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HEADQUARTERS
601ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #464 U. S. ARMY

5 November 1943

SUBJECT: Report of Operations for Period 1 October 1943 to 31 October 1943

TO : Commanding General, 3rd Infantry Division, APO #3, U. S. Army.

a. 601st TD Bn attached to 3rd Infantry Division on 1 October 1943 was bivouaced vicinity VOLTURARA (N-813533). Oct. 3, A Company plus 3rd Plat Rcn Co attached to 15th Inf Regt with mission of engaging hostile armor if it threatens infantry. Oct 4, Co B plus 2nd Plat Rcn Co attached to 30th Inf to protect their right flank and rear. Oct. 6, 3rd Plat Rcn made contact with enemy infantry at N-385417, fired on by MG and mortar fire. Loss: One (1) 1/4 ton vehicle with 610 radio. Reconnaissance was made to VOLTURNO and vicinity of LIMATOLA for possible positions and tank crossings. Oct. 7-9 B Co fire indirect fire in support of 30th Inf. Oct. 10, Bn vicinity of N-266765. Oct 11, C Co in support of 15th Inf. Oct. 13, 3rd Inf Div attacked across VOLTURNO RIVER with C Co (waterproofed) to cross on order; crossed at 1210. A Co fired direct and indirect fire (418 ras), knocked out 2 tanks, 1 S/P gun, 1 1/2 track personnel carrier. Oct 15 Bn completely moved over VOLTURNO. Oct 19, Rcn and A Co left Bn area to go to vicinity DRAGONI (N-254993) to protect against armor coming down VOLTURNO VALLEY. Oct 20, Rcn patrolled from vicinity of DRAGONI, N-254967, to VOLTURNO RIVER. Rcn and B Co supported advance of 7th Inf and 10th Eng. Rcn captured 10 PW from 3rd Co 29th PGR. Forward elements at N-220995 received heavy enemy arty fire. A Co moving NE of DRAGONI. Oct. 22, Rcn Co plus 2 Plats of B Co with B Co 751st Tk Bn worked as far as H-200010. Contacted enemy Inf. Received heavy mortar and arty fire. Results: took 2 prisoners, lost one (1) M5A1 and one (1) halftrack through enemy fire. Oct 23, Cos in position firing on targets of opportunity. Rcn outposted line and established active reconnaissance. Oct 24, Rcn remained in vicinity of H-187018 and set up an OP there. Oct. 25, Bn Co moved to N-205975. B and C Cos moved to assembly area prepared to support Inf advance. Oct. 26, Co A moved along ROCCA ROMANA - SAN FELICE road. Cos B and C moving along road SW from ROCCA ROMANA to PIETRAMELARA. Oct. 26, Bn assembled vic N-155935 and went into positions from there. Rcn Co patrols advanced as far as N-129992 and made contact with enemy. Oct. 27, Bn fired direct fire on MARZANELLO and targets of opportunity; formed line of defense MARZANELLO - MT MONTICELLO with 751st Tk Bn. Oct. 28, C Co formed line vicinity N-118970 to N-120975. Oct 29, A Co moved to H-149973 in firing position. Oct. 30, B Co moved to area south MARZANELLO with B Co 751st Tk Bn. 3rd Plat of C Co moved to area SW MT. S. ANGIO to protect 15th Inf road-blocks. Oct. 31, Rcn pushed to POZA H-035986. B Co supported advance of 15th Infantry.

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b. Enemy operations throughout the period have been vigorous. The use of evasive, delaying, withdrawing tactics has been employed. Well dug in MG and anti-tank gun positions, roving S/P artillery pieces, and good CPs have enabled the enemy to delay our advance and make movement of TDs difficult.

c. The withdrawal tactics of the enemy through the mountain passes and across the VOLTURNO have had a decided effect on the maneuverability of this battalion. German demolitions have been well employed and in all cases our heavy M-10's have had to wait until Division and Corps engineers could repair bridges. It is felt that engineers with heavy equipment should accompany forward units of this battalion and work with them more closely than they have in the past. The Division engineers have been very good at this but their equipment has, in many cases, been inadequate for our purposes (crossing VOLTURNO RIVER). The nature of the terrain we are working in makes it ideally suited for defense. The enemy is well dug in and on mountain roads jeep reconnaissance is no longer practicable. Consequently, foot reconnaissance has been extensively used. The Germans are able to conceal high-velocity, direct fire weapons and make any movement of tank destroyers in the vanguard of a Division hazardous.

In this country tank destroyers should be employed in Division reserve and be used to deepen the fires of the Division artillery. The long range (14,500 yds) makes them ideally suited for this. When a sizeable enemy tank attack seems imminent, the battalion should be massed in depth. If we are employed in this manner, our striking power will not be dissipated before the actual need arises and we will be able to operate effectively in the manner for which we were designed.

d. 601st TD Bn is attached to 3rd Infantry Division with Battalion in vicinity of PRESENZANO H-0608. B Co with A Co 751st Tk Bn pushing N towards MIGNANO G-985125, hindered by demolitions and poor cross country mobility. Personnel status: Good. Equipment: Good.

Walter E. Tardy

WALTER E. TARDY,
Major, FA,
Commanding.