

HEADQUARTERS  
5TH TANK DESTROYER GROUP



APO 403, U.S. Army  
5 September 1944

**SUBJECT:** Report After Operations Against The Enemy.

**TO :** The Adjutant General, Army War College, War Department, Washington, D.C.

**THRU :** Commanding General, Third United States Army, APO 403, U.S. Army.

**THRU :** Commanding General, XV Corps, APO 436, U.S. Army.

1. In compliance with Par 10, AR 345-105 as amended by Change 3 dated 9 March 1943 and Par 2 Third United States Army letter, file AG 319.1(G-3)GMEC, Subject: Action Against Enemy, Reports After, dated 21 July 1944 the following report is submitted.

2. Arabic numbers following pertinent statements made in the report refer to JOURNAL ENTRIES made in the Unit Journal of the 5th Tank Destroyer Group, correspondingly numbered extracted true copies being attached as inclosure #1.

3. Report After Operations Against the Enemy - Period 010001B August 1944 - 31:359B August 1944.

5th TD Group, attached to XV Corps, became operational along with the Corps on 1 August 1944. At this time the Group CP was located in the vicinity of MARCHESIAUX at (351772). Group remained in this location until 031032B August 1944 at which time movement was made to new area in the vicinity of AVRANCHES at (371109); distance travelled, 5.4 miles (1). At 050105 August a five hundred pound bomb was dropped two hundred yards from the Group CP, causing no casualties or damage (2). Group remained in this location until 6 August, coordinating plans for the Corps Antitank defense (3).

At 061710B August, CP closed at (371109) and moved to vicinity of LE BOURGNEUF at (597556); distance travelled, 51.2 miles (4).

On 081150B August, CP closed at LE BOURGNEUF and moved to vicinity of ST JEAN at (998404) opening there at 1540B hours; distance travelled, 30.5 miles (5). On this date billeting detail sent out in advance had a skirmish with the enemy, who had not been cleared from the area, resulting in the wounding and evacuation of Captain ROBERT E. HAYTON, O-367799, and T/5 Marcel A. Vachon, 20139772, (6). For gallantry in their action, Captain EDWARD N. STIVER, O-392004, was recommended for the award of the Silver Star.

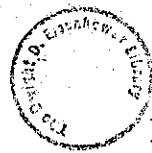
On 101330B August, CP closed at (998404) and moved to vicinity of SAVIGNE at (458677); distance travelled, 35 miles (7).

On 121815B August, CP closed at SAVIGNE and opened in vicinity of ALENCON at (360845) at 2220B hours; distance travelled, 33 miles (8). Beginning at approximately 122300B the general area surrounding the CP was subjected to a heavy air attack. Approximately 50 medium bombs were dropped causing no damage or casualties within the Group.

On the 13 August, the 773rd TD Battalion, having been assigned to XV Corps and attached to 5th TD Group, and upon arrival in the Corps sector, reported in to the Group Headquarters at 1310B hours (9). Orders were issued to move the 773rd TD Battalion from DANQUEL (as soon as it arrived there) to an area in the vicinity of ESSAY, which location afforded good routes to reinforce either the 2nd French Armored Division, 5th Armored Division, 80th Infantry Division, or the 79th Infantry Division, as the situation dictated (10).

Early on the morning of 14 August, Major Busch, Assistant Corps Antitank Officer accompanied by S-3, CCA, 5th Armored Division, visited Group CP with information of an imminent armored counter-attack in the vicinity of ARGENTAN (11). Preliminary plans were made to move the 773rd TD Battalion under Group control to the vicinity of ARGENTAN with the mission of reinforcing either or both the 5th Armored Division and the 2nd French Armored Division and guarantee that no enemy armor break through the spearhead held by the divisions. This plan was approved and ordered to be

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executed by Chief of Staff of XV Corps (12).

At 0655 In O of 773rd TD Battalion was dispatched to his unit with the instructions that his unit move immediately to the Northwest, axis of advance, SAGES - MORTHEIS, and be prepared to support CCA, 5th Armored Division, from attack from the West, North, or East (13). At 1030B hours, advance CP of 5th TD Group moved out to vicinity of ARGEFIAN. Enroute the advance CP party stopped by CP of 5th Armored Division and held conference with G-3 and CG, coordinating the defense plan (14). At 1500B hours CO, 5th TD Group with CO, 773rd TD Battalion conferred with CG, CCA, 5th Armored Division, and discovered that CCA was being pulled out of the line to prepare for a long movement, the 773rd TD Battalion would be required to take up and hold their advance road blocks until the arrival of the 90th Infantry Division, and in addition be prepared to repel any armored attack launched by the enemy in their sector (15). Accordingly, CO, 5th TD Group, ordered reconnaissance be made immediately and a plan formulated for the complete relief of CCA, 5th Armored Division. Based on this reconnaissance Company "A" and Company "B", 773rd TD Battalion, were placed in positions near SAUCHEAUX (250157) and BORDEAUX (292190) respectively, thereby relieving CCA and bolstering the defenses of the 2nd French Armored Division within their sector (16). The advance Group and battalion CP's were opened 112200B in the vicinity of ARGEFIAN at (294139); distance travelled, 30.9 miles (17).

