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HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 83, U. S. Army

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Auth. C. G. 83d Inf. Div.

Initials *npc*

Date *9 March, 1945*

319.1/401

9 March 1945

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Report After/After Action Reports.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D.C.
(Thru: Channels,

In compliance with paragraph 10, C-3, AR 345-105, After Action Reports, for Headquarters 83d Infantry Division covering the period 1-28 February 1945 are submitted herewith:

- a. Original Unit: No Change.
- b. Changes in organization: None.
- c. Strength:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Warrant Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
1 February 1945	47	8	116
28 February 1945	<u>49</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>120</u>
Net increase	2	0	4

d. Stations:

Hamoir, Belgium- 1 Feb 45 to 6 Feb 45
Dalhem, Belgium- 6 Feb 45 to 22 Feb 45
Schaufenberg, Germany- 22 Feb 45 to 28 Feb 45
Hasselweiler, Germany 28 Feb 45.

e. Marches: See Inclosure No. 1.

f. Campaigns:

- (1) Campaign Germany (No.1)
- (2) 1-28 February 1945
- (3) Purpose: See Inclosure #1.

(4) Ltr Hq European T of Opns, AG 200.6 OpGA, Subject: "Battle Participation Awards-Germany Campaign (No.1)" dtd 24 December 1944.

g. Battles: See narrative reports, Inclosure #1.

h. Commanding Officers in important Engagements: Major General Macon commanded throughout this period.

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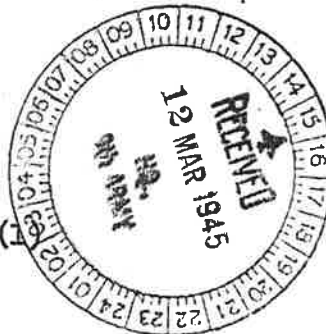
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Ltr Action Against Enemy, After Action Reports, cont'd
(9 March 1945)

- i. Losses in action: None.
- j. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action: None.
- k. Photographs: None.

For the Commanding General:



N. P. Cowden
N. P. COWDEN
Major AGD
Asst Adj General.

- 1 Incl:
83d Inf Div After Action Report (1)

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F E B R U A R Y

At the beginning of February the 83d Division engaged in a period of training and rehabilitation South of LIEGE, Belgium. Its Command Post was at HAMOIR, Belgium (K433055) and units were assembled in that general area. At this time the Division recently returned from participation in the Ardennes offensive under control of the VII Corps, in First U.S. Army.

Training during the first few days of the month was devoted mainly to individual and small unit training, with emphasis on getting recently received reinforcements thoroughly familiar with all infantry weapons, and the bazooka and rifle grenades. Problems for squad and platoon tactics were practiced. Division tests were set up for certain units but were cancelled because of the movement of the Division which occurred on 6 February. Thus, the period of training begun during the last week of January was brought to a close.

The Division was placed on the alert status and moved to assembly areas East of the MEUSE River between LIEGE, Belgium and MAAS-TRICHT, Holland. There another period of training was initiated. Principal emphasis was placed on the attack over open terrain of a fortified position. Exercises were conducted both during hours of daylight and darkness. Special attention was given to the technique of street and village fighting as developed during previous combat operations. Also, tactics of the attack of an infantry company supported by tanks was stressed. Individuals were trained to use other than their primary weapons by rotation of infantry weapons and familiarization firing. Tactical exercises included marches which were combined with instruction on proper care of the feet.

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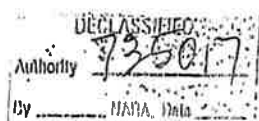
Division teams tested selected companies in village fighting and the attack over open terrain against fortified positions, continuing for a night and day. Smoke was used to cover the advance of attacking forces, and smoke pots and dynamite charges were employed to create the illusion of actual battle conditions. In tests held during daylight hours, tanks supported units of infantry in the attack. One problem consisted of an attack on the Division Command Post by an infantry company supported by a platoon of tanks.

When these tests had been completed, training was expanded to include night problems in which terrain was selected so as to prevent the use of familiar landmarks in determining direction. Leaders were thus forced to rely upon a thorough understanding of the use of the compass. The use of signals at night was stressed. Combat formations for the squad and platoon were practised, illustrating methods of advance across open ground, how to establish a base of fire, and the proper use of a maneuvering element. Other subjects covered during this period of training included relief of front line units, organization for security after taking an objective, organization of a rear slope defense for security, combat patrolling and outpost guard. Pillboxes in the training areas were utilized to practice correct methods of assault against strongpoints and heavily fortified emplacements.

