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Report date: August 1944 – April 1945

Title: After Action Report, Headquarters Combat Command “B” (CCB) Report of the United States Army 5th (Fifth) Armored Division

Abstract: U.S. Army 5th (Fifth) Armored Division Combat Command “B” Report. These are reports of action against the enemy from August 1944 to April 1945 in the European Theater of Operations to include narratives and journals.

Number of pages: 29 (some pages from the original document are not legible)

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Document#: 805 AD 404

Classification: Unclassified; Approved for public release

AAR# 487

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

5TH ARMORED DIVISION

~~83425~~

AUGUST 44 thru APRIL 45

Classification cancelled or changed to
by authority of *DoD DIR 5200.9*, by
on 19.....

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JOHN L. GRANT

Captain, Armor
Ch. Secty & Doc Branch

9 JUN 1959

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* S E C R E T
* TH: CO CCB 5 AD
* DATE: 9 Oct 44
* INIT: JIC

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U.S. Army

9 October 1944

Subject: After Action Report, Month of August 1944.

OPJ
ETO

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

1. In compliance with par. 10 (C3) AR 345-105, the following After Action report is submitted:

a. In general Combat Command operated in Divisional Formation "Red" consisting of 81st Tank Bn., 15th Armd. Inf. Bn., 71st Armd. F.A. Bn., Co. B 22nd Armd. Engr. Bn., Co. B 75th Armd. Med. Bn., and Co B 127th Ord. Bn. Additional attachments were made available or attachments were withdrawn as situation demanded.

b. Operation of Tank and Infantry units were closely coordinated, Tank and Infantry Companies, Platoons, and Sections being "married" almost permanently, being separated only for specific missions.

c. Tank and Infantry teams were generally divided in two forces.

(1) Force A commanded by Commanding Officer, 81st Tank Bn. consisted of two (2) "married" companies of tanks and infantry, supported by weapons of Hq. Co. 81st Tank Bn.

(2) Force D commanded by Commanding Officer, 15th Armd. Inf. Bn. consisted of one (1) married tank and infantry company supported by Hq. Co. weapons of Armored Infantry.

(3) Light tanks were employed on special missions, as reserve, and supported by Engineers.

(4) Appropriate attachments of Engineers, Light Tanks, etc. were made to the two forces in accordance with their mission.

2. During entire period Combat Command operated on a pursuit, blocking mission. Pursuit was ordered and carried out to the limit of endurance of vehicles and men.

3. Methods of Pursuit:

a. Operated on at least two routes wherever road not permitted.

b. By choosing secondary roads with main forces, prepared delaying and defensive positions were avoided and outflanked. The Germans invariably pulled out when outflanked.

c. Speed was emphasized and calculated risks were the rule. Had the enemy been less thoroughly defeated and disorganized, the operation might well have failed due to headlong advance without adequate information of terrain and enemy dispositions.

4. Reconnaissance.

a. Generally divisional reconnaissance was lacking or sent out on such short notice that it was soon overrun by advancing columns.

(1) There were two reasons for this:

(a) Changes in mission were so sudden and time so urgent that reconnaissance was an impossibility.

(b) Higher echelons of command were forced to utilize available reconnaissance units for other missions.

The only lesson to be learned or considered is the ever present plea that higher echelons of command assign missions as early as possible to allow subordinate units planning and reconnaissance time.

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5 AD, APO #255, U.S. Army, 9 Oct. 44
Subj: After Action Report, August 1944
To: Adjutant General, Wash. DC (Continued)

5. Night Operation.

During a great part of this operation, units operated day and night. The situation and orders required this. Minor resistance was overrun with ease. Major resistance brought on night attacks which were not fruitful and took more out of the units concerned than was gained by fighting blind.

It is recommended that even in pursuit, orders do not require night marches or night attacks over ground and defenses encountered in hours of darkness. Leaders and men get lost as they have never seen the terrain and a well set trap is too inviting to run into. In night operations it is essential that the fires caused by our own burning vehicles be immediately extinguished even at great risk as they illuminate the terrain and make our columns a target for enemy fires.

Bright moonlight is of course an exception.

6. Equipment.

Equipment is generally adequate. Of course we lack a gun to cope with the Germans heavier tanks except when they can be attacked at short range from flank or rear.

Each tank company or even each tank platoon should have a tank equipped with a bulldozer.

Engineers in dump trucks are severely handicapped in an armored unit. We run through small arms fire which the trucks cannot take.

7. Concealment and Camouflage.

The Germans are far better than we are in hiding their weapons and installations. On many occasions fire could not be located. Much is due to their superior powder and the muzzle brakes on their guns. A muzzle brake is highly recommended for our own guns.

We still think in terms of road blocks. We must make ambushes. Keep away from roads, dig in deep and camouflage thoroughly.

8. Artillery.

During pursuit operations it was necessary to either run away from artillery or keep it in column on the road. Direct fire from tanks gave sufficient power to overcome resistance except on three occasions.

9. Engineers.

Treadway bridge sections must be available and kept well forward. The Germans are good demolishers. Had they had time to be more thorough, we would not have succeeded with amount of equipment at hand.

10. Air Cooperation.

On all occasions in which air was available, the cooperation and prompt attack of suitable targets was all that could be desired. The essentials of prompt air support are:

1. Prompt and accurate report by Reconnaissance Agencies to S-2.

2. Close association, either physical or telephone between S-2 and S-3 Air and V.H.F. air support.

3. Coordination between artillery forward observers and artillery S-2 linked with combat command S-2.

It was found that air complimented artillery perfectly.

Artillery can neutralize, force targets to move, and the air destroys. An example of artillery air cooperation follows:

Direct fire was received from either 75 or 88 mm weapons. Source of fire could not be discovered. Artillery hunted for enemy source by firing at likely places. In a few minutes enemy fire ceased. Artillery cub observed two German tanks emerge from rear of wood about 2500 yards from our position. In less than four (4) minutes air reported target destroyed.

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5 AD, APO #255, U.S.Army. 9 Oct. 44
Subj: After Action Report, August 1944
To: Adjutant General, Wash. DC (Continued)

11. Conclusions.

a. In pursuit, avoid long columns. They are hard to control and most terrain will not permit fighting anything but leading elements and adequate control is lacking.

b. The German is communication conscious and likes good roads. First class roads are always studded with defenses. Secondary ones are generally neglected.

c. His use of roving, self propelled or towed guns is normal and good. He covers road bends, changes in grade and road intersections.

d. Our security detachments on approaches are generally too obvious. Make them security ambushes.

e. Keep contact at night and fight in the daytime unless the night operation can be carefully planned, reconnoitered, and kept simple.

f. Calculated risks are necessary, even to extent of being overly rash if the gain is commensurate. The enemy must be well defeated and entirely confused to make pursuit, such as this operation has been, successful.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

2 Incls.

1-S-2 Journal, month of August, 1944
2-S-3 Journal, month of August, 1944.

