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HEADQUARTERS
802d TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 403
U. S. Army

7 September 1944.

319.1/401

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/after Action Reports.

TO: The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

In compliance with paragraph 10(c) AR 345-105, and letter Headquarters, 83d Infantry Division, APO 83, U. S. Army, dated 20 July 1944, subject and file as above, journal and attached St. Malo-Dinard operation report for the month of August 1944, is submitted herewith.

John H. Montgomery
JOHN H. MONTGOMERY JR.
Lt. Col., Infantry,
Commanding.

1 Incl.
Unit journal.

319.1/401
(7 Sep 44)

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 83, U.S. Army, 9 Sep 44.

TO: Commanding General, VIII Corps, APO 308, U.S. Army.

Forwarded.

For the Commanding General:

N. P. Cowden
N. P. COWDEN,
Major, AGD,
Asst Adj General.

1 Incl. a/c

Incl # 16

REC-1 1944

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HEADQUARTERS
802d TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO #403
U. S. Army

31 August 1944

EMPLOYMENT OF TOWED TANK DESTROYERS IN NORMANDY
AND ST MALO-DINARD OPERATIONS

The 83d Division encountered no tank attacks during the Normandy and St Malo-Dinard operations. German tanks were employed as armored pillboxes either stationery or with limited lateral movement.

NORMANDY OPERATIONS

EMPLOYMENT - During this operation Tank Destroyer companies were employed either attached to or directly supporting the three infantry regiments. Due to the flat terrain, hedgerows, and dense vegetation observation was usually limited to a matter of 100 yards. The flat trajectory of the 3" Gun necessitated that it be employed at point blank range of several thousand yards to the rear of the assault elements. Reconnaissance platoons were employed in reconnaissance of position areas, location of mine-free routes, and for coordination and liaison with the infantry.

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS - Attachment vs Support: Experience has shown that as a general rule Tank Destroyer companies should be placed in support of the infantry regiments rather than attached to them. This belief is based upon the following reasons:

1. When Tank Destroyer companies are attached to the infantry regiments it is impossible to coordinate the ant-tank defense of the divisions.
2. Frequently infantry commanders are unfamiliar with the limitations and capabilities of the 3" towed gun. When companies are attached this resulted in instances where:
 - (a) Guns were ordered to occupy during daylight exposed positions offering no covered routes of approach and not adequately protected by infantry.
 - (b) Insufficient time available for reconnaissance of gun positions, and,
 - (c) guns assigned firing positions from which the mission could not be accomplished.

When Tank Destroyer companies were placed in support the above mentioned observations were not encountered and missions were accomplished with a greater degree of success.

MISSIONS - The infantry cannon company is more suited for close support of the infantry than the 3" towed gun particularly in close country firing against mortars and machine guns. Covered routes of approach is the answer to the question - "How close can the 3" gun support the infantry?"

It has been found that harrassing and interdiction fire of Tank Destroyer weapons is more effective than when these weapons are employed in massed artillery concentrations.

Employment of Towed Tank Destroyers in Normandy and St Malo-Dinard Operations
Cont'd:

ST MALO - DINARD OPERATIONS

The St Malo-Dinard operation was essentially the attack of a fortified area.

EMPLOYMENT - Tank Destroyer companies were in support of the infantry regiments. The Reconnaissance Platoons were usually employed as a counter reconnaissance screen on the left flank of the Division.

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS - The 3" Gun proved itself to be an excellent weapon against fortifications in this operation. The 3" HE shell, fuze delay was successfully used in destroying machine guns emplaced within the house. Successive single rounds of APC were successful in penetrating reinforced concrete blockhouses. Greater success was achieved however by firing platoon volleys at targets of this type. 10% of the 3" APC rounds were successful in penetrating 10" steel pillboxes, the remainder of the rounds produced flaking on the inside of the pillbox. When the ports were opened the guns were fired and shells entered the embrasure neutralizing the gun.

In direct assault fire the organic small arms weapons of the TD platoon should be used to neutralize enemy fire to permit operation of the 3" Gun. The extreme accuracy of the 3" Gun permitted it to successfully out-duel with direct fire enemy artillery pieces.

Previous training in occupying positions under cover of smoke and the recording of adjusted deflections and elevations for use in future direct firing under conditions of poor visibility were utilized in this operation.

/s/ John H. Montgomery Jr.,
/t/ JOHN H. MONTGOMERY JR.,
Lt. Col., Infantry,
Commanding

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