Instruction was given to all troops in detection and disarming of various types of mines, and typical booby trap devices known to be currently employed by the enemy. Proper use of demolitions by assault troops was also demonstrated for the benefit of all units. Personnel were instructed on the importance of submitting prompt and accurate operation reports on enemy mortar fire and artillery shelling. Other special features of this period of training were demonstrations of the new type flame-thrower recently installed on some of the tanks of the 736th Tank Battalion, and gunnery practice with the new 75mm and 76mm guns mounted on tanks. SCR 300 radios were placed on a number of the M-24 tanks for employment in infantry-tank operations, and certain tanks were improved by additional armor plating. The

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83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop practiced using smoke in the attack on a strongpoint, and gave a demonstration of methods of reconnaissance in a defile. Toward the end of the period in the DALHEM assembly areas, problems were carried out on battalion scale, coordinating the training of the smaller units. A school was conducted for recent infantry officer reinforcements on artillery observation and the adjustment of artillery fires. The 736th Tank Battalion fired the 75mm and 76mm guns on the range, and later the 2" mortar and the 105mm assault guns of the assault gun platoon. The 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion began reorganization under the revised Tables of Organization for a self-propelled unit, and began training with 11 self-propelled guns (M-18) received on 22 February.

Following the movement of the Division into the general vicinity of SCHAUFENBERG, Germany (K899543), between 22 and 26 February, units resumed training in the reserve area. Village fighting and the attack across open terrain were emphasized prior to the commitment of the Division East of the ROER river. New weapons were test-fired, and rotation of weapons in small arms and familiarization firing continued. Stress was laid on improving communication procedures by conducting unit schools for officers and operators in the principles of Slidex and radio procedure, and voice training for wire communication personnel. Units were instructed to conduct their own test by setting up problems and appointing umpires from among their own officers.

With the units of the Division moving into action all efforts of training were concentrated in a newly created reinforcement school. Its purpose was to train, orient and equip reinforcements. Proven practices and techniques were stressed and taught by veterans of three campaigns. Before assignment, each reinforcement was given the tricks of the trade and made to feel that he was an important member of the Division.

During a visit to XIX Corps Headquarters on 4 February, the general plan of future operations was made known to the Division Commander. The Commanding General then oriented the Division Staff and Unit Commanders on the details of the forthcoming operation "GRENADE".

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The plan initially indicated the 83d Division would have a part in the main effort to be made on the Western Front. This plan placed the Division in XIX Corps reserve, and according to Letter of Instructions #111, issued by XIX Corps, the XIX Corps would cross the ROER River North and South of JULICH, with the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions abreast, the 30th Division on the right, to capture JULICH and the STAATS FOREST HAMBACH area and protect the right flank of the NINTH U.S. Army. The 83d Division was to pass through the Corps bridgehead and continue the attack to the Northeast, initial formation of two regiments abreast. One regiment of the Division was to be attached to the 29th Division after the initial crossing.

The first unit of the Division to become engaged in operation "GRENADE" was the Division Artillery, which passed to the operational control of the 29th Infantry Division on XIX Corps order on 6 February and moved the following day into that Division's area at SCHAUFENBERG, Germany (K899543).

Previous to that time oral instructions had been received from higher headquarters on 2 February, alerting the Division for movement into XIX Corps reserve, and parties were dispatched for reconnaissance of roads and billeting facilities in the vicinity of VISE, Belgium (K5693).

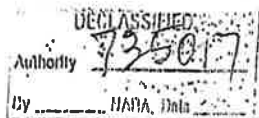
On 5 February the Division gave the necessary instructions to units for the movement to the North, using two independent routes. At 1600 on 6 February the Division Command Post closed at HAMOIR and moved to DALHEM (K579370), Belgium. The 329th Infantry moved to EKKEIRADE, Holland (K613472), the 330th Infantry moved to MHEER, Holland (K631439) and the 331st Infantry moved to BERNEAU, Belgium (K587402).