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* S E C R E T
* AUTH: CO CC "B" 5
* DATE: 9 Oct 44
* Init: *stc*

HEADQUARTERS COLBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U.S. Army

9 October 1944

Subject: After Action Report, Month of September 1944.

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

1. In compliance with par. 10 (C3) AR 345-105, the following After Action Report is submitted:

a. In general Combat Command operated in Divisional Formation "Red" consisting of 81st Tank Bn., 15th Armd. Inf. Bn., 71st Armd. F.A. Bn., Co. B 22nd Armd. Engr. Bn., Co B 75th Armd. Med. Bn., and Co B 127th Ord. Bn. Additional attachments were made available or attachments were withdrawn as situation demanded.

2. During period 1 September to 10 September operations were similar to and conducted along lines outlined in August report.

3. Period 11 September to 15 September border occupancy and probing by patrols over German border constituted all action.

a. On 11 September our first patrol entered Germany in late afternoon. Frontier pillboxes were found occupied by light forces.

b. Starting 12 Sept. the Germans built up moderate strength of mortar and light artillery fire. Our patrols were countered and were unable to penetrate line of pillboxes. Germans patrolled in small groups and later in large groups. They patrolled boldly until discovered and fired upon, whereupon they withdrew promptly. On one occasion a strong force of company strength, preceded by heavy mortar shelling, drove our border outpost to support line. This was countered during day and restored in late afternoon.

c. The principal lesson to be learned from this period of operation was one of terrain. Had any action of any scope developed, our only useful element was Infantry and Artillery plus some use of light tanks. The medium tanks were helpless due to steep grades, defiles and weather.

It seems to be indicated that more consideration should be given to terrain and weather in the employment of armor. In such terrain and weather as this area, tanks were useless and indeed, a hindrance. It is dangerous to rely on armored action under such adverse conditions as power cannot be put into action. Furthermore, ample and continuous reconnaissance must be employed before moving armor through such country, as mountain roads were defiles on which it would have been fatal to be caught. The only alternative is moving at foot speed, combing out defiles before entering.

4. Period 16 Sept. to 22 Sept. was one of demonstration in Germany. Initial opposition was not severe but built up during period to the point where artillery, mortar and small arms fire was continuous as were small unit counterattacks. Tanks became practically useless as terrain was not too favorable and the rain caused mud too seyer to negotiate. Operation could however have been wholly successful had infantry been available to keep open supply lines. The Germans are bold and quick to infiltrate on flanks and rear.

6 *Quill* It was found that in operating against pill boxes, it is necessary to completely demolish them as one goes along. Otherwise the Germans infiltrate back or utilize underground passages and the ~~operation must be done over.~~

In attacking boxes the following suggestions are made:

a. Use normal assault methods of Tank of TD and Infantry to gain possession of box.

b. Utilize about 17 pound charge to block doors and embrasure.

c. Bulldoze in rear entrance and plug ventilator when possible.

- 1 -

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5th A.D., AFO #255, U.S. Army, 9 Oct. 44
To: Adjutant General, Washington, D.C. (Thru Channels)
Subj: After Action Report, Sept. 44

d. To demolish most boxes completely costs about 400 pounds of explosive each.

e. Do not give up area as Germans will come back, dig out and use again.

f. On boxes not already taken, keep artillery and mortars registered. This keeps people in box and lowers their morale considerably.

5. Period 23 Sept. - 25 Sept. Division reserve.

6. Period 25 - 30 Sept. was defensive mission defending Luxembourg sector. Activity consisted of patrolling and counter patrolling and artillery and mortar exchanges.

Again due to weather and terrain, tanks were helpless and could not have rendered effective action had occasion required it. The lesson to be learned is that it is extremely uneconomical to employ tanks on such a mission unless they can be employed in their own true defensive role, that of counterattack. To dismount crews and use as Infantry is costly as they are improperly armed for such missions and casualties will be higher than with Infantry troops.

7. German Anti-Tank tactics.

The Germans are using many more hollow charges than previously. Nearly every group has a similar weapon to our bazooka and they know how to use them.

We must:

1. Keep Infantry with our tanks all the time.
2. Avoid woods and defiles unless we combat them with Infantry before and during passage.

8. Mines.

German mines are used with greater density and more in one place than formerly. Often mines will wreck a tank, knocking out some or all of personnel. It is no longer safe to assume that a blown track is the worst that can happen to a tank.

9. Withdrawal from action.

In withdrawing from Germany on 28 Sept. it was found that by putting a great deal of pressure on the Germans with artillery and air in the late afternoon and evening, the Germans did not recover sufficiently to react to our withdrawal during the night.

The 47th Armd. Inf. Bn. was able to cover the withdrawal without trouble and the German mortar and artillery fire had been sufficiently upset so that they were unable to hamper the operation seriously.

10. Air cooperation.

The air gave excellent support whenever available. The air officers do not like the V.H.F. set in a tank. They function best from a position near the S-2 in a C.P. In a tank, with units in contact, they see only the local picture, and motor noise is such that they cannot talk planes into targets with any success.

It is recommended planes be brought in circle around C.P. given direction panel and talked into target from half-track in vicinity of C.P.

It is also necessary that the artillery have red and yellow smoke to mark targets when called for. The German is clever at this. He will mark you with white smoke whenever used. The air and artillery can work white smoke by paying attention only to rounds when given "on the way."

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5th A.D., APO #255, U.S.Army, 9 Oct. 44
Subj: After Action Report, Sert. 44
To: Adjutant General, Wash. D.C.

10. Air cooperation (cont'd)

Violet or green smokes are not suitable at this time of year. Later, with no foliage and possible snow, these smokes will be effective from the air viewpoint.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

- 2 Incls.
- 1-S-2 Journal, month of Sept. 44
- 2-S-3 Journal, month of Sept. 44

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: Auth: C.O. CCB :
: Init. :
: Date: 4 NOV 44 :

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U.S. Army

4 November 1944

Subject: After Action Report - Month of October

To : Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

1. CAMPAIGN:

a. Campaign in Western Europe.

