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HEADQUARTERS
5TH TANK DESTROYER GROUP
APO 758, U.S. ARMY



7 April 1945

SUBJECT: Report After Operations Against the Enemy.

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

THROUGH: Commanding General, Seventh U.S. Army, APO 758, U.S. Army, (Attention: Historian) and Commanding General, XV Corps, APO 436, U.S. Army.

1. In compliance with AR 345-105 dtd 18 Nov 1929, and change 4, dtd 10 Aug 1944, and ltr, Hq, WDUSA, Subject: "Handling of Historical Documents in the European Theater of Operations", file AG 312.1 Op History, dtd 14 July 1944, the following report is submitted.

2. Arabic numerals following certain statements refer to the serial numbers of the pertinent entries in the attached Unit Journal of this organization. See inclosure #1.

3. Report After Operations Against the Enemy, 010001 March to 312400 March 1945:

1 March 1945, Hq, 5th TD Gp was situated in FINNIERANCE, FRANCO, Q4727, Sheet XXVI-13, SSOS 4416, Map of FRANCE, 1/50,000. Tank destroyer battalions in XV Corps were employed as follows: On Corps right flank, 824th TD Bn (T) supported the 100th Inf Div. On Corps left flank was the 776th TD Bn (SP, M-36) in support of the 44th Inf Div.

1 March, enemy armored activity on XV Corps front was limited to occasional observation of the movement of SP guns. None were observed firing.

2 March, S-2, 824th TD Bn visited CP 5th TD Gp and discussed the situation (28). Liaison officer, 16th TD Gp (XXI Corps) came to Group Headquarters and exchanged information with the S-3 on the flank TD Battalion's (29). Word was received from Army that the 824th TD Bn (T) would receive 5 M-18 TD's on or about 4th March for training purposes.

3 March, CO and S-3, 776th TD Bn stepped in Group Headquarters and went over the current situation (30).

4th March, the S-1 of Arm'd Section, Seventh Army, visited Group CP with information that 5th TD Gp would reorganize 7 March under a new T/O & E, as per General Order #76, Hq, Seventh Army (74).

5th March, 824th TD Bn received 4 M-18's for training purposes. The fifth destroyer arrived on the 7th. A driver training program to train 72 drivers was immediately begun.

6th March, a small group of enemy tanks or SP guns were observed in the sector of the 44th Div. Artillery fired on them, but the results were unknown (120). The Armored Section, Seventh Army, telephoned the message to Group that 12 additional M-18's were being processed by ordnance and would be released to the 824th TD Bn in the near future (119).

7th March, S-3 of 824th TD Bn came to the 5th TD Gp CP to talk over plans for conversion of the bat-alion from towed guns to the M-18 (127). Later that day the Group Commander, with his executive and S-2, visited the 824th TD Bn and inspected front line gun positions (132, 133, 134). The unit commanders conferred on the subject of reorganization and decided on a plan.

8 March, Staff Officers from 16th TD Gp visited 5th TD Gp and exchanged information (134). In Opns Instrs #132, the 749th Tk Bn relieved from attachment to the XXI Corps and concentrated in XV Corps zone (164). Ordnance notified 5th TD Gp that 12

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additional M-18's were being made available to 824th TD Bn. This information was given to the battalion.

9 March, Opns Instns #133 atchd the 6th Armd Div (603d TD Bn, M-18, atchd) to XV Corps for operations (172).

11 March, S-3 and S-2 of 603d TD Bn reported in to Group CP and conferred with the Group Commander (222). 603d TD Bn was in the vicinity of VIU-SUP-SKILLIS, Q1120. The next day, S-3 and S-2, 635th TD Bn (T), visited Group CP as advance party of the battalion which was scheduled to close into the Corps zone 151400 Marsh (245).

13 March, a billeting detail from 5th TD Gp located a new CP in the vicinity of DENDING, Q351515, Map of FRANCE (256). The evening of 13th the advance party occupied the billets prior to the move of the main body at 140900 (261). The new CP opened at 141200 in DENDING, distance travelled, 21.6 miles (275). Air supporting XV Corps destroyed 3 enemy tanks.

