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AFTER ACTION REPORT

736th Tank Bn

1st May - 31 May 45

8736 TB 101

AMTH: G3 XIII Corps
DATE: 31 May 45
INIT: MHR

DUP
BBF

319.1/401 AG

2 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Actions Battle Report.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C.

In compliance with par 10 (c3) AR 315-105 and Ltr Hq AFSA, Subject, same as above, dtd 13 July 1944, "After Actions Battle Report" for the period 1 May 1945 to 31 May 1945, 736th Tank Battalion, is submitted together with allied papers.

PAUL J. MITCHELL
Lt Col., Infantry
Commanding

Incls: Allied Papers

319.1/401 1st Ind. C/r
HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 83, U. S. Army, 15 June 1945.

TO: Commanding General, XIII Corps, APO 83, U. S. Army.
(Attention: Adjutant General).

Forwarded.

For the Commanding General:

H. A. CORDEN,
Major, AGD,
Adjutant General.

Incls: n/c

**DOWNGRADED TO:
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AFTER ACTION BATTLE REPORT
736TH TANK BATTALION
1 May - 31 May 1945

1 - 5 May

On 30 April 1945, Task Force RITCHIE, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel PAUL J. RITCHIE, Commanding Officer, 736th Tank Battalion, was formed as a Mobile Reserve for the 83rd Infantry Division's Bridgehead across the ELBE River. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, attached to Task Force Ritchie moved to WALTERNIENBERG (D886823). The Assault Gun Platoon was placed in a Defensive Position in vicinity of GODNITY (D874856) with the mission of guarding the approach to the North Bridge (D864817) across the ELBE River; the Mortar Platoon was located in GLINDE (D826868) with the mission of shelling across the ELBE River in vicinity of RAINES (D808877).

Company "A" attached to 329th Infantry Regiment remained in a static position across the ELBE River with Platoon dispositions as follows - 1st Platoon at NUTHA (C943824); 2nd Platoon at GUTERGLUCK (C924842); 3rd Platoon at ZERBST (D990842); while Headquarters Platoon and "A" Company CP was located at WALTERNIENBERG (C885-823). In this sector no opposition or activity had been received from the enemy, but large numbers of prisoners approached outposts to "give up en-masse."

Company "B" attached to 330th Infantry Regiment maintained a Defensive Position across the ELBE River as part of Task Force Ritchie, with Platoon dispositions as follows - 2nd Platoon was attached to Company "C", 330th Infantry Regiment, acting as Regimental Reserve for 330th Infantry Regiment; Company "B" (-2nd Platoon) with "B" Company 330th Infantry Regiment was part of Task Force Ritchie with the mission of reinforcing 330th Infantry Regiment in case of counterattack or reinforcing any other sector as ordered by the Task Force Commander. On 5th of May Company "B", -736th Tank Battalion, was alerted to move to NEUNDORF; 2nd Platoon was relieved from attachment to Company "C" 330th Infantry Regiment and reverted to Company control. Task Force Ritchie at this time had been dissolved and the Company moved to NEUNDORF on 5th of May 1945.

Company "C" maintained a Defensive Position across the ELBE River with the 1st Platoon attached to 331st Infantry Regiment at BADEZ, placed on a half hour alert and remained so until 5 May 1945. The Company (-1st Platoon) was in position at WALTERNIENBERG where Task Force Rogers was formed. Task Force Rogers was composed as follows - Company "C" (-1st Platoon); 1st Platoon of Company "D"; and Company "L" 331st Infantry Regiment under the command of Captain GLYNN O. ROGERS. Task Force Rogers was assembled in vicinity of WALTERNIENBERG in a Mobile Reserve and placed on a half hour alert for the purpose of holding open the Corridor to the 125th Cavalry Squadron, who were meeting the Russian Spearhead. This alert continued through the 4th of May 1945.

Company "D" during the period 1 May to 5 May 1945 was in position at WALTERNIENBERG as a Mobile Reserve for Task Force Ritchie.

Service Company remained in position at CALBE (D782751), supplying the Battalion.

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The Medical Detachment remained in position at WALTMANIENBERG (D889823), with the exception of Medical Teams that were assigned to various Companies throughout the Battalion. Sick call was held to a minimum, with the exception of the usual transportation difficulties of the unit's widely separated positions.

At 1630, 4 May 1945 Major MAURICE H. RAHE, Battalion S-3, received notification by phone from Major HARTMAN, Division G-3 that the 330th Infantry Regiment had contacted the Russians in the vicinity of D950950 and had even run an Allied PW Cage at ALLENGRABOW (B040090).

On the 4th of May Task Force Ritchie was dissolved. "A" Company remained attached to 329th Infantry Regiment, but was relieved from its Defensive Positions only after direct contact with the Russians had been established. "B" Company remained attached to 330th Infantry Regiment. "C" Company remained attached to 331st Infantry Regiment and "D" Company remained under Battalion control.

