

HEADQUARTERS
601ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 464 U. S. Army

3 April 1944.

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SUBJECT: Reports of Operations for Period 1-31 March 1944

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

a. Summary of Our Operations:

Attached to Third Infantry Division from 1-28 March and 34th Infantry Division, 28-31 March, VI Corps, the Battalion remained in defensive positions for the month. The first few days were in continuation of a coordinated enemy Infantry and tank attack that began on 29 February with our units repelling attack by all enemy tanks and destroying or disabling 16 of these tanks during the period. The remainder of the period was devoted to improving defensive positions, firing harassing and interdictory fires and occasional tank shooting and house destruction missions.

Reconnaissance Company patrolled all roads in the Division road net forward of the Canal; operated three OP's during the period.

During the latter part of the period, "C" Company, 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion and "C" Company, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (attached) relieved elements of this Battalion in front line positions. These elements moved into reserve and flank positions and one Company started rest, rehabilitation, maintenance, and training.

Tabulation of enemy and our losses is contained in Annex #1.

b. Summary of Enemy Operations:

During the period the enemy attacked vigorously with tanks accompanied by infantry, with resulting losses in tanks from our fire, and eventual withdrawal. For the remainder of the period the enemy mined avenues of approach, wired and booby trapped around houses which he holds, and in general showed an entirely defensive attitude.

After the initial attacks, enemy armor has been used very sparingly, and when observed by our OP's, artillery has succeeded in destroying or damaging it.

Harassing fire of all calibers of artillery was kept up by the enemy during the period. Over a period of time, the enemy counter-battery has proved to be very inaccurate.

c. Situation at End of Period:

"C" Company, 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion in position on 168th Infantry Regiment front with "C" Company, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion in reserve in positions forward of the Canal. "C" Company, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion

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in position on 135th Infantry Regiment front with "A" Company, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion in reserve positions forward of the Canal. "B" Company, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion assembled in rear of Canal for (1) Rest, rehabilitation, maintenance, and training with Third Infantry Division (2) Counter-attack force with the 133rd Infantry Regiment. Operating with the 34th Infantry Division in defensive positions with little or no enemy activity..

d. Status of Personnel and Materiel:

Morale continued to be high during enemy tank attacks but lowered with continuous sitting in tanks in front line positions and no action. All positions had been relieved by the end of the month and all men had an opportunity to rest and clean up. Replacements with training capable of going into combat are still badly needed. Rotation replacements are slow in arriving.

Vehicles and guns also have been retated for complete maintenance and about 90% of maintenance needs were accomplished by the close of the period.

e. Comments and Lessons Learned:

(1) One of the most important points, stressed by Allied Force Headquarters, Fifth Army and all Tank Destroyer experts, is that infantry commanders continue, against the tactical advice of these persons, to place Tank Destroyers in forward anti-tank positions where they can have only one logical field of fire instead of placing them in a central positbn where they can move rapidly to cover a logical area. This tends to:

(a) Absolutely nullify the purpose of the Tank Destroyer — Mobility.

(b) Place the Tank Destroyer under small arms and mortar range where it will be immediately rendered less effective if the enemy plans to neutralize our resistance prior to attack. The open turret of the M-10 makes it vulnerable to sniper fire. This long-range 3" gun on its thin-shelled mobile chassis can engage and knock out a tank at a much greater range than infantry commanders realize.

(c) Draw unnecessary fire on nearby infantry.

(2) Some metal overhead cover for the open turret of the M-10 should be developed to protect the crew from flak and falling buildings. It can be so constructed that it can be thrown off if the Tank Destroyer moves out to engage the enemy. Plans are being made to construct these locally.

(3) In the role of firing night harassing missions, it has been found that a minimum of counter-battery will be received if only one gun fires at a time. Should the number of rounds to be fired or the time allotted require that two guns fire at the same time, it is best to space the guns as far apart as possible. This Battalion fired 4 guns for 6 or 7 nights, a total of 800 rounds, and received no counter-battery in an area that enemy fire was a most common occurrence.

(4) At least 6 to 8 power magnifying direct fire telescope is needed on the M-10.

