



C O N T E N T S

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Unit Journal

- 11 Letters, Headquarters Ninth United States Army,
Confirming Claims for Damage or Destruction of
Enemy Aircraft.



I

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AIR ACTIVITY

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AIR ACTIVITY



Only scattered raids were made by enemy aircraft during the first days of the month during which the 83d Infantry Division made its drive from the Rhine to the Elbe River. These raids were made by flights of from one to fifteen planes, FW 190s and ME 109s.

At 1430B 4 April Platoon X, giving AA protection to the 83d Infantry Division CP, engaged and destroyed one ME 109 which had strafed BAD LIPPSPRINGER. The plane, flying at the extremely low altitude of 100 feet, also fired on an air OP and scored a hit on the wing of the air OP. A Category I was claimed by Platoon X, and confirmation of this claim has been received by this Headquarters.

Between 1645 and 1700 4 April two flights of ME 109s came over the defended area of Battery C. These two flights, consisting of two planes in the first and fifteen in the second, were presumably on reconnaissance, as they circled the area at various altitudes from 1000 to 6000 feet; but, made no attack. The planes were driven off by heavy fire from Battery C.

Twelve FW 190s swept over the Division Artillery Airstrip and Division CP at 1645B 8 April. They were engaged by one of the half-tracks protecting the airstrip and units of Platoon X. The enemy aircraft entered the defended area at extremely low altitude flying straight down a valley formed by hills surrounding ESCHENHAUSEN, Germany thereby making it impossible for most of the fire units to engage them. The half-track at the airstrip hit and destroyed one FW 190. The 330th Infantry reported the plane crashing in its forward area.

At 1715B 8 April eight FW 190s passed over the defended area of Battery C at tree top height. The fire units of the second platoon of Battery C, which were located just to the rear of the 330th Infantry forward elements, engaged the aircraft and destroyed one.

The destruction of the first German "L" type plane by this organization came at 0745 hours 11 April when Battery B engaged a FI 156 (Storch) flying at extremely low altitude at approximately 80 MPH. Gun crews of Battery fired only .50 caliber machine guns at the target and promptly destroyed it.

Battery D was withdrawn from the defense of the 324th FA Battalion on 12 April and moved up to cover the Elbe River Crossing. Platoon X was attached to Battery D and AA defense was set up for the Elbe River Bridge, with guns being placed on both sides of the river. Five fire units were across early on the 14th and two others went across later in the period. Batteries A and B moved with supported FA Battalions to the East side of the Elbe River on 15 April 1945.

The enemy launched his first air attack on the bridge site at 1300B hours 12 April - 4 ME 109s made a low-level bombing attack from the East. They withdrew from the attack immediately upon being fired on. There was no damage from the raid.

Between 0530B and 0610B hours 14 April the enemy attacked the bridge and bridge site six times. He employed FW 190s, ME 410s, ME 210s, and JU 88s in low-level bombing and strafing missions. No damage resulted from the attacks, and the enemy aircraft in each instance gave up the attack when fired upon.

At 0815B 14 April one JU 87 made a low-level strafing attack on the area west of the BARNY Bridge. No damage resulted from the attack. The plane was destroyed. The pilot was killed and the observer wounded and captured - evacuated through medical channels.

The enemy flew three armed reconnaissance missions over the bridge site at 0630B 16 April, one at 1730, and one at 2330.

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At 2110B 17 April the GAF made a low-level bombing run on the bridge in two flights, one from the NE and one from the SE, diagonally to the bridge. The planes were taken under fire before they reached the river. They broke formation before reaching their objective. The majority turned east; however, three turned west and flew over the Division CP. The bomber formations were a conglomeration of all types, JU 88s, ME 410s, ME 111s, and JU 188s. They had a small fighter cover of six ME 109s. They strafed the Division area and dropped their bombs but caused no damage. The attack was over a fifteen minute period. Two bombers were destroyed.

At 2040B 18 April three FW 190s made a low-level bombing and strafing attack on the east bank of the river opposite BARBY. They withdrew from attack when taken under fire. Two were destroyed.

At 2055B 18 April the enemy launched a determined attack against the bridgehead. He employed ME 111s, JU 88s, and ME 410s to bomb and strafe the area. Many HE and anti-personnel bombs were dropped. Tactics that were employed in the hey-day of the Luftwaffe came into use again during the raid when one bomber would hit an objective strafing, thereby, drawing fire while another came in from the opposite direction to drop a bomb load. The only reported damage in the sector was to one 40mm gun section. Battery A suffered one officer killed, six men wounded. One bomber was destroyed.

At 2100B 18 April three FW 190s and one JU 88 attacked the 329th Infantry sector. They bombed and strafed from low altitudes. No damage resulted from the attack. The JU 88 was probably destroyed after receiving several 40mm hits. At 2110B 18 April one ME 111 dropped bombs north and south of CALBE. No damage resulted.

