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701ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 251, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

1 February 1944

SUBJECT: Operations Report

TO : Adjutant General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C. (thru channels)

1. In compliance with the requirements of paragraph 10, AR 345-105, dated March 10, 1943, the following operations report of the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion covering the period 1 January 1944 to 31 January 1944 is herewith submitted.

2. The operations covered in this report are statements from the Unit Journal and the Battalion Diary, and supporting evidence for said statements is attached.

3. Previous operations report submitted and including 31 December 1943.

For the Commanding Officer:

*Jesse B. Wray*  
JESSE B. WRAY  
Capt., 701st TD Bn.,  
Actg. Adjutant.

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OPERATIONS OF THE 701ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

Period - 1 Jan. - 31 Jan., 1944

Company locations, at beginning of period:

- "A" Company: 00100-00222.
- "B" Company: 00543-00735.
- "C" Company: 00850-00950.

Map - Italy 1/50000, sheet 161 III

The year 1944 opened with the Battalion in position in the vicinity of LA SAVA, ITALY. An offensive was brewing for the sector, and for this operation the Battalion was attached to the recently organized Task Force Allen, whose mission was to be the capture of the German strongpoint Hill Porchio (21450 - map 1/50000 Italy, sheet 160-III).

January 1st being New Year's Day, and also marking the beginning of the 20th consecutive month of overseas duty for the Battalion, the day's activities were

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at a minimum. A turkey dinner was served in the mess. The morning was a black one, with a high wind and heavy rains which later changed to snow, and a continual maintenance of the road net was necessary. This job fell mainly to the Reconnaissance Company, who for lack of a suitable mission during the past operation had been serving as a semi-service company for the Gun Companies.

Positional areas for the gun companies were chosen from the available maps. All positions were such that the guns could support the advance of the Infantry on Porchie. A and B companies were for direct fire, while the C company positions were chosen for indirect fire. Reconnaissance parties from each company went out in the morning of the 1st, to make an actual choice of these positions. The next day construction parties went out from each company to prepare positions in the chosen areas, and the Bn. Survey party began a survey of the 'C' company batteries. The base piece of each Platoon of 'C' company moved into the new positions on the night of the 2nd, and registration began the following morning ('C' company surveyed positions: C-1, 96602-11706; C-2, 96365-11603; C-3, 96404-11403. Base point registered on - 91681555. All coordinates from Sheet II). On the 3rd Recon. Company began an infiltration movement from the LE CAVE area to a new bivouac in the vicinity of 000108. In the afternoon all construction work was discontinued on the B company positions, the fact that the new 'B' company area was in the 34th Infantry Division sector being the cause. Plans were altered, and it was decided that B company would follow the advance of the 753rd Tank Battalion along Route #6, and would occupy direct fire positions at 942160 and 942157. The area still being in enemy hands, a reconnaissance was impossible; and areas chosen were only approximate.

On the night of the 3rd-4th, the remainder of 'C' company moved forward. The Command Group moved on the 4th, closing in bivouac at the area 969121. 'B' and 'A' companies moved on the night of the 4th. Bad weather made it impossible for 'A' company to get into their positions that night, so they pulled into an inter-

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mediate assembly area just off route #6 at the forward end of Mt. Lungo. Here they spent the entire day of the 5th, unable to move in the daylight hours. On the night of the 5th, with the aid of construction crews, 'A' company was able to get two platoons into position, the other platoon going into an assembly area in the vicinity of the company CP.

CP's were manned by Lt. McKnight and Capt. Morrison for the TFA operation, and on the 5th, 'C' company expended 515 rounds in indirect fire. During the same period 'B' company expended 87 rounds in direct fire. On this day the 'A' company area was heavily shelled and 10 casualties were inflicted on the company. On the 6th 'C' company expended 908 rounds in indirect fire, and 'A' Company fired 58 rounds in direct fire at targets at the base of Porchio. Capt. Whitsit, C.O. Co. 'B', was wounded and evacuated; Lt. Neeleman assumed command of the company.

On the morning of the 7th, Lt. Hudson's platoon of 'A' company fired in support of British units attacking Hill Cedro (Approx. 1000 yds to the south of Porchio), and took enemy pillboxes and self-propelled guns under his fire. A few minutes later the platoon fired on an enemy anti-tank gun at the base of Porchio. At least two self-propelled guns were destroyed, and in addition, a number of enemy pillboxes were known to have been damaged. As a result of this fire, the platoon drew heavy enemy counterbattery from a battery of Nebelwerfers and several direct fire guns. No damage was done to the platoon, however. A total of 66 rounds of HE and 6 rounds APC were expended. During the day, 'C' company fired 551 rounds in indirect fire.

