

SECTION III

AFTER ACTION REPORT - APRIL 1945

The operations for CT 80 during the month of April consisted of three major phases. From the 1st to the 11th of the month reduction of the enemy in the RUHR POCKET took place, the reduction of the HARZ MOUNTAIN pocket lasted from the 14th to the 21st and the final phase was the taking over of the line on the MULDE RIVER and the contacting of the SOVIET forces. Particularly heavy fighting occurred in the RUHR POCKET and, although the enemy put up fanatical resistance to open an escape route, casualties were light. With the reduction of the RUHR POCKET organized enemy resistance appeared to have collapsed and the HARZ MOUNTAIN engagements were mainly against small groups of enemy which had become cut off and were attempting to either surrender or escape to the east. The final phase consisted of patrolling to the east from the MULDE RIVER and capturing large groups of enemy fleeing from the approaching SOVIETS.

1 April 45

The 1st Bn was enroute for the new assembly area at BEDDELHAUSEN and arrived there at 0645 hours; jumped off in an attack following the 2d Bn at 1230 hours, moved to the north through WUNDERTHAUSEN thence through the woods to attack the town of MOLLSETTEN where first resistance was met. The Bn took some prisoners and cut the main east-west road.

The 2d Bn closed into the new area at BEDDELHAUSEN at 0345 hours, jumped off in the attack at 1215 hours. It proceeded to the north to WUNDERTHAUSEN then northwest to a point 2 miles southeast of GIRKHAUSEN where poor roads held up the advance. The Bn remained in these positions.

The 3d Bn closed into the new area at ARFELD at 0530 hours, was designated Division reserve and detached from the CT.

2 April 45

The 1st Bn, in positions in NEU ASTENBERG, was counterattacked at 0630 hours by tanks and infantry, was driven from the town, remained on high ground south of town during the day and moved to positions in MOLLSEIFEN at 1900 hours.

The 2d Bn attacked at daylight from positions one-half mile east of GIRKHAUSEN, arrived at the town at 0800 hours and proceeded to the north, sent G Co to the north, cut the road near LANGEWEISE. A heavy battle ensued at road curve at 480825. Position was carried at 1800 hours and final positions were reached at dark.

The 3d Bn remained detached to Division as Division reserve.

3 April 45

The 1st Bn remained in positions during darkness, moved into the town of NEU ASTENBERG to relieve the 3d Bn, 39th Inf, at 0530 hours, patrolled to north and northwest, remained in position to end of period.

The 2d Bn continued the attack at 0800 hours, moved north and then west, then captured the town of WESTFELD after a short small arms battle at 1630, received a counterattack at 1745 and repulsed it, took up defensive positions for the night.

The 3d Bn returned to regimental control at 2030 hours, moved G Co to join the balance of the Bn at HESBORN.

DECLASSIFIED
DOD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
NWV by date 3-27-66

4 April 45

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The 1st Bn remained in position as regimental reserve; patrolled to front; sent patrols to capture enemy half-track which had broken into regimental area.

The 2d Bn attacked at 0800 hours to northeast; advanced without opposition to high ground overlooking ALTASTENBERG; cleared area covered of enemy; contacted 47th Inf on left; defended the flank of the regiment.

The 3d Bn arrived from assembly area at HESBORN at 0500 hours, attacked north from NEUASTENBERG at 0800 hours; met resistance south of town consisting of tanks, infantry and artillery; captured the town at 1930 hours and prepared for counterattack; contacted 39th Inf on right.

5 April 45

The 1st Bn, in positions vic NEU ASTENBERG, displaced to positions in and north of ALT ASTENBERG, relieved L Co of positions in that area, maintained contact with 3d Bn and 2d Bn on left.

The 2d Bn, in positions vic WESTFELD, defended the regimental left flank, attacked with E Co and captured high ground north of WESTFELD, cut the main NORDENAU - OBERKIRCHEN road, contacted 7th Armd Div on left and 1st Bn on right.

The 3d Bn attacked from ALT ASEENBERG at 0800 hours, made good progress against moderate resistance, gained ground 5 kilometers to the north, maintained contact with 39th Inf on right.

6 April 45

The 1st Bn continued the attack to the west at 1000 hours, met resistance at its first objective, fought heavily until at 2100 hours the final objective was reached. It contacted the 2d Bn on left.

The 2d Bn continued the attack to the north at 0530 hours, met little resistance and at 1500 hours had secured all its objectives, which placed it on line and facing the 1st Bn. It contacted the 7th Armd Div on left.

The 3d Bn continued the attack at 1000 hours to the west, met little resistance; advance was controlled by movement of adjacent units and at 1700 hours had secured final objective. It contacted the 39th Inf on the right.

7 April 45

The 1st Bn continued the attack at 0800 hours; moved east against moderate resistance through RENGLIPEN, OBER SORPE and reached the final objective of MITTEL SORPE at 2030 hours, contacted 3d and 2d Bns during hours of darkness.

