

HEADQUARTERS 1ST TANK DESTROYER BRIGADE Auth: CO, 1st TD Brig
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TANK DESTROYER INFORMATION)

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SECTION I

CUMULATIVE REPORT OF TANK DESTROYER UNITS TO 29 MARCH

BATTALION	TOTAL TANKS DESTROYED	TOTAL SP GUNS DESTROYED	TOTAL ARTY & AT GUNS DESTROYED	TOTAL ROUNDS FIRED	ROUNDS FIRED DIRECT	ROUNDS FIRED INDIRECT
602	41	8	61	9751	6232	3519
603	58	22	30	14297	7213	7084
607	58	23	23	62760	8907	53853
610	93	2	25	11224	4819	6405
631 *						
691	6	2	1	15458	2522	12936
704	65	13	29	1824	1180	644
705	43	5	12	21690	6690	15000
773	109	23	54	12276	9109	3163
774	5	1	16	12092	8924	3168
803	25	16	19	15710	3777	10933
808	7	11	14	37999	6304	31695
811	58	10	15	8111	2730	5381
818	33	5	14	23099	4469	19430
Others**	142	22	116	107430	33620	73810

In addition to tanks and self-propelled, anti-tank, and artillery guns destroyed as shown above, Third Army Tank Destroyers have also destroyed 463 machine guns, 824 pillboxes, and 1671 other targets, including artillery prime movers, GP vehicles, JPs, AAA guns, troop trains, ammunition dumps, airplanes, etc.

* Not yet in action

** Destroyed by tank destroyer battalions formerly in Third Army, but now assigned to other Armies.

CO *WMB*
SX *WMB*
S1
S2 *RTM*
S3 *WMB*

copy to all Co's

SECTION II

TANK DESTROYERS IN COMBAT

602ND TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-18):

a. Late one afternoon, as darkness was approaching, the 6th Cavalry Squadron Commander observed a dug-in machine gun in FAXTEILLER that was pinning down part of the cavalry's attacking force. The Squadron Commander called for tank destroyer fire from the 3d Platoon, Company "A", 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion. The range was over 2200 yards. Due to darkness, the target could not be observed and guns were as near to the target as the terrain would permit.

Radio communication had previously been provided between the tank destroyer company command post and the squadron command post. The cavalry forward observer named reference points still distinguishable from the tank destroyer positions. This information was radioed to the leader of the 3d Platoon. One AP shell was fired and the forward observer reported it fell 10 yards short of the target; the second shell fell at the edge of the gun position; the observer then called for a delayed fuze HE. Several rounds of delayed fuze HE wiped out the gun position. The attacking force was then able to move on to its object unmolested by any enemy machine gun fire.

b. Two guns were in position near the vicinity of RALLENSDORF, covering several approaches into the town of PHILLIPSTEILLER. Platoon Sergeant Haynes observed an enemy column moving along a road, just as darkness approached. Sergeant Haynes was observing from a high embankment, about 300 yards in front of the dug-in infantry positions. Upon the sergeant's request, the infantry ran a telephone line out to his position. The sergeant then used the telephone to call for Corps artillery fire on the target. The enemy column was composed of a large tank, followed by horse-drawn artillery. A road block caused the enemy column to close up and become bunched. Darkness had fallen by the time artillery was obtained and a base point selected. All that could be seen was the dim green shaded ends of the flashlights the enemy was using to get around the road block. Every time the enemy vehicles would group up a volley of artillery was brought upon them causing them to disperse. This incident happened over and over again and the enemy finally dispersed into a woods about 1000 yards away. Sergeant Haynes was able to follow the enemy by the noisy, disorganized manner in which they moved and to direct artillery fire on the enemy as they dispersed. Later, an infantry reconnaissance patrol reported many destroyed enemy vehicles, dead horses, personnel and equipment strewn all over the landscape. (S-2, 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

609TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-18):

Recently the 2nd Platoon, "B" Company, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion, supporting an armored spearhead in the drive on TRIER, ran into some stiff opposition and in reducing this opposition demonstrated outstanding courage, initiative and versatility. In two days of action the platoon was officially credited with destroying 9 88mm guns, 5 20mm multiple-mount anti-aircraft guns, 2 pillboxes, 1 radar and fire direction installation, 1 ammunition dump, and an undetermined number of enemy. The platoon also played a large part in the capture of 474 prisoners of war. Here is the story of the platoon leader, 1st Lieutenant William M. Fudge:

"I give most of the credit for that job to Sergeant Miller (Sergeant Earl L. Miller). He did most of the work. On the night of 28 February our column went into bivouac on a stretch of high ground. During the day we had shot up a couple of pillboxes and taken four prisoners. All night we received a large amount of artillery fire with considerable air bursts. I was called to the half-track command post and told to "get" a gun that was firing on us from a draw to our north, so I sent Sergeant Miller on that mission. He moved his destroyer in position, located the gun and fired on it, scoring a direct hit. In the flash he saw two more 88s and fired on them, destroying both. Then he spotted five multiple mount 20mm anti-aircraft guns and fired on them, silencing all. Later we inspected the set-up and found a complete radar set-up and fire direction center. We killed a lot of Jerries there.