On 6 February, XIX Corps Field Order #30 was issued and the Division was given the mission of being initially in Corps reserve. In addition one regimental combat team was to be prepared to move by motor and be attached to 29th Division after that Division had seized its bridgehead. The 83d Division would be prepared to resume control of this combat team on the line of the Corps bridgehead and continue the attack to the Northeast. In compliance, plans were made which called for the 330th Combat Team to be attached to the 29th Division. However, Operation "GRENADE"

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was postponed on 10 February and, remaining in place, the regiments continued training. The XIX Corps Letter of Instructions of 9 February gave the Division the alternate plan that should it become advisable to continue the advance within the Corps zone with the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions abreast, the 83d Division would be committed on the left of the 29th Division.

The go ahead sign was given by the XIX Corps Letter of Instructions which ordered the Division to displace to assembly positions vicinity SCHAUFENBERG - DURBOSLAR - KOSLAR as this area was vacated by 29th Division. The Division on 22 February issued movement orders and outlined also the various projected plans of operation for the Division when it should be committed. The movement into Germany by the Division began on 22 February when the Division Command Post moved to SCHAUFENBERG, Germany (K902-544). On the following day the 330th Combat Team (less artillery) moved to assembly area vicinity of SCHLEIDEN (K948551) and was attached to the 29th Infantry Division. The 331st Infantry moved to ALSDORF (K8954) and the 329th Infantry moved to ZOPPENBERG (K8753). All units of the Division were in Germany by 26 February, prepared for commitment.

At 0330, 23 February the XIX Corps attacked across the ROER River. The 330th Combat Team, operating under control of the 29th Division, started their crossing on 24 February to relieve the 115th Infantry and continue the attack. The attack was launched at 0530 on 25 February and by 1330 the 330th had advanced to take the two towns of PATTERN (FO563) and MERSCH (FO564). By the end of the day Company L was in SEVENICH (FO564) and the 1st Battalion occupied the town of MUNTZ (FO466). In the meantime, Instructions from higher headquarters gave the 83d Division the mission of remaining in Corps reserve, prepared to move on six hours notice to pass through the 29th or 30th Infantry Divisions and continue the attack; or, attack in its zone between the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions, enveloping MUNCHEN-GLADBACH from the East; or, protect the Corps right flank as the 30th Division advanced. The 83d Division Artillery ceased to be within effective range of the enemy and was relieved from control of the 29th Division and attached to the XIX Corps Artillery.

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The 330th Combat Team continued the attack on 26 February and captured the towns of HASSELSWEILER (FO566), GEVELSDORF (FO568) and ISEN KROIDT (FO669) against light resistance. The Division assumed control of the 330th at 0700, 27 February and the regiment effected general rehabilitation. At 2300, 27 February the 331st Infantry was attached to 2d Armored Division; the 3d Battalion, 331st Infantry and the 908th Field Artillery Battalion moved to the 2d Armored Division area while the rest of the regiment remained on a one hour alert.

XIX Corps Letter of Instructions as of 2015, 27 February returned the 83d Division Artillery to Division control and ordered the 83d Division (less 330th and 331st Combat Teams) to move to assembly area vicinity of OUSTON (FO863) commencing at 0900, 28 February. The move was completed by 1830, 28 February which placed all combat elements of the Division on the East side of the ROER River. The 331st Combat Team supported the advance of the 2d Armored Division.

At the close of the month the combat efficiency of the Division was excellent. Training during the month had enabled reinforcements to obtain a degree of efficiency which was revealed by their success in combat East of the ROER. Changes in attachments to the Division during the month saw the 774th Tank Battalion relieved from attachment on 3 February and attached to the 78th Infantry Division. The 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed) was attached on 2 February and the 736th Tank Battalion (less Company C) was attached on 6 February.

Immediate future plans of the Division as revealed by the Corps Commander indicated that the 83d Division would be employed around 1200, 1 March, on the Corps right flank, taking in the main road from GREVENBROICH to the HEMMERDEN - NEUSS Road and securing NEUSS and the bridges over the RHINE.

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OPERATIONS G-2

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The month opened with the Division attached to VII Corps, First United States Army. The Division, as well as the entire Corps had been withdrawn from the line. Later, as XIX Corps reserve, Ninth United States Army, the Division moved to vicinity of DALLHEM (580369) BELGIUM and thence to vicinity of ALSDORF (19054) GERMANY. As XIX Corps attacked across the ROER River 23 February the Division remained in Corps reserve. Division Artillery and 330th Infantry, attached to the 29th Division, and 331st Infantry attached to the 2d Armored Division were the only units committed during the month.