14 March, 5th TD Gp received FO #22 which directed that XV Corps attack on D-day on the axis RIMLING, ZWEIBRUCKEN, KAISERSLAUTERN, WORMS, penetrate the SIGFRIED LINE and advance to the RHINE in zone (273). Tank destroyers in XV Corps were disposed as follows. On Corps left flank prepared to pass through 44th Inf Div was the 45th Inf Div, with the 603d TD Bn, SP, M-36, atchd. East of the 45th Inf Div also prepared to pass thru the 44th Div was 3d Inf Div with 601st TD Bn, SP, M-36, atchd. East of the 3d Div was 100th Div with 824th TD Bn atchd. On Corps right flank was the 71st Div which had 635th TD Bn scheduled to be atchd, on arrival in the Corps zone. The 44th Div, 776th TD Bn atchd, screened the sector of the 3d and 45th Div's prior to the attack. Corps Artillery observed 1 tank and destroyed it and the air liquidated another tank.

The attack moved out at 150001 and initially met little resistance. In the 45th Div sector, an estimated company of enemy tanks met the attack. 3 SP's were destroyed by the 645th TD Bn and 2 by the 191st Tank Bn. 8 more tanks were taken under fire by artillery with results unknown. In the 3d Div sector another estimated tank company was in action against friendly troops where 4 enemy tanks or SP's were destroyed by our tanks, 3 by TD's, 2 by infantry and 2 by artillery. Total of eleven tanks and 5 SP's were liquidated on the first day of the attack (305).

16 March, CO, 645th TD Bn visited Group CP and conferred with the Group Commander on the tactical situation (327A). The Corps attack continued against somewhat lighter enemy armored activity. In the 3d Div sector, nine enemy tanks or SP's were observed and 2 were destroyed. 645th TD Bn destroyed one SP. 7 other tanks or SP's were taken under artillery fire with unknown results. In the 100th Div sector 7 enemy tanks were attacked and destroyed by artillery and air in the early morning. The same treatment was given with unknown results to a group of 5 tanks at 1300. In the fighting for BITCHE and CAMP DE BITCHE 5 or 6 German SP guns were in action. The infantry reported having destroyed one SP gun in BITCHE. The SP guns in CAMP DE BITCHE were reported to have withdrawn late in the day (338). At least 9 tanks and 2 SP's were liquidated on the second day of attack.

At 160001, 776th TD Bn was detached from 44th Div and atchd to XXI Corps where the battalion was attached to the 63d Inf Div to deliver direct fire support in breaching the SIGFRIED LINE.

On 17 March, the attack continued and the infantry elements closed on the SIGFRIED LINE in places. The air destroyed 5 tanks near ZWEIBRUCKEN, friendly tanks destroyed an SP South of ZWEIBRUCKEN, and infantry accounted for one tank and one SP (361).

18 March, 645th TD Bn supported the 45th Div in its attack into the SIGFRIED LINE by firing 781 rounds direct fire on pillbox fortifications. The billeting detail, Hq, 5th TD Gp selected a location at ALHEIM, GERMANY (372). The 601st TD Bn destroyed a Mk IV tank, artillery destroyed 5 tanks and air claimed to have destroyed 3 tanks or SP guns (387).

19 March, Hq, 5th TD Gp moved to ALHEIM, GERMANY, Q691636, closing the old CP at Q855A and opening the new CP at 1205A, distance travelled, 15.7 miles (394). This marks the entry of the CP of 5th TD Gp into GERMANY. The 645th TD Bn KO'd two towed anti-tank guns, replaced in the SIGFRIED LINE. Only 2 tanks were seen on the XV Corps front and both were forced to retire by artillery fire (410).

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20 March, advance CP, 5th TD Gp opened in BITCHE, FRANCE, for a period of 60 minutes (419). The situation became fluid on 20th and the 6th Armd Div (-CGA), 603d TD Bn atchd, was committed and passed thru the 3d Div in the vicinity of ZWEIFBRUCKEN. Little enemy armor was reported on the XV Corps front. Co "B" 645th TD Bn destroyed over 60 enemy vehicles and guns and 2 tanks were destroyed by the 3d Div.

21 March, CP closed in ALTHEIM at 0935 and opened in ZWEIFBRUCKEN, Q737732, Map of GERMANY, at 1040. Distance travelled was 8 miles (440). The 645th TD Bn and 601st TD Bn atchd to the infantry regiments moved forward rapidly, enemy armored contact resulted in the destruction of 5 enemy SP's by our armor, 1 tank by the 3d Div's infantry, and 2 SP guns by 645th TD Bn.

22d March, by the provisions of Opns Instns #148, Hq, XV Corps, 635th and 824th TD Bn's were detached from the XV Corps and attached to the XXI Corps. The 822d TD Bn (T) atchd to the 63d Div joined XV Corps (464). The only report of enemy armor in the sector was that one tank was destroyed in the 3d Div sector. The Gp S-4 and party captured 70 PW's, which were evacuated through the Corps PW enclosure (483).