"In the morning we were having out when the fog lifted and right away we

609TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-18) (Cont'd)

started to get direct anti-tank fire from the east and northwest. Several tanks and half-tracks were hit and there was panic and confusion as they burst into flames. Sergeant Miller, without waiting for orders, moved two guns into hull defilade and fired upon the three anti-tank guns to our east, knocking out all three. Meanwhile I took one destroyer and knocked out the gun to the northwest.

"Then we moved out with my platoon following the point tank. As we approached the town of TARFORST, two 88s knocked out the lead tank. Sergeant Miller sent one destroyer off to the side to draw fire and then knocked out both guns with an overwatching destroyer. Meanwhile I'd spotted an 88 off to the west and knocked it out.

"Sergeant Miller had expended all his HE so he climbed into a burning tank and brought out 15 rounds and a case of rations.

"Then we moved on to TRIER with my platoon leading the column. An 88 opened up on us from one of the buildings so Sergeant Miller fired immediately. His shot was a little to the right but it must have hit an ammunition dump because the whole building blew up in a tremendous explosion and with all the flares going off it looked like 4th of July. We entered the town at 1945 on 1 March and helped clean it out.

"The next day we knocked out an anti-tank gun that was firing on us from across the river, killing about six of the crew and dispersing the others."

When asked about his methods, Lieutenant Fudge asserted that he and his sergeants placed their guns in position by using foot reconnaissance invariably. "That's the only way", he said. (Commanding Officer, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

630TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (Towed):

The Infantry RCT, including Company "B", and Third Platoon, Company "A", 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion, recently played the major role in the capture of COLMAR. Below is a brief resume of the operations of the Third Platoon, Company "A", during the operation.

In the early hours of 2 February 1945, infantry, supported by the third platoon, Company "A", 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion, headed an attack into the inner defenses of the City of COLMAR, situated in the open, flat country of the COLMAR Plain. Our troops were harassed by enemy artillery fire and after gains into the city were held up by the enemy's infantry and machine gun fire. At this point of the engagement members of the tank destroyer gun crews manned the caliber .50 machine guns mounted on the half-track prime movers. The vehicles were maneuvered to favorable positions from which the machine guns opened fire, clearing all enemy opposition in that area.

A patrol was sent out to discover the positions of the enemy and it found them well entrenched. The patrol asked the Germans to surrender; instead the enemy opened fire. The caliber .50 machine guns mounted on the half-tracks were again used to good advantage and the enemy were soon waving white flags. The tank destroyer platoon helped clear their sector of the city of enemy and took up defensive positions with their towed guns.

Everything went well until late in the afternoon when a member of one of the gun crews reported that the enemy was grouping in the distance. This warning gave the crews time to alert all men for the enemy counterattack which followed. The infantry mortars and our caliber .50 machine guns succeeded in breaking up that attack. In a short time the enemy attacked again, this time on the left of the infantry and the towed platoon. The three main guns, supported by the caliber .50 machine guns, stopped this attack.

By dawn of the next morning this sector had been cleared of enemy, and the platoon was assigned to another sector of the city. To reach this new area it was necessary for members of the platoon to remove the roadblocks. While working on the second block, some members of the platoon went a short distance to a prison

camp that inclosed a large number of Russian prisoners. The tank destroyer men captured the German guards and liberated the prisoners. The platoon continued its move to the new sector without opposition. Several more prisoners were captured there and the defensive positions were held until the platoon was relieved.

During this action this towed tank destroyer platoon took at least 35 prisoners, killed at least 25 and wounded approximately 40 who were captured when our infantry overran the enemy aid station. The platoon fired 9 rounds of three-inch HE, 5000 rounds caliber .50 machine gun, 2000 rounds caliber .30 machine gun and carbine ammunition. Total casualties for the platoon was one man injured by small arms fire.