The 59th Infantry Division and the 363d Volksgrenadier Division initially opposed the XIX Corps on the east bank of the ROER River. Boundary between these Divisions was vicinity of JULICH, the town inclusive in 59th Infantry Division sector. The 1034 Regiment and 1036 Regiment were originally in the line. The 1035 Regiment had been reported dissolved. This information was confirmed prior to our attack. The 958 and 959 Regiments of the 367 Volksgrenadier Division were initially in line with 957 Volksgrenadier Regiment as the organic reserve. Four days after XIX Corps launched its attack, only battle groups from these two divisions were being contacted, and as the attack gained momentum, the enemy was forced to commit his reserves piecemeal, as evidenced by the employment of the 9 Panzer and 11 Panzer Divisions. Elements of the 9 Panzer Division were first contacted in the vicinity of STEINSTRASS (F1259). Elements of the 11 Panzer Division were first contacted in vicinity of TITZ. Elements of the 15 Panzer Regiment (11 Division) were identified fighting as infantry. For two days the enemy found difficulty in moving his tanks: Our extensive air cover, and his obvious shortage of gasoline. As the 29th US Infantry Division and 2d US Armored Division neared

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MUNCHEN-GLADBACH and NEUSS respectively, a variety of other battle groups were also contacted.

The enemy's main line of defense was well back from the river. Natural terrain features were utilized as had the prime capability of flooding the ROER River. However, lack of sufficient troops prevented him from establishing his defense in depth. As he was forced to fall back the enemy built strong points around the edge of towns for the terrain offered no other tactical assistance. In many instances when the enemy's defensive positions were outflanked and became untenable, he chose to surrender rather than withdraw or continue a useless fight. His artillery was put in a precarious position since communications were being continually disrupted by our intensive artillery bombardments. This was evident by the number of pieces overrun and by the lack of artillery fire. As our attack progressed the bulk of the opposition came from high velocity weapons, principally tanks or self-propelled guns. In some places tank turrets and guns were dismounted and dug well into the ground. This afforded a delaying weapon that was at once effective and comparatively inexpensive. As the period closed the enemy attempted to establish defensive lines but lack of reserves, coupled with XIX Corps superiority in men and materiel forced him to continue his retreat.

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A W A R D S

	DSM	Bronze Star	Silver Star	Total
Headquarters 83d Inf Div	1	13		14
329th Inf Regt		73	15	88
330th Inf Regt		50	4	54
331st Inf Regt		158	24	182
Headquarters 83d Div Arty		3		3
322d FA Bn		49	7	56
323d FA Bn		7		7
324th FA Bn		23	1	24
908th FA Bn		14		14
308th Engr Bn		16		16
308th Med Bn		6		6
83d Cav Rcn Tr		9		9
Hq Co (Sp Trs)				
83d Sig Co		13		13
83d QM Co		2		2
783d Ord Co				
MP Plat		1		1
Attached Units:				
453d AAA Bn		9		9
643d TD Bn				
736th Tk Bn				
	1	446	51	498

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LOSSES IN ACTION

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FEBRUARY BATTLE CASUALTIES

	KIA	WIA	MIA	NBC	TOTAL	REINF & RTD	PWS TAKEN
Headquarters 83d Inf Div	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
329th Inf Regt	0	0	0	226	226	379	0
330th Inf Regt	17	86	5	211	319	363	254
331st Inf Regt	0	9	0	155	164	235	34
Headquarters 83d Div Arty	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
322d FA Bn	1	7	0	14	22	22	
323d FA Bn	0	0	0	8	8	22	
324th FA Bn	0	1	0	6	7	12	
908th FA Bn	0	1	0	8	9	17	
308th Engr C Bn	1	4	0	19	24	14	1
308th Med Bn	0	1	0	14	15	19	
83d Cav Rcn Tr	0	0	0	3	3	3	
Hq Co (Sp Trs)	0	0	0	3	3	3	
83d Sig Co	0	0	0	6	6	4	
83d QM Co	0	0	0	4	4	3	
783d Ord Co	0	0	0	1	1	2	
MP Platoon	0	0	0	2	2		
Attached Units:							
453d AAA Bn	0	3	0	16	19	31	
643 TD Bn	1	2	0	23	26	97	
736th Tk Bn	6	4	0	21	31	65	
TOTAL	26	118	5	741	890	1297	289

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R O S T E R O F C O M M A N D E R S

