

HEADQUARTERS 413TH INFANTRY
APO 104, UNITED STATES ARMY

SECRET
AUTH: CG, 104th Inf. Div.

Date 10 May 45

For the C.G. JKR

Asst A.G.

3 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report

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

The following After Action Report is submitted for the period
1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 inclusive:

I. NARRATIVE

1 April 1945

CLASSIFICATION

CANCELLED

BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Chapman 7 June 46
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE

The 3d Armored Division proceeded north to effect a link-up with the Ninth Army and thereby close a trap on the bulk of the German Army in the west. In the last miles of their extremely rapid advance the Armor by-passed several strongly defended pockets of enemy. One such enemy group held the towns of Rimbech and Scherfede with the important road junction in that area. After mopping up other smaller pockets in the regimental zone, the 1st and 2d Battalions began to methodically reduce the fanatical group holding the road junction. Several hundred young SS trainees armed with small arms and panzerfausts occupied a large forest area with the two adjacent towns. They were well dug in and even had sniper platforms built in the trees. With strong, steady pressure the two battalions advanced yard by yard throughout the entire area.

2-3 April 1945

On 2 April the 2d Battalion completed the mopping up of Rimbech. They were supported by the 2d Platoon of Company B, 750th Tank Battalion. On 3 April the relentless advance continued and the towns of Scherfede and Hardehausen were cleared. The southern and western edges of the woods were entered and over 900 rounds of supporting artillery covered the enemy-held center of the forest.

4 April 1945

By 4 April the final resistance collapsed in the zone and the complete occupation of the forest was effected. During the four days required for the completion of this operation, the 3d Battalion remained in division reserve on our left flank. Several attempts were made by German units trapped in the Ruhr pocket to break out to the east, and the constant vigil maintained by Major O'Connor's troops prevented any such infiltration. During the

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entire period of the Battle of the Ruhr, the regiment took 3,508 prisoners of war, advanced well over 100 miles, and as a part of the 104th Infantry Division became the first infantry elements to seal the mouth of the Ruhr trap--the greatest encirclement maneuver of the war to date.

5-6 April 1945

On 5 April the regiment was assigned a new tactical mission. We moved to the east to take over positions in line from elements of the 9th Armored Division and the 2d Infantry Division. The towns of Teutonia, Bonenburg, and Barlinghausen were occupied by the forward companies. The front here was very fluid and contact with the enemy was limited to sporadic artillery fire and infantry patrols. Company A was directed to clear Barlinghausen. When their leading scouts entered the village, they found an E Company soldier waiting for them with six prisoners of war. This man had ventured into the wrong town in search of his company, and finding no friendly troops there, he personally captured the German garrison. The relief of the 2d Infantry Division continued on 6 April while plans were being laid for the attack to the east towards the Weser River. Twenty rounds of 88 mm. direct fire fell in the regimental zone during the day.

7 April 1945

At 0700 on 7 April the regiment attacked to the east. This time the doughboys led the advance again, as we had no friendly armor out in front. Enemy resistance consisted of scattered small arms fire centering on roadblocks and critical points. These groups were very quickly dealt with and by late afternoon the Weser River was reached at several points to register another 20 mile advance for the Seagulls.

8-10 April 1945

At 0400 on the 8th day of April, the 3d Bn crossed the Weser River in assault boats followed by the 2d and 1st Battalions. The crossing was opposed by only scattered small arms fire. By mid-afternoon the 329th Engineers had completed a vehicular bridge and our organic vehicles were crossing one of Germany's greatest river barriers. Fifty to sixty rounds of artillery fell around the bridge site in the late afternoon without delaying the advance, however. In Lippoldsburg more determined SS troops made it necessary to shell the town and progress through the rubble house by house. The 3d Armored Division now passed through the Weser bridgehead won by the 41st Infantry and spearheaded to the east. For the next three days the regiment advanced by foot and motor behind the armor, mopping up small by-passed pockets as enemy resistance crumbled in the zone.

11 April 1945

On 11 April, the 917 Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to

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the Combat Team for support in ensuing operations. On this day also, the drive eastward was slowed by Corps orders and the regiment relieved elements of the 3d Armored Division in the vicinity of Neunorf and Bartofede. Late in the day 300 prisoners of war drifted into the 2d Battalion to surrender themselves.

12-19 April 1945

By 12 April the spearheads of the armor were far ahead while the regiment was disposed along the division left flank to establish blocks on the roads leading south out of the Harz Mountains. The enemy units in these forested hills were determined to maintain their positions and constituted a grave threat to our long-extended supply routes along the valley corridor. From 12 to 15 April several sharp skirmishes were fought by the Seagulls in establishing and maintaining blocks on the roads leading out of the mountains.

Bad Lauterberg was entered by the 3d Battalion only after a bitter fight in which the enemy used artillery, mortar, and well-placed machine guns to delay our advance. The 1st Battalion repulsed two tanks and sixty infantrymen to take Bad Sachsa, while the 2d Battalion was able to occupy Walkenreid and Ellrich with lesser opposition. The 817 Tank Destroyer Battalion rendered extremely effective assistance in these operations in which 250 prisoners of war were taken.

The enemy continued to infiltrate snipers into Bad Lauterberg even after the town was completely occupied, while machine gun nests on the cliffs overlooking the town harassed our troops continually. Other enemy units ambushed single vehicles on all roads leading near the hills and disappeared into the woods before they could be caught.

