

HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 45, U. S. Army,
10 December 1943.

Subject: Battle Report.

To : Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO 464, U. S. Army. (Thru channels)

Map References: ITALY, 1/100,000
Sheets 161, and 172

Period Covered: 1 November 1943 to 30 November 1943.

1. At the beginning of this phase, the Battalion, in an assembly area vicinity GIGIA, was given the mission of A.T. defense of the 45th Infantry Division and to participate in the Division Artillery preparation fire prior to the Division attack toward VERAFRO.
2. The Battalion was employed with the dual mission in mind (see Par. 1). "C" Company moved at 0200A on the 1st of November 1943 to a position vicinity (13.4-06.1). "A" Company, in reserve, moved to an assembly area vicinity SAN-LEONARDO at 0500A. "B" Company (less one M-10) moved to fire positions vicinity (13.2-09.0) at 2030A. Battalion Command Post moved to (16.6-05.2). Pioneer Platoon was used to construct by-passes and locate fords to expedite the movement of "C" Company across the VOLTURNO RIVER. Reconnaissance Company established CP's and made road reconnaissance for the movement of the firing companies.
3. On 2 November 1943, "C" Company was surveyed in by Division Artillery Survey Officer. Two platoons of "B" Company were surveyed in by the 171st Field Artillery Battalion. The other platoon remained in an A.T. position. At this time the enemy had fallen back so it was unnecessary for the Battalion or Division artillery to take part in the preparation fire.
4. On 4 November 1943, the infantry elements of the 45th Infantry Division had entered VERAFRO. "B" Company moved forward to positions on a line extending from (05.5-18.0) to (06.2-20.0). Fire was observed by the Commanding Officer of this Battalion. Company fire one mission of 57 rounds at enemy vehicles reported in the woods vicinity (02.2-18.5). The infantry reported the vehicles moved out of the area fired upon. "A" Company moved to firing position vicinity (09.4-14.3). The Battalion Command Post moved to SERRA CASIANO. During the morning of 4 November 1943, a $\frac{1}{2}$ Ton reconnaissance vehicle from Reconnaissance Company hit a Teller mine, killing one man and injuring another. The vehicle was destroyed.
5. Due to the mountainous country to the North, it was evident the Battalion could not advance until the ground had been secured by infantry elements. With this in mind, the firing companies moved into positions on 5 November 1943 to cover tank approaches into the VOLTURNO RIVER valley from the north, northwest and west. "A" Company moved into position 3000 yards east of VERAFRO and "C" Company moved to positions 3000 yards northwest of SERRA CASIANO and "B" Company moved to positions 3000 yards east of VERAFRO. One man from Reconnaissance Company was hurt by booby trap explosion.

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D).

6. On 6 November 1943, "B" Company was surveyed in and registered by the 160th Field Artillery Battalion. At 2000A the Company fired harrassing fire on the town of FILAGHANO, expending 450 rounds HE on the mission. "C" Company was surveyed in by 171st Field Artillery Battalion. Reconnaissance Company established GP's with the GP's of the 171st and 160th Field Artillery Battalions.

7. "A" Company was surveyed in and registered on the morning of 7 November 1943 by 160th Field Artillery Battalion. "A" and "B" Companies worked through the one fire direction center with the 160th Field Artillery Battalion. "B" Company expended 111 rounds HE on enemy gun positions with good results. Fire was observed by Reconnaissance Company GP. "C" Company was registered in by Reconnaissance Company GP. Two men were wounded from shell fragments.

8. "A" Company moved 2nd platoon to an A.T. position 300 yards south of FOZILLI at the request of the 179th Infantry Regiment. "A" Company (-) remained in indirect fire positions to fire 260 rounds HE at a 4 gun battery. Battery was destroyed. "B" Company, supporting 160th Field Artillery Battalion, fired 240 rounds HE on enemy troops concentrations at a range of 13000 yards. On the night of 7 November 1943, "B" Company fired interdiction fire on road near vicinity FILAGHANO expending 600 rounds HE. The 2nd platoon of "C" Company supported the 180th Infantry Regiment by firing assault fire on dug in enemy gun positions at a range of 2000 yards. 37 rounds were expended on this mission with excellent results. Battalion Command Post moved from SESTO CAMPANO to VENAFRO.