On 4 May all Companies except "A" Company returned to Battalion control and prepared to move to new locations. The Battalion CP was opened at CALBE (D782751); "B" Company at NEUNDORF; "C" Company at BARBY (D850825); "D" Company at CALBE (D782751); Medical Detachment and Service Company at CALBE (D782751); while "A" Company's disposition was as follows - Headquarters and 1st Platoon at WHEELBEN; 3rd Platoon at ZERBST; 2nd Platoon attached to 329th Infantry Regiment at HALBERSTEDT (D455775).

Lieutenant Colonel PAUL J. RITCHIE was awarded a Bronze Oakleaf Cluster to the Bronze Star on the 4th of May

6 May

At an Officer's meeting at the Battalion CP in CALBE Lt Col RITCHIE informed those present that the Battalion's mission was to establish and operate as Military Government. For this new mission, the Battalion was assigned to Division Artillery. Upon receipt of orders, the Battalion moved as a unit from their former locations to WOLFENBUTTELE (C917998), where the Battalion CP was set up. The Companies moved into the following Towns - Headquarters Company - WOLFENBUTTELE (C918887); "A" Company - VALLSTEDT (X795055); "B" Company - THIEDE (C881026); "C" Company - GR DENKT (C970980); "D" Company - AHLUM (X960010); Service Company and Medical Detachment - WOLFENBUTTELE (C917998) and were assigned areas to be Governed.

7 May - 9 May

Companies, on 7 May, spent the day performing First Echelon of Maintenance on their vehicles, functional duties and preparing to Govern their assigned area. Lt Col RITCHIE, at a Staff Meeting held 8 May informed those present that the Battalion was relieved from attachment to Division Artillery and attached to 330th Infantry Regiment as of 0800, 8 May 1945. This new mission was to occupy and govern the area now under control of the 41st Armored Infantry and 66th Armored Regiments. The Battalion then moved to new locations as follows - Headquarters, Headquarters Company and Medical Detachment - LICHTENBERG (C748995); "A" Company - LESSE (C725989); "B" Company - GUSTIDT (C960915); "C" Company - KL HEERE (C718887); "D" Company - SILLIUM (C671888); Service Company - STEINLAH (C776895) Upon arriving at these locations the Companies began to set up their Military Government Policies and Procedures, performing First Echelon of Maintenance, Resting and Refitting Troops. Instructions regarding Civilians were passed out to Companies and the problem of de-nazifying Germany began with apprehension of several SS troops, Party Members, inspecting records of Buergemeisters that were under the control of the

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Battalion, and last but not least to attempt to restore Germany as a Democratic Nation - within the areas assigned to the Battalion.

10 May - 19 May

Company "B" was relieved from assignment of governing OLBER (C713921); responsibility was assumed by "D" Company. Previous to this, "B" Company was assigned a very large area to Govern and almost every man was either on guard or pulling double shifts. The change of assignment of areas provided for a better means of equalizing responsibility throughout the Battalion and gave each Company an opportunity to rest and refit troops. On the 12th of May each member of the Battalion saw the long awaited film "Two Down and One To Go" and the VE Day film which provided for a better understanding of the "Point System" that Govern the Redeployment and Readjustment of Troops. Parties were held by all Companies in their respective areas, celebrating VE Day. All movies were held in Headquarters Company Mess Hall. On the 13th of May another change in responsibility of areas had taken place - "B" Company was relieved from the assignment of governing the town of KL ELBE (C732895) and responsibility was assumed by "C" Company. 1st Lt JAMES CROWLEY, assigned to "A" Company left for a furlough to the United States. During the remainder of the period up to 19th May the Battalion was primarily engaged in Military Government and guarding of vital installations; Tours were conducted through Herman Goering works and movie pictures were shown as often as possible. This was the only form of entertainment available for the troops.

On the 19th of May, Headquarters and Headquarters Company left LICHTENBERG to proceed to BADDECKENSTEDT (C719901) to assume control of new areas assigned the Battalion by higher Headquarters. Headquarters and Headquarters Company were billeted in BADDECKENSTEDT with the exception of the Mortar Platoon which was billeted in BINDER (C68912) and assigned a task of providing road blocks in the vicinity of BINDER. "A" Company remained in LESSE (C725989) to continue with their assigned mission of governing that area. "B" Company remained in GUSTEDT (C960915) to continue with their assigned mission of governing that area. "C" Company moved to SEHLDE (C735855) to assume responsibility of Military Government. Service Company moved to KL HEERE (C718887) to assume responsibility of Military Government. "D" Company moved to WALTWINSCH (C740040) to continue with their mission of Military Government, while the Medical Detachment moved to BADDECKENSTEDT.

20 May - 21 May

Upon arriving in new areas, all Companies in addition to occupying and governing their assigned areas, began the task of re-painting and re-servicing all vehicles. Training schedules were placed in effect, softball teams (inter-Battalion) were organized under the supervision of Capt CLYNN O. ROGERS, six (6) hour passes were established and a quota of men from each Company began daily visits to BAD HARZBURG for recreational purposes.

