, cloudy skies and visibility generally poor.

Throughout the last three days of the month, the Destroyer Companies remained in forward positions awaiting the attack order. Due to the inclement

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To date the officers and enlisted men of this Battalion have been awarded twenty-four Silver Stars and seventy-four Purple Hearts. One Oak Leaf Cluster has also been awarded.

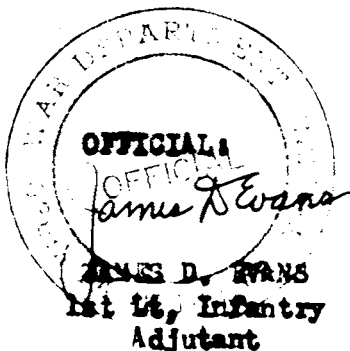
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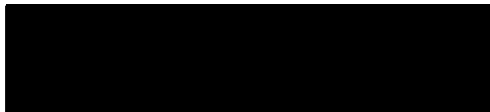
Attached Annexes :

1. Copy of Unit Journal
2. Overlays of Positions
3. Personnel Casualties during period
4. Materiel destroyed or damaged by enemy action
5. Enemy Casualties caused by 636th TD Bn during period

For the Battalion Commander:

James D. Evans
JAMES D. EVANS
1st Lt, Infantry
Unit Historian





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>
3 Feb 44	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
5 Feb 44	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
12 Feb 44	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	0

ANNEX NO. 3



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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1037.

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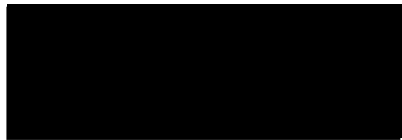
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ANNEX NO. 4

MATERIAL DESTROYED OR DAMAGED
BY MINE ACTION

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>
1 - Trailer, armored, M-8	11 February 1944	Replaced
100 rounds - 3" ammunition	11 February 1944	Replaced
1 - Gasoline, cal. 30, M-1	19 February 1944	Replaced
1 - Truck, 1½ Ton, 6 x 6	25 February 1944	Replaced


ANNEX NO. 4

17



ANNEX NO. 5

ENEMY CASUALTY REPORT

1. Total expenditure of 3" ammunition during the period was 11,800 rounds of H.E., 182 rounds of 3" smoke, and 2 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 material destroyed: During this period this organisation destroyed 14 enemy occupied houses, 2 enemy S.P. vehicles, 3 enemy trucks, and 3 enemy tanks.



ANNEX NO. 5

12

HEADQUARTERS 424th TANK BATTALION, AIRBORNE
Office of the Battalion Commander

RESTRICTED

A.O. 464, U. S. Army
7 April 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.

TO : Commanding General, Fifth Army, A.O. 464, U. S. Army.

1. Pursuant to instructions contained in Letter, Allied Force Headquarters, dated 20 April 1944, file AG 214.7/389 C-11, Subject: Historical Records and Histories of Organizations, transmitted herewith Operations in Italy, March 1944 of this Battalion.

2. Conclusions:

One M-10 tank destroyer of this unit was damaged by a bomb from a friendly bomber during the bombing of Cassino by our Air Force. Only one casualty resulted from this direct hit due to the habit of the destroyer crews digging elaborate foxholes and dugouts near their destroyer in which they live when not actually firing on the enemy. This enables them to take cover during bombing attacks by high level planes. If the planes are watched there is time to take cover when the bomb racks are seen to open and spill their bombs. Friendly ground troops should not be too close to enemy targets when a friendly high level bombing mission is to be accomplished.

Van W. Pyland
VAN W. PYLAND

Lt Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

1 Incl:

Narrative of Operations for the month of March 1944, with attached annexes.

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