9. "A" Company (-) fired 226 rounds HE harrassing fire at VITICUSCO on 9 November 1943. 2nd platoon of "A" Company rejoined the company at 2100A. Platoon was unable to fire from position occupied and due to mine fields in the area was unable to move to a better position. Pioneer platoon had moved removed 146 Mark III and Mark IV Teller mines and 42 "S" mines from the area. Two officers and three enlisted men were wounded in removing the mines. 1st section of the 2nd platoon of "C" company fired assault fire on enemy infantry dug into the mountain side. 137 rounds HE were expended on the mission. VENAFRO was bombed and shelled during the day. One man was killed and three wounded from the Command Post group by enemy shell fire. Total casualties during the day. Two killed, six men wounded.

10. On 11 November 1943, the 2nd platoon of "A" Company moved to a position 1000 yards north of FOZILLI in support of the 179th Infantry Regiment. Due to intensive enemy artillery fire, the platoon was forced to withdraw 500 yards south to a protected position. One M-10 was hit, knocking out one motor. The Destroyer was returned to the Rear Echelon under it's own power.

11. "A" and "B" Companies registered and "C" Company expended 237 rounds at enemy GP's during the day of 13 November 1943.

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

12. On 14 November 1943, the 3rd platoon, "A" Company, fired 353 rounds of HE interdiction fire on supply route vicinity (04.4-30.6) at a range of 13,300 yards. 2nd platoon of "B" Company fired 336 rounds HE interdiction fire on same point.

13. On 15 November 1943, Battalion was assigned the mission of reinforcing the fires of Division Artillery. Companies were assigned missions as follows: "A" Company to reinforce fires of 171st Field Artillery Battalion, "B" Company to reinforce fires of 160th Field Artillery Battalion and "C" Company to reinforce fires of 158th Field Artillery Battalion. Companies received fire missions direct from the reinforced Battalion or from this Headquarters. Reconnaissance Company maintained at least one OP per letter company. Letter Companies furnished radios to Reconnaissance Company OP's to make it possible to contact Company concerned on the Company channel. Reconnaissance Company OP's worked in conjunction with Field Artillery OP's. Targets reported by Reconnaissance Company OP's were reported to Division Artillery if it was not possible for our units to fire.

14. During the period 15 November 1943 to 30 November 1943, the letter companies remained in indirect fire positions except the 2nd platoon of "A" Company, in position vicinity of (02.5-18.5). 2nd platoon of "C" Company supported the 180th Infantry Regiment by firing direct fire on enemy dug in positions on Mt. Corno. "B" Company was regrouped into two 6 gun batteries.

15. When the companies are given the mission of reinforcing the fires of an Artillery Battalion, the companies continue to maintain their own fire direction centers. The companies are regrouped into two 6 gun batteries, if the terrain permits, to reduce the amount of computing necessary to fire the Company. Necessary data is given the reinforced Battalion to make it possible for them to compute data for the company after it has been registered. The majority of the time the companies are given a point to fire on, by coordinates, and the Company Fire Direction Center does the necessary computing. This procedure makes it possible for the company to fire missions given to them by Division Artillery, the reinforced Battalion or this Headquarters. This Battalion was assigned a block of concentration numbers, 900 to 999, to use on missions fired by this Battalion. Companies were assigned numbers up to 974. Battalion concentrations were numbered from 975 to 999. One man was wounded by shrapnel.

16. The 3" gun has proved to be very effective at all ranges up to 1400 yard. At ranges as high as 6000 yards, the gun is accurate in direct fire missions. The 180th Infantry Regiment used the 2nd platoon of "C" Company to fire direct fire missions at ranges up to 6000 yards with excellent results. A large percent of ammunition expended by the Battalion has been on night interdiction fire at ranges from 12000 to 14000 yards. The use and results of this type of missions by this Battalion was mentioned in the Artillery Information Memorandum, Number 4, Headquarters, Fifth Army, dated 22 November 1943.

BATTLE REPORT (CONT'D)

Map data has been fired by the Battalion with accurate results. This was proven when after "B" Company had fired on VITIGUSO using map data the Company was registered on VITIGUSO by the 160th Field Artillery Battalion ACP. The data obtained from registration by the ACP was the same as the map data used to fire on the same point. Three men were wounded by shell fragments.

17. Reconnaissance Company maintained four to six CP's during the period 8 November 1943 to 30 November 1943. Four men per CP were used. Personnel were rotated every 48 hours. This procedure reduced the supply problem to a minimum. Each new crew carried supplies to last up to sixty hours. CP's relayed target information to firing companies by radio and if it was impossible for them or the Artillery Battalion they were reinforcing to fire on the target, the information was relayed to Division Artillery by telephone. Many times Reconnaissance Company CP's have fired Corps Artillery by the above mentioned method.