The 2d Bn continued its clean up operations at 0800 hours, reported area totally cleared at 1100 hours, pushed patrols out to high ground west of HOLTHAUSEN at 1830 hours, contacted 1st Bn and 7th Armd Div during hours of darkness.

The 3d Bn continued its attack to the west at 0800, cleared woods over a wide front, met scattered strong points, arrived at a line abreast of the 39th Inf and 1st Bn at dark, contacted 39th Inf on right and 1st Bn on left.

8 April 45

The 1st Bn attacked at 0800 hours across wooded terrain to the west, had difficulty with road conditions, finally moved through 39th area, and arrived on objective at dark, contacted adjacent units, blocked roads leading into sector from north.

The 2d Bn attacked in its sector at 0800 hours, made good progress and captured high ground north of FREDEBURG, arrived on objective at 1700 hours, contacted adjacent troops.

The 3d Bn attacked in zone with limited objective at 0800 hours, met light resistance and arrived on objective at 1400 hours, reassembled by 1830 hours when 1st Bn arrived on their objective, reverted to regimental reserve.

9 April 45

The 1st Bn continued the attack at 0800 hours, moved to north to high ground, met light resistance, reached intermediate objective at 1500 hours, continued to capture the town of DORNHEIM where forward movement ceased.

The 2d Bn attacked at 0800 hours in its zone, made rapid advances and had captured the towns of ALTENILPE and OBER HENNESBORN by 1830 hours where forward movement ceased, contacted adjacent units on right and left.

The 3d Bn moved in regimental reserve from south of BOTEFELD to a position in rear of 1st Bn, attacked through that Bn at 1400 hours, made rapid advances to capture OBER RARBACH and KIRCH-RARBACH where it stopped for the night.

10 April 45

The 1st Bn remained in regimental reserve, regrouped at KIRCH-RARBACH, attached C Co to 3d Bn at 1100 hours, was employed with C Co released to them to continue the attack. This Bn at 1500 hours crossed the front of the 2d Bn, captured BUENFELD, SCHUREN, OSTEBERGE and surrounding high ground.

The 2d Bn attacked in its zone north over rugged terrain, with one force from F Co with armor along the main road on left flank, encountered enemy roadblocks which were reduced, reached final objective at 1700 hours.

The 3d Bn continued the attack in its zone, arrived on its objective at 1100 hours, was moved to the west at 1200 hours, arrived on final objective at 1600 hours.

11 April 45

The CT remained on the alert in defensive positions in its zone of BUENFELD - REISTE - HERRAGEN area for an enemy tank column reported to be approaching the zone.

At first light reorganization, rehabilitation and resupplying commenced.

At 1200 hours it was determined that all flanks of the CT were covered by friendly troops.

The 9th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the CT at 1330 hours.

12 April 45

The CT remained in position during the period, accomplished rehabilitation and training and prepared for future operations.

13 April 45

The CT remained in assembly vic BUENFELD, HERRAGEN, REISTE. Orders were received to move to an assembly area to the east and plans were made to make this move.

Training and rehabilitation were continued and motor maintenance and resupplying were accomplished.

14 April 45

The Division being transferred from III Corps to VII Corps, the CT began to move from a position on the rim of the RUHR pocket to an assembly area vic of BREITENSTEIN (2240) in preparation for an attack to reduce the enemy pocket left in the HARZ MOUNTAINS. Co B, 746 Tk Bn, and Co B, 899 TD Bn, began their move at 0500 hours, but at end of period had not closed in final assembly area.

The separate Cos, Co C, 15th Engr Bn, Co C, 9th Medical Bn, part of Service Co, Hq Co, Cn Co, AT Co, began to move at 0645 hours and by 1850 had all closed into final assembly area. The AT Co with 2 platoons of Engineers attached established local security in the form of roadblocks.

The 3d Bn, which had awaited transportation throughout the morning, was able to begin its move during the afternoon but at close of period had not yet arrived in final assembly area.

Balance of CT remained in the old assembly area (SOCTROP) with orders to begin their move east at 1800 April 15.

15 April 45

At the beginning of the period the 1st Bn and 2d Bn were in assembly vicinity of GOSTROP and the 3d Bn was halted for the night at USLAR, enroute to BREITENSTEIN. Special units of the Combat Team had arrived at this position the evening before.

At 0700 hours the 3d Bn commenced movement toward the assembly area and had entirely closed in by 1230 hours. It was immediately organized for an attack and at 1430 jumped off toward the town of STIEGE.

Progress against light resistance was made and at 0830 hours L Co entered the town. Shortly thereafter I Co moved in from the south. Small arms fire from the enemy somewhat delayed the advance but at darkness the town was completely taken and organized for defense for the night.

