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Month of Mar 44

HEADQUARTERS  
701ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 464, c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

1 April 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 March 1944 to 31 March 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 29 Feb 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

*[Handwritten signature]*  
Col. L. H. [unclear]  
14 Nov 43

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OPERATIONS OF THE 701ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

Period - 1 March - 31 March 1944

Location of 701st T.D. Bn. beginning of period:

Map - Italy 1/50,000, Sheets  
158 I II III IV GSUS  
4229

Bn. CP:	867227
Bcn Co:	867224
"A" Co:	865229 (9 guns in assembly area)
"B" Co:	978172 (12 guns anti-tank reserve)
"C" Co:	943269 (10 guns in anti-tank reserve)

Beginning of the month the battalion continued its operations in VI Corps reserve. The morning of the 1st March "C" company was attached to the 601st TD Bn. to strengthen the anti-tank defenses in the 3rd Infantry Division sector. "C" company was held in reserve in indirect fire positions. The dispositions of the guns were 2 guns 94296, 2 guns 972288, 2 guns 941239,

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supervised by the 89th AFA Bn. Rcn. company set up an OP in the vicinity of 007201 to observe the fires for "B" company in the SSF sector.

Rcn. company on 7 March moved the OP in SSF sector from vicinity 007201 to vicinity 007188.

"A" company after 12 days of maintenance, rehabilitation, and training was placed in Corps reserve on 7 March. Plans were formulated to relieve "B" company 645 TD Bn. in direct fire positions by "A" company 701st TD Bn. in vicinity of 876283. The relief was planned to take place on the night of 8-9 and 9-10 March. A night reconnaissance was accomplished by Rcn. company on the night 7-8 March of forward direct fire positions to be occupied by "A" company. Capt. Clarke of Rcn. company made the reconnaissance and recommended that guns can reach houses in vicinity of 876283 and 883283 to occupy direct fire positions in the houses.

The night of 7-8 March "C" company operating with the 601st TD Bn. in the 3rd Inf. Div sector relieved one platoon of "B" company 601st TD Bn. The anti-tank position consisted of night and day direct fire positions; night positions 2 guns at 983298; day positions 2 guns at 985302. Two guns were held in reserve in the vicinity of 974287.

8 March battalion contacted the British Recce, 6th Armd. Infantry, and 645th TD Bn. in conjunction with "A" company's TD guns occupying direct fire positions in vicinity of 879283 and 883283 on night of 8-9 March. After sundown on 8 March on night of 8-9 March the pioneer platoon moved out to build a road and fortify positions to be occupied by the "A" company guns in the vicinity of 879283 and 883283. The work by the pioneer platoon was completed by 2200 hrs and 2 guns of "A" company closed into direct fire positions at 2345 hrs without an incident. The following morning, 9 March, 6 guns of "A" company closed in indirect fire positions in vicinity of 862253 and 4 guns remained in vicinity of 865229 held their position

in preparation to occupy direct fire positions in vicinity of 878275, 878273, 872209, and 876209 on the night of 9-10 March.

At noon 9 March "C" company and 3rd plat. "B" company attached to 601st TD Bn. reverted back to the control of 1st Arm. Division. "C" company was notified and alerted for movement at 2000 hrs on night of 9-10 March. The relief to be effected by 601st TD Bn. and to begin at dusk.

Liaison was established with 601st TD Bn. and preparations were made for the relief and movement of "C" company and the 3rd platoon of "B" company. The 3rd platoon of "B" company was moved to an assembly area in vicinity of 973195. The following morning the 3rd platoon was moved into indirect fire positions in vicinity of 976218. "C" company, upon relief by 601st TD Bn. moved to assembly area in the vicinity of 954214 where it spent the following ten days on maintenance and rest.

The following three days, 10th through 13th March, were quiet and not much activity transpired in the battalion. The whole extent of the activity was firing of 18 guns in indirect fire positions; 6 "A" company guns, 12 "B" company guns, and manning of OP's at 908272 and 876267. The OP at 908272 observed a mission for 938 FA Bn (155 Hows) on enemy artillery battery. The area was well covered and battery neutralized.

The afternoon of 13 March liaison was established with 5th (Br.) Inf. Division by Capt. A.B. Morrison, equipped with radio and messenger. Capt. Morrison worked with the British R.A. coordinating the fires of 6 "A" Co. guns and 12 "B" Co. in support of the 5th (Br.) Inf. Div.