18. Radio contact with all units in the Battalion was maintained at all times. Command Post communication personnel laid wire to the letter companies. A total of ten miles of wire was laid. Companies assumed maintenance of lines. Due to the limited personnel in the Command Post communication section, arrangements have been made with the companies for them to lay wire to the Command Post when future operations require it. A direct line was run to Liaison Officer with Division Artillery to relieve traffic through Division Artillery switchboard.

19. Ammunition expenditure during the period has far exceeded the normal expenditure for a Tank Destroyer Battalion. This was due to the use of the Battalion to reinforce Division Artillery fires. However, no ammunition problems were encountered. Each company kept the platoon ammunition trucks loaded at all times with 3" ammunition. Supply lines have been short enough to make it possible for the Battalion train to keep the companies supplied at all times. During the month of November, the Battalion expended 8,599 rounds of HE and 360 rounds of APC.

20. Three men wounded by shell fragments, 20 November 1943; one man died of wounds on the 21st November 1943, which he had received on 20 November 1943; one man killed by S-mine on 22 November 1943; one man wounded by shell fragment 27 November 1943; one officer wounded by shell fragment 28 November 1943.

EDWARD L. AUSTIN
Major, Field Artillery
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Annex "A"-Target Summary

Annex "B"-Battle Casualty Summary

2 incls.

1-Intelligence Summary

2-Unit Journals and Operational Notes

Annex(1) Messages

TARGET SUMMARY FOR PERIOD FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1943 TO 30 NOVEMBER 1943

DATE	TARGETS	LOCATION	UNITS FIRING	RDS EXPENDED			RANGE
				A	B	C	
16 Nov.	Road Junction	963260	B	84			13000
	Road Junction	964265	B	84			13500
	Road Junction	961263	B	84			13600
17 Nov.	CP & Foot Troops	998173	C		44		3500
	Enemy Foot Troops	995170	C		45		3500
	VITIGUSO	976246	B	33			12600
18 Nov.	Enemy Infantry	992174	C		87		6000
	Enemy CP	015255	C		70		12000
19 Nov.	Interdiction Fire	018250	C		144		12500
	Enemy Field Gun	009252	C		46		12000
20 Nov.	Enemy Infantry	987176	C		49		6500
	By troops in build:	008260	C		84		13350
	By troops in build:	009254	C		6		13500
21 Nov.	Interdiction Fire	938170	A	144			13600
	Interdiction Fire	942174	A	144			13500
	Interdiction Fire	940175	A	72			13500
	Interdiction Fire	938162	A	25			13500
	Interdiction Fire	963146	A	24			12000
	By troops in build:	008260	C		130		12750
	By troops in build:	009254	C		130		12750
	Enemy CP	007258	C		24		13000
	Enemy Personnel	997200	C		51		6000
22 Nov.	Enemy CP	981179	C		20		8000
	Enemy CP	007262	C		35		13500
	Personnel & build.	005260	C		88		8000
	Personnel & build.	007262	C		131		13500
23 Nov.	VITIGUSO	976245	A B C	88	120	40	12600
	Road NW of VITIGUSO	975232	A B C	80	120	40	11000
	By gun positions	972255	A B C	80	120	40	12300
24 Nov.	By gun positions	950150	A	160			12000
	By gun positions	972255	B		60		12300
	VITIGUSO	976245	B		60		12600
	Rd NW of VITIGUSO	975232	C			40	11000
	By personnel & installations	006266	C			101	14000

ANNEX "A"

TARGET SUMMARY FOR PERIOD FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1943 TO 30 NOVEMBER 1943

DATE	TARGETS	LOCATION	UNITS FIRING	RDS EXPENDED			RANGE
				A	B	C	
25 Nov.	VITICUSO	976245	A B	60	120		12600
	Road NW of						
	VITICUSO	975232	A B	60	120		11000
	By gun positions	972255	B		120		12300
26 Nov.	Interdiction	006266	C			508	13000
	Interdiction	006266	C			200	13000
	VITICUSO	976245	B		118		12600
27 Nov.	VITICUSO	976245	B		300		12600
	ACQUAFONDATA	961267	B		48		13900
28 Nov.	VITICUSO	976245	B		252		12600
	ACQUAFONDATA	961267	B		24		13900
29 Nov.	By gun positions	949191	A	128			12700
	VITICUSO	976245	B		104		12600
	By inf. & OP	000200	C			57	6500
30 Nov.	Interdiction	949191	A	80			13500
	Interdiction	961209	A	160			12000
	Interdiction	952196	A	80			12500

ANNEX "A"