

HEADQUARTERS
5TH TANK DESTROYER GROUP
APO 403, U.S. ARMY

5 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Report After Operations with 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 and Commanding General, XV Corps, APO 436, U.S. Army.

1. In compliance with paragraph 10, AR 345-105 as amended by Change 3, dated 9 March 1943, the following report is submitted.
2. Arabic numbers following certain statements refer to similarly marked pertinent entries in the attached Unit Journal of this organization. See inclosure #1.
3. Report After Operations Against the Enemy, 010001 October to 312400 October 1944.

1 October 1944, Hq, 5th TD Group, attached XV Corps, was located in LINSVILLE, coordinates 0899, sheet 15 H, USCS 4249, 1/100,000. TD battalions in XV Corps were attached as follows: 813th TD Bn, less "F" Company in Corps reserve, was attached to 106th Cavalry Group, operating North and South of RHIN-MARNE CANAL on XV Corps North (left) flank. "F" Company, 813th TD Bn, was attached to XV Corps Artillery, on an indirect fire mission, from positions in LINSVILLE. 773d TD Bn was attached to 79th Infantry Division, acting in a general support role, West and South of the FORET DE PARROY. The FORET DE PARROY, a heavily wooded, hilly area of approximately 45 square kilometers was being attacked by the 79th Division.

Due to the recent transfer from Third to Seventh Army, there were changes required in TD reports. 1 October, 5th TD Group published a memorandum setting up reports and times at which they were to be submitted (1).

2d October, 5th TD Group received Operations Instructions #23, Hq, XV Corps, which withdrew 106th Cavalry Group from North of the RHIN-MARNE CANAL upon relief by XII Corps troops (2). In accordance with this directive, 813th TD Bn moved South of the canal the same day except for 2 platoons "G" Company.

The Group S-1 & 4 visited AG and G-1 of XV Corps, 2d October, to expedite the processing of recommendations for the award of decorations to personnel of 773d TD Bn and Hq, 5th TD Group. A total of 51 decorations have already been presented to personnel of these two organizations (3).

During the day October 3d, Bn CO, 773d TD Bn and 813th TD Bn visited CP, 5th TD Group and discussed the TD situation of XV Corps with the Group Commander (4-5). Liaison officers, 5th TD Group visited the TD battalions in XII Corps operating on the north of XV Corps and obtained their dispositions and plans (6).

4 October, Seventh Army TD Officer and his assistant, accompanied by Bn executive, 776th TD Bn, conferred with CO, 5th TD Group, on TD employment (7). Attachments of TD battalions to infantry divisions was the chief matter of discussion. It was recommended by the CO, 5th TD Group, that TD Bn's supporting infantry divisions be issued infantry radios to facilitate communications. Correspondence on this subject was initiated to obtain these radios for TD units in XV Corps.

"B" Company, 813th TD Bn, attached to XV Corps Artillery was relieved of this assignment by "A" Company, 813th TD Bn in order to save wear on "B" Company's gun tubes. During the period between 24th September and 4th October, "B" Company fired over 600 missions, expending 8158 rounds HE. CO, 182d FA Bn commended "B" Company for its effective firing stating that a large number of enemy infantry, vehicles and other material had been observed destroyed.

7th October, CP S-1 & 4 visited Seventh Army Signal Depots at SPINAL and obtained the following equipment for 773d and 813th TD Bn's: mast sections, fuses, tubes, microphones and handsets (8). This equipment was badly needed in the Tank Destroyer companies in order to maintain necessary radio communication.



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By 8th October, the 773d TD Bn had moved its Tank Destroyer companies into the FOREST DE FAYEUX. Plans were made by 79th Infantry Division for a combined infantry, tank and tank destroyer attack to jump off at first light on October 9th. This attack moved off successfully and all objectives were taken. 773d TD Bn destroyed 2 Mk IV tanks against the loss of one tank destroyer. A special report of the action of the battalion in dense woods was forwarded by the Group to the Twelfth Army Group Combat Observer (9).

10th October, the Group Commander was oriented by IV Corps on the future mission of XV Corps, (10).