The night of 14-15 August was generally quiet with some enemy artillery fire noted. Three enemy were killed and 51 prisoners were taken.

On 15 August orders were received through In O from Deputy Chief of Staff, XV Corps, that the Group and attached battalion would give close support to the 90th Infantry Division in its attack, with emphasis on enemy counter-attack from the West, North, or North-East (18). On this date advance CP and rear echelon joined at 1715 near CHAILLOU (451319) where CP was opened adjacent to Headquarters, 90th Infantry Division in order that close coordination be expedited (19). In the afternoon of 15 August request was made to G-3, 90th Infantry Division, for a company of infantry to support its forward positions of "B" Company. This request was granted, and "B" Company, 358th Infantry Regiment, was sent forward to support the 773rd TD Battalion (20).

On 16 August information from XV Corps Assistant Antitank Officer instructed the Group to continue on its present mission (21). On the afternoon of the 16th Colonel Hagan, Deputy Chief of Staff, XV Corps visited Group CP and discussed plans for moving the Group and its battalion to the East to rejoin XV Corps in the event he was given the instructions to move the two units (22). In addition, CO, 773rd TD Battalion, was instructed to pull back his "A" Company to reserve in view of the fact that the 2nd French Armored Division had moved well forward in its sector, and there was ample AT defense in their zone.

At 2216B hours, orders were issued to move 773rd TD Bn less "B" Company to a position of readiness in the vicinity of ALMENGCHES (4040) with the mission of reconnoitering for routes and position areas to reinforce 90th Infantry Division and their attached 607th TD Battalion (23).

During the day of the 16th the 773rd TD Battalion captured 36 PWs.

At 0530B hours the morning of 17 August, Group received 90th Division FO No. 21 and Third Army Provisional Corps Operations Order No. 1 which stated that all preparations for an attack North would be completed by 1000B hours. The mission for the 5th TD Group was to remain initially in present positions prepared to support the attack of the 90th Division on Corps order (24).

At 0710B hours CO visited XV Corps CP and met with General Raffey, Third Army Provisional Corps Commander, where he was designated as the Antitank Officer for the Provisional Corps.

At 1030B conference was held with Major Hughes, Antitank Officer, 90th Infantry Division, to coordinate use of TDs within the 90th Division sector (25).

At 1130B hours Provisional Corps Commander called CO in for conference on Anti-tank plans (26). At this conference General Gerow, V Corps Commander, was present, and it was apparent at this time that the V Corps would make the attack instead of the Provisional Corps, and that the attack would not be launched until the morning of

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18 August. In the afternoon the Germans launched an attack along the front of the 90th Infantry Division and "A" and "C" Companies of 773rd TD Battalion were moved up to vicinity of LE BOURG ST LEONARD with the mission of giving close support to the 359th Infantry Regiment (27). The 773rd TD Battalion knocked out seven Mk V tanks. During the evening, Group CO visited the V Corps CP, 90th Division CP, 80th Division CP, and 773rd TD Battalion CP, and was told by General Gerow that inasmuch as the CO, 3rd TD Group was not present and inasmuch as he was senior TD officer in the Corps, he was duly appointed V Corps AT Officer under General Helmich (28 & 29). Plans were made that "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion would be relieved from 80th Division sector as soon as 610th TD Battalion (attached to 80th Division) could move in to relieve the company, thereby releasing all of the 773rd TD Battalion to be utilized in the 90th Division sector (29).

Early on the morning of the 18th, the Group CP was moved North along with the 90th Division CP to vicinity of NOMANT DE PIN (451319); distance travelled, 7.5 miles (30). In the early afternoon the CO and G-3, 893rd TD Battalion, (V Corps reserve TD Battalion) visited Group CP where they were oriented and the following mission given them: Conduct reconnaissance at once (1) for a position to relieve "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, and (2) positions from which to repel enemy attack from the North and West to the 32X coordinate. Upon completion of this mission, to conduct reconnaissance with the view of reinforcing the 773rd TD Bn. to repel attacks of enemy armor from the direct North, general direction FOUZY (4048) and any tanks moving to the West from GOUFFENIN FOREST (31).