(5) A smoke generator should be available in each M-10. When enemy fire develops they can be used to a definite advantage. The Germans use them most effectively to our disadvantage.

Daniel S. T. Hinman

DANIEL S. T. HINMAN
Major, FA.,
Commanding.

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

4 April 1944

OPERATIONS REPORT:

Annex No. 1

SUMMARY OF DAMAGE INFLICTED ON ENEMY
PERIOD: 1 March - 31 March 1944

	: A CO	: B CO	: C CO	: TOTAL
Tanks and SP's	: 9	: 10	: 3	: 28
(Probables)	: :	: 3	: :	: 3
Armd Cars & 1/2 Tracks	: :	: :	: :	: :
MG's	: :	: :	: :	: :
Artillery & AT Guns	: :	: 1 AT	: :	: 1 AT Gun
Prisoners of War	: :	: :	: :	: :
Miscellaneous	: 1 Air	: 1 veh	: :	: 1 Aircraft, 1 Vehicle
	: Craft	: icle	: :	: :

CASUALTIES INCURRED BY 601ST TD BN
PERIOD: 1 March 1944 - 31 March 1944

	: A Co	: B Co	: C Co	: Ren Co	: HQ Co	: TOTAL
EM (SWA, MIA, LWA, KIA)	: 11	: 7	: 6	: 1	: 3	: 28
Officers (SWA, MIA, LWA, KIA).	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: None
M-10's (KO'd not repair-able in 24 hrs)	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: None

For the BATTALION COMMANDER:

James C. Grimes
JAMES C. GRIMES,
Capt., FA,
Adjutant.

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ANNEX #2

SUMMARY OF EVENTS, MARCH 1944

- Mar. 1 - One platoon, "C" Co, 701st fired 200 rounds harassing fire during the night. Rcn Co established night patrol on roads in Div forward area. 2nd Platoon, "A" Co KO'ed 1 tank vic CARANO. 1st Platoon, "B" Co KO'ed 1 Mk VI, 3 Mk IV's, 1 probable - 85 rounds expended. 2nd Platoon, "B" Co KO'ed 2 tanks one Mk IV (1 type unknown), 1 probably destroyed - 100 rounds expended. "C" Co, 701st knocked down house E of CARANO using HE and AP assisting inf to advance.
- Mar. 2 - One platoon, "C" Co, 701st fired 200 rounds harassing fire during the night. Coordinated Field Artillery and TD fire on tanks and SP guns; FA fire neutralized area while TD's moved around houses, fired and pulled back. Excellent results. Rcn Co provided night road patrol in Div area. 1st Platoon, "B" Co KO'ed a tank at F-999306. 3rd Platoon "B" Co, KO'ed 2 tanks at G-013297. 3rd Platoon, "B" Co KO'ed 2 additional Mk IV tanks N of ISOLA BELLA.
- Mar. 3 - "B" Co, 701st TD Bn attached to 601st TD Bn (8 guns). Rcn Co provided road patrols during the night in forward areas. 3rd Platoon, "A" Co KO'ed 3 tanks vic F-99832. 3rd Platoon, "B" Co KO'ed 3 tanks and one SP gun (Ferdinand) N of ISOLA BELLA. 2nd Platoon, "A" Co fired 18 rounds APC at enemy occupied house vic CARANO. 2nd Platoon, "C" Co fired on enemy tank recovery crews trying to recover KO'ed tanks. Inf flares illuminated targets. Results excellent. 1st Platoon, "A" Co KO'ed tank at F-998305 at 1000 hrs.
- Mar. 4. - Rcn OP's adjusted 2 indirect fire missions - (1) 2 SP guns or tanks vic F-908345, fire neutralized (2) arty btry vic F-914341, results unknown. Rcn Co night patrols covered Div road net. One platoon, "B" Co, 701st reverted to 1st AD control. 1st Platoon, "B" Co and 1st Platoon, "A" Co covered counter-attack by 7th Inf toward PONTE ROTTO with direct fire. 1st Platoon, "A" Co moved with tanks to cover inf and engineers working on road towards PONTE ROTTO during night. 1st Platoon, "C" Co 701st fired 9 rounds HE on house at F-998308; personnel ran from house. 2nd Platoon, "C" Co KO'ed tank behind house at F-998308; fired 40 rounds APC, 50 rounds HE; fired 20 rounds at house at G-008297 enemy strong point; fired 30 rounds HE at house at F-998308; fired 10 rounds and KO'ed tank (type unknown) at G-011298. 1st Platoon, "B" Co fired 7 rounds at tanks vic PONTE ROTTO (2 probables).
- Mar. 5 - Rcn night patrols covered Div road net. 1st Platoon, "B" Co attempted to destroy bridge at F-993311, fired 85 rounds scoring numerous hits on SE side of bridge - damage unknown (KO'ed vehicle with 6 hits coming SE from PONTE ROTTO toward bridge during firing. 3rd Platoon, "B" Co, 701st fired 200 rounds harassing fire during the night. 2nd Platoon, "C" Co KO'ed tank at G-034288 at 1530 hrs.