2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:

- a. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
b. Hq. Co. CC"B" - Captain JOE W. PERRY
c. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report 81st.
d. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
15th Armored Infantry Bn.
e. 71st Armored F.A. Bn. - Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
71st Armored F.A. Bn.
f. Company "B", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn. - Capt. ROLF E. WICKERSON
g. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn. - Captain THOMAS P. HARRISON
h. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - 1st Lt. RICHARD L.
MC SPADDEN.

3. LOSSES IN ACTION:

- a. Killed - None
b. Wounded - One
c. Missing - One
d. Known captured - None

4. October (1-2) consisted of defensive action, Luxembourg border.

Enemy in contact, KAMPF GRUPPE APPEL, consisting of battalion strength. This force was disposed on northern half of sector. On southern front a Provisional Battalion of 19 G. A. B. consisting of Air Force personnel.

Both battalions had some 120 and 81 MM mortars on their defensive position and a few self propelled pieces of medium artillery.

Enemy utilized the OUR River and heights east thereof for defensive position.

No evidence of extensive use of mines or demolitions.

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5th AD, 4 November 1944
Subj: After Action Report - Month of October (continued)
To : Adjutant General, Wash., DC (thru channels)

During period enemy did not patrol and our forces made no crossings. No prisoners or deserters were picked up.

Enemy patrolling was ineffective. Prisoners captured in late September stated they knew nothing of our dispositions as their patrols never penetrated our outposts.

The civilians were passive and friendly. Known Germans had been taken up.

The terrain was rugged and wooded and heavy mud prevailed.

Action consisted of counter reconnaissance and reconnaissance patrolling, operation of OP's and artillery fire of interdiction and on targets of opportunity.

The Combat Command operated under Division control.

Command Posts:

Combat Command "B"	MEDERNACH, LUXEMBOURG
15th Armored Infantry Bn.	1 Mi N MEDERNACH (908362)
81st Tank Bn.	1 Mi N GILSDORF (885438)

Mission of Combat Command was defense of LUXEMBOURG border. The 15th Armored Infantry Bn. was utilized to garrison strong points on front and to man OP's.

81st Tank Bn. backed up infantry positions by platoon attachments. The remainder of battalion was disposed to utilize limited terrain upon which they could be moved, (mud and natural obstacles made tanks relatively useless) to repel any penetration and control highway system.

Communication was maintained by limited use of FM Radio with main channels supplemented by wire.

Liaison was maintained with supporting and adjacent units but no action was necessary.

Use of weapons was normal. Some booby traps were set for a few hours during the night and taken up by day. No Germans were caught however.

Supply and evacuation was normal.

No casualties were suffered.

The remainder of the month the Combat Command was out of contact.

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Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5th AD, 4 November 1944

Subj: After Action Report - Month of October (continued)

To : Adjutant General, Wash., DC (thru channels)

October (3-4) engaged in maintenance MEDERNACH area, having been relieved by 121 Infantry Regiment, 8th Infantry Division.

October (5-14) Training FAYMONVILLE area.

October (15-26) Army Reserve, AACHEN area. CP at SCHLECKHEIM, GERMANY. (K890373)

Prepared to counter attack on Army order under direction VII Corps. 2nd battalion 110th Infantry was attached. On 18 October this battalion was detached and attached to 1st Infantry Division for action with that Division.

October (27-31) Returned to FAYMONVILLE area for training and reconnaissance to relieve CC"R".

Only one casualty was suffered from enemy shelling in AACHEN area.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

3 Incl.

1 - FO #13

2 - Extract S-3 Journal.

3 - Extract S-2 Journal.

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Ltr. Hq CCB, 1 March 1946 continued.

b. Attack mutually supporting places simultaneously and seal off flanks with artillery and/or smoke. Most losses are from flanking supporting elements of enemy A.T. fire.

c. Stuck vehicles are sitting ducks. Get them out as soon as possible.

d. In heavy going do not trust halftracks. Put infantry and their supporting weapons on tank decks. A long rope on tank is useful for dismounted infantry to hold onto for rapid progress.

e. With many villages to be attacked, tank ammunition is rapidly expended. Each tank Bn should have 8 or 10 trailers for quick resupply. These trailers should be towed by reserve company or light tanks. Wheel transportation fails in heavy going. M S R are generally crowded and serious delays are apt to result. |

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

4 Incl.

1. Extract S-2 Journal
2. Extract S-3 Journal
3. Report of Air-Ground Cooperation
4. Supporting Documents
 - a. FO #20
 - b. Annex #1 to FO #20
 - c. Annex #2 to FO #20
 - d. Memo. 23 Feb. 45
 - e. Movement Order 22 Feb. 45
 - f. Letter of Instructions
 - g. Movement Order 9 Feb.
 - h. Convoy Instructions 9 Feb.
 - i. Movement Order 4 Feb.

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:Auth: L. AD, 19 Oct 44
:Init: 712
:Date: 1 December 1944

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

1 December 1944

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of November
To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

1. CAMPAIGN:

a. Campaign in Western Europe.

2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:

- a. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
- b. Headquarters Company CC"B" - Captain JOE W. PERRY
- c. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
81st Tank Battalion.
- d. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
15th Armored Infantry Bn.
- e. 71st Armored F.A. Bn. - Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
71st Armored F.A. Bn.
- f. Company "B", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn. - Capt. ROLF E. MICKLESON
- g. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn. - Capt. THOMAS P. HARBESON
- h. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - Capt. RICHARD L. MC SPADDEN.
- i. Company "B", 628th T.D. Bn. - Captain PAUL L. MC PHERRAN
- j. 85th Cav. Rcn. Sqdn. Mcz. - Major GEORGE C. BENJAMIN

3. LOSSES IN ACTION:

- a. Killed - 2
- b. Wounded - 9
- c. Missing - None
- d. Known captured - None

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4. November (1-10) consisted of defensive action along line MONSHAU, HOFEN, ALZEN GERMANY thence 3000 yards to South.

Enemy in contact 2nd and 3rd Battalions of 1056 Regiment.

During this period the enemy was inactive. Their front lines were from 150 yards on the North to 3000 yards on the South from our lines. A moderate amount of unobserved mortar and artillery fire fell on our positions. Occasionally small arms fire would be directed aimlessly against us. Flying bombs passed overhead very frequently.

The enemy used large numbers of Anti Tank and Anti Personnel mines. The Anti Personnel mines encountered were Scha mines.

Very light enemy patrol activity was observed. All patrols withdrew hurriedly when artillery fire was laid upon them. Approximately eight (8) enemy voluntarily surrendered to our outposts.