121115 October, XV Corps alerted the 773d TD Bn, attached to 79th Division, for movement back to Third Army control (11). In view of the situation, in order to employ the Tank Destroyers in the most vital sector, the CO, 5th TD Group recommended to Corps G-3 that the 773d TD Bn be replaced upon retirement from the lines by the 813th TD Bn, then in Corps reserve, attached to 106th Cavalry Group (12). This recommendation was approved and the S-3 of 773d TD Bn was oriented on the plan at 121800 October (13).

Confirmation of the above order was received in Operations Instructions #24, XV Corps, dated 121800 October, and further directed the 773d TD Bn to assemble in LUNSVILLE not later than 15 October. 813th TD Bn, less Co "C" attached to the 106th Cavalry Group relieved the 773d TD Bn by dark October 13th, and 773d TD Bn, now attached to 5th TD Group, completed its assembly in LUNSVILLE by the same time (14).

During the afternoon of the 13th October, CO and SX, 5th TD Group again visited AG, XV Corps, with reference to decorations of personnel of 773d TD Bn and Hq, 5th TD Group (15).

14th October, "C" Company, 813th TD Bn, less one platoon, was released by the 106th Cavalry Group to battalion control, and moved to the sector of the 79th Infantry Division.

In complete darkness at 150200 October, an enemy self-propelled assault gun approached to within 25 yards of a tank destroyer of "A" company, 813th TD Bn. A nearby infantry machine gunner notified the destroyer crew by voice, then fired cal .30 M2 tracer at the assault gun. The destroyer commander, by observing the strike of machine gun tracers, aimed and fired one round APC which destroyed the enemy vehicle.

160800 October, the 773d TD Bn began its movement to Third Army sector in vicinity of MARS. Prior to the departure of the battalion, each area and billet which the battalion occupied was checked and cleared by officers from Hq, 5th TD Group. When the battalion completed its movement across the IP in LUNSVILLE, Group S-3 reported this fact to Corps Hq (16). Daily TD Report, 773d TD Bn, dated 15 October 1944, is attached as inclosure #3 to show total destruction of tanks to date by this battalion.

In the afternoon of 16 October, Seventh Army TD Officer and a TD officer of AFHQ visited Gp CP and 813th TD Bn CP for a conference with the unit commanders (17).

In the face of a tenaciously held line and small frequent enemy tank actions, the 813th TD Bn went into positions up with the advance infantry elements of the 79th Division. During the nights October 15-16 and 16-17, the enemy threw in counterattacks against the division front. After each attack, the front lines were restored. In one case an M-10 of "A" company, 813th TD Bn, was overrun, but when the counterattack came in, the destroyer was re-captured. During these attacks, enemy tanks were in action, but in each case, fired wildly and withdrew before daylight. At this time it was estimated that there were 25-30 enemy tanks in the sector of 79th Division.

18 October, the 5th TD Group was notified that the 776th TD Bn, SP, M-36, was earmarked to come to XV Corps, and be attached for operations to 5th TD Group (18). Accordingly, the Group S-3 selected a tentative battalion assembly area in the vicinity of MUNKEL (19). In view of the fact that the 776th TD Bn would use 90mm ammunition, a check was made at XV Corps ASP's to insure that a plentiful supply of ammunition would be on hand by the time the battalion would arrive, around October 30th.

During the period 18-23d October daily visits to the newly arrived 44th Infantry Division were made by personnel of Hq, 5th TD Group to work out a plan for coordinating TD employment in the 44th Division. An arrangement was made whereby the Executive

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Officer of the Division Artillery was made chief coordinator for tank destroyers in the division, (20-21-22-23).

19th October, Group CO and SX visited Seventh Army Hq and conferred with General BRITTONHAM, chief of artillery section, and with the Army TD officer. Recommendations for changes in personnel, equipment and the ammunition supply of TD Bn's was discussed (24).

20th October, Group Special Service Officer and Group Asst S-1 & 4 visited Seventh Army. The procedure for procuring all types of special services equipment was obtained. This information was published in a memorandum and distributed to TD units in XV Corps (25).