The 1st and 2d Bns and the 60th F.A. Bn commenced the march to BREITENSTEIN at 1600 hours and after an uneventful trip arrived at the assembly area at 1730 hours. Upon arrival the 2d Bn was designated Division reserve and accordingly made liaison with that unit.

16 April 45

At 0530 hours of this day the 2d Bn commenced a move from GUNTERSBERGE to secure the road net at HARZGERODE. All units were in place by 1100 hours with E Co at HARZGERODE, F Co at NEUDORF and G Co at STRASSBERG.

At 0800 hours the 3d Bn attacked to the north toward HASSELFELDE from positions in STIEGE. I Co led off, after meeting several delaying parties of enemy, entered the town at 1430 hours. Resistance in town consisted mostly of small arms fire and, at 1800 hours, the Bn reported the town secure. L Co remained in STIEGE to secure that town.

The 1st Bn, in regimental reserve near BREITENSTEIN, remained in position throughout the period, patrolled to the west and north and cleared the forest of enemy in that area.

17 April 45

The CT had a quiet night. At 0900 hours operations were commenced to reduce the enemy pocket in the HARZ MOUNTAINS. The regimental plan was to attack north with 3 Bns abreast and for the 3d Bn, which was being relieved by the 1st Division, to start an hour later than the 1st and 2d Bns.

At 0900 hours the 2d Bn on the right, with a limited objective, jumped off. No resistance was met in the first 1500 yards but at that point heavy small arms was received, accompanied by Panzerfaust fire. Progress was slow and at darkness, when action ceased, the Bn was 500 yards short of the objective.

The 1st Bn attacked at 0900 hours and soon hit heavy small arms fire. The enemy, entrenched on favorable ground for defense, fought back fanatically. Finally, at 1400 hours, the Bn was able to move forward with a platoon of A Co on the left flank, but only a limited advance was made. Darkness ended the Bn effort to push forward.

The 3d Bn, at 1000 hours, completely relieved by the 18th Inf, commenced an attack to the west toward ALLRODE. Heavy small arms resistance was met very early and movement was slow. The objective was finally captured at 1600 hours and was organized for defense.

18 April 45

The CT, at 0730 hours, continued operations in the HARZ MOUNTAINS. The mission was to maintain constant heavy pressure by attacking while enveloping forces at the east moved around to north to encircle the enemy.

At 0730 hours each Bn jumped off and met the same type of resistance as the preceding day. Heavy small arms from strong defensive positions delayed all units. Slow progress was made however and at the conclusion of the day's activities the hospital town of FRIEDRICHSBRUNN was captured with several hundred patients. The 3d Bn took this town with few casualties.

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F Co moved against assault gun fire into the town of MAGDES-PRUNG after heavy fighting. The town was completely secured by 1700 hours.

19 April 45

Operations to clear the HARZ MOUNTAINS were continued this day. At 0800 hours the 2d Bn on the right and the 3d Bn on the left patrolled to all flanks and the front to clear the forests of remaining enemy. The 1st Bn, in the center, ordered A Co to attack to the north to bring its positions abreast of the 2d and 3d Bns.

At 1230 hours the regiment was ordered to attack to the north to a line where the 39th Inf and 47th Inf were to be met. At 1500 hours all units had jumped off and progress was made against light resistance. At 1830 hours I Co contacted elements of G Co, 39th Inf, just north of the regimental boundary line and by darkness the 1st and 2d Bns had each secured high ground just south of the line.

20 April 45

The regiment, having attacked to the north in the HARZ MOUNTAINS and having met the 39th Inf the day before, commenced mopping-up operations. Large areas of forest were scoured by patrols in all directions. Small pockets of resistance were reduced and enemy stragglers were captured. Contacts with the 1st Inf Div on the left, the 39th Inf to the front and the 47th Inf on the right were made throughout the period to assure against enemy infiltration.

Near the close of the period orders were received to prepare for a motor move and plans were made accordingly.

21 April 45

Night patrolling between units was carried on during the early hours of the period. At first light work was recommenced on clearing out the forests in the regimental sector of last remaining enemy. Small groups of enemy were encountered who were attempting to surrender and none committed hostile acts.

In the latter part of the period plans were made for moving to a new area. Attached vehicles were received and distributed to units and march orders were distributed.

22 April 45

The Combat Team remained in defensive positions via SIPTEN-FELD during the hours of darkness. At 0630 it left the area without being relieved and commenced a motor march to new positions on the MULDE RIVER. First units arrived at 1000 hours and the entire unit closed in at 1300 hours.

Immediately upon arrival elements of the 3d Armd Div were relieved of positions. The 2d Bn occupied the right of the sector, the 1st Bn occupied the left and the 3d Bn was designated regimental reserve.

At 1700 hours the 2d Bn was relieved of the right half of its sector by the 415th Inf after a change of boundary was received.