At 1540H General Helmich, G1, V Corps Artillery, visited Group CP and was given an outline of the Corps Antitank Defense by the Group CO, to wit, utilize the 607th (t) TD Battalion in the East sector of the 90th Infantry Division with the mission of protecting the Corps right flank; the 773rd TD Battalion in close support of the 359th and 358th Infantry Regiments spearheading the attack to the North; the 610th TD Battalion supporting the 80th Infantry Division in its sector; and the 893rd TD Battalion to reinforce in the 80th Division sector (32).

At 2230H, Major Hughes, ATC, 90th Division, was oriented on the plan of the 5th TD Group (33).

One Mk IV tank was knocked out by 773rd TD Battalion on this date.



On 19 August 1944 at 0230H, Major Moore, Ex O, 773rd TD Battalion, was called to Group CP where he informed the Group CO that "B" Company had been relieved by a company from the 893rd TD Battalion. Major Moore was oriented on the mission assigned to the 90th Division and was given the mission for "B" Company to contact the 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment, and be prepared to support that battalion during its attack to be launched at 0600 (34). "A" Company held (a) at LE BOURG ST LEONARD; "B" Company advanced North and Northwest in support of the 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment, "C" Company advanced North in support of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 359th Infantry Regiment. During the advance the battalion destroyed 2 Mk V and 5 Mk IV tanks and captured 13 prisoners of war.

In the evening plans were made with G-3, 90th Division, CO, 607th TD Battalion, and CO, 5th TD Group for relieving the 773rd TD Battalion on the following morning, enemy situation permitting, by having the 607th TD Battalion take over their missions, inasmuch as elements of the 2nd French Armored Division, coming up on the 90th Division right boundary, released the greater portion of the 607th TD Battalion from its mission of antitank defense on the right flank (35).

On 20 August the enemy situation was such that relief of the 773rd TD Battalion was impossible. All elements of the enemy caught in the trap were attempting to run the gauntlet and extricate themselves from the fast closing pockets. Inasmuch as the 773rd TD Battalion was in position of close support to the 358th and 359th Infantry Regiments in the vicinity and to the south of CHAMBOIS, they could not be relieved at this time (36).

Around 0630H the enemy attempted to break through south of CHAMBOIS and escape to the East. The first platoon of "C" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, in position North of FOUZY and in the vicinity of hill 129, was encircled by this attempted escape and heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy in the fire-fight which ensued. This platoon after expending all its ammunition and losing one destroyer to enemy fire

withdrew to its company CP around 0600 to resupply. It was planned that the first platoon of "A" Company would replace them by moving up into their position, however

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the first platoon "A" Company, at approximately 0900, encountered the enemy prior to reaching the old positions of the first platoon of "C" Company. Later this platoon was reinforced by the third platoon "A" Company, 773 TD Battalion. In the fire-fight which followed these platoons caused heavy damage and casualties on the enemy.

At 0800B, Company "B", 773 Tank Destroyer Battalion accompanied and furnished the closest support to the 3rd Battalion of the 358th Infantry Regiment in their advance North to seize and hold the eastern half of CHAMBOIS, FRANCE, and the roads emanating from the section of the town. As the objective was reached the platoons of "B" Company moved into position in close support to the infantry enabling them to firmly consolidate and hold their objective and also join forces with the Polish Troops moving down from the North. The fulfillment of this mission resulted in the first firm physical contact of a major force advancing from the South joining with a major force moving down from the North thus establishing the first positive seal between the American and British Armies on the Eastern side of the ARGENTAN-FALAISE pocket. At this junction the Polish Troops turned a German Corps Commander, captured by them, over to members of "B" Company for processing and safe keeping. Subsequently this Corps Commander was turned over to the 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment for processing and evacuation.

Later that evening, apparently after regrouping for another stab in our defenses, the German chose to attempt a breakthrough at CHAMBOIS. Here the enemy ran into the 2nd Battalion of the 359th Infantry Regiment and the second platoon of "C" Company, 773 TD Battalion which was later reinforced by the second platoon "A" Company, 773rd TD Battalion (approximately 1600B) and the first platoon "C" Company, 773rd TD Battalion (approximately 1830B). This attempt was broken up after heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy.

Fighting was severe throughout the day and continued up to dark. The following is a list of damage inflicted on the enemy by the 773rd TD Battalion and the 607th TD Battalion during the course of the day:

20 August 1944	Mk VI	Mk V	Mk IV	SP	OTHERS	AT GUNS	ARTY	M/Gs	PILL BOXES	PRs
773rd TD Battalion	0	9	35	15	142	0	10	2	0	432
607th TD Battalion	4	14	6	19	41	0	9	0	0	275

It is believed that this is the greatest kill made by Tank Destroyers operating in support of and within an American Division Sector on any single day during the present war.

The day of 21 August was generally quiet, with all the TDs remaining in position; approximately 100 prisoners were taken during the day.

