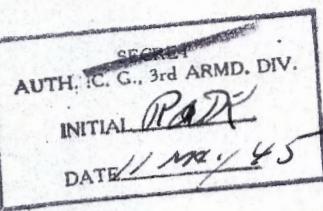


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HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMORED (SPEARHEAD) DIVISION  
APO 255, U. S. ARMY

319.1

10 May 1945.

SUBJECT: Action against the enemy, Reports After/ After Action Reports  
(1 - 30 April 1945)

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

1. Original unit and changes in organization: See Annex #1, attachments and detachments.

2. Strength:

	Officers	W. O.	EM	Total
1 April	806	89	13764	14629
30 April	735	56	13671	14462

3. Stations: Does not apply.

4. Marches: See Annex #2, Narrative Battle Report.

5. Campaigns: Not officially named at time of this report.

6. Battles: See Annex #2, Narrative Battle Report.

7. Commanding General throughout the Period: Brig. Gen Doyle C. Hickey.

8. Losses in Action: See unit reports.

9. Former and Present Members who have distinguished themselves in Action: See Annex #3, Decorations and awards.

10. Photographs: None.

11. Inclosures:

- ✓ 1 - 3 (incl) Copies 2 - 4 (incl) After Action Reports, 1 - 30 April.
- 4 - G-3 Periodic Reports
- 5 - G-3 Journal
- 6 - G-2 Journal
- 7 - G-2 Periodic Report
- 8 - G-2 In & Out Messages
- 9 - Tac/R Reports
- 10 - G-1 Journal
- 11 - G-4 Journal
- 12 - CC "A" Journals and Allied Papers
- 13 - CC "B" S-5 Journal 1 April - 13 April
- 14 - CC "B" S-5 Journal 13 April - 30 April
- 15 - CC "B" S-2 Journal 1 April - 15 April
- 16 - CC "B" S-2 Journal 16 April - 30 April
- 17 - Journal Div Arty, 54th, 67th, 391st Armd FA Regt
- 18 - Journal 36th Armd Inf Regt
- 19 - Journal 23d Armd Engr Bn
- 20 - Journal 45th Armd Med Bn
- 21 - Journal Div Tns 1 April - 15 April
- 22 - Journal Div Tns 16 April - 30 April.

For the Commanding General,



SURPLUS

NON RECORD MATERIAL  
WW II RECORDS DIV. NARS.

ROBERT M. GANT,  
Lt Col, AGD,  
Adj Gen.

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Annex No. 1



ATTACHMENTS & DETACHMENTS

DATE	ATTACHED	DETACHED
EFFECTIVE at beginning of period - April	705d TD Bn 480th AAA Bn 53d Armd FA Bn 183d FA Bn 188th FA Bn	
6 April	901st FA Bn	
8 "		188th FA Bn
11 "	1st Bn 18th Inf Regt attd to C Comd "Dean" 47th RCT under oper- ational control of 3d Armd Div	414th Inf Regt (- 2d Bn)
12 "	3d Bn 47th RCT attd to C Comd "Howze"	47th RCT released from oper- ational control
17 "	Btry "A" 18th FA Obn Bn	
22 "	60th RCT under opnl con- trol of 3d Armd Div	2d Bn 414th Inf Regt
23 "		Btry "A" 18th FA Obn Bn 83d FA Bn
24 "		60th RCT released from opnl control. 3d Bn 47th Inf Regt 183d FA Bn C Comd "Dean" and C Comd "Howze" (- TF "Richardson") under opnl control 9th Div
25	C Comd "Dean" and C Comd "Howze" reverted to con- trol of 3d Armd Div	1st Bn 18th Inf Regt

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NARRATIVE BATTLE REPORT

During the month of April the 3d Armd (SPEARHEAD) Division completed its last phase of combat operation in the European War with one sustained drive, spearheading the advance of VII U.S. Army Corps 175 air-line miles from PADERBORN to the ELBE RIVER at DESSAU.

While never very strong the enemy defenses overcome in this operation were stronger and much better coordinated than those encountered from ALLENKIRCHEN to MARBURG and from MARBURG to PADERBORN, with the exception of the PADERBORN defenses. Moreover, they were extended in depth to far greater extent. The WESER River line was the first completely organized position. It was broken. The HARZ Mountains were strongly defended. The 3d Armd merely blocked the South exits to these mountains and bypassed the position which was later liquidated by the 1st and 9th Divisions. The SAALE River was not strongly defended, and proved only a minor obstacle. Then, along the ELBE - MULDE line, where the last German available reserves were concentrated the advance of the American Armies was halted.