All civilians in the area had been evacuated except a detail of four men, who had been carefully screened, left behind for the purpose of caring for the livestock.

The terrain was very hilly and the ground was very muddy.

Donald Cameron
13 Aug

12

Ltr. Hq. CC"B", 5th AD, 1 December 1944
Subj: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of November (continued)
To : The Adjutant General, Wash., DC (thru channels)

The Combat Command operated under Division control and was supported by Division Artillery.

Command Posts:

Combat Command "B"	KUCHEL SHEID , BELGIUM
15th Armored Infantry Bn.	HOFEN, GERMANY
81st Tank Bn.	1 Mi West KUCHEL SHEID , BELG.
85th Cav. Rcn. Sqdn. Mcz.	KALTERHERBERG, GERMANY

Mission of Combat Command "B" was to defend the line, MONSHAU, HOFEN, ALZEN (GERMANY) thence 3000 yards to the South.

15th Armored Infantry Battalion occupied the sector from MONSHAU to ALZEN. Their positions were normal infantry positions except on the right flank where houses and pillboxes were used as strongpoints. A ring of defensive artillery fire was established approximately 150 yards in front of their positions. In addition to normal artillery observers the 15th established 27 OP's manned by their own men. Every officer and most of the NCO's thus had an opportunity to adjust artillery fire. At times privates would fire missions. The mortars of the 81st Tank Battalion were attached and the resulting battery of six mortars proved a very flexible and effective combination. Approximately 150 Anti Personnel mines and traps were employed to cover the front - some 4600 yards. The organic Anti Tank guns were used to cover possible tank approaches and were backed up by a platoon of medium tanks from the 81st Tank Battalion.

85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) occupied the remainder of the Combat Command front. Their sector was held by platoon strong points which were linked by telephone. The artillery set up was very similar to the 15th Armored Infantry Battalion. "E" troop fired a great many missions by platoon and by troop and proved to be an excellent weapon. At least one patrol a day was made. The patrols went as far as was necessary to observe enemy activity around some pillboxes approximately 3000 yards to their front. On no occasion did the patrols contact enemy patrols. Patrol leaders requested white uniforms for patrolling in snow. Two troops at a time were employed on the line thus allowing the reserve troops to have a long deserved rest.

81st Tank Battalion was held in reserve throughout the period. One medium company at a time was employed on indirect fire missions. A great deal of benefit was derived from this firing and at the end of the period all companies were proficient in indirect fire. The assault guns were used to reinforce the fires of the 95th Armored F.A. Battalion. The mortars were attached to 15th Armored Infantry Battalion. One platoon of medium tanks was used to back up the 15th Armored Infantry Battalion. The light tank company was employed on road blocks throughout the area for the primary purpose of checking identification of all traffic in the area.

"B" Company 22nd Armored Engineers was engaged in extensive road, bridge and ford maintenance throughout the period. A major job was encountered in registering existing mine fields, replacing mines detonated by livestock, and constant checking of the fields.

Three schu mines were removed in sector of 85th. Four mines had been detonated by a patrol of the 85th.

Communication was entirely by wire.

Liaison with adjacent and supporting units was maintained.

Supply and evacuation were normal.

Ltr. Hq CC"B", 5th AD, 1 December 1944, (continued)
Subj: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of November
To : The Adjutant General, Wash. DC, (thru channels)

Approximately ten(10) casualties were suffered.

November (10-17) Engaged in maintenance and training
FAYMONVILLE, BELGIUM area.

November (17-30) Prepared plans to counter enemy thrusts in
Corps area and conducted patrol activity in KONZEN, GERMANY area.
Made plans to move to the North for employment SW DUREN, GERMANY.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

- 2 Incl.
1 - Extract S-3 Journal
2 - Supporting Documents
 a. FO #14
 b. FO #15
 c. Operational Memo
 d. Instructions for Movement

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SECRET

: Auth: Ltr. 5 AD, 19 Oct 44

: Init:

: Date: 1 January 1945

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

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1 January 1945

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of December

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

1. CAMPAIGN:

a. Campaign in Western Europe.

2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:

a. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE

b. 4th Cavalry Group - Colonel JOHN C. MC DONALD
For Squadron, Battalion, Troop and Company Commanders
see After Action Report, 4th Cavalry Group.

c. 2/330 Infantry - Lt. Colonel NORRIS
For Company Commanders see After Action Report 2/330 Inf

d. Headquarters Company CC"B" - Captain JOE W. PERRY

e. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
81st Tank Battalion.

f. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
15th Armored Infantry Bn.

g. 71st Armored F.A. Bn. - Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Company Commanders see After Action Report
71st Armored F.A. Bn.

h. Company "B", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn. - Capt. ROLF E. MICKLESON

i. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn. - Capt. THOMAS P. HARBESON

j. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - Capt. RICHARD L.
MC SPADEN.

k. Company "B", 628th T.D. Bn. - Captain PAUL L. MC PHERRAN

l. 85th Cav. Rcn. Sqdn. Mez. - Major GEORGE C. BENJAMIN

m. D/87 Chemical Battalion - Liaison Officer 1st Lt.
WILLOUGHBY.

3. LOSSES IN ACTION:

a. Killed - 42

b. Wounded - 344

c. Missing - 37

d. Known Captured - None

No figures available on casualties for 4th Cavalry
Group, 2/330 Infantry, D/87 Chemical Battalion, B/628th
T.D. Bn., and 85th Cav. Rcn. Sqdn. Mez.

4. Period December (1-8) incl. included a position in readiness
prepared to operate North East or South East. The Combat Command was
concentrated West of ROTGEN, with the 15th Armored Infantry Battalion
in readiness East of ROTGEN.

Incl 3 December 9 and 10, Combat Command moved to assembly area
West of KLEINHAU, GERMANY.

MISSION: To attack and sieze high ground overlooking WINDEN,
GERMANY after the towns of GEY and STRASS and ridge South West had
been secured by elements 83rd Infantry Division.

RESTRICTED

Donald Cameron

13 August 7

~~RESTRICTED~~

Ltr. Hq CC"B", 5th AD, 1 January 1945, continue d.

Reconnaissance, December 10 disclosed routes to line of departure were impassable to anything but tanks and foot troops. Also that Germans had mined entire area, and that entire area was under observation and accurate artillery and mortar fire from positions both East and West of ROER River.

11 December positive report was rendered that GEY and STRASS were in our hands and that ridge South West of GEY - STRASS road had been cleared giving Combat Command "B", 5th Armored Division line of departure for attack. 15th Armored Infantry Battalion ordered dismounted to advance to Line of Departure.