1st Lt Carl Jonsson, S-3 of the 3d Battalion, accompanied by an enlisted interpreter, was taken through the enemy lines and attempted to conduct negotiations for surrender. Although the smaller unit German commanders appeared willing, the negotiations fell through when the German Army Commander turned down all offers. Although at the time it was believed about 4,000 enemy were in the mountain, when the pocket was completely wiped out several days later by other Corps units, the total of over 50,000 prisoners of war were taken.

On 15 April we were relieved from the Harz Mountains roadblocks by the 4th Cavalry Group and were shuttled forward to take positions on the west bank of the Saale River opposite Halle. The 2d Battalion took up new blocking positions at the mouth of the Harz pocket and reverted to control of the 9th Infantry Division for a two day period. While the 414th Infantry Regiment cleaned up Halle, Germany's tenth largest city, our 1st Battalion guarded the western approaches to the city. The 3d Battalion, followed by the 2d, circled to the north and east of Halle, cleaning up the towns of Zolitz, Robitz, and

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Reideburg. By 19 April the 1st Battalion rejoined the regiment on the east bank of the Saale River and the Combat Team continued to improve its positions in the area.

20-30 April 1945

On 20 April the advance to the east was resumed against light opposition. Delitzsch was captured just before dark after a sharp skirmish with youthful SS troops. During the following days with all three battalions on line, all resistance west of the Mulde River was wiped out and all units assumed positions along the west bank. The towns of Seelhausen and Tiefensee were defended lightly with small arms fire. The 3d Battalion, after shelling Gruna across the river with a mortar barrage, crossed the river by ferry and returned with eighty prisoners of war.

From 7 to 21 April the regiment had advanced 175 miles deeper into Germany and was now within a few miles of the Russian army which was advancing from the east. 2,449 Prisoners of war were captured by the regiment in this fifteen day advance.

A temporary halt was ordered by 1st Army on the Mulde River line although enemy opposition the other side of the river was negligible. After buttoning up on the Mulde River, the regiment entered one of the most remarkable phases of its history. Enemy activity across the river sharply decreased daily, until by the 24th of the month it had ceased entirely. The disorganized, terrified German Wehrmacht streamed into our lines to avoid capture by the Russians who were methodically closing the corridor between the Allied forces. Accompanying the German soldiers were thousands of released Allied prisoners of war of all nationalities--American, British, French, Polish, Dutch, Belgian, Yugoslav, Russian, Italian, and Greek.

The regiment occupied the town of Duben on the east bank of the river and set up a temporary foot bridge. Through this narrow funnel enemy soldiers and Allied released prisoners of war poured into our lines daily. Thousands of terrified German civilians who streamed into town on foot and in wagons were forcibly directed away from the bridge site. During this period of virtually quiet warfare, 9,777 enemy soldiers were added to the regiment's ever-growing list of prisoners. The total of Allied released prisoners of war added up to 1,885. For these men it was a jubilant, celebrated moment when they once again returned to join the Allied soldiers of freedom--quite a contrast was vividly expressed in the sullen, arrogant, beaten faces of the defeated Nazis, some of whom came to us on stretchers, minus legs, wounded, and others hobbling with canes. These Germans hardly resembled a regimented, well-groomed superior race.

A large captured airport was established as a joint prisoner of war and displaced persons collecting point, and under the supervision of Lt Graber's I and R Platoon, several thousand Allied and

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enemy soldiers were fed and sheltered daily. On 26 April a five man patrol led by Lt Bartlett of Company F crossed the eighteen mile gap between our lines on the Mulde and the Russian lines on the Elbe. The surprised Russians took him to the command post of the 118th Russian Guards Division, where he and his men were received as honored guests. Lt Bartlett gave the Russian commander our disposition and plans, and returned to our lines on 27 April with four Russian staff officers, who brought details of their tactical situation to Lt Col Summers.

By the close of the month the flood of Prisoners of War and released Allied prisoners had decreased to a trickle, as the area between the Eastern and Western Allies was nearly cleared except for civilians. On 30 April the regiment sent out reinforced platoons with two tanks each from Company B, 750th Tank Battalion to thoroughly comb out the entire zone between the Mulde and the Elbe for enemy stragglers and holdouts. A catch of thirty prisoners of war was recorded for the day, as all patrols reached their objectives and returned without meeting any enemy resistance.

II. PERSONNEL'

1. Strength as of 010001 April 1945: Officers: 158
 WO's : 4
 EM : 3140

2. Battle Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Total</u>
1st Battalion	10	17	-6*	0	27
2d Battalion	19	42	2	0	63
3d Battalion	10	37	-2	0	47
Separate Companies	1	14	0	0	15
Totals	40	110	2	0	152
			-8		

*One officer and enlisted man reported from MIA to liberated by the Allied troops, or to KIA.

3. Men sick and Non-Battle Casualties:

<u>1st Bn</u>	<u>2d Bn</u>	<u>3d Bn</u>	<u>Sep Co</u>	<u>Total</u>
39	67	66	26	198

4. Reinforcements received: 10 officers and 274 enlisted men (this figure includes 1 officer and 236 enlisted men returned to duty)

5. Strength as of 312359 April 1945: Officers: 155
 WO's : 4
 EM : 3045

6. Prisoners of War captured and evacuated: 12,808.

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