21st October, 813th TD Bn remained in positions supporting the 79th Division. During the period 18-20 October, 2d platoon, "D" Co went into indirect fire positions under control of 79th Division Artillery. The platoon fired 945 rounds HE on harassing missions on an enemy supply route. Also during this period, CO, 813th TD Bn made extensive reconnaissance for employment with 79th Division in the attack 21 October.

20th October, Seventh Army Asst ATO, S-4 and the Motor Officer of the 636th TD Bn visited Gp CP and 813th TD Bn. The purpose of the visit was to find out how a TD Bn could operate under the present Tables of Equipment which limits transportation in Bn Hq Co very severely (26).

21 October, the advance party of 776th TD Bn, reported in to XV Corps CP and to CP, 5th TD Group. The battalion assembly area, vicinity of LUNEVILLE was pointed out and following this, the required reports, SOP's, and policies pertaining to TD Bn's in XV Corps were presented to the advance party (27-28).

21 October, 813th TD Bn jumped off in support of the 79th Division. "A" Co advanced and secured its objective without loss, knocking out one 88mm gun and prime mover. The other companies met considerable resistance in reaching their objectives. A total of 4 enemy tanks were destroyed against a loss of 3 M-10's. Extremely boggy terrain was encountered and numerous enemy mine fields were discovered during the advance.

21st October, Gp Hq received a telephone call from G-3, XV Corps, to the effect that Seventh Army issued an order that 813th TD Bn reorganize to T/O & E 18-25, March 15, 1944. This information was relayed to CO, 813th TD Bn (29). 22 October, a General Order was published by XV Corps directing that the date of reorganization be 25 October.

22d October, the 813th TD Bn destroyed another enemy tank and lost one M-10 bringing the total for 2 days to 5 tanks destroyed and 4 M-10's lost. Air and tanks liquidated 7 more enemy tanks on this date.

Many reports of small groups of tanks came in from the 79th Division on October 22 and 23d. In order to be prepared to combat this threat with all possible strength, the platoon of "C" Co, 813th TD Bn, which was still attached to the cavalry was requested to return to battalion control. At 231645, this return was authorized and the platoon arrived in a reserve position in 79th sector by dark 23d October (30). On 23d October, the 813th TD Bn destroyed 5 enemy tanks without loss during widespread enemy tank - infantry counterattacks.

In this period of close support a critical shortage of batteries for operation of M-10's radios developed. Due to the nearness of the enemy, tank destroyer motors could not be run, necessitating that radios be entirely battery operated. The Group communications officer made a thorough search and obtained sufficient batteries to be able to make 100% replacement (31).

23rd October, Group SX and Asst S-1 & 4 visited Seventh Army Hq and the initial assembly area of 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion at NOMELEY. 18 Tank Destroyers of the 776th TD Bn had arrived from MARSEILLES by rail. 776th was given a part of its initial issue of maps by Group Hq. At Army Hq the possibilities of obtaining tank or TD Bn's for XV Corps was discussed. No definite answers were obtained, but it was learned that 1 SP, TD Bn per division and 1 towed TD Bn per Corps was the army goal (32).



24th October, during tank - infantry counterattacks against the 44th Division front, which now had replaced the 79th Division, the 813th TD Bn destroyed 3 enemy tanks. On 23d and 24th October, infantry destroyed 5 tanks and the artillery and air action destroyed an additional 5 tanks.

25 October, Gp SX visited 776th TD Bn and Seventh Army in EPINAL to check on arrival of 776th TD Bn and Seventh Army arrangements to exchange the 500 series radios for 600 series in the Bn's vehicles (33).

Troop assignment #87, Hq, Twelfth Army Group, relieved Hq, 5th TD Gp from assignment to Third Army and further assigned it to Hq, ETOUSA. Group remained attached to XV Corps (34).

26th October, CO and S-3, 776th TD Bn, reported in to Group Hq. These officers were further oriented on the situation and visited the Bn assembly area in the vicinity of MONGEL, 3 Km SE of LUNEVILLE (35-36). 27th October, S-1 and Asst S-2, 776th TD Bn, visited Group CP and conferred with S-2's of Group and 813th TD Bn on the enemy situation on 79th Division front (37).