23 April 45

The CT remained in defensive positions along the MULDE RIVER during the period. During the hours of darkness an enemy patrol penetrated the outpost line but was driven back without having caused damage. Friendly patrols were operated along the river line.

At 0800 hours a relief of elements in the southern half of the 1st Bn sector was commenced. This relief was completed by 1100 hours.

The balance of the day was spent in improving defensive positions.

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24 April 45

The CT remained in defensive positions along the MULDE RIVER, continued to defend the assigned sector, patrolled to the front and flanks for security.

At 0800 hours B Co relieved elements of the 3d Armd Div on the left and extended the regimental left flank further to the north. This relief was completed by 1200 hours.

The balance of the period was spent in improving defensive positions and preparation for reception of SOVIET forces moving toward our lines from the east.

25 April 45

The CT continued to defend the assigned sector. Twenty-four hour security posts were set up throughout the entire area, including motor patrols.

1st and 2d Bns maintained security patrols to the front and flanks throughout the period.

3d Bn sent out a contact patrol in an attempt to contact the Russians. Patrol reached the town of GRAFENHAINICHEN, liberated 97 captured American soldiers and captured 15 Germans including two Lieutenant Colonels. Patrol made no contact with either Russians or enemy.

Remainder of CT maintained 24 hour security posts and continued normal support.

At 1700 hours ninety captured Americans were observed by E Co making their way to our lines. Contact was made and the group was ferried across the MULDE RIVER.

Contact was made with adjacent units.

Some training was accomplished during the period, including security instruction.

26 April 45

At 0800 hours a patrol from the 3d Bn consisting of 4 vehicles crossed the bridge at RAGUHN and proceeded on to ZSCHORKEWITZ where large numbers of the enemy surrendered themselves. The numbers were so great that it was decided to send a reinforced company to MESCHEIDE to act as a base for patrol operations and to guard the prisoners.

At 1330 hours I Co with one section tanks, one section AT guns one section 81mm mortars and one section heavy machine guns were sent to MESCHEIDE. This entire group assumed defensive positions and gathered in large numbers of the enemy.

At 2130 hours I Co and all attachments were ordered to return and at 2530 the move was commenced. At the close of the period this group was enroute to the rear.

27 April 45

The regiment continued to defend the assigned sector. Contact between adjacent units was maintained throughout the period.

At 0930 hours a motorized reconnaissance patrol from the 3d Bn operated to the east beyond the MULDE RIVER with the mission of determining enemy activities and to contact SOVIET forces near the ELBE RIVER.

This patrol reached the town of BERGWITZ without incident, discovered no hostile enemy and continued on to the town of EUTZSCH where SOVIETS were contacted at 1600 hours. Information was exchanged and the patrol withdrew.

I Co in position in vicinity of RAGUHN was moved to its former position at THURLAND at 1600 hours.

28 April 45

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The assigned sector was defended during the period. Patrols laterally for defense and to the front to determine enemy dispositions were operated. No contact with the enemy was made. At 1810 hours the commander of the 337th Rifle Regiment of the 21st Rifle Division, Soviet Army, was met at RABIS and information was exchanged.

Contact adjacent units was maintained throughout the period.

29 April 45

The assigned sector was defended. Patrols for security were operated to the front and between units.

With orders to take over the sector of the 415th Inf, the CT began a foot movement at 0900 hours. The 2d and 3d Bns moved into the line of the new sector and the 1st Bn, when relieved by the 47th Inf, moved to a regimental reserve position. The 47th Inf assumed responsibility for the old area at 1355 hours and the new area was organized by 1500 hours.

The balance of the period was spent in patrolling for contact with adjacent units, establishing civilian control posts and preparing for future activities.

30 April 45

The regiment continued to defend the assigned sector. Twenty-four hour security posts were set up throughout the entire area, including motor patrols. Contact between adjacent units was maintained throughout the period.

At 0900 hours a motorized reconnaissance patrol from the 1st Bn operated to the east beyond the MULDE RIVER with the mission of determining enemy activities and to contact SOVIET forces. This patrol reached the town of GLLBIG without incident where the SOVIETS were contacted at 1400 hours. Information was exchanged and the patrol returned.

At 1245 another motorized patrol from the I & R Platoon ran into a fire fight in woods at coordinates 8357, overcame opposition, took 35 prisoners and proceeded without incident to town of BUSSDORF and returned.

At 1300 a foot patrol from E Co, which was also operating beyond the MULDE RIVER, ran into small arms and machine gun fire coming from the town of BURKEMNITZ. Patrol captured 17 prisoners and withdrew. PWs captured said there was a company of enemy equipped with small arms and machine guns in the town.

Some training was accomplished during the period.

VAJ HOUTEN
Commanding

OFFICIAL:

Whitmore
WHITMORE
Asst S-3

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