

HEADQUARTERS
601ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
AFPO 464 U. S. ARMY

3 June 1944

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

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

a. SUMMARY OF OUR OPERATIONS:

The Battalion (with the following attachments: 1 - 7 May 1944, Company "A", 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 7 - 11 May 1944, Company "B", 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 1 - 22 May 1944, Company "B", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed)) was attached to the 34th Infantry Division from 1 p 22 May 1944 and engaged on one limited objective attack (2 May 1944 by Company "B", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion). During the period, 1 - 22 May 1944 an average of 400 rounds nightly were fired by one platoon of the Battalion Reserve Company for harassing missions in support of the 168th and 133rd Infantry Regiments.

From 22 May to 31 May 1944 the battalion was attached to the Third Infantry Division and was engaged in the attack beginning the morning of 23 May 1944. The 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion was supported by the following attached units: 21-24 May 1944, Company "A", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion; 23-27 May 1944, Company "B", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed); 28-31 May 1944, Company "A", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed).

Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion attached in support of 30th Infantry Regiment; Company "B", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion attached in support of 15th Infantry Regiment; Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion attached in support of 7th Infantry Regiment. Reconnaissance Company was employed in support of the gun companies by attaching one platoon (2 M-8's, 1 M-20 and Pioneer Section with half-track and mine detectors) to each company. They also manned OP's, reconnoitered gun positions and cleared mines for the advance. Company "A", 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from the battalion 24 May 1944 and employed in support of the SSF. Company "A", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed) was employed in an anti-tank defensive role.

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During the attack the battalion lost 4 M-10's through enemy mines and one T-70 and one M-10 was damaged through enemy shell fire, 10 M-10's were damaged through enemy mines. The battalion closely supported the advancing infantry by destroying strong-points, enemy infantry, dug in guns and tanks.

On 26 May 1944 Company "B", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to "Task Force HOWZE" and closely supported the force which reached all of its objectives.

On 27 May 1944, Company "A", less one platoon, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to "Task Force SHEPPARD" and closely supported the force which reached all of its objectives.

b. SUMMARY OF ENEMY OPERATIONS:

During the period covered by this report the enemy for 22 days continued to mine and wire in his defensive positions. The morning of the 23rd May when our attack started the enemy fell back but only after a determined resistance. The enemy armor was seldom seen and only in groups of two or three tanks or self-propelled guns. The weight of our armor strength was far superior and caused the enemy armor to fall back hastily.

Enemy mines proved very successful in spite of engineer efforts to find and lift all of them in the path of the advancing armored elements. The enemy had selected very good positions for his anti-tank guns and pillboxes. Numerous night air raids with enemy planes dropping anti-personnel bombs caused some damage.

c. SITUATION AT THE END OF PERIOD:

At the close of the period the battalion with one company of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed) prepared to continue the advance on ROME by being placed in a supporting role with the Third Infantry Division and the SSF.

For the attack, Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion supported the 30th Infantry Regiment; Company "B" supported the 15th Infantry Regiment; Company "G" (two platoons in reserve) with one platoon supported the SSF; and Company "A", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed) was attached to the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion for artillery and direct fire support.

Although in the attack beginning on the 23rd May the battalion received a considerable number of casualties both in men and officers, it was able to enter the final assault with all 36 guns committed and properly manned.

d. STATUS OF PERSONNEL AND MATERIEL:

Morale reached a peak just prior to the attack on 23 May and remained high all during the remainder of the period covered by this report.

Vehicles and guns are in excellent condition. The losses in personnel received in the full scale attack has resulted in a dire need for replacements of drivers and gunners for our M-10's in this battalion. Every effort is being made to procure the necessary personnel.



e. COMMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

(1) It has been noted that in the present operations very satisfactory results have been obtained in the employment of the Tank Destroyers through the Infantry Regimental Commander's understanding and confidence in the ability of the Tank Destroyer Company Commander to select positions and routes of advance without limitations excepting the sector boundaries.

Probably the most outstanding lesson learned during this period came about when numerous enemy mines were encountered in the advance. Experience proved that speed had to be forgotten and a slow advance led by mine sweepers and engineers on foot provided the most successful fire support in the attack.

An M-10 is recommended for the Tank Destroyer Company Commander in order that he may move about in comparative safety while directing the operations of his platoons in actual combat.

Walter E. Tardy

WALTER E. TARDY
Lt. Col., FA,
Commanding.

