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HEADQUARTERS
258TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
A.P.O. 339, U.S. ARMY

L-503

SUBJECT: After Action Report for March 1945.

CLASSIFICATION April 1945

TO : Commanding General
Ninth U. S. Army
A.P.C. 339, U. S. Army

THRU : Channels

CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
[Signature]
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 31 June 1946

1. a. At the beginning of the period the Battalion CP was located in a Catholic Mission in Broeksittard, Holland (VK7169, France and Belgium, Sheet No. 48, 1:25,000). The CP's of the lettered companies were located as follows:

- (1) Company A at Hollensburg, Germany (VK7165).
- (2) Company B at Merkelbeck, Holland (VK7463).
- (3) Company C at Jabeek, Holland (VK7466).

b. On 2 March 1945 the Battalion CP was closed and a new CP was opened the same day in the vicinity of Ratheim, Germany, (VK9276, GSGS 4507, Sheet No. 19, 1:50,000). The CP's of the lettered companies were closed and new CP's opened on dates as indicated.

- (1) Company A at Ratheim, Germany (VK9075), 1 March 1945.
- (2) Company B at Hilforth, Germany (VK9472), 2 March 1945.
- (3) Company C at Huckelhoven, Germany (VK9474), 2 March 1945.

c. On 3 March 1945 the Battalion CP and the Company CP's closed and new ones were opened the same day at Swalmen, Holland, (VK8294, GSGS 4040, Sheets No's 27 and 37, 1:50,000).

d. On 7 March the Battalion CP and the CP's of the lettered companies were closed and new ones opened the same date at Stevenswaard, Holland (VK6883, GSGS 4040, Sheets NO's 27 and 37, 1:50,000), except Company B which opened its CP at Eiland, Holland (VK6983).

e. On 20 March 1945 the Battalion CP was closed and a new one opened the same day two miles SW of Alpen, Germany (VA1431, GSGS 4507, Sheet No. 17, 1:50,000). The CP's of the lettered companies were also closed 20 March 1945 and new ones opened the same date at the following locations:

- (1) Company A 2 mi. SE Alpen, Germany (VA1429).
- (2) Company B 2 mi. SW Alpen, Germany (VA1529).
- (3) Company C 6 1/2 mi. NE Issum, Germany (VA1630).

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f. The Battalion Forward CP was opened 21 March 1945 at Wallach, Germany (VA1933, GSGS 4507 Sheet 17, 1:50,000) and was closed 25 March 1945.

g. On 26 March 1945 the Battalion CP was closed and a new CP was opened the following day Vic Friedrichsfeld, Germany (VA3737, GSGS 4507, Sheet 37, 1:50,000). The CP's of the lettered companies were closed 26 March 1945 and were opened 27 March 1945 Vic Friedrichsfeld, Germany (VA3737).

h. On 28 March 1945 the Battalion CP and the CP's of the lettered companies were closed and new ones opened the same day Vic Luisburg, Germany (VA3638, GSGS 4507, Sheet 37, 1:50,000).

i. On 29 March 1945 the Battalion CP and the CP's of the lettered companies were closed and new ones opened the same day Vic Holthausen, Germany (VA3937) GSGS 4507, Sheet 37, 1:50,000).

j. On 30 March 1945 the Battalion CP and the CP's of the lettered companies were closed and new ones were opened the same day at Zweckel, Germany (VA4833, GSGS 4507, Sheet 37, 1:50,000).

2. Operations for the period 1 March 1945 thru 31 March fell into two categories comprised of missions within the assigned areas of responsibility and special assigned tasks.

a. Missions performed in areas of responsibility;

(1) The area of responsibility for the Battalion was as follows (Map coordinates pertain to Maps: GSGS 4041, Sheet 48, North and South and GSGS 4414, Sheets 4902 and 5002, 1:25,000).

(a) At the beginning of the period it was that area included in the following boundaries; Heinsburg (K8575) to Orsbeck (K8978) to Hilfarth (K9473) to Geilen Kirchen (K8763) to Heinsburg (K8575).