23d March, the advanced party of 5th TD Gp moved forward to EISENBURG, GERMANY, (M243068) and selected a new CP (489). The main body closed the CP at ZWEIFBRUCKEN at 1025A and opened the new CP at 1620A (491). Distance travelled 48.5 miles. The 776th TD Bn, reatchd to 44th Div in the vicinity of SARREGUEMINES came under control of XV Corps. With the 44th Div and 63d Div, the 776th and 822d TD Bn's began to assemble behind the 45th and 3d Div's (518).

FO #23, XV Corps dtd 23d March directed the XV Corps to attack, seize bridgeheads East of the RHINE at 260200A and exploit to East and North-East. The mission of 5th TD Gp remained the same, to coordinate the AT defense of XV Corps (523).

25th March, billeting detail 5th TD Gp reconnoitered and selected billets in the vicinity of PFEDDERSHEIM (M3714). Hq, 5th TD Gp displaced forward to PFEDDERSHEIM, closing in at 251028, capturing 3 PW's in the new billets.

26 March, Opns Instns #155 directed that 776th TD Bn, atchd to 44th Div, cross the RHINE upon completion of crossing of 3d and 45th Div's. 601st TD Bn and 645th TD Bn crossed the RHINE and were supporting their regiments by 1600. During the river crossings, Corps TD's furnished direct fire from the West bank of the RHINE. 4 SP's were destroyed by the 45th Div.

27th and 28th March, the situation moved forward rapidly and 3 tanks were destroyed by the 3d Div.

29 March, the Hq, 5th TD Gp moved across the RHINE at 1048A and closed into the town of BENSHEIM (M638205), travelling 28.1 miles (612). 4 officers and 6 EM's Hq, 5th TD Gp, were on special duty with traffic control section, Hq, XV Corps from 26 - 29 March. This party aided in the control of traffic across the RHINE bridges during the period in which Corps Troops, 3d, 45th, 44th, 63d Inf Div's (reinforced) and 12th and 10th Armd Div's crossed the river.

30 March, Gp CP displaced forward again in order to keep up with the rapidly moving situation. The CP closed in BENSHEIM at 1007A and opened in GROS-UMSTADT (M858414), distance travelled 26.5 miles (642). Ex Officer, Armd Section, Seventh Army visited Gp CP and conferred with Group CO (643). 636th TD Bn, atchd to 14th Armd Div came under control of XV Corps at 301700A (656). The 601st TD Bn destroyed one SP along the MAIN RIVER and 45th Div destroyed an SP (652).

31 March, the 645th TD Bn engaged and destroyed an American M-4 (German manned) and a Mk IV tank in SCHEINHEIM and 3d Div destroyed a tk and 2 SP guns.

The dentists of 5th TD Gp worked on personnel of 824th, 645th TD Bn's and Group Headquarters during the month of March and were with the 645th TD Bn at close of period.

The chaplain of 5th TD Gp was atchd to 645th, 824th TD Bn's and XV Corps rest center in NANCY at different periods during the month and rendered daily services. He was with the 645th TD Bn at the end of the period.

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For the period covered, the CG, 5th TD Gp, served as AT Officer for XV Corps. During this period XV Corps is credited with knocking out 45 tanks and 25 SP guns. Since XV Corps became operational 311600Z July 1944, the cumulative total of tanks and SP guns destroyed by all troops, assigned, attached, or in support of XV Corps totals 1021. Of these 1021 tanks and SP guns destroyed, 89 were eliminated by 5th TD Gp and 773d TD Bn, while on temporary detached service with V Corps during the period 17 - 22 August 1944.

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Daily TD Reports, 601st, 645th and 776th TD Bn's are enclosed to show total destruction of enemy material by these battalions.

L. W. Jacoby
L. W. JACOBY
Colonel, FA
Commanding



5 Incls:

- Incl #1 - Unit Journal, Hq, 5th TD Gp, 1 - 31 March 1945, w/supporting papers.
- Incl #2 - Record of AT Section, XV Corps, of enemy tanks destroyed during March 1945.
- Incl #3- Daily TD Report, 601st TD Bn, dtd 31 March 1945.
- Incl #4- Daily TD Report, 645th TD Bn, dtd 31 March 1945.
- Incl #5- Daily TD Report, 776th TD Bn, dtd 31 March 1945.

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