The following morning, the 3rd platoon of 'B' company occupied positions at 932161 (They were to occupy these positions during hours of daylight only). During the day this platoon was attacked three times by enemy aircraft with no damage. In that period 'C' company fired 645 rounds HE and 9 rounds of smoke.

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On the morning of the 9th, the 2nd platoon of 'B' company moved to new positions vicinity 932164, occupying the area under the same plan as that for the 3rd platoon. A 'C' company party left early in the morning to reconnoiter for positions in the vicinity of 928151 (Positions were to be chosen for 6 guns, said positions to be occupied at dawn 10 Jan). 'A' company was ordered to move back into an area near 'C' company for indirect fire, and spent the day in preparing their outlet roads for the movement. The Battalion survey party surveyed the proposed positions. The 'A' company area was shelled intermittently throughout the day, but no damage was done. During the period 'C' company expended 1077 rounds of ammunition.

Road conditions made it impossible for 'A' company to move back as scheduled that night, so road maintenance continued throughout the night, continuing into the next day. The 6 'C' company guns moved into anti-tank positions at 928151 as scheduled. On the 10th, 'C' company expended a total of 244 rounds.

'A' company closed in bivouac in the vicinity of 965120. The movement out of the anti-tank positions had been so difficult that two full nights were required to prepare a route. Positions were prepared for an artillery role, and a bulldozer, furnished by the engineers, did much of the work. That afternoon, 'C' company fired 33 rounds of smoke in a test of the 3" smoke shell. Officers of the 602 Ordnance were on hand to report the results. On the following day, 'C' company expended 106 rounds of HE and 33 smoke shells, while a survey of 'B' company was begun for use as artillery.

January 12th saw the completion of a survey of 'A' company positions, and their occupation by the company. Two OP's were established on Mt. Porchia by Lt. Summers, Recon. Company, at 917163 and 915157 while Lt. McKnight shifted his OP on Mt. Maggiore from 936134 to 945147. 'C' company continued to fire ~~ammunition~~ with 177 rounds of HE and 23 rounds of smoke, <sup>expended</sup> for the day with 'A' company expending 66 HE shells. In general, however, things were quiet on the TFA and 34th Division sectors.

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TFA was dissolved and its units passed under the command of the 36th Division on the morning of January 13. The 701st was attached to 1st Armored Division Artillery to support the fire of the 34th Division. One 'C' company M-10 went to the rear for repair. 6 'C' company guns and 6 guns of 'B' company pulled back to artillery positions from their anti-tank locations. The survey of 'A' and 'B' companies had been completed by noon, and the preparation of 'B' company's position was continued. In the day's firing, 'C' fired 211 HE shells and 8 rounds of smoke while 'A' company shot 135 rounds of HE.

Captain Clarke was out on a reconnaissance of the 135th Infantry sector in the morning of January 14. One 'A' company gun moved back to the service echelon to have the radiator repaired. The Battalion expended 687 rounds of HE that day. At 1700 hours, a letter from Headquarters, II corps, was received, dated 12 January 1944, detaching the 701st T.D. Bn. from 1st Armored Division and attaching the Battalion to II Corps.

The Battalion armorer inspected the guns of 1st Platoon, 'A' company, and found a small adjustment necessary on one gun. All the others were in satisfactory condition. A Recon. company patrol worked to the 139th Brigade (Br.), 141st Infantry Reg't., 135th Infantry Reg't. Headquarters, and got within a mile of Cassino. The Battalion fired 339 rounds of HE for January 15th.

The following day, the 36th F.A. Battalion Chaplain held Catholic Church Services in the immediate area of the Battalion CP. Lt. Kennedy, Recon. Company, established and manned an OP on Hill 780 at 919231. A reconnaissance was carried out for an OP on Mt. Trocchio, but the post was not established. Another reconnaissance was made of routes from the present positions to a contemplated position, northwest of Mt. Porchia, off Highway #6. The routes were marked but the area needed sweeping. Maintenance was emphasized through the Battalion that day.