At the beginning of the period the 3d Armd Div was engaged heavily with the enemy defenses south of PADERBORN, described in After-Action Report for March 1945. The plan for attacking PADERBORN was to commit the two fresh task forces of C Comd "Dean", "Kane and "Boles", bypassing them through C Comd "Howze" in the vicinity of WENNER and NORDBORCHEN in a northeasterly direction toward the city. TF "Welborn" was to attack due north and clear the east side of town, while TF "Lovelady" covered the Division right by attacking LICHTENAU. C Comd "Howze" was to take SALZKOTTEL, covering the Division left.

Then at 010300, the CG VII Corps ordered the 3d Armd Div to send a force to LIPPSTADT, some 20 miles to the West to make junction there with elements of the 2d Armd Div which had broken out of the 9th Army's Rhine bridgehead and was driving rapidly East North of the industrial RUHR district. In order to accomplish this mission, TF "Kane" was diverted from the PADERBORN attack and TF "Lovelady" was ordered to leave only a blocking force West of LICHTENAU and attack PADERBORN on Welborn's right. Kane was ordered to move via GESEKE and BOGENFOLDE as rapidly as possible to LIPPSTADT and join the 2d Armd Div there.

TF "Kane" moved out before first light on this mission. Most of the resistance met was half-hearted. Many non-German Flack units were encountered who fired a few rounds and then either fled or surrendered. By 1520, the Air G.F. planes of the 2d and 3d Armd Divisions were in radio contact in the vicinity of LIPPSTADT, and each had identified leading ground troops of both divisions. At 1530, TF "Kane" made physical contact with elements of the 41st Armd Infantry Regiment. The Great RUHR Pocket, which yielded 374,000 German prisoners of war was closed.

By 1700B, the city of PADERBORN was securely in the hands of the three converging task forces. There was house to house fighting for sections of the bombed out city. Dug in tanks and infantry attempted to defend in the southwestern edge, but were quickly routed out.

On 2 - 3 & 4 April, the Division area was swept for remaining enemy pockets and defenses were further coordinated and strengthened. On 4 April the northeast corner of the RUHR Pocket was a secure hold and the business of clearing the pocket itself was under way.

The 8th Armd Div which had driven north of PADERBORN to BAD LIPPSPRINGE, re-assembled and attacked southwest of PADERBORN and GESEKE.

Further to the north the 9th Army's 2d Armd Div resumed the attack to the East followed by the 83d Inf Division.

Southwest of the 3d Armd sector the 1st Division had established a defensive sector facing generally west. While southeast of the 3d Armd was the 104th Div facing north and east and prepared to continue the attack to the east.

The next natural barrier in the zone of VII Corps was the WESER River over 30 miles to the east. Intelligence reports indicated that the bridges over this stream were still intact on 5 April. Accordingly, the 3d Armd Div was ordered to attack as rapidly and as soon as possible and to take these crossings if possible.

At about noon on 5 April the attack to the East was resumed. Again, there were four parallel routes on which C Comds "Dean" and "Boudinot" moved abreast in Task Force columns with C Comd "Boudinot" on the right. From north to south the leading task forces were: Boles, Kane, Welborn and Lovelady. C Comd "Howze", in Division reserve followed on the two center routes, Hogan behind Kane and Richardson following Welborn. The 83d Armd Rec Bn followed TF "Lovelady" on the south route. Resistance was scattered and light initially, consisting principally of road blocks defended by bazooka teams and small arms - a familiar pattern. All that afternoon and through an exceptionally dark night, the advance continued.

On 6 April it was apparent that a coordinated defense line had been reached along the WESER River, and that the WESER bridges could not be taken intact. TF "Boles" was heavily engaged in OTTBURGEN where strong road blocks had been erected by the enemy and were defended with SA, A.T. and arty fire. Boles was able to reach AMELUNXEN with one battle group. Another, attacking south from OTTBURGEN toward DRENKE into which enemy tanks were seen to withdraw, encountered a very strong enemy position about halfway between OTTBURGEN and DRENKE.

Kane fought his way through RHEIDER and ERKHEIN to TIETELSEN where he left a containing force and bypassed to the south only to become engaged just to the east with strongly defended road blocks.

