

HEADQUARTERS 1ST RANGER BATTALION
APO 302, U S Army

1 January 1943

SUBJECT: Report of Action Against Enemy.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

1. The following report of action against the enemy is made as required by paragraph 10, AR 345-105.

2. With the mission of capturing and silencing the battery of three 75mm guns at Fort De La Pointe and the battery of four 105mm guns 1500 yards north of the harbor of Arzew (both shown on attached map "Port of Arzew", 1:10,000), the 1st Ranger Battalion, at about 0130 hours on 8 November 1942 landed as shown on attached "Arzew" sheet 127, 1:50,000.

3. The attack on Fort de la Pointe was accomplished by the formation of a perimeter by Company "B", as shown on attached sheet "Port of Arzew", 1:10,000 while the main attack was made by Company "A". Entrance into the fort was made as indicated by arrows on the map. Surprise was complete, the guns being captured with speed and with little firing. Approximately fifty prisoners were taken and the guns prepared for demolition and out-posts established.

4. After landing at the beach approximately half mile south of Cap Carbon, the battalion, less Companies "A" and "B", proceeded still undiscovered along the coast road to the attack on the four 105mm battery. Formation in the attack was as shown on attached map, with Companies "C", "F", and "E" abreast and Company "D" handling four 81mm mortars, in a defiladed position about 500 yards to the rear. The scouts of each company made contact with the barbed wire encircling the enemy position. Heavy rifle and machine gun fire caused the Battalion Commander to call on Company "D" for fire from the 81mm mortars. After the enemy fire had been reduced by mortar fire, Companies "C", "E", and "F" rushed to close with the enemy, captured the guns and approximately sixty prisoners. Captured guns were prepared for demolition and outposts established.

5. During the balance of the night and the following day, the battalion spent in patrolling to the north of town in the vicinity of the refinery and south to make contact with the 3rd Bn. 18th Infantry. A good deal of activity was had with enemy snipers and many more prisoners were captured.

6. Early on the morning of the 8th, Fort du Nord, which was being used as a convalescent home for members of the French Foreign Legion, capitulated after a brief parley between the Battalion Commander and the Commander of the garrison. Some shots had been fired from the fort prior to this.

At about 1600 hours, 8 November, orders were received to dispatch a company to report to the Commanding Officer, 1st Bn. 16th Infantry at Port-aux-Poules for attachment by 1900 hours the same date.

Company "E", this battalion, was entrained at 1800 hours at Arzew and arrived at Port-aux-Poules at approximately 0200 hours and found the railroad station deserted and the town apparently free of troops. The company was established in the station while combat patrols were sent out to attempt to contact friendly troops. At about 0400 hours, 9 November, contact was made with an outpost of the 16th Infantry and information obtained as to the location of a nearby telephone switchboard. At about 0700 hours the company commander was able to make contact with the commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, and was instructed to proceed by road to La Macta approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the eastward.

The company moved out and at a point about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Port-aux-Poules began to come under harassing fire from a ridge south of the road.

At a point about one mile west of La Macta, the company was forced to deploy by heavier fire from both rifles and machine guns. The second platoon was dispatched to envelope the enemy position from the left (east) flank while the fire of the remaining platoon was directed to fix the enemy in their locations. A pair of self-propelled 75mm guns of the Cannon Company, 16th Infantry accompanied the second platoon.

Opposition was reduced, a number of the enemy killed and two prisoners taken. The company then proceeded unmolested into La Macta where the company commander reported and was assigned the mission of providing close-in protection of the town. A system of outposts was established and maintained until the company was relieved at approximately 1400 hours, 10 November. The company then returned to Arzew by train.

At about 1600 hours, 8 November, orders were received to furnish a company to provide for the defense of the Command Post of 1st Division at Tourville, a village on the outskirts of Arzew, Company "C", this battalion, was dispatched on this duty and remained as such until about 1000 hours 9 November, when the company was ordered to move overland by marching to Saint Cloud to (a) report on arrival to Lieutenant Colonel Murtaug, Security Officer, 1st Division, for instructions or (b) report to Headquarters, 1st Division or (c) report to Commanding Officer, 18th Combat Team, which ever happened first. The exact military situation at St. Cloud was not known. At Renan, the Company Commander reported to Commanding General, 1st Division and was ordered to report to the Commanding Officer, 18th Combat Team near St. Cloud. The Company Commander reported to the Commanding Officer, 18th Combat Team and was attached to 1st Battalion, 18th Combat Team and instructed to move after dark on an encircling movement to a position to the south of the town with the mission of blocking the exits from St. Cloud and preventing the exit of the enemy force from town. When darkness came, the company moved out and reached a position astride the main road leading out of town at an early hour. At dawn, an enemy motor column was discovered at a standstill just outside of town and the company moved to attack. When within a quarter mile of the enemy column, the company came under mortar, machine gun and artillery fire and was pinned down. It was discovered that an artillery position existed adjacent to the truck column.

A platoon less one section was sent to flank the enemy right. The fire increased in intensity and the flanking movement was brought to a standstill when about 75 yards of the enemy positions. The platoon was forced to dig in and content itself

with sniping at the enemy. A messenger to the main body of the company determined that the heavy fire had also brought its movement to a standstill. This condition continued till about 1500 hours the same afternoon when the enemy surrendered. The Company returned to the battalion at about 2000 hours, 10 November 1942.

7. Losses in Action:

Killed: 1st Lieut GORDON L KLEFMAN, 0325561, Company "C"
Private ELMER I ESKOLA, 20707902, Company "C"
Pvt 1cl GEORGE W. GRISAMER, 36153957, Company "B"
Pvt 1cl ALDER L NYSTROM, 36037106, Company "C"

Wounded: 1st Lieut EARL L CARRAN, 0414866, Company "B"
Cpl GILBERT E. WILSON, 35021630, Company "C"
T/5th CHARLES F GRANT, 34146593, Company "C"
T/5th CLINTON L WESTRUM, 20714914, Company "C"
Pvt 1cl BURTON D BOUDREAU, 20700532, Company "C"
Pvt1cl JAMES O EDWARDS, 33081650, Company "C"
Pvt1cl GEORGE HAWKINS, 37044716, Company "C"
Pvt1cl CARL R. JOHNSON, 37026230, Company "C"
Pvt1cl ALLEN E SWANSON, 20712877, Company "C"
T/4th MELVIN P GRAMKE, 20703167, Company "E"
Pvt1cl CLIFFORD H HAMBRICK, 34145459, Company "E"

WILLIAM O DARBY,
Lt Col, 1st Ranger Bn,
Commanding.