At 0705B 19 April a flight of six FW 190s bombed the defended area of Battery A from an altitude of 5000 feet. During a fifteen second engagement one of the attacking planes was shot down. The pilot bailed out and the plane crashed at D 923796 (Vic KAMERITZ).

The same day two FW 190s made a reconnaissance run over the defended areas of Batteries A and D at 2020B hours. They maintained an altitude of 4500 feet, travelling in a northeasterly direction. Both batteries engaged the planes; but, destroyed no planes.

On 20 April the enemy was very active over the bridgehead, making a determined effort to bomb out the bridges across the Elbe River and installations in the bridgehead area. At 0630B a JU88 made its appearance over the defended area of Battery D. No hostile act was committed, though it came in at a very low altitude. The Battery fired on the plane but made no hits.

At 0724B 20 April one ME 109, flying at 1000 feet, bombed the defended area of Battery B. No damage or casualties resulted. The plane was hit by Battery B and crashed at D 912843.

One JU 87 bombed the defended area of Battery A from a very low altitude at 0740B 20 April. No damage was caused from the bombing and no hits were made on the plane.

This attack was followed by a two plane formation, one ME 109 and one JU 88, at 0745B. Upon approaching the defended area of Battery D, the JU 88 came in low and drew fire as the ME 109 kept high and dropped its bombs. Some of the bombs hit within one hundred yards of the bridge. Only damage resulting was to the roof of Battery D CP. No casualties were suffered. The JU 88 was destroyed.

At 1730B 23 April one ME 262 made a reconnaissance flight over the defended areas of Batteries A and C. The plane was fired on but no hits were made. This was the last plane over the bridgehead area.

Thirteen enemy planes were destroyed during the month.

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II

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GROUND ACTIVITY

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GROUND ACTIVITY



With the Division moving ahead as rapidly as it did, many enemy pockets of resistance were by-passed by the Infantry. These were encountered several times by reconnaissance parties of the batteries and their supported units.

In the early morning of 1 April the reconnaissance party of Second Platoon Battery D and supported FA Batteries were fired on by machine pistols from a woods vicinity of AHEIN. Part of the reconnaissance party of the supported unit was captured. Second Platoon Battery D suffered no casualties.

The combined reconnaissance parties of Battery A and 908th FA Battalion captured an enemy machine gun nest and its occupants at 1803B 1 April near LONUN-DORF. There were no casualties in either unit suffered while taking this enemy position.

The communications corporal of First Platoon Battery B was fatally injured at 1000B 8 April when the jeep in which he and the platoon sergeant were riding was hit by fire from an enemy tank about one and one-half miles SE of ECHERSHAUSEN. An 88mm AP shell hit the jeep and the corporal. His leg was torn off. 20mm fire was also received.

About 100 rounds of enemy artillery fell in the Battery D area on the west side of the Elbe River Bridge site between 1715-1830B 13 April killing four men and wounding seven others. Three 2½ ton trucks were damaged.

On 13 April at approximately 1900, a gas supply convoy, consisting of two men from Battery A and 12 men from 907th FA Battalion, was stopped just west of SCHADELEHEN by some released British PWs and warned that SS troops were in the town and had an ambush prepared, and that they had shot up the town. The men halted when they received the warning and were attacked almost immediately by the SS troops. The men took positions in the ditches and killed six of the attacking troops, and possibly more. One Battery A man was seriously wounded when hit by a hand grenade. All men and equipment were evacuated.

A total of twenty-two PWs were captured by Headquarters Battery during the month, most of them being taken by reconnaissance parties. One PW, a General-leutenant of the German General Staff, was captured by Headquarters reconnaissance party on 12 April. PW stated he was on a special mission from Berlin to check the situation on the Western Front. He had left Berlin two days before his capture.

As part of Task Force "May", Battery C assisted in the capture of thirty-one PWs in a woods - vicinity ASTFELD at 1130 11 April. One of the half-tracks of Battery C spearheaded the attack that cleared out the woods.

At 1130B 13 April the supply vehicles of Battery D captured the enemy garrison of ATHENSLAHEN, Germany. The garrison consisted of four officers and an undetermined number of enlisted men.

At 1005B 18 April ten high velocity shells landed near the CP of Battery A, vicinity of KAMERITZ. One enlisted man was killed and one officer slightly wounded.

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OPERATIONS OF PROVISIONAL PLATOONS

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OPERATIONS OF PROVISIONAL PLATOONS

Platoon "Y" Platoon Y, attached to the 330th Infantry Regiment since 27 March, was given the mission of protecting their columns against enemy aircraft on their movements and also to be used against ground targets whenever necessary. Immediately after joining the Regiment a half-track was attached to each of its three battalions and one half-track and one 40mm was kept at the Regimental CP. Up to 4 April the Platoon was used entirely in an AA role and was not called on for ground support.