G E N E R A L & S P E C I A L S T A F F

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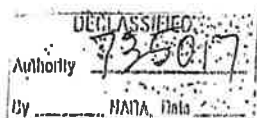
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DIVISION COMMANDER	Macon, Robert C., Maj. Gen., USA (1 February to 28 February)	0-4733
ASST to DIV COMMANDER	Ferenbaugh, Claude B., Brig. Gen., USA (1 February to 28 February)	0-12479
CHIEF OF STAFF	Hughes, Shelly G., Lt. Col. (Actg 1 February to 3 February)	0-165757
	Boyle, Conrad L., Col. (Actg 4 February to 9 February)	0-15951
	Boyle, Conrad L., Col. (10 February to 28 February)	0-15951
AC of S, G-1	Mackenzie, Alan F. S., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-253371
AC of S, G-2	Deshotels, Jules H., Jr., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-273934
AC of S, G-3	Boyle, Conrad L., Col. (1 February to 9 February)	0-15951
	Duke, Robert W., Lt. Col. (10 February to 28 February)	0-365127
AC of S, G-4	Hughes, Shelly G., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-165757
SIGNAL OFFICER	Rhyme, George W., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-21219
ENGINEER OFFICER	Dodge, Roy T., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-21468
CHEMICAL OFFICER	Shaver, Paul F., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-213755
AIR-GROUND COOPERATION OFFICER	Stephens, Raymond D., Maj. (Atchd 1 February to 28 February)	0-367023
ADJUTANT GENERAL	Harrell, Robert G., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-318679
JUDGE ADVOCATE	Smith, John D., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-915645
INSPECTOR GENERAL	Tubb, James M., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-371106
FINANCE OFFICER	Shuck, Russell N., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-474859
SURGEON	Clotfelter, David W., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-20029
MILITARY GOVERNMENT OFFICER	Hanrahan, James C., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-520279
INFORMATION-EDUCATION OFFICER	Hartman, Fred B., Jr., Maj. (1 February to 9 February)	0-393009
	Neff, John C., Capt. (10 February to 28 February)	0-454413
ORDNANCE OFFICER	Lundy, Thomas F., Jr., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-252065
QUARTERMASTER	McLaughlin, John D., Maj. (1 February to 28 February)	0-452948
SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICER	Lybrook, Robert C., Maj. (1 February to 28 February)	0-269407

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CHAPLAIN	Donnelly, Augustine P., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-23681
PROVOST MARSHAL	Ogilvie, George, Maj. (1 February to 28 February)	0-445620
HEADQUARTERS COMMANDANT	Lewis, Raymond J., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-271706
CIC DETACHMENT	Vietor, Oliver A., Capt. (1 February to 28 February)	0-1049003

329TH INFANTRY

COMMANDING OFFICER	Crabill, Edwin B., Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-6769
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330TH INFANTRY

COMMANDING OFFICER	Foster, Robert T., Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-11258
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331ST INFANTRY

COMMANDING OFFICER	York, Robert H., Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-21341
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83D DIVISION ARTILLERY

COMMANDING GENERAL	Montague, Robert M., Brig. Gen., USA (1 February to 28 February)	0-12261
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Clay, Robert P., Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-16212
S-1, S-4	Seidler, Howard B., Maj. (1 February to 28 February)	0-394165
S-2	Faxon, Alfred A., Maj. (1 February to 28 February)	0-361523
S-3	Smith, Robert B., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-411990

308TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

COMMANDING OFFICER	Dodge, Roy T., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-21468
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83D CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE TROOP

COMMANDING OFFICER	Drum, Heister H., Capt. (1 February to 28 February)	0-23923
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308TH MEDICAL BATTALION

COMMANDING OFFICER	Higdon, Robert S., Lt. Col. (1 February to 28 February)	0-21459
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DIVISION HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICER	Cederberg, Elfred A., Capt. (1 February to 28 February)	0-1286960
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783D ORDNANCE (LM) COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICER	Norton, John J., 1st Lt. (1 February to 28 February)	0-7548988
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83D SIGNAL COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICER	Harkey, Marion L., Capt. (1 February to 28 February)	0-454655
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83D QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICER

Brauch, George P., Capt.
(1 February to 28 February)

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BATTLE LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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On 22 January the Division was entirely withdrawn from combat and placed in reserve. This status continued throughout most of February. It was the first time since commitment in June, 1944, that the entire Division had been out of contact with the enemy. Full advantage of this situation was taken by all echelons of the command.