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OPERATIONS REPORT

3 June 1944

ANNEX #1

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

	: A CO	: B CO	: C CO	: TOTAL
Tanks and SP's (Probables)	: 1	: 1 (TK)	: 1	: 3 (TK)
Arm'd Cars & Half-tracks	:	:	:	: None
Machine Guns	: 2	:	:	: 2 (MG'S)
Artillery & AT Guns	: 1 (AT)	:	:	: 1 (AT)
Prisoners of War	:	:	:	: None
Miscellaneous	: 1 Nebelwerfer	: 1 Nebelwerfer	: 2 Flak-wagons	: 2 Nebelwerfers : 2 Flak-wagons

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

	: A CO	: B CO	: C CO	: BCH CO	: HQ CO	: TOTAL
Enlisted Men	: 7	: 14	: 26	: 8	: 4	: 59
Officers	: 1	: 2	: 4	:	:	: 7
M-10's (KO'd not repairable in 24 hours)	: 2	:	: 2	:	:	: 4
Miscellaneous Vehicles	: T-2	:	: 1 T-70	:	: 1 ton wrecker	: 1 T-70 : 1 T-2 (wrecker) : 1 10-ton wrecker

For the BATTALION COMMANDER:


GEORGE F. MACKLIN
 1st Lt., FA
 Adjutant

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3 June 1944

SUMMARY OF EVENTS - MAY 1944

- May 1 - Ron adjusted fire of 185 FA on Inf. Several casualties observed.
- May 2 - Ron fire 634 FA on enemy houses and personnel seen carrying object into house. Target received several direct hits. Personnel seen leaving.
3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T.D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf on enemy vehicles. 2 vehicles destroyed. Ammo fire started.
- May 3 - Nil
- May 4 - Nil
- May 5 - 2nd Plat, "B" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 9 targets.
- May 6 - 2nd Plat, "B" Co fired 600 rds harassing fire on 10 targets.
- May 7 - 2nd Plat, "B" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 10 targets.
Ron fired 151 FA on enemy occupied house. House demolished.
- May 8 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T.D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf at 50 to 60 enemy infantry. Many casualties.
- May 9 - 1st Plat, "C" Co fired 600 rds harassing fire on 10 targets.
- May 10- 1st Plat, C Co fired 600 rds harassing fire on 7 targets.
- May 11- Nil
- May 12- "A" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.
- May 13- 2nd Plat, "A" fired 400 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.
3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T.D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf at two groups of Inf (15 in each). Many casualties.
- May 14- 2nd Plat, "A" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 7 targets.
- May 15 - 2nd Plat, "A" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.
- May 16- 2nd Plat, "A" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.

May 17 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T.D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf at MG. MG destroyed.

May 18 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 342 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.

3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T. D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf at enemy Inf. Many casualties, fire started.

May 19 - 3rd Plat "C" Co fired 89 rds direct fire on enemy OP. Many direct hits.

Rcn fired 125 FA at personnel. Enemy dispersed. Many casualties.

3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 281 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.

May 20 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 399 rds harassing fire on 7 targets.

May 21 - 3rd Plat, "B" Co, 805 T. D. Bn fired Cn Co, 168 Inf at enemy personnel. Area well covered. Several casualties.

3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 5 targets.

May 22 - "B" Co, 805 T. D. Bn fired Battery "B", 634 FA Bn at enemy. Very Good effect.

1st Plat, "B" Co fired 400 rds harassing fire on 8 targets.

May 23 - 1st Plat, "B" Co destroyed Nebelwerfer with 2 rds. Started ammo fire.

May 24 - Fired upon enemy infantry held strong points, MG's, and AT guns.

May 25 - Fired upon enemy infantry held strong points, MG's, and AT guns.

May 26 - Fired upon enemy infantry held strong points, MG's, AT guns and tanks. One enemy tank probable KO.

May 27 - Fired upon enemy infantry held strong points, MG's, and AT guns.

May 28 - "B" Co fired 105 rds HE, 92 rds APC in support of TFH repulsing counterattack. Dispersed inf. Silenced MG nests.

May 29 - "B" Co fired 9th FA Bn at enemy inf. "Excellent effect."

3rd Plat, "B" Co fired 25 rds at enemy inf. "Effective."

2nd Plat, "C" Co fired 75 rds direct fire at two enemy flak-wagons. Destroyed same.

May 30 - "B" Co fired 10 FA Bn on enemy inf. "Extremely effective."

May 31 - Supplement to 23 May 1944: 1st Plat "A" Co fired 5 rds HE direct fire at Nebelwerfer - destroyed.

For the BATTALION COMMANDER:

George F. Macklin
GEORGE F. MACKLIN
1st Lt., FA
Adjutant.

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