Night of 13-14 March "B" company moved from indirect fire positions in vicinity of 909158 and 976218 to vicinity 866247. "B" company put in position 2 six gun batteries in vicinity of 861000-24560 and 861000-24568 to support the Br. R.A. of 5th (Br.) Inf. Div. "B" company's FDC coordinated

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and handled fires for their two 6 gun batteries, and one 6 gun battery of "A" company.

Rcn. company set up OP's in vicinity of 903270, 876267, and 883283 the morning of 15 March. The OP's and "A" and "B" companies worked in FM channel of Rcn., receiving sensings on observed targets direct from forward observers. Fire missions requiring heavier caliber guns were relayed from Rcn. company command half-track via telephone to 938th FA Bn. (155 Hows) or 91st AFA Bn. (105 SP Hows). Lt. Boenning supplemented the ground OP's by arranging for air OP flights with 1st AD artillery Piper Cubs. The ground OP's remained in same vicinity through the close of the period.

Six guns of "A" company and 12 guns of "B" company remained in indirect fire positions from 13 March through the close of the period. The night of 20-21 March the 6 guns of "A" company which were in direct fire positions moved to the vicinity of 861249 into indirect fire positions. The move of these 6 guns of "A" company into indirect fire positions made four 6 gun batteries in indirect fire positions. The guns of "A" and "B" company were tied-in with the 91st AFA Artillery. "A" and "B" companies remained in indirect fire positions through the end of the period.

Night of 18-19 March the 1st platoon of "C" company moved out from vicinity of 954214 to SSF sector to support a contemplated attack by our troops. Before the platoon reached the assigned rendezvous in the SSF sector prior to attack, the attack was called off and the platoon was ordered back to company assembly area in vicinity of 954214. The following morning 19 March "C" company reconnoitered the SSF sector for artillery positions. Positions were found in vicinity of 975190 and plans were made for occupation of those positions the night of 19-20 March. The movement was made without incident, closing in reconnoitered areas at 2100 hrs. The company split into 3 four gun batteries, one at 975187, one at 975220, and one at 975190. Lt. Lewis surveyed "C" company's guns the follow-

ing morning and with the aid of 69th AFA Bn. the guns were registered and tied-in with the 69th AFA FDC. on the 22 March, Lt. Edson of "C" company established an OP in SSF in vicinity of 014443.

The gun companies of the battalion remained in artillery roles until the 25 March when "C" company was alerted to relieve "B" company, 601st TD Bn. in direct fire positions in 3rd Inf. Div. sector. Preparations and plans were made with 601st TD for the relief during the night of 25-26 March. Movement began at 2200 hrs and "C" company closed in direct fire positions at 2400 hrs; one gun at 008288, 1 gun at 011282, 1 gun at 006282, 1 gun at 004287, 1 gun at 989279, 1 gun 989282, 2 guns 005293; the 3rd platoon with 4 guns remained at 973196 in reserve. The company CP located at 991248.

The 25 March was a red letter day for the battalion. At approximately 1400 hrs Lt. Col. King was seriously wounded and Captain Whitsit, "B" Co. commander, lightly wounded from a 3" shell fired from gun of 894th TD Bn. Col. King, Col. McPheters and Capt. Whitsit were having a conference outside of "B" company's CP at 866247 when the accident occurred. The 3" shell hit a branch of a tree directly above them causing an air burst. Lt. Col. McPheters of 91st AFA Bn. died in route to the hospital.

Capt. Bowden, company commander of Hqs. company and senior officer, assumed command of the battalion. At 1700 hrs 25 March, Capt. John S. King, Bn. S-3, assumed command per authority contained in letter 1st Armd. Division, dated 25 March 1944. Capt. John S. King appointed Capt. Wray, Bn. S-1, as executive officer in addition to his S-1 duties, and Lt. Gady, "B" company assumed command of "B" company.

"A" and "B" companies continued in an artillery role, with Rcn. company manning OP through close of period. "C" company, in direct fire positions, working with the 34th Inf. Div., harrassed the enemy nightly by coordinated "shoots" with the infantry. Night of 31 March a "shoot" was coordin-

ated with 168 RCT, 34th Inf. Division. Two guns from 1st platoon, "C" company moved to within 600 yards of an enemy strong point, (house #14). At a prearranged signal the infantry illuminated the target by means of flares fired from mortars. The two guns fired 77 rounds, about half HE and half APC BDF in 3 minutes. The "shoot" created a bedlam in enemy sector with the enemy retaliating with MG and mortar fire. Despite the heavy MG and mortar fire the two guns moved back into their direct fire positions without any casualties or damage to the M-10's.