(b) On 2 March 1945 the Battalion was relieved of the above area of responsibility. Instead of being assigned a new area, specific tasks were assigned and training for future operations began.

(2) The following type of work was performed within the above outlined area;

- (a) Operation of water points.
- (b) Operation of gravel pits
- (c) Maintenance of routes of communication.
- (d) Gridge maintenance.
- (e) Construction of Treadway Bridge.
- (f) Operation of rubble pits.

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b. Specific tasks performed other than maintenance of the assigned areas of responsibility included the following:

- (1) Operation of water points.
- (2) Clearing mines from roads assigned for maintenance.
- (3) Construction of two 80' Bailey Bridges at Swalmen (VK8294).
- (4) Training power boat operators on Maas River at Stevensweerd (VK8294)
- (5) Training Assault troops for 30th Division for Rhine River Crossing.
- (6) Participation in Rhine River Crossing as Engineer Assault Troops. 262 power boat operators assigned from various units of Ninth Army and trained with the Battalion assisted with the assault. The Assault consisted of 4 waves from 3 beaches controlled by Company Commanders as Beach Masters.

The first wave of storm boats carried two engineer and seven infantrymen. The second consisted of Storm and Assault boats, the third consisted of LVT and M2 Assault boats, and the fourth wave consisted of LCVP's.

The Beachmaster controlled and coordinated movement of all traffic from first assault wave until relieved after beachhead was firmly established at approximately 1800 following day.

3. Difficulties encountered were:

a. It was found during training on the Maas River that the Double Assault Boat shipped enough water to swamp the boat when propelled by the 22 h.p. outboard motor. This difficulty was overcome by adding an 18" x 53" plywood prow.

b. Cold outboard motors are difficult to start and as a result the assault wave in training frequently was too irregular. To overcome this difficulty chemically treated medical heatpads were put around the cylinders of the motors prior to the operation and motors were covered with gas protective covers. The results were very good as the first wave of the actual assault was nearly simultaneous.

c. Another difficulty encountered was the drifting of assault craft after being put in the water and before the motor was started, which resulted in bunching of assault troops on the far shore. The preheating of the outboard motors helped overcome this difficulty. In addition the Engineer assistant operator held the double assault boat out from the shore until the motor was started. It was not necessary to hold the storm boats.

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d. To prevent succeeding waves of assault troops from landing too far from original landing site, the first wave carried red and green inter-aircraft lights built into special boxes and placed them on the far shore as guides. Duplicate lights were carried in adjacent boats for use if necessary.

4. The Battalion Medical Detachment performed routine tasks pertaining to the health of the command including sick call and dental work, sanitation inspections, and normal administration connected therewith. In addition it established a forward aid station at Wallach, Germany to assist in handling casualties incurred in the Rhine River crossing.

5. a. The strength of the Battalion at the first, twentieth, and thirty-first of the month of March 1945 was as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 March 1945	29	3	596	628
20 March 1945	31	3	918	952
31 March 1945	28	3	610	641

b. During the period the organization had battle casualties totaling 19 and 26 non-battle casualties.

c. The increase in strength was due to the receipt of reinforcements, the returning of EM from evacuation hospitals, and the attachment of officers and men for operations in the Rhine River Crossing.

6. Roster of officer personnel attached as Inclosure No. 2.
The following awards were made during the month of March.
4 Purple Hearts
21 Good Conduct Ribbons

Adrian H. Williams

AIRIAN H. WILLIAMS
Lt., Col., CE
Commanding

3 Incls:

1. Copy of Unit Journal (triplicate)
2. Roster of Officer Personnel (triplicate)
3. Copy of FO No. 2 (3 copies)

AUTH: VOGG XVI Corps

INIT:

DATE: 22 March 1945

Bn. 250th Engr C Bn
APO 339, US Army

221500A March 1945

L-503

FIELD ORDER
NUMBER 2

Maps: GSC 4411, scale 1:25,000, sheets 4304, 4305, 4404, 4405, 4406.
GSC 4507, scale 1:50,000, sheets 7, 17, 37, 8, 15, 35.