The report that Line of Departure was clear was premature.

The 15th Armored Infantry Battalion advanced to line of departure on 11 and 12 December taking heavy casualties from artillery and mortar fire and considerable small arms from infiltrated Germans. Infiltration due to allowing infantry to pass down ridge without occupying same. In heavy woods this was comparatively easy.

On 12 December 2nd Bn. 330 Infantry was attached to Combat Command. 13 December completed clearing to line departure.

14 December attack was ordered and broken up with heavy and continuous artillery and mortar fire. Due to boggy condition of ground and extensive mining, all attempts to use tanks were frustrated.

15, 16 December see attached operations overlay.

15 December, due to heavy casualties in 2nd Bn 330th Infantry and 15th Armored Infantry Battalion, 85 Rcn Sq (less C,D,E,F,) were attached.

Tanks were gotten forward to line departure with both 15th Armored Infantry Battalion and 2nd Bn 330th. (Company Hq. and 1 platoon to 2/330 and company less 1 platoon to 15th Armored and 85 Rcn. Sq.)

Objective 1 and 2 were taken 15 December.

Enemy left objective 2 on approach of tanks. Objective 2 was lightly held and offered little resistance.

It was decided to attack¹² objective 3 with 85th Rcn. Sq. and tanks, holding 15th Armored Infantry Battalion in reserve, organizing Southern edge of objective 1 to protect flank until taken over by 4th Cavalry Group. Attack was to be supported by tanks. Attack postponed until early morning 16 December as little day light was left to organize new position.

16 December attack was launched as planned just before daylight.

Enemy fled from tanks into WINDEN, with a few being killed and captured on position.

15th Armored Infantry Battalion siezed BILSTEIN with "C" Company meeting light resistance and capturing all that remained of garrison.

17, 18, 19 December held positions. Until thoroughly dug in suffered from heavy artillery and mortar fire and direct weapons from East side of river.

Ltr. Hq CC"B", 5th AD, 1 January 1945, continued.

19th December 4th Cavalry Group attached and 15th Armored Infantry Battalion attached to Combat Command "A", 5th Armored Division.

20th December directed to attack and sieze river line to Corps boundary.

BERGHEIM was placed in Combat Command "A" control.

2/330 was released and directed to attack UNTERMAUBACH. On 20th and 21st December it was impossible to get tanks in to help infantry and infantry was unable to get beyond outskirts of town.

Tanks were held up due to impossible terrain for cross country movement (cliff surrounding town) and heavy mining of only approach road. Engineers were unable to open road until night of 21/22 December.

22nd December 6 tanks were gotten through to infantry and town was promptly taken.

The work of Troop A, 85th Squadron in blocking approach from WINDEN made operation possible. Every attempt of enemy to relieve town from North was frustrated. This troop had to put itself in a pocket from which there was no withdrawal until town was taken.

On 22nd December 4th Cavalry Group was relieved by elements of 8th Division, the Corps boundary being readjusted to include objectives of 4th Cavalry Group.

Combat Command "B" relieved in place by 330th Infantry night 22/23 December.

24th December moved to present area, Army Reserve.

(24-31) December: No change.

NOTES: 1. TERRAIN.

Ground was impossible tank country except for limited action on plain above river line.

Tanks initially were only vehicles which could be used on prepared trails for supply and evacuation.

2. MINES.

The Germans mined cleverly. Every possible place to employ tanks was well mined. Ground was kept under constant artillery and mortar fire, to hinder clearing. Box (wooden) type predominated. Several instances of deep burial were found and consequently tanks were lost on trails that had been considerably travelled.

A.P. mines were scattered and a menace but not serious. No new types encountered.

3. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION.

Until roads were cleared, all supply and evacuation was by hand carry and light tanks. The light tank company was invaluable for this purpose. The Service Companies and administrative personnel of all units were organized as carrying parties and litter bearers. They were invaluable.

4. ENEMY ARTILLERY AND MORTARS.

Due to perfect observation and limitless artillery and mortar positions, the enemy were able to keep all key terrain and movement under constant and damaging fire.

5. GERMAN INFILTRATION.

In woods, the German is sure to return unless our troops occupy and constantly comb them. By simply fighting through woods and then going on, we simply invite casualties by assuming woods remain clear. Also in advancing to line departure by 15th Armored Infantry Battalion I feel certain infiltrated observers were in prearranged areas and by machine pistol bursts, (one day one, the next day two) signaled for mortar fire. On several instances this was more than a coincidence, all who experienced it feel certain.

6. 4.2 MORTARS.

The Company attached (D/87) was invaluable and supplemented by organic mortars, was the only weapon at all capable of interrupting enemy mortar fire.

7. USE OF TANKS.

Every effort was made to utilize tanks, but as before stated, mud and steep slopes made their use most limited. German mines were so placed that there was no maneuver or getting through defiles until mines were cleared.

In the town of UNTERMAUBACH tanks alone made it possible to allow the infantry to mop up. By clearing the sunken road of mines, tanks were moved in behind infantry just at daylight. All houses were separated in this town (UNTERMAUBACH) instead of lining the street as is usual. The tanks methodically went from house to house, fired AP and HE into ground floor and basements and literally blew the defenders out into hands of the mopping up infantry.

8. CASUALTIES.

Nearly all casualties were caused by advancing through artillery and mortar fire. This must be done at rapid pace. Casualties were heavy in holding the exposed objectives until thoroughly dug in.

9. CROSSING OPEN GROUND.

Whenever humanly possible, do so on tank decks or vehicles. Otherwise it should be done before daylight.

10. GERMAN INSTALLATIONS.

Direct fire guns (A.T.) were well hidden and apparently put in to stay until overrun.

They have entrenched all positions thoroughly with the apparent intention of completely encircling entire villages.

11. COMMUNICATIONS.

In operating with attached units from Infantry Divisions, communications other than possible phone lines must be improvised. To provide this, we solved as follows: Attach Combat Command Headquarters tank with 506 radio to attached Infantry Battalion.

Ltr. Hq CC"B", 5th AD, 1 January 1945, continued.

Communication with 4th Cavalry Group were maintained easily by placing C.P's next to each other with a telephone link.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

3 Incl.

1. Extract S-2 Journal
2. Extract S-3 Journal
3. Supporting Documents
 - a. FO #16
 - b. FO #17
 - c. FO #18
 - d. FO #19
 - e. Operation Memo #2
 - f. Fragmentary Warning Order
 - g. Operations Overlay
 - h. Overlays.