During the morning of 22 August all companies of the 773rd TD Battalion were relieved from the front lines, coordinated by G-3, 90th Infantry Division, and 5th TD Group. The 773rd TD Battalion was assembled in the vicinity of LE BOURG ST LEONARD and thereupon moved to rear area near CHAILLOUE there at 1810B hours.

Headquarters, 5th TD Group remained in its present location adjacent to 90th Infantry Division at the close of this period.

23 August 1944, 5th Tank Destroyer Group and 773rd TD Battalion remained in bivouac areas until 231740B when Group headquarters moved to rendezvous with 773rd TD Battalion in vicinity CHAILLOUE.

At 1800, 5th Tank Destroyer Group and 773rd TD Battalion moved to rejoin XV Corps and arrived vicinity BREZOLLES at 2405B (37). Route and clearance was given to Group Commander by First U.S. Army thru V Corps. 240700B August the march to XV Corps assembly area was resumed and at 241130B Group headquarters and 773rd TD Battalion closed in bivouac 2 miles NW of LONGNES (482554) (38).

During the afternoon 24 August the Group Commander visited the CP of the 813th TD Battalion in the SEINE bridgehead, and the XV Corps CP, formulating plans to strengthen the Corps AT defense. (39).



At 241935, The Group Commander issued orders to CO, 773rd TD Battalion, to (1) reconnoiter position for 1 company to reinforce 813th TD Battalion right sector of 79th Division; (2) reconnoiter for assembly area just North of the SEINE; (3) to reconnoiter for assembly position just South of the SEINE (40).

At 250900B August, CO, 773rd TD Battalion contacted 813th TD Battalion and made reconnaissance and plans to move Company "B", 773rd TD Battalion, to SEINE bridgehead, vicinity of LIMAY (607633). During the morning 25 August the Group Commander visited the XV Corps CP and received approval CG, XV Corps, to move "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, across the SEINE to reinforce the right sector of the 79th Division front (41).

251200, "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, was moved to assembly position near LIMAY (607633) (41). Movement was completed at 251515. Upon arrival, "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, passed from Group control to the 79th Division. CO, "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, reported to CO, 813th TD Battalion and received reconnaissance order to reinforce right sector, 813th TD Battalion. Reconnaissance was completed by dark, 25 August.

During the morning of 26 August the Group Commander visited XV Corps CP and received orientation on plan to expand SEINE bridgehead (42). At 261030B August, Battalion Commander, 773rd TD Battalion, was oriented on the plan, and tentative use of TDs (43).

At 261630B August the Germans attacked the SEINE bridgehead with tanks and infantry. "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, was moved to readiness positions, one section was committed to firing positions, no action was taken against the enemy by "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion.

Group Commander visited XV Corps CP during the morning of 27 August and returned with order that "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, would return to Corps when 30th Division took over right (East) part of 79th Division sector at 271200B August. Group Commander directed that Company "B", 773rd TD Battalion, would remain at disposal of 813th TD Battalion (79th Division) until direct order from Group was issued (44).

Early morning of 27th August, "B" Company, 773rd TD Battalion, was assembled at GUITANCOURT in 79th Division sector prepared to support the advance of 79th Division or to be withdrawn to battalion assembly position vicinity LONGNES.

At 280815B August, Group received Operations Instructions No. 9, XV Corps, which directed CO, 5th TD Group reconnoiter assembly positions in vicinity CONDE and be prepared to move to these positions (45). At 281015 August, Group billeting party moved to assembly area to arrange to billet 5th TD Group and 773rd TD Battalion on arrival (46). At 1100 hours Colonel Jacoby issued orders with approval CG, XV Corps, to withdraw Company "B", 773rd TD Battalion, to battalion assembly area at LONGNES. This move was completed 281310B August (47).

The Group Commander also received permission to move 5th TD Group and 773rd TD Battalion to new assembly position at CONDE (555327) beginning at 281500B August (45). This move was completed 281310B August (48).

5th Tank Destroyer Group and 773rd TD Battalion spend day, 29th August, on intensive maintenance and resupply. At 291250B the Group Commander returned to Group CP with information that XIX Corps had fully relieved XV Corps as of 291200. At 292100, 5th TD Group received Operations Instructions #12, XV Corps, which directed the 5th TD Group and 773rd TD Battalion to move East in Corps troops column to vicinity of ROZAY (481212) (50).

At 300915B, Group billeting party departed for new assembly area. Leading elements of Group serial crossed IP at RAMEOUILLET at 1230. Movement was completed at 302040B August (51).

The day 31 August was spent in assembly area vicinity of ROZAY in renewed maintenance and fuel resupply. This concludes operations for the period.

*L. E. Jacoby*  
L. E. JACOBY  
Colonel, FA  
Commanding



1 Inclosure

Incl #1 - Extracts from Unit Journal, 5th Tank Destroyer group.

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