1. a. Annex Nos. 1 and 2, Intelligence (by 1153d Engr C Co)
- b. (1) XVI Corps assaults across Rhine R in Z, D-day, H-hour, and secures that portion of Ninth Army bridgehead within Z.
- (2) 12 Corps (Br) on our left assaults across Rhine R north of Wesel to secure bridgehead and seize Wesel.
- (3) 30th Inf Div (reinf) assaults across Rhine R in Z at D-day H-hour, secures that portion of initial bridgehead in Z and adv E in Z to successive Corps obj's.
- (4) 79th Inf Div (reinf) on our right assaults across Rhine R in Z at D-day, H-hour.

Troops:

202d Engr C Bn

250th Engr C Bn

200th Engr C Bn

171st Engr C Bn

234th Engr C Bn

989th Engr Tdvy Bn Co

Co E, 17th Armd Engr Bn (Tdvy Br. C)

150th Engr Div Pcn Bn

73d Engr L Pcn Co

1355th Engr Bn Trk Co

747th T K Bn (less Co D) (Operating LVT's)

9 LVT and 9 LCVP's crews (from Naval Unit 122.5.3)

6 senale crews (from detachment C, 329 Harbor Craft Co)

533d AAA AF Bn (mbl) (less Btry B) (attached for ops)

2. 250th Engr C Bn supports attack of 30th Inf Div in Z.

3. a. Co A

- (1) Conducts assault crossing of 117th Inf at site K employing fifty storm boats and forty M2 assault boats.
- (2) Supervise construction of near-shore approaches for LCVP's and LCM's. Work to be performed by 200th Engr C Bn.
- (3) Move equipment to initial assembly area under cover of darkness on D minus 1.

b. Co B

- (1) Conduct assault crossing of 119th Inf at site F employing fifty stern boats and forty M2 assault boats.
- (2) Supervise construction of near-shore approaches for LCVP's and LCM's. Work to be performed by 280th Engr C Bn.
- (3) Move equipment to initial assembly area under cover of darkness on D minus 1.

c. Co C

- (1) Conduct assault crossing of 120th Inf at site M employing fifty stern boats and forty M2 assault boats.
- (2) Supervise construction of near-shore approaches for LCVP's and LCM's. Work to be performed by 234th Engr C Bn.
- (3) Move approximately one-half of equipment to initial assembly area under cover of darkness on D minus 1; balance on D-day.

X. Each Co will

- (1) Control all engineer crossing means at crossing site in its zone. Co CO is known as beachmaster.
- (2) Schedule loading and departure of LVT's, three LCVP's, and six LCM's.
- (3) Mark boundaries of crossing sites on far shore for assault companies by use of inter-aircraft marking lamps, using one red lamp on left flank and one green lamp on right flank in each assault company area.
- (4) Maintain continuous liaison with Inf CO or his representative on beach on D-day.
- (5) Mark near-shore assault areas prior to H-hour by means of luminous signs on left and right boundaries and LVT lanes by means of luminous signs on left boundary and tracing tape on right boundary.
- (6) At completion of assault crossings assemble in bivouac area on battalion order and be prepared to move to accomplish normal engineer missions on far shore.
- (7) Operate two assault boats for rescue work after foot troops have crossed, until relieved by Group order.
- (8) This order will not be taken fwd of Co CP's.
- (9) Maximum secrecy precautions will be taken.
- (10) Gas masks will not be carried during this opn.
- (11) Life belts will be worn by all personnel on or near the water.
- (12) Marking of individuals
 - (a) Beachmaster - white helmet.
 - (b) Engineer guides - Two inch white stripe around bottom of helmet.
 - (c) Engineer boat crews - One-half inch white stripe around bottom of helmet.
 - (d) All officers (other than those assigned other markings) engaged in supervision of assault crossing, one inch wide stripe over top of helmet from the chin strap.