- Mar. 6 - 2nd Plat, "C" Co adjusted fire on enemy inf at G-017309 and G-618306 with excellent results; adjusted fire on enemy inf at G-000310 with excellent results - vehicle set on fire at same vic by arty fire. 1st Plat, "A" Co moved forward to cover inf vic F-988305. Enemy mortar dropped through open turret killing 2 and seriously wounding 1 member of the TD crew. 2nd Plat, "A" Co fired 15 rnds HE at enemy held houses vic N of CARANO.
- Mar. 7 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 701st fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night. 1st Plat, "A" Co covered inf Sector, vic F-988305. 2nd Plat "B" Co fired on enemy held houses in 15th Inf Sector. 3rd Plat, "A" Co engaged and KO'd 3 enemy tanks in front of 7th Inf Sector (F-963325).
- Mar. 8 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 701st fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night. One section of "C" Co, 701st moved to vic of F-988305 to cover inf during night. 1st Plat, "A" Co, 601st relieved by Plat, "C" Co, 701st during period. 1st Plat "B" Co fired 14 rnds. "C" Co, 701st fired 40 rnds AP and HE on enemy held house vic F-994312. Rcn Co conducted meter patrols during night in Div Sector.
- Mar. 9 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 701st fired 200 rnds along roads SW of CISTERNA and in area NW of CISTERNA during the night. One section, "C" Co, 701st moved to vic F-998305 during night to cover inf. Rcn Co conducted meter patrols during night in Div Sector. 3rd Plat, "A" Co KO'd Mk VI tank at 0730 vic F-984316, 46 rnds APC at 3000 yards, and knocked down German aircraft at 1120 - pilot picked up vic GP, 2nd Bn, 7th Inf.
- Mar.10 - "C" Co plus 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 701st relieved from attachment to 601st. 1st Plat, "A" Co and elements of "B" Co moved to cover positions left vacated by these units.
- Mar.11 - 3rd Plat, "C" Co fired on houses held by enemy in 504th Inf Sector.
- Mar.13 - "B" Co fired on enemy held houses in 15th Inf Sector.
- Mar.14 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 12 rnds on disabled tank to make sure it wasn't a "sleeper". "B" Co fired 20 rnds on houses in 15th Inf Sector. Destruction of one enemy held house reported. "C" Co, 805th TD Bn attached.
- Mar.15 - 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th moved into indirect fire positions at F-953255. 2nd Plat, "A" Co coordinated supporting fires with 30th Inf during attack. Remainder of "C" Co, 805th relieved positions of 1st and 3rd Plats, "A" Co. Units of "A" Co moved to F-972254.
- Mar.16 - One M-10 of 2nd Plat "B" Co fired 30 rnds HE at houses in 15th Inf Sector. 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night.
- Mar.17 - 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night.
- Mar.18 - 2nd Plat, "C" Co 805th fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night. 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 200 rnds on revving gun mission during the night in 15th Inf Sector. 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th fired 58 rnds registration, 42 rnds on enemy tank at G-000308, several hits - men ran from tank; fired 240 rnds on enemy guns.
- Mar.19 - 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th fired 200 rnds harassing fire during the night.
- Mar.20 - 2 M-10's, 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 190 rnds from revving gun positions during the night. 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th fired 150 rnds harassing and interdiction missions during the night.