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

OPD
9/10/45

1 February 1945

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of January

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

1. CAMPAIGN:

a. Campaign of Germany.

2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:

- a. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
b. Headquarters Company CCB - Captain JOE W. PERRY
c. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 81st Tank Battalion.
d. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 15th Armd Inf Bn.
e. Company "B", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn - Captain ROLF E. MICHLESON
f. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn - Captain THOMAS P. HARBESON
g. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - Captain RICHARD L. MC SPADEN

3. LOSSES IN ACTION:

- a. Killed None
b. Wounded 1
c. Missing None
d. Known Captured None

4. During the entire month of January the Combat Command was under control of 5th Armored Division in Army Reserve. The period was spent in refitting and training of reinforcements. Training in married tank-infantry tactics, close-support exercises, night exercises and range firing were the principal subjects.

For the Commanding Officer.

Hugh J. Fitzgerald

HUGH J. FITZGERALD,
Colonel, Cavalry,
Executive.

2. Incl.

1. Extract S-3 Journal
2. Supporting Documents
a. TM #1
b. TM #2
c. Letter of Instructions
d. Memorandum - 4 Jan. 45
e. Overlay

Incl 11

5-13.2

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

1 March 1945

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of February

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

1. CAMPAIGN:

a. Campaign of Germany

2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:

- a. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
b. Headquarters Company CCB - Captain JOE W. PERRY
c. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 81st Tank Battalion.
d. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 15th Arm Inf Bn
e. 71st Armored Field Arty. Bn. - Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 71st A.F.A. Bn.
f. Company "B", 22nd Arm. Eng. Bn. - Captain ROLF E. MICKLESON
g. Company "B", 75th Arm. Med. Bn. - Captain THOMAS P. HARBESON
h. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - Captain RICHARD L. MC SPADEN
i. Company "B", 628th Tank Destroyer Bn. - 1st Lt. FRANK E. HURT
j. Company "B", 85th Cav. Ren. Sqdn. Mez. - Captain LORAN L. VIPOND
k. Sqdn "C", 1st Lothian & Border Yeomanry - Major BENNETT

3. LOSSES IN ACTION:

- a. Killed - 10
b. Wounded - 66
c. Missing - None
d. Known Captured - None

4. February (1-4) was spent in reconnoitering new assembly areas near HEERLEN, HOLLAND. The towns of WELTEN, KUNRADE, VOAGSBERG were picked as the new locations. February (5-24) Command moved to the new assembly area on February 5th. On February 6th Combat Command "B" was attached to 102nd Division for employment across the Roer River, after a bridgehead had been established. Plans were made to move on D-Day to MERKSTEIN, GERMANY and thence across Roer. When the Roer River dams were damaged the move was cancelled and the remainder of the period was spent in range firing. On 24 February Combat Command "B" moved to BAESWEILER, GERMANY.

February 25 plans were made to move across Roer to HOTTORF and assemble the Command. TFD already across the river closed at 2130 and remainder of Command at 260200

February 26: At 1200 TFA attacked in column of companies to seize WOCHERATH, TERHEEG, MENNERATH, and KAULHAUSEN in order to cut communications North and East of ERKELENZ. The plan called for isolation of all surrounding towns and farms, each of which was a probable location of AT weapons. The right flank of the force was

necessarily going to be exposed as the Corps on our right had not advanced as far north as we. The TD Company and Recon. troop were assigned the mission of covering this exposed flank. The greatest threat was the town of HOLZWEILER and our entire operation was hindered by the fact that this town was in another Corps zone and no accurate information could be secured as to the progress of our troops in that zone. As a result one or possibly two high-velocity AT guns in HOLZWEILER destroyed three medium tanks and five halftracks. The terrain greatly hampered the operation. Although flat and slightly rolling and giving the appearance of being firm it bogged all of the halftracks and many of the tanks. One company attempted to attack towing the halftracks behind the tanks, but this proved unsatisfactory and the operation was concluded with the infantry riding the decks of the tanks. The objectives themselves were taken by 1705 without a great deal of fighting because the heavy tank fire demoralized the garrison of the town.

At 1830 orders were received to advance the next day at 0700 in the zone of the 102nd Division to seize the town of MUNCHEN - GLADBACH, RHEINDAHLEN and be prepared to continue and seize HARDT.

The night was spent in organizing for the attack and resupplying TFA which had expended large quantities of ammunition in isolating flanking strongpoints.

27 February. The attack was launched at 0700 hours as planned. By 0930, despite heavy resistance as indicated by the fact that 12 AT guns, 4 SPAT guns, 3 105 Howitzers and 3 150 Howitzers had been destroyed or captured, both task forces were only about 1 mile south of the objective. Here a long delay was caused by the difficulty of reorganizing and resupplying. Again all of the halftracks and many of the tanks were bogged down and extricating them was a time-consuming task. The supply of ammunition was very low in TFA and the supply vehicles were delayed in getting forward by the heavy traffic of two divisions on one road. At 1354 TFD has secured its portion of the objective and was ordered to consolidate and await further orders. During the period of delay continuous artillery fire was placed on the SE portion of RHEINDAHLEN from which heavy AT or tank fire was being received. TFA was prepared to attack its portion of the objective at 1530 but the attack was called off as the 406th Infantry Regt. received orders to pass through Combat Command "B". By mutual agreement with the regimental commander the tanks of TFA attacked the town at 1555 closely followed by his infantry. The tank fire was so intense that it was not necessary for the infantry to fire a shot as it entered the town.

Combat Command "B" then regrouped and established unit defense areas for the night.

28 February. Combat Command "B" was given the mission of protecting the right flank of the Corps and accomplished this with a cavalry screen.

1 - NOTES:

The proper coordination of artillery, air, tanks and infantry is irresistible. Necessary items are:

- (1) Artillery preparation (HE and smoke if favorable) should be exact.
- (2) Planes move in on top of artillery, preferably covered by smoke if wind is right.
- (3) Tanks lead infantry and arrive about 200-300 yards from objective as planes go in.
- (4) Infantry and designated tank units move into town at once. Generally there will be no further resistance.
- (5) Study terrain carefully so that tank attack is not halted by unexpected ditches etc.

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

1 April 1945

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of March

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

a. CAMPAIGN:

1. Campaign of Germany

b. LOSSES IN ACTION:

(1) Personnel.

Killed - None
Wounded - 3
Missing - None
Known Captured - None

(2) Vehicular.