Lt. Lewis and his survey party ran control points to a contemplated gun posi-



tions between Perchia and Trocchio on the morning of the 17th. The Company Commanders proceeded to the vicinity of 901167 on a reconnaissance for gun positions while maintenance of vehicles and equipment continued throughout the day in preparation for the move. 'B' company expended 16 rounds registering. Maintenance and preparation for the movement continued through the following day. A reconnaissance for a Battalion CP site proved unsuccessful, but Recon. company reported that CP positions had been chosen on Perchia and Trocchio. Despite slow progress, preparation of gun positions were carried out through the day. Recon's Pioneer Platoon was occupied with sweeping the area for mines.

A successful reconnaissance for a Battalion CP was made on the morning of January 19, and the location picked was on the San Vittore road at 934165. Preparation of gun positions continued and the survey, except for one platoon of 'C' company, was completed. The Perchia and Trocchio CP's were established, and Lt. Kennedy went to the 139th Brigade (Br.) as liaison for their operations. At 0200 hours the next day, 'A', 'B', and 'C' companies moved into their new areas, and OP's were established and manned on Perchia at 913157, Trocchio at 883174, and Cedro at 902145. Vehicles of Command Group moved by infiltration, one vehicle every 20 minutes, to establish the new CP.

One 'A' company M-10 received a direct hit from enemy shell-fire at 0200 hours of January 21. There were four enlisted men casualties. A reconnaissance party covered the Rapido River area seeking approaches to and across the river. During the day the Battalion sent 3584 rounds into enemy positions.

A heavy smoke screen, which had been laid over the valley for the past three days, made visibility and, consequently, OP operations exceedingly difficult. Lt. Kennedy was out on reconnaissance to the Rapido River area. During the day of January 22, the Battalion expended 4228 rounds. Only 616 rounds were directed at German lines the following day, and there was a general shelling of the valley by enemy guns. Slight damage resulted to some light vehicles in the Battalion CP area,

but there were no casualties.

Visibility from CP's continued to be poor on January 24th due to the smoking of the valley by the engineers. Lt. Kennedy was out on a reconnaissance of routes in the forward area but there was no firing during the day. The 701st Trains moved up to the area of 999105. Lt. Kennedy continued his reconnaissance activities the following day when he attempted to locate a route from Highway #6 to the area northwest of Mt. Trocchio. However, his efforts were unsuccessful and it was concluded that no such route exists. A total of 4178 rounds were fired at the enemy that day by the Battalion guns.

On January 26, for the first time since the Battalion had moved into its present area, the valley was not smoked and the CP's could observe for registration of the companies. All the companies registered and 99 rounds were fired that day. Lt. Kennedy made contact with the British in X Corps sector. 1732 rounds were expended the following day, and Reconnaissance patrols contacted the British on the left of the 36th Division sector and the 34th Division troops to the right of the 36th Division sector during the day. 3026 rounds were fired at the enemy on January 28, and this dropped to 465 rounds the following day. Lt. Kennedy contacted the British in the Vandra sector.

Church services were conducted by Chaplain Strevig in the Battalion CP area on the morning of January 30. 1354 rounds were fired that day as 5th Army attacks brought good results. All companies prepared to move forward in support of "CG" B should a bridgehead be established across the Rapido River.

The positions of the Battalion on 31 January 1944 were as follows:

Bn. CP - 934105  
Recon & Trains - 000108  
A-1 - 91309 - 16268  
A-2 - 91240 - 16392  
A-3 - 91182 - 16504  
B-1 - 90830 - 16276  
B-2 - 90650 - 16218  
C-1 - 91602 - 16673  
C-2 - 91404 - 16678  
C-3 - 91609 - 16471

*Albert B. Morrison*  
ALBERT B. MORRISON  
Capt., 701st T. D. Bn.,  
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Appendix \*\*\*\*\*

Total ammunition expenditure for the month of January 1944 -- 25733 rounds.

Casualty Report -

WHITSI, Robert	Captain	NIA
RITHEMAN, Charles	2nd Lt.	SWA
HEISBERGER, Chas.	S/Sgt.	SWA
OLSON, Henry A.	Sgt.	LWA
DWORSKI, Frank A.	Corp.	LWA
GLYNN, James A.	T/5	LWA
RHOTERS, William	Pvt.	SWA
COPE, William R.	Pvt.	SWA
KEEMAN, John R.	Pfc.	SWA
FARBER, Daniel	Pvt.	SWA
KEEN, Edwin G.	Pvt.	SWA
BUHRMANN, Louis	Pvt.	SWA
REPKA, Loleslaws	Pvt.	LWA
WILCOXON, John L.	Pvt.	LWA
NIEMAN, Raymond	Pfc.	LWA

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