The Mission was clear: The combat efficiency of the Division would be restored to the high level which obtained before the Ardennes. The men and officers would be trained and indoctrinated for reentry into combat which higher headquarters early in the month indicated might well prove to be the most crucial battle of the war in the West. Indeed, toward the conclusion of the month, after a major portion of the command had taken up positions within Germany itself, all officers and men were told of the great significance the Supreme Allied Commander placed on the battle which began at 0330 on 23 February. It was announced to the entire command that the XIX US Corps, with the 83d Division in reserve, was making the main effort in the West. Thus it at once became clear to all troops why so much effort and time had during the month been given to rehabilitation and training.

A comprehensive program was devised under the guidance of divisional and regimental staffs. The program concerned itself with training in tactics and techniques of combat and with rehabilitation of all troops.

In tactics, special attention was given to the operation of the infantry platoon, the infantry company and the infantry-tank team. Problems were executed during hours of daylight and darkness and under conditions simulating battle. The importance of teamwork was made unmistakably clear both during the execution of problems and the detailed critiques which followed.

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At all times consideration was given to the type of terrain most likely to be encountered in the battles which would occur later on. With this in mind, emphasis was placed on fighting in open country. Specifically, problems were designed which required movement of formations across open terrain preliminary to an attack on a village. Whenever natural cover and concealment were unavailable to participating troops smoke was employed to the maximum. Blank ammunition improvised by the troops was used and reinforcements were trained in the handling of explosives -- "beehives" and pole charges. Explosives were used to simulate artillery and mortar fire and, in addition, to expedite the construction of foxholes and individual shelters in frozen ground. In accomplishing various assigned missions troops were encouraged to exercise native ingenuity.

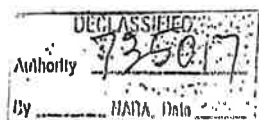
One lesson learned at the close of January is worthy of mention here. It was concerned with penetration of enemy armor. Test firing was conducted. These tests were prompted by the frequent failure of bazooka teams in accomplishing their missions. During the fighting in the Ardennes bazooka rockets had sometimes failed to penetrate two inch armor plate on the sides of tank destroyers, self propelled guns and tanks. It was known that the rocket does not penetrate but burns through armor. It was concluded therefore that the distance from which the rocket is fired has no bearing on its penetration. Test firing proved this. It was noted that if the rocket lands with impact sufficient to ignite it, and lands withing sixty degrees of a direct impact, it will penetrate comparatively thick armor. The more direct the hit, the better the penetration. In short, an impact of ninety degrees to the plate is perfect.

Tests of firing anti-tank grenades and anti-tank rockets at enemy armor were also conducted, a German tank destroyer serving as the target. This plate is three and a half inches of first grade armor. An AT grenade, fired at a slight angle to the plate, penetrated four and a half inches, promptly ignited small arms ammunition scattered inside the vehicle. It was observed that when a tank is hit by an AT grenade or AT rocket and penetration is complete, molten metal of incandescent heat is sprayed all

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over the inside. This molten metal is so hot that it will penetrate any ammunition cases contacted, set the ammunition on fire and thus destroy the tank. Even if no ammunition is present within the tank, the molten metal will force the crew to abandon it.

Equally important as the training of the men was their rehabilitation. Brought up to full strength, all units of the Division were reequipped wherever necessary, and a thorough-going series of inspections of vehicles, weapons and equipment conducted. The result was that at the conclusion of the month, ready to reenter battle, the Division found itself more mobile, more completely prepared for action than it had been in many months.

This Division recognized very early in its operational career that putting newly received reinforcements into the line immediately not only was wasteful of manpower but did not materially aid the units engaged. Consequently, since very early in July, 1944, all reinforcements have been given the benefit of at least a two day orientation course by combat experienced officers and enlisted men. This tends to act as a welcome to the Division and the instruction given quiets their uneasiness prior to actually entering combat.

In connection with the rehabilitation and rest of troops, it was again learned that proper billeting - with provisions for warmth, cleanliness and washing - is vital. Men are prone to maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness when it is apparent to them that every possible effort has been taken by commanders to provide them with the wherewithal of achieving that cleanliness.

Recreation was provided by Special Services and the Red Cross. New vigor was given to the Division newspaper, which began publishing weekly, and to the Division's Public Relation policy. It was determined that through a liberal policy regarding Press and Public the morale of officers and men would be immeasurably increased.