None

c. COMMANDERS:

1. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
2. Headquarters Company CCB - Captain JOE W. PERRY
3. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
4. For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 81st Tank Battalion.
4. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 15th Armd Inf Bn.
5. 71st Armored Field Arty. Bn. * Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Battery Commanders see After Action Report, 71st A.F.A. Bn.
6. Company "B", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn. - Captain ROLF E. MICKLESON
7. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn. - Captain THOMAS P. HARBESON
8. Company "B", 127th Ord. Maint. Bn. - Captain RICHARD L. MC SPADDEN
9. Company "B", 628th Tank Destroyer Bn. - 1st Lt. FRANK E. HURT.
10. Company "B", 85th Cav. Rcn. Sqdn. Mcz. - Captain LORAN L. VIPOND

d. ATTACHMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Normal Combat Command composition directly under Division.

e. MOVEMENTS, BOUNDARIES, AND COMMAND POSTS:

1. As indicated in journal and supporting documents.

f. AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES AND LOSSES:

1. None

g. Period of 1-2 March was occupied in establishing road-blocks west of MUNCHEN-GLADBACH and cleaning out enemy pockets up to the outskirts of MUNCHEN-GLADBACH. This was done by employment of the normal task forces and by the formation of a temporary task force composed of the light tank company, rcn troop and a platoon of

Ltr. Hq. GCB, 1 April 1945 continued

TD's. There was no opposition and apart from some traffic problems there was no difficulty.

Period 3-30 March was spent in occupying the territory in the vicinity of OEDT, GERMANY. Military government was established in OEDT, MULHAUSEN, VORST, ST. HUBERT and several other smaller towns. No difficulty was experienced through lack of cooperation on the part of the German populace. On the contrary, the populace was, as a general rule, anxious to aid us in order that their "life as usual" could be resumed. Searches were conducted for deserters from the Wehrmacht, Nazi party officials and for all types of military equipment. Check points were established throughout the area to prevent unauthorized movement. The 81st Tank Battalion conducted indirect tank firing across the Rhine River, generally with unobserved results.

31 March the Command moved across the Rhine River at WESSEL and assembled South West of MUNSTER.

h. COMMENTS: - None

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

3 Incl.

1. Extract 8-2 Journal
2. Extract 8-3 Journal
3. Supporting Documents
4. a. Letter of Instructions, 1 March
b. Memo, 3 March
c. Ltr. 6 March
d. Ltr. 6 March
e. Ltr. 8 March
f. Letter of Instructions, 30 March
g. Letter, Change, 30 March
h. Movement Order, 30 March
i. Overlays.

not Reed

SECRET

4574

~~RESTRICTED~~

SECRET
Ltr, 5 AD, 19 Oct. 44
Date: 1 May 1945

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "B"
5th Armored Division
APO No 255 - U. S. Army

1 May 1945

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Report After - Month of April

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D.C. (thru channels)

a. CAMPAIGN:

1. Campaign of Germany

b. LOSSES IN ACTION:

(1) Personnel.

Killed - 15
Wounded - 41
Missing - 1
Known Captured - None

(2) Vehicular.

5 - Trucks, 1/4 ton 4 x 4
2 - Half tracks
6 - Tanks
1 - Truck, 2 1/2 ton 6 x 6
2 - Armored cars
3 - Trailers, 1 ton cargo
3 - Ammunition trailers, M10

c. COMMANDERS:

1. Combat Command "B", 5th AD - Colonel JOHN T. COLE
2. Headquarters Company CCB - Captain JOE W. PERRY
3. 81st Tank Battalion - Lt. Col. LEROY H. ANDERSON
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 81st Tank Battalion
4. 15th Armored Infantry Bn. - Lt. Col. GLENN G. DICKENSON (1-17 Apr)
Major EMERSON F. HURLEY (18-30 Apr)
For Company Commanders see After Action Report, 15th Armd Inf Bn.
5. 71st Armored Field Arty. Bn. - Lt. Col. I. B. WASHBURN
For Battery Commanders see After Action Report, 71st A.F.A. Bn.
6. Company "E", 22nd Armd. Eng. Bn. - Captain ROLF E. MICKLESON
7. Company "B", 75th Armd. Med. Bn. - Captain THOMAS P. HARBESON
8. Company "E", 127th Crd. Maint. Bn. - Captain RICHARD L. MC SPADEN (1-7 Apr)
Captain ROBERT N. HERRICKS (8-30 Apr)
9. Company "E", 628th Tank Destroyer Bn. - 1st Lt. FRANK E. HERT.
10. Company "B", 85th Cav. Recon. Sqdn. Recon. - Captain LORAN L. WILSON.

d. ATTACHMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Normal Combat Command composition directly under Division.

e. MOVEMENTS, BOUNDARIES, AND COMMAND POSTS:

1. As indicated in journal and supporting documents.

f. AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES AND LOSSES:

	LOSSES	EXPENDED
Shell 105-MM How H E w/ fuze M48		824
Shell 105-MM How HE w/ fuze M54		152
Shell 105-MM How Smoke W.P.		31
Shell 105-MM How H.E.A.T.		27
Shell 76MM Gun HE M/C w/ fuze M48		1868
Shell 76MM Gun APC w/ fuze M66A1		17
Shell 76MM Gun H.V.A.P.		18
Shell 76MM Gun MK24 MOD.1, ILL. w/ fuze M66A1		17
Shell 76MM Gun Smoke H C		57
Shell 76MM Gun, H.E.		19
Shell 76MM Gun, A.F.C.		

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:
~~RESTRICTED~~
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DEFENSE BOARDING COMMITTEE

~~RESTRICTED~~

RESTRICTED

AUG 5 1945

RESTRICTED

Ltr. Hq. CCB, 1 Ma, continued.

f. Continued.