The platoon was released from attachment to the 330th Infantry Regiment on 4 April and was attached to the 801st TD Battalion. The platoon then consisted of four half-tracks. The platoon was attached to Company A, 801st TD Battalion, with one half-track being placed in support of each of their platoons and one kept at the company CP to be used with the reconnaissance platoon and, also, as a reserve. The tracks with the platoons were deployed on road blocks, each roadblock consisting of two towed three inch guns and one half-track. The mission of the TD Battalion was to protect the right flank of the Division and to move forward when the 1st Division, on our right, paralleled the road blocks. During the period 4 April to 10 April no action occurred and the platoon moved several times a day.

On 10 April Platoon Y set up AA defense around the Division's south bridge across the Weser River at GONDRA. No enemy air or ground action took place. The next day Platoon Y was relieved by Battery A 453d AAA Auto Wpns Battalion and rejoined Company A 801st TD Battalion.

On 12 April the half-tracks, together with an M-18 of the second platoon, fired on a wooded area south of SSESSEN and captured 35 German soldiers.

On 17 April the half-tracks with the 3d Platoon fired on the woods around a road block after being fired upon by enemy troops. Many enemy troops were taken prisoner. On 20 April Platoon Y was released from 801st TD Battalion.

Platoon "Z" On 2 April 1945 Platoon Z was attached to the 3d Battalion, 331st Infantry and directed to one of the companies by the Battalion Commanding Officer. The possible deployment of the half-tracks and 40mm was planned by the Battalion Commanding Officer and platoon commanders. The Infantry, having a company of tanks attached to them, were to ride the tanks until they met opposition and then dismount and "clean up". The half-tracks were to be used in the column, with the 40mm before at Battalion CP on call. The column consisted of one tank with infantry riding, one half-track, one tank, another half-track, three tanks, a half-track, anti-tank guns, one tank, and one half-track in the rear of the column.

The mission of the platoons while in column was to discourage the use of panzerfaust, lay fire on road blocks, strong points, or targets of opportunity, and to protect the rear of the column. The terrain was hilly and somewhat wooded.

The first part of the operation was uneventful. The first town was taken without a shot being fired. The column proceeded down a wooded road toward the second objective. The next town was not to be taken by the column, but, because the column passed the town so closely, it was necessary to at least pin the enemy down long enough to allow the column to pass through to open terrain. Reconnaissance proved the town to be defended and two wagons loaded with German troops were spotted on the same road the column was travelling. A plan of attack was made immediately and a reconnaissance of positions made. The element of surprise was complete and the terrain was such that it permitted the deployment of two half-tracks in the edge of the woods without detection. The Infantry

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dismounted and came up on line with the half-tracks. The tank column moved out and immediately drew fire from a castle nearby. The tanks opened fire, and the enemy on the wagons started deploying along the road. The half-tracks had been given three targets, the two wagons, a house on the edge of town where enemy troops were seen, and another suspicious looking house. When the command "fire" was given to the track crews, they gave all three targets a thorough saturation - and then sprayed the town and fields, firing on what enemy they could spot.

After this action the column moved through the edge of town with little or no trouble. The column passed the two wagons and there were no live enemy to be seen. Many were cut to pieces along the road and in the fields. Another force took this town approximately an hour later, and they met no opposition. The commander of this force stated that 60 PWs were taken, and he estimated that the half-tracks had accounted for 50 killed.

For the remainder of the day the column stayed on the road and met no resistance until an enemy SP gun made its appearance. The gun was destroyed by artillery fire.

The Third Battalion, 331st Infantry, Commander was impressed by the provisional platoon, its equipment, and its work.

The platoon was then attached to the 801st TD Battalion. It was further attached to Company C of this Battalion. One half-track to each of the three platoons and one half-track plus a 40mm gun held in reserve at the company CP. The 40mm gun was to be used, on call, at any roadblocks the company commander anticipated the enemy to appear. The 40mm crew accounted for fifteen PWs the first day.

In all cases a thorough reconnaissance was made of each road block and the half-tracks were placed where they could make best use of the field of fire and at the same time remain mobile to alter positions when necessary. No enemy action was encountered during the time the platoon was attached to Company C.

The platoon, with one platoon of TDs, moved across the Weser River Bridge for air-ground defense of the Bridge.

On 13 April the platoon was attached to Company B, 801st TD Battalion, and the disposition was the same as was with Company C, only in some cases it was necessary to use a half-track with reconnaissance troops or to accompany the mess truck to and from the company CP. Scores of prisoners were taken.