22 May - 24 May

The Battalion during this period carried on with its primary mission of Military Government. Personnel not engaged were following a Battalion Training Schedule. Foreign vehicles that were in the Battalion were turned over to Battalion Supply to be evacuated to Ordnance Depots. Lt Col RITCHIE received notification by phone that the Battalion would be prepared to participate in a Ceremony held in honor of high ranking Russian Generals, who were guests of the Commanding General, XIII Corps, 26 May 1945.

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Lt Col PAUL J. RITCHIE presented awards to the following Officer and Enlisted Men, 24 May 1945:

Major GEORGE P. CALLISON - Bronze Star for Meritorious Service
Staff Sergeant Frank A. Pettinate - Bronze Star for Meritorious Service
Technician Fifth Grade Robert Cooley - Bronze Star for Meritorious Service

25 May - 27 May

T/Sgt Walter F. Layman and T/5 Anthony J. Nasimento, Headquarters Company, returned to duty after a seven day pass in Paris and reported that they had been involved in an automobile accident on the return trip. Capt BURTON C. POTTER, who had attended the Information and Education School was also returning to the Battalion with T/Sgt Layman and T/5 Nasimento with a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton truck, and in the accident Capt POTTER received injuries about the head and was evacuated to a Hospital. Capt POTTER is expected to return to duty within ten days.

2nd Lt JERALD E. SMITH, Platoon Leader of the Assault Gun Platoon was promoted to 1st Lt per par 3, SO #136, Headquarters, 9th US Army, dated 16 May 1945.

28 May

A quota of Enlisted Men and Officers of the Battalion left for VALKENBERG and MAASTRICHT, Holland on three day recreational passes. Capt MORDIE I. GARBER was placed in charge of the group of Officers and Enlisted Men.

A Showdown inspection of Chemical, Engineer, Medical and Signal Property was held throughout the Battalion. Orders were received from 83rd Infantry Division that an Advance Detail would be prepared to move to new location to arrange for billets for the Battalion. Companies were notified and the contemplated detail of three men from each Company, and one man from Medical Detachment, and one officer were selected. The Advance Detail was to be prepared to move no later than 31 May 1945.

29 May

The Battalion prepared to turn over Military Government responsibility to British Authorities as per orders from higher Headquarters and relief is expected 30 May 1945. The 30th of May, being Memorial Day, plans were drawn up to hold an appropriate Ceremony for the Battalion on the Parade Grounds just opposite Battalion Headquarters in BADDECKENSFEDT.

30 May

At 1100 hours the Battalion was formed on the Parade Grounds. The blank ammunition that was to be used by three assault guns in firing a salute was obtained without too much difficulty and arrived just fifteen minutes prior to the Ceremonies. At the Ceremony, Lt Col PAUL J. RITCHIE, presented The Bronze Star Medal to the following Officers and Enlisted Men of the Battalions:

Major MAURICE H. RAHE - For meritorious service
Capt WILLARD L. THOMPSON - For Meritorious Service
1st Lt HUGH ROWLAND - For Bravery in Action
1st Lt BENJAMIN T. RODINI - For Meritorious Service
2nd Lt JAMES J. FYSHER - For Meritorious Service

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T/Sgt Arthur J. McGuire - For Meritorious Service - C Company
S/Sgt Marion L. Campbell - For Bravery in Action - B Company
S/Sgt Joseph Driscoll - For Meritorious Service - Med Det
Sgt Robert S. Lamneck - For Bravery in Action - A Company
Sgt Robert L. Parker - For Bravery in Action - A Company
Sgt Alden E. Reinhart - For Bravery in Action - A Company
T/5 Alfred C. English - For Meritorious Service - Hq Company
Pfc Alfred H. Cezarie - For Bravery in Action - Med Det

After the presentation of the Awards, a fitting tribute was paid to the members of the Battalion who had given their lives during the Battalion's participation in combat. Lt HALLINAN, Battalion Adjutant, read the names, after which a volley of three rounds were fired from 105 Assault Guns under the supervision of Capt GLYNN O. ROGERS, Taps were then sounded in a final tribute to these brave men.

The Battalion then assembled to hear the Principal Address which was given by Lt Col RITCHIE. At the conclusion of the Ceremony, Companies returned to their respective billet areas.

31 May

The American Red Cross Clubmobile visited the various Companies throughout the Battalion to serve doughnuts and coffee. Major MAURICE H. RAHE, conferred with British Officials regarding relief of Military Government responsibility. By 2400 hours, all Companies with the exception of "D" Company had been relieved by the British - "D" Troop, 212 Group, 64th Medium Regiment, RA. It is expected that "D" Company will be relieved shortly.

Excess Ordnance ammunition and Chemical ammunition was turned into Battalion Supply. Expendible equipment from mechanized Flamethrowers was turned into 83rd Division Chemical Officer.

All vehicles are being prepared for movement, but maintenance and training will continue through 4th of June 1945. Warning Orders from 83rd Infantry Division were issued to prepare to move on or about 5 June 1945. Contemplated plans for movement - tanks will proceed to new destination by rail while personnel and wheeled vehicles will travel by road.

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