	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>EXPENDED</u>
Shell 75MM Gun HE S/C w/fuze M48		2907
Shell 75MM Gun APC M61 w/fuze M66A1		915
Shell 75MM Gun Smoke W.P. w/fuze M57		440
Shell 75MM Gun Cannister		1 80
Shell 75MM Gun Smoke HC		80
Shell 75MM Gun, H.E.		31
Shell 75MM Gun, A.P.C.		2
Shell 37MM Gun HE		28
Shell 81MM Mortar H.E. (Light)		173
Shell 81MM Mortar, W.P.		7
Fuze Cpt 105		35
Mortar 2" Smoke bomb		172
Rocket HE A.T. 2.36"		10
Rocket Smoke W.P. 2.36"		4
Rocket, Anti-tank, A.P.	28	0
Rocket, Anti-tank, W.P.	11	0
Grenade Hand Frag	25	858
Grenade Hand Offensive	15	80
Grenade Hand Smoke M-8	12	8
Grenade Hand Smoke M-14		252
Grenade Hand Smoke M-15		183
Grenade Hand Smoke M-16 & M-18		8
Grenade Hand incend.	10	2
Grenade, Rifle, H.E.A.T.	18	0
Grenade, Rifle, WP M-19	10	0
Flare, trip, M-49	8	0
Signal, Ground W.S. Para. M17A1		3
Signal, Ground W.S. Clus. M18A1		2
Signal, Ground, G.S. Para. M19A1		3
Signal, Ground, G.S. Clus. M20A1		3
Signal, Ground, A.S. Para. M21A1		4
Signal, Ground, A.S. Clus. M22A1		24
Cartridge, Cal. 50 MG	1300	26,480
Cartridge, Cal. 45 Ball	900	4,300
Cartridge, Cal. 30 MG (4 to 1)	12,000	366,750
Cartridge, Cal. 30 Rifle 8/clip	8,000	14,890
Cartridge, Cal. 30 Carbine M1	2,000	6,300

g. 1-3 April was a period in which the Combat Command was employed in a normal role for armor - exploitation of a situation in which the enemy is disorganized. The mission was to get East as rapidly as possible. To accomplish this mission, units were instructed that opposition of a serious nature was to be bypassed and light opposition was to be attacked rapidly and boldly. In France we had learned that back roads are better than main roads in this type of operation because the defenses tend to concentrate on main roads. The difficulty experienced in using these least lines of resistance was caused by the boggy condition of the terrain. Frequently a wrecker had to be stationed near bad spots in the road to tow wheeled vehicles through. Movement was from dawn to dusk. This was decided because many bitter experiences had shown us that ground gained at night does not balance the casualties, confusion and general decrease in efficiency caused by a night operation over unfamiliar terrain and against an enemy whose dispositions are unknown. On the night of April 2, however, it was decided to keep on after dark because it was essential to have the pass at BORGHOLZHSN and as we were then in contact with an enemy force we knew its approximate disposition and strength. The enemy force (approx. 200 men of SS Pz Div. Viking) in this pass was particularly stubborn. Although only armed with small arms and Panzerfaust they made a determined but suicidal charge against the lead tanks. Other opposition encountered during this period consisted of scattered tanks, SP guns, and defended road blocks. These were invariably dealt with by no more than the lead platoon and frequently by the platoon leader in the lead tank alone.

From 4 to 9 April a period of relative inactivity set in. Contact with the British was gained during afternoon of 4 April. Artillery and air support were loaned to 335 RCT for their river crossing South of MINDEN. The fundamentals of military government were set up in our area West of Weser River including MINDEN and preparations were made for the operation between Weser and Elbe.

RESTRICTED

10-13 April the Combat Command was in division reserve with married C companies attached for operations to Div. Hq. with the mission of clearing the MSR ahead of Div. Hq. On night of 12 April married C reverted to Combat Command control and Combat Command was given mission of clearing MSR to Elbe. Mission was accomplished morning of 13 April in about 4 hours for an average rate of advance of 7 MPH. On night of 13 April the Combat Command was spread over a distance slightly greater than 120 miles as we were guarding the bridge over the Moser River at LAHLEH and various bridges and installations along the route of the division.

14 and 15 April were spent in out posting Elbe River in some clearing the area for scattered enemy stragglers, and setting up military government. Some difficulty was encountered in civilian looting of stores of soap, bedding, cosmetics, and liquors but this was stopped without the necessity of resorting to force.

16-20 April - The Combat Command was ordered to reassemble in the vicinity of CHEINITZ. While on the move to the assembly area word was received that the MSR had been cut in the vicinity of BIRA - VOITZE and the Combat Command was ordered to search for and destroy the enemy force. The search proved negative and blocks were established to prevent movement NE from FORST KNESEBECK. On 17 April a change was made and blocks were established along the general line WITTINGEN - ZASEBECK - KIRKBERG to prevent movement from the North. Since that time the front some 25km long we were only able to block at major crossroads and intersections. During afternoon 18 April recon elements of Pz Div Von Clausewitz were contacted in woods East of JUBAR, surrounded by tanks, TD's and infantry, and virtually destroyed by artillery and fighter bombers. During night of 18 April the main body of Pz Div Von Clausewitz drove in a road block that had been established at LINDHOF but the advance was stopped by placing very heavy artillery fire on LINDHOF and all the surrounding woods and roads. The 19th and 20th were repetitions of the night of the 18th. Artillery and fighter bombers pounded the enemy concentrations continually, beautifully coordinated by the Horsefly. A small number of enemy vehicles were destroyed by our road blocks as they attempted to get away from the terrific beating and some enemy vehicles managed to slip between the road blocks because we were spread so thinly across the long front. By the night of the 20th there was nothing left of the enemy force to our front except for many wounded soldiers and numerous abandoned vehicles.

Remainder of month was spent in occupying an area of some 300 square miles, collecting or destroying enemy material, and gathering up stragglers. Maintenance of equipment although handicapped by the large area that it was necessary to patrol was stressed insofar as possible.

h. COMMENTS:

Section I - Personnel

None

Section II - Intelligence

3150 PWs, 800 killed, 800 long term wounded, 72 miscellaneous assault guns, 110 miscellaneous vehicles, 10 tanks, 21 locomotives, 1 train load ammunition, 11 barges loaded with troops, 2 flak radar stations.

Section III - Operations:

1. It is felt that a better method of location of hostile mortars is essential. While contact with German mortars was slight during April, the probable employment against the Japanese makes this a matter of prime importance.
2. Effective coordination of air, artillery, and ground forces was very materially aided by the Horsefly that was attached to the Combat Command during the operation against Pz Div Von Clausewitz.
3. It was found that in heavily wooded areas although artillery fire actually causes more enemy losses than fighter bombers, the effect that fighter bombers have in causing confusion and indiscriminate movement on the part of the enemy is well worth the extra effort to get them on the target. In woods as in the open, one complements the other.

CONFIDENTIAL

Section IV - Supply

The initial performance of the M-26 tanks received during April has proven them highly satisfactory and a great improvement over the M-4.

Section V - Civilian.

None.

John T. Cole
JOHN T. COLE,
Colonel, Cav.,
Commanding.

4 Incls.

1. Extract S-2 Journal
2. Extract S-3 Journal
3. FO #22
4. Supporting documents.
 - a. Letter, 7 April
 - b. Letter of Instructions
 - c. Memo. 26 April
 - d. Overlays