At 1100 hrs 30 March, Major F.M. Doran, executive officer of 68th AFA Bn. assigned to the battalion by 1st Armored Division, assumed command of the battalion. The new battalion commander appointed Capt. J.S. King, executive officer, Lt. Cox of "C" company, S-3, and Capt. A.B. Morrison as survey and special services officer.

Locations of 701st T.D. Bn. at end of period:

Bn. CP - 867227. Bn. Trains - 875218. A Company CP - 860252; A-1 (6 guns) - 861249; A-2 (5 guns) - 862253. B Company CP - 866247; B-1 (6 guns) - 864247; B-2 (6 guns) - 862245. C Company CP - 991248. C-1 - 018274; 019268; 014267; 991248. C-2 - 989279; 989282; (2 guns) - 005293. C-3 - 008288; 011282; 006282; 004287. Recn Company CP - 867225. OPs - 876267; 851290; 918295. Bn Medical Detachment with Trains - 875218.

APPENDIX:

Ammunition expended from 1 March to 31 March:

Shell, HE, M42, FPD M48	-----	10878
Shell, HE, M42, FPD M54	-----	24
Shell, APC	-----	70
Shell, Smoke	-----	298
TOTAL	-----	11270

CASUALTIES:

KING, Harrison	Lt. Col.	SWA
WHITSIT, Robert J.	Capt.	LWA
NEELEMAN, Leonard J.	1st Lt.	SWA
KENNEDY, Joseph G.	1st Lt.	LWA
Outlaw, Ernest L.	Sgt.	KIA
Simmons, Russell W.	Sgt.	LWA
Arant, Henry L.	T/4	LWA
Scott, Charles H.	T/5	LWA
Smith, Chester A.	T/5	LWA
Bednarz, Edward	Pfc.	SWA
Staggsdill, Harold	Pvt.	LWA
Clarke, Carroll J.	Pvt.	LWA



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1 April 1944

COMBAT LESSONS LEARNED FOR PERIOD 1 MARCH - 31 MARCH

1. The M-8 and M-20 vehicles with any prolonged usage for radio communication are presenting excessive amount of electrical maintenance. The weakness lies in the generator and voltage regulators in the M-8 and M-20. Due to the type of electrical equipment used in these vehicles, repair and regulations is almost out of question, leaving the only alternative of complete replacement of the generator and voltage regulator. This means of maintenance is presenting a problem because of the limited amount of electrical parts available for the M-8 and M-20 vehicles.

2. High velocity gun tubes, namely, the 3 inch TD gun, can be preserved and maintained very satisfactorily by using diesel fuel as a solvent and cleaning agent. Tubes in this battalion have fired an approximate average of 200 rounds each and in a recent ordnance inspection were classed in good condition without any signs of excessive deterioration.

3. Recently this battalion started to use weather corrections on all unobserved fires with excellent results. We get the Meteorological messages from Corps Artillery Net. A relatively short time is required to figure a Metro and it is well worth the trouble. A powder thermometer would be extremely useful. At present we have to call on a nearby artillery unit to get the powder temperature.

4. Replacements, both officers and enlisted personnel, received in the past month by this battalion show considerable lack of IB training. Noticeable weaknesses are radio procedure and general knowledge of FM radios. Map reading, gunnery, and general knowledge of the capabilities of the M-10 are lacking in many cases.

5. There are no direct sights equipped with night lighting devices in the battalion. Our night lighting device for the panoramic sight is a home made contraption which works with limitations but it is still not good enough. It is imperative that we get both a direct sight with night lighting device fixtures and a night lighting device for the panoramic sight.

6. When making large shifts we have found that an error occurs as large as 20%. To correct for this we have two or more check points in addition to the base point. In each case the check point deflection is calculated so that when a target located in the vicinity of the check point is to be fired the shift is given from the check point.

When figuring M.M.F.'s, the data for each check point is computed that gives us Metro corrections for an area 1000' each side and 1500 yards over of short of the check point. Following this method, we are sure to have applied the proper Metro corrections to unobserved concentrations fired in each check point area.

For the Commanding Officer:

Charles H. Cox  
Charles H. Cox, Jr.,  
1st Lt., 701st TD Bn.,  
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