- Mar. 21 - One section, 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th relieved section, 2nd Plat, "A" Co at F-943298 during night. "A" Co guns moved to F-972256. 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds on harassing and interdiction missions and moved into indirect fire positions vic F-990240 prior to daylight. 2 guns, 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 200 rnds from roving gun positions in 15th Inf Sector during night.
- Mar. 22 - 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 150 rnds on harassing and interdiction fire missions during the night.
- Mar. 23 - One section, 1st Plat, "A" Co fired 88 rnds HE and 8 rnds APC at houses in vic of F-998305. 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired interdiction and harassing fire missions during the night. One M-10, 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 6 rnds HE, 6 rnds APC into woods harboring enemy inf 1500 yds N of PONTE ROTTO. 1 M-10, 1st Plat, "B" Co fired 15 rnds at house concealing AT guns 600 yards N of ISOLA BELLA; house and AT gun damaged. 2nd Plat, "C" Co fired 96 rnds at 1st and 2nd houses N of ISOLA BELLA; demolished houses.
- Mar. 24 - 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds interdiction and harassing fire missions during night.
- Mar. 25 - 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds interdiction and harassing fire during the night. One section, 2nd Plat, "A" Co moved from F-943304 to Rest Center. One section, 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th moved from F-943298 to indirect fire positions with other section of 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 805th at F-951256. 2nd Plat, "A" Co relieved by 645th TD Bn.
- Mar. 26 - "C" Co, 701st TD Bn attached to Bn. One plat, "C" Co, 701st relieved 2nd Plat, "C" Co, 601st vic ISOLA BELLA. One section, "B" Co vic ISOLA BELLA and one section, "B" Co vic F-989281 replaced by one plat, "C" Co, 701st. 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds harassing fire during night. 805th OP adjusted 41st FA on enemy inf vic F-972357 with excellent results.
- Mar. 27 - 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds harassing fire during night.
- Mar. 28 - 3rd Plat, "A" Co fired 120 rnds harassing fire during night, fired 40 rnds at enemy gun at G-05123236 and 40 rnds at G-04703136. "C" Co, 805th fired 63 rnds HE and 6 rnds smoke indirect at two enemy tanks dug in at F-963379 at 1240A; knocked tank out - men ran from tanks, some casualties on tank crew; at 1440A fired 17 rnds HE indirect fire at Volkswagon at F-991345; knocked it out. "C" Co, 701st OP observed indirect fire for 16th FA on enemy tank with 2 or more hits; personnel ran about 100 yds into defilade. Attached to 34th Div at 0900A.
- Mar. 29 - "C" Co, 701st OP observed indirect fire for 151st FA on enemy mortar position; very effective. 2nd Plat "B" Co relieved by 1st Plat, "C" Co, 701st.
- Mar. 30 - "C" Co, 701st OP observed indirect fire for 151st FA on enemy mortar positions. "C" Co, 805th fired indirect fire on tanks at F-995310; 98 rnds HE; fired 6 rnds smoke on inf at F-973335. Fired on tanks at F-984318; 150 rnds HE and 6 rnds smoke. Observed by 135 FA Piper Cub. Results effective.
- Mar. 31 - 3 guns, 1st Plat, "B" Co fired 225 rnds HE and 75 rnds APC on Boche Woods and woods at G-013319 from roving positions on request of 168th Inf; results unknown. 2 guns, 1st Plat, "C" Co, 701st fired 77 rnds HE at house at G-054261 which was lighted for them with good effect by infantry mortar flares. "C" Co, 805th OP adjusted fires of supporting FA on enemy infantry and mules assembling at F-9635; 3 or 4 mules and about 15 men killed and several wounded. "C" Co, 701st OP adjusted fire for 185th FA on enemy inf just N of ISOLA BELLA.

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NOTE:

Reconnaissance maintained road patrols on all roads forward of Canal during night hours throughout the month and manned 3 OP's throughout the month.

For the BATTALION COMMANDER:

James C. Grimes
JAMES C. GRIMES
Captain, FA.,
Adjutant.

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