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Yet another means of increasing the state of morale was the awarding of various decorations and commissions to officers and men in all echelons. An Awards Board constituted shortly before the beginning of the month greatly facilitated the processing of recommendations for decorations. The Commanding General of the Ninth US Army visited the Division Command Post in Dalhem, Belgium, in order to present the Distinguished Service Medal to the Division Commander. This award, initiated by Lieutenant General Patton, Commanding the Third US Army, was made in recognition of the Division's reduction of the German garrison at St Malo - Dinard, Ille et Vilaine, France, in August, 1944.

At the beginning of the month instructions regarding security were received. These were passed on to all echelons and were implemented with outstanding success. Shoulder patches were removed, bumper markings painted over on all vehicles, road signs bearing unit designations eliminated. In general, all possible steps were taken to obliterate the whereabouts if not the very existence of the Division. Experience gained since Carentan, in June, 1944, had time and again proven the benefits to be obtained from secrecy measures. Veteran troops had learned their lesson well and with their help the security instructions now issued by the Division were thoroughly executed. Witness of the success of these measures were several instances in which non-battle casualties evacuated to hospitals in the rear refused to identify themselves beyond name, rank, and serial number. Some slight confusion resulted, of course, but this was more than compensated by the obvious excellence of the security discipline which had been indoctrinated among all troops.

Toward the conclusion of February there was occasion to call attention of all troops to the necessity of immediately evacuating captured enemy documents. Certain papers carried by a German NCO were thrown away by his captor as being without value. Subsequent interrogation of the prisoner indicated that the papers were of inestimable value. The papers were not recovered, the information contained in them never utilized. All personnel were again notified that the searching of prisoners of war by front line troops must be limited to the search for weapons. All other

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possessions of prisoners must be left with them until brought to the attention of trained prisoner processors.

Twice during the month combat flyers of the IX Tactical Airforce visited the Division for the purpose of studying and observing ground force operations. The first of these two visits was made while troops were training in Belgium and Holland and while the Division Command Post was at Dalhem. Air officers there observed the various tactics being employed in the platoon and company problems. The second visit of flying officers was made after the Division had taken up positions inside Germany and while the Division Command Post was at Schaufenberg. Towns cleared but a few hours earlier by the 330th Infantry Regiment were visited.

Pilots and troops exchanged information on the spot - for during the previous day the flyers had themselves operated against the enemy over these same towns. Troops were told exactly in what manner the enemy garrisons they'd captured had the day before been softened by airpower. These visits accomplished two things: Ground troops became more confident of the capabilities of their supporting air arm; combat flyers obtained a clearer understanding of means by which ground troops accomplish assigned missions. The value of such exchanges of information cannot be overestimated.

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During February 83d Infantry Division was in XIX Corps reserve. Order of Battle estimates during the period and immediately prior to the attack of XIX Corps across the ROER River on 23 February indicated the presence of 363 Volksgrenadier Division and 59 Infantry Division along the East banks of that River. It was believed that the enemy was not inclined to defend along the River line, but would rather fight to defend the towns. Engineer reconnaissance disclosed that the enemy was not occupying the ground defenses on the East bank, but it appeared that he could strongly resist from the towns along the River and especially from the Citadel in JULICH.

Prior to the attack by XIX Corps, the enemy reserve picture was ^{not} ~~unclear~~. It was widely and rightfully believed that he could not afford to leave the approaches to COLOGNE and DUSSELDORF unprotected. Higher headquarters listed 116 Panzer, 130 Panzer Lehr, 15 Panzer Grenadier, and 11 Panzer Divisions as candidates for a counter-attacking role on the approaches to the vital RUHR area. Elements of 9 Panzer and 3 Panzer Grenadier Divisions were also listed, but at the time these units were loosely in contact on First US Army front. Also listed were two unidentified Infantry divisions and 12 Volksgrenadier Division reported disengaging from First US Army front.

The mobile reserve picture became considerably clearer with the attack of First Canadian Army against CLEVE. This attack alarmed the enemy sufficiently for him to displace 15 Panzer Grenadier, 116 Panzer and 130 Panzer Lehr Divisions from the COLOGNE plain and to commit them against the Canadians. Upon commitment of these three Divisions, the only available

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mobile reserves or our zone were elements of 11 Panzer Division (half of which was believed to have gone East), elements of 9 Panzer Division, and elements of 3 Panzer Grenadier Division. 10 SS Panzer Division, while rumored as having been sent to the Eastern front was nevertheless believed to be in the West due to the persistent prisoner of war claims that its supply elements were South of COLOGNE.