The tank destroyers personnel were favorably impressed with the platoon and were very disappointed when it was detached. Some of the TD personnel were trying to devise a mount so as to employ twin .50 calibers on their M-3s.

Bridgehead Platoons Y and Z were relieved from the 801st TD Battalion on 20 April and given a mission of air-ground defense of a section of
Defense 83d Division Bridgehead area. Strengthened by 36 men from the five batteries, the two platoons took up defensive positions along a dyke ranging from 100 to 500 yards from the Elbe River, north of BARBY. The ground defense was very easy due to the fact that the dyke had several prepared positions which were used.

Seven half-tracks were placed in strategic points along the platoon sector. One half-track and one 40mm gun remained at the CP as a mobile reserve. The sector was broken four ways and contact points made. Each contact point was under the command of a sergeant. There were 11 outposts and four contact points including the CP. Each contact point was manned by a sergeant who walked to all the OPs in his sector. Three river barges and one house boat docked on the opposite side of the river were ordered to move across to the west side of the

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river. There was some question in their minds as to what to do about complying with the order. They were promised by the Germans that, if they pulled out into the river, they would receive artillery fire; however, in less than four hours, they were all on the west side of the river.

On the afternoon of 21 April one 20mm flak gun fired on a L-5 and in return the area was machine-gunned by one of the half-tracks. There was no more fire from that point. About an hour later two other 20mm flak guns fired on the L-5 from further back in the woods but the artillery silenced them quickly.

The night of 21 April the CP was attacked by a four or five man enemy patrol which scored four direct hits with panzerfaust and damaged equipment at the CP. Two men were wounded very slightly. The area was quickly encircled, but no enemy movement was found.

The platoons were relieved 22 April by a reconnaissance unit of the Division, and the units returned to their respective batteries.

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ROSTER OF COMMANDERS, STAFF AND SPECIAL STAFF

BATTALION COMMANDER	TROUSDALE, George W., Lt. Col (1 April to 30 April)	0189048
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	RITTERSPACHER, Phillip C., Major (1 April to 30 April)	0297704
S-1	MONTROY, Wilfred R., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01060894
S-2	COHEN, Samuel, Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	0385879
S-3	GENRI, Errol O., Major (1 April to 30 April)	0338056
S-4	FISHER, John S., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	01041272
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	OTTERBOURG, Charles R., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01046823
SURGEON	WIREN, William E., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	01692265
SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICER	COOK, Harold D., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01544407
CHAPLAIN	KINIRY, John P., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	0403147
<u>HEAD BATTERIES BATTERY</u>		
BATTERY COMMANDER	PATTERSON, Daniel C., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	0311250
<u>BATTERY A</u>		
BATTERY COMMANDER	CHAMBERS, Stewart M., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	0338364
<u>BATTERY B</u>		
BATTERY COMMANDER	SCHULTZ, Carl T., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	01042939
<u>BATTERY C</u>		
BATTERY COMMANDER	SPIES, Thomas M., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	01042434
<u>BATTERY D</u>		
BATTERY COMMANDER	NEWELL, Gordon R., Capt. (1 April to 30 April)	0451363
<u>PLATOON X</u>		
PLATOON COMMANDER	JURY, Raymond F., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01047596
<u>PLATOON Y</u>		
PLATOON COMMANDER	HATTON, Wilfred C., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01045764
<u>PLATOON Z</u>		
PLATOON COMMANDER	HEDDEN, Henry C., 1st Lt. (1 April to 30 April)	01047565

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IV

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TROOP LIST

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TROOP LIST - 1 - 30 APRIL

453d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion



Headquarters and Headquarters Battery

Battery A

Battery B

Battery C

Battery D

Provisional Platoons (Tactical only)

Platoon X

Platoon Y

Platoon Z

Attached: (For Operations only)

2nd Platoon, Battery A, 226th AAA B/L Battalion.

2 Sess - 7 April through 30 April.

2 Sess - 12 April through 30 April.

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V

ROSTER OF COMMANDERS, STAFF, AND SPECIAL STAFF

VI

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AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

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AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



Bronze Star Medal

GARLAND, David B., 1st Lt., O1042816

31 March 1945.

BELL, David M., 1st Lt., O1042762

29 April 1945.

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VII

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LOSSES IN ACTION

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LOSSES IN ACTION

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>IIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>WIC</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RTD & REINF</u>
Headquarters Battery	0	0	0	0	3	3	1
Medical Detachment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Battery A	1	5	1	0	11	8	2
Battery B	1	0	0	0	3	4	6
Battery C	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Battery D	3	5	0	00	2	10	4
TOTAL	5	10	1	0	11	26	18



VIII

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APPENDICES

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