Welborn cleared HAINHOLTZ & BORGHOLTZ and reached HAARBRUCK.

Lovelady reached MANRODE where strong defenses supported by AF and artillery fire halted his advance.

On the south and southeast the 83d Armd Rec Bn probed with strong patrols toward THENDEBURG. On the north flank the 83d Division had moved up well abreast and on the south the 104th Div was approaching the WESER in their zone.

On 7 April the 3d Armd closed on the west bank of the WESER, taking the towns of GODELHEIM, WEHRDEN, BLANKENAU, NEVERENGUN, HERSTILLE, CARLSHAVEN and HELMARS-HAUSEN and finding all the bridges blown by the enemy.

Two bridgeheads were securely established over the WESER River by this time. One in the zone of the 83d Div and another in the 2d Div zone immediately south of the 104th Div.

The 1st Div began moving up in the 3d Armd Div sector. It was planned that the 1st and 104th Divs would force crossings simultaneously to form VII Corps bridgehead while C Comd "Howze" would cross in the zone of the 2d Div and attack USLAR from the south to assist this operation.

When the operation got under way on 8 April it was seen that things were going easier than had been anticipated. The 104th Div crossed with minor opposition as did the 1st Div. By night, elements of the 104th Div were closing on USLAR. Accordingly, C Comd "Howze's" objective was changed to HARDEGSEN, crossing at GIESELVENDER. That night C Comd "Boudinot" started moving into the 104th Div bridgehead followed by the 83d Armd Rec Bn.

On the morning of 9 April, C Comd "Howze" attacked NE from the vicinity of IMBSEN while C Comd "Boudinot's" column was still crossing the river. Howze's left column, TF "Hogan" moved rapidly and with light opposition, and took HARDEGSEN easily. TF "Richardson" engaged a strong concentration of enemy tanks near HARST early in the morning. This task force was disengaged about noon, and bypassed the HARST position to the west, continued on to come abreast of TF "Hogan". Together these task forces pushed on to NORTHEIM which was cleared that night.

With TF "Welborn" on the north and TF "Lovelady" on the South, C Comd "Boudinot" formed and attacked east immediately after the crossing of the WESER was completed. The enemy tanks in the HARZ area were out-maneuvered. In addition fighter-bomber support attacked them in strength and in conjunction with the fire of "BOUDINOT'S" tank and anti-tank weapons. Several were destroyed and the others were forced to withdraw. That night TF "Lovelady" secured a bridgehead over the LEINE Creek and Division Engineers constructed a treadway bridge. TF Welborn captured an intact bridge by infantry action.

Meanwhile C Comd "Dean" crossed at BEVERUNGEN and GIESELWERDER and followed the advance remaining in Div Reserve.

The Corps Commander ordered the 3d Armd Div to pay particular attention to blocking the south exits of the HARZ Mountains, which was proving to be a strong enemy position and not to advance beyond NORDHAUSEN until relieved by the Infantry Divisions following.

On 10 April the advance continued on NORDHAUSEN. Enemy resistance was scattered as on previous days, withdrawing to the north into the HARZ Mountains strongly held when overcome. Any attempt to turn north was met by vigorous enemy action including counter-attacks supported by tanks (see unit reports).

The blocking positions at NORDHAUSEN covered a front stretching from OSTERODE and HERZBERG, where C Comd "Dean" was attacking a strong and stubborn enemy, through the comparatively quiet sector from HARTFELDE to WOFFLEBEN, held by C Comd "Howze" and the 88d Armd Rec Bn, thence south to include NORDHAUSEN and vicinity, held by C Comd "Boudinot".

On 11 April the 414th Inf Regt (less 2d Bn) was detached from the 3d Armd Div. The 2d Bn 414th remained attached and with TF "Lovelady". The 1st Bn 18th Inf Regt and the 3d Bn 47th Inf Regt were attached to 3d Armd Div and, in turn, attached to C Comd "Dean" and C Comd "Howze".

The continuation of the attack from NORDHAUSEN depended largely upon being relieved by infantry elements and on securing sufficient supplies of 50 weight oil. The reliefs were made quickly and a sufficient quantity of oil was secured to reach SANGERHAUSEN. Only light resistance barred the way. SANGERHAUSEN was reached easily, the first task force entered the town about midday on 12 April. That night the Division closed into a tight leagure around SANGERHAUSEN and pushed strong patrols to the east. These patrols drew heavy anti-tank fire four or five miles northeast of town. The attack was ordered to continue to the northeast on the following day to seize crossings over the ELBE River in the vicinity of DESSAU and WHITTEBURG. Heavy weight oil and gasoline was again short. This time some lighter was substituted, sacrificing a certain degree of engine performance for time gained.