27th October, Group Asst S-3 visited 776th TD Bn at MORGEL and learned that the Bn would be ready to move to assembly area at MONGEL on 29th or 30th October (38). Work on the installation of radios was being completed satisfactorily. Basic load of ammunition came with the battalion vehicles and destroyers. The same day, Group CO and Asst Executive journeyed to the 90th Division CP and Third Army Hq with reference to completing the work on decorations for TD personnel. While on this trip, the party established liaison with the 4th TD Gp and exchanged information (39).

28th October, G-4, Seventh Army reported by telephone to XV Corps that 776th TD Bn would arrive at assembly area at MONGEL at 30100 October. Acting on this information and in agreement with G-3, XV Corps, CO, 5th TD Group issued instructions to CO, 776th TD Bn on the morning of 29th October, that the 776th TD Bn would relieve the 813th TD Bn in the sector of 44th Division by the night of October 31 - November 1 or November 1 - 2, 1944. 29th October, Group Executive Officer delivered this message to Bn Commander, 776th TD Bn at MORGEL (40).

The Battalion Commanders of the 776th and 813th TD Bn's established liaison on 29th and 30th October, and decided to effect the relief by the morning of 1 November. The 776th TD Bn closed in bivouac at MONGEL by 30100 October. During the afternoon and evening, 30th October, CO, 776th continued his reconnaissances of the 44th Division front.

30th October, upon recommendation of the Group Commander, the XV Corps published operations instructions #36 which directed the relief of 813th TD Bn by 776th TD Bn. 776th TD Bn was to be in position and attached to 44th Division by 31150 October and the 813th TD Bn was to be detached from 44th Division and placed in Corps reserve by 011000 November (41).

By 302000 October, the 776th TD Bn relieved the 813th TD Bn, placing 2 companies on the line, each company with a platoon in reserve. "G" Company, 776th TD Bn remained at MONGEL until the morning of 31 October, when it moved to a reserve position. By dark, 31 October, 813th TD Bn withdrew from the division sector to a rest area west of LUNEVILLE. The 813th TD Bn remained in close liaison with 776th TD Bn at close of period.

During the month of October, both chaplains of Hq, 5th TD Group worked with the TD Bn's in XV Corps. A total of 24 Sunday services and 37 daily services were held among the 773d, 776th and 813th TD Bn's. 28 hospital visits were made and 88 letters to families of the men were written.

The two dentists of Hq, 5th TD Group and their technicians were attached to the 813th TD Bn for the period 1 - 31st October. 107 patients received treatment, 30 emergency and 77 routine cases. Troops serviced were from the 773d and 813th TD Bn's.

For the period covered, the Commanding Officer, 5th Tank Destroyer Group, served as the Anti-Tank officer for XV Corps. During this period, the XV Corps is credited with knocking out 51 tanks and 2 self-propelled guns, of which, 15 tanks and 1 SP gun were destroyed by Tank Destroyers, 6 by air action, and



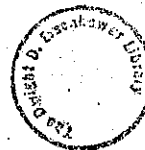
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30 tanks and 1 SP gun by other combined branches. Since the XV Corps became operational at 011600Z July 1944, the cumulative total of tanks and self-propelled guns liquidated by all troops assigned, attached or in support of the Corps totals 750. Of this 750 tanks and self-propelled guns liquidated, 89 were eliminated by Hq, 5th Tank Destroyer Group and 773d Tank Destroyer Battalion on temporary detached service with the V Corps during the period August 17 to August 22, 1944.

Daily TD report of 813th TD Bn dtd 30th October is attached as inclosure #4 to show total destruction of tanks to date by this battalion.

This concludes the operations for the period 1 - 31 October 1944.

L. E. JACQUE
Colonel, FA
Commanding



A - Incl

- #1 Unit Journal, Hq, 5th TD Group, 1 Oct 44 to 31 Oct 44.
- #2 Record of ATO, XV Corps, of enemy tanks destroyed during October 1944.
- #3 Daily TD Report, 773d TD Bn, dtd 14 October 1944.
- #4 Daily TD Report, 813th TD Bn, dtd 30 October 1944.

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