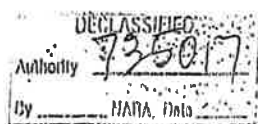
Immediately prior to XIX Corps attack considerable traffic was observed in the JULICH area and a deserter taken stated that 12 Volksgrenadier Division was moving into the DUREN area. This statement, later verified by actual contact with this Division affected XIX Corps in that the 363 Volksgrenadier Division (located directly North of 12 Volksgrenadier Division) had considerably narrowed its front in the JULICH area. The heavy traffic observed indeed consisted of elements of 363 Volksgrenadier Division moving in to strengthen the JULICH defenses.

The attacks launched by VII, XIX, and XIII Corps corroborated in all respects, existing Order of Battle estimates. XIX Corps was lightly opposed by 363 Volksgrenadier and 59 Infantry Divisions. The DUREN area (VII Corps) was defended by 12 Volksgrenadier and 363 Volksgrenadier Divisions. XIII Corps was opposed by 183 Volksgrenadier and 176 Infantry Divisions. Within a day after the attack was launched elements of 9 Panzer Division were identified in support of 363 Volksgrenadier Division. 9 Panzer Division was to be used in a counter-attacking role but early reverses, the loss of a complete battalion, and the very weak condition of 363 Volksgrenadier Division made accomplishment of this mission impossible.

Within two days after the attack 11 Panzer Reconnaissance Battalion, of the 11 Panzer Division, was identified on the Northern flank of XIX Corps and prisoners claimed that parts

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of the Division were still on Third US Army front not being able to leave because of strong interference of our air arm. This was true at the time as proven by the capture of elements of 111 Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 11 Panzer Division, in the Third US Army area. But by 27 February the entire Division was firmly in contact on XIX and XIII Corps fronts, committed to delay our advance toward MUNCHEN-GLADBACH.

Toward the end of the month two new identifications provided great interest but not much concern. On 27 February, 338 Infantry Division, one of the Divisions which was severely mauled in the COLMAR pocket by the First French Army, was identified by XIII Corps. The arrival of this Division and its parent, XVIII SS Corps, suggests that other Divisions extricated from the COLMAR pocket will shortly arrive in First or Ninth US Army Zones of Advance. These Divisions are in an extremely weakened condition but it is apparent that they will pick up replacements on their way North. There are indications that 338 Infantry Division received replacements from the Battalion that normally supplies 361 Infantry Division which is now in an inactive sector of the SAAR front. Whatever Infantry Divisions arrive will be welcomed in this Infantry-hungry area.

The second significant new arrival at the end of the period was the 130 Panzer Lehr Division from the Canadian Zone. This Division, badly hit by the Canadians was given the task of defending MUNCHEN-GLADBACH. At the end of the period the two Panzer Grenadier Regiments (901 and 902) but not the tanks of the 130 Panzer Lehr Division were firmly in contact with XIX and XIII Corps on the outer approaches to MUNCHEN-GLADBACH.

At the end of the period 59 Infantry and 363 Volksgrenadier Divisions were fighting delaying actions as small battle groups and all the auxiliary units of these Divisions were committed as

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Infantry. Both these Divisions are believed virtually destroyed. The bulk of defensive fighting was being carried by 9 and 11 Panzer Divisions, both in a weakened condition. 130 Panzer Lehr Division entered the picture to become a major defending force against our drive on MUNCHEN-GLADBACH but it is not considered to be in first class fighting shape. The usual conglomeration of miscellaneous units such as, 14 Fortress AT Battalion, 341 Assault Gun Brigade, 3 Home Guard Training Battalion, 25 Rocket Projector Regiment, 1219 Assault Gun Battalion, 756 Engineer Battalion (GHQ), Volksstrom and Police units, were contacted - many fighting as Infantry troops.

In conclusion it may be said that our attack across the ROER River came as a complete surprise to the enemy and caused extreme disorganization in his ranks. Heavy casualties were inflicted on units before they could be organized into effective fighting organizations. The loss in equipment was equally heavy. At the end of the period it appeared that the enemy could not prevent our forces from reaching the RHINE River and that his major concern was to fight delaying actions in order to permit the bulk of his forces to cross to the East bank of the RHINE.

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