The attack carried to the SAALE River on 13 April. TF "Hagan" and TF "Lovelady" forced crossings and two bridges were constructed during the night 13 - 14 April, allowing the attack to continue early 14 April.

Three new German Divisions defended the ELBE-MULDE line. (For dispositions and comments see G-2 Periodic Reports for period). The HARZ Mountain strongly held occupied the full strength of both the 1st and 9th Divisions and the 104th Div was heavily engaged in the HALLE area, so no infantry was available to consolidate the open country through which tank spearheads of the 3d Armd Div had penetrated.

On 16 April the Division was engaged in many directions. The front was a long one. It reached from BERNBERG, where TF "Richardson" had sealed one of the enemy's last remaining exits to the HARZ Mountains, through KOTHEN to the MULDE River at the Autobahn crossing, where TF "Welborn" was attempting to construct a bridge, thence south through the western edge of RAGUHN and southwest through THALHEIM. The rear areas were not completely cleared; many villages still

harbored small groups of enemy, and the HAIDEBURG Forest which reaches from just south of DESSAU almost to THIRLUND, provided a convenient build-up area for enemy counter-attacks & raids.

First Army limited the advance of its elements to the west bank of the MULDE & ELBE Rivers. Consequently TF "Welborn" was ordered to suspend operations on the bridge on 17 April, and withdrew his bridgehead forces on the following day. The Division was given the mission of clearing its zone completely up to the Army limiting line. This included the taking of DESSAU and the industrial area of WOLFEN - GREPPIN - JESSNITZ. In view of the enemy strength, particularly in the DESSAU area, it was necessary to undertake the mission in fragments in order to provide sufficient force to insure the success of each separate operation that was necessary.

Initially, on 15 April, C Comd "Dean" was committed facing DESSAU, which was considered the greatest threat, and built up a defensive sector between Howze and Boudinet in the QUELLENDORF area.

On the following day C Comd "Boudinet" extended the line to the south by occupying the western part of RAGUHN and the towns of PRIEBAU, MANKE, SCHIEBAU, and SIERENHAUSEN. Simultaneously, the infantry of TF "Orr" plus one company of the 83d Armd Regt Bn swept the northern part of HAIDEBURG Forest which lay between Dean and Boudinet. After clearing KOTERN, Hogan sent elements east to KLEPZIG and MERZEN and established firm contact with TF "Boles" on his right. In days following, TF "Hogan" also pushed North and secured AKEN, on the ELBE River after a brief fight.

Next, (18-19-20 April) TF "Richardson" was moved to the south part of the Division zone to take BOESAU STEINTURM and JESSNITZ, while the 83d Armd Regt Bn, reinforced by 1 Co of tanks, 1 Co of infantry and a section of TDs from TF "Orr" attacked to clear WOLFEN & GREPPIN. This action was controlled by C Comd "Howze". Both these operations developed into stiffly contested battles; the enemy counter-attacked twice with tanks and infantry.

The attack on DESSAU was launched at 210000B. The maximum artillery support was provided, including a sound and flash battery and the coordinated assault was made by four Task Forces. TF "Hogan" attacked from the west. TF "Boles" and TF "Orr" attacked from the SW. TF "Welborn" made a limited objective attack from the south with their right flank on the MULDE River. At the same time TF "Love-lady" crossed the SPITTLE WASSER Creek to take the east portion of RAGUHN, and TF "Richardson" continued the attack on JESSNITZ in the face of heavy arty and mortar fire.

The fighting in DESSAU proper developed as was expected, into a house to house battle that lasted through 22 April as the defenders slowly withdrew toward ROSSLAU. On 23 April there remained only one enemy pocket to be dealt with. In the bend of the MULDE River just North of DESSAU, the last of the DESSAU garrison occupied a wired in position in the soft almost swampy ground defending the railroad bridge that led to ROSSL U. C Comd "Dean" spent a full day rooting out these "Last-Ditch-Standers".

By 25 April the 3d Armd Div had been relieved in the sector by the 9th Div and occupied an area around SANGERHAUSEN. For the remainder of the period the Division conducted maintenance, rehabilitation and training in this area.