COMMENT: This operation illustrates the capabilities of tank destroyer automatic weapon fire. Although a towed platoon, this unit utilized the machine guns on the half-track prime movers as a partly armored, maneuverable base of fire. This action was in the City of COLMAR where normal fields of fire, positions, etc., could not be occupied. Such action on the part of a towed platoon required closest cooperation with the infantry and called for prompt reconnaissance, aggressive action and the ability to seize any opportunities presented. (S-3, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

776TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36):

a. On February 18, 1945, 1st Platoon, Company "C", was in general support of 1st Battalion, Infantry Regiment, general vicinity 63.7-56.1 to 64.6-56.4. During the day the guns occupied a cover position about 200 yards behind the infantry and at night moved two guns up to a hill top position in the infantry line. About 0100 hours the enemy launched a counter-attack with 4 Mk IV tanks and 1 75 self-propelled assault gun, and infantry. The night was very dark. The enemy had previously occupied this ground and moved rapidly with the use of his own flares. The tank destroyers called for mortar flares, but were not successful in getting them. The platoon leader knew that in order to make their attack successful it would be necessary for the enemy armor to come over the ridge line. The platoon leader quietly backed his destroyer about 75 yards down the hill, and decided to do the shooting from his own destroyer. He followed the movement of the enemy armor by the tracer of the enemy's machine guns. One tank pulled to a hull-down position on the forward slope. The destroyer commander withheld his fire and soon the Mk IV pulled to the top of the hill. The tank was knocked out with one round of APC, and the vehicle and crew members burned. The balance of the enemy armor stopped their motors and remained well on the forward slope for about 20 minutes, using more flares searching for the tank destroyers. Then an assault gun moved up to a hull-down position shooting Vory Pistol flares, trying to locate the tank destroyers. About 5 minutes later the assault gun pulled on the top of the ridge line and was quickly knocked out with one round of APC; the second round burned this vehicle. Two crew members evacuated the vehicle and were captured by our infantry. The other three Mk IV tanks fled. The two M-36 destroyers pulled back to the ridge line and fired on the retreating enemy, but it was too dark to observe the vehicles and none were hit.

This counter-attack was repulsed with loss to the enemy because the destroyer platoon leader knew his ground from extensive reconnaissance during daylight, and knew which way a tank would approach the ground he was occupying. By assessing the situation coolly and fighting on his terms, he was able to repulse the attack with no loss of ground and no casualties to the infantry or himself.

b. Recently one M-36 tank destroyer was in position in RIMLING, FRANCE. The enemy was attacking with infantry and armor and was gradually occupying the town, when the enemy armor tried to cut-off RIMLING from the rear. A small force of enemy tanks and assault guns appeared about 1,000 yards southeast of RIMLING. It was evident that the enemy armor felt quite safe in their positions, as they had excellent hull-down positions for frontal protection, and apparently thought that there were no anti-tank guns to bother their flanks. The M-36 tank destroyer moved about 300 yards into position, where one JAGD Tiger could be plainly seen. One round of APC, fired at 900 yards into the flank of the JAGD Tiger, hit it in the ammunition racks. It immediately went up in flames and numerous explosions of ammunition followed. None of the crew escaped from the tank. An American "Sherman", captured by the enemy was in position and firing on American elements. From the position of the M-36 tank destroyer in RIMLING only the turret of this tank could be seen. The M-36 tank destroyer was about 40 meters lower than the "Sherman", this difference in elevation making the "Sherman" a very difficult

776TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36): (Cont'd)

target. Fourteen rounds of APC were fired at this tank and three hits were scored in the turret. Part of the crew was seen bailing out. High explosive was fired, but the tank could not be set on fire. There were more enemy tanks in the vicinity, but they could not be seen from the tank destroyer's position. While the M-36 tank destroyer was engaging enemy armor, the enemy infantry continued to advance, approaching the gun position from the south and firing the bazooka and small arms at the M-36 tank destroyer. The M-36 tank destroyer then started to shoot the enemy with HE at ranges of 200 yards and less, killing and wounding about 75, causing the balance of the enemy to withdraw. The destruction of the JAGD Tiger and "Sherman" and the stopping of the enemy infantry was accomplished with one M-36 tank destroyer. (S-3, 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion.)

803D TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36):

The Second Platoon of Company "A" was with the forward elements of the Infantry Regiment when two enemy tanks and one self-propelled gun were sighted coming down a road toward them. At about 2000 yards an infantry officer wanted the platoon leader to open fire. The platoon leader, however, allowed the enemy armor to approach to 900 yards. He then directed fire on the last tank. This tank was knocked out, blocking the road behind the other two vehicles. As the forward tank and the self-propelled gun attempted to turn to pass the destroyed tank, they presented flank shots that made easy targets for the tank destroyer gunners. (Commanding Officer, 803d Tank Destroyer Battalion.)

808TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36):

a. On the 23d March 1945 the battalion was attached to the Infantry Division, occupying positions on the west bank of the RHINE River between BOPPAARD and BINGEL. Captain James G. Martin, commanding Company "B", reports the following unusual method of obtaining targets:

"On the morning of 23 March 1945 a prisoner of war was picked up by the security corporal of the 1st Platoon of Company "B", 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion at 0630 hours. The prisoner of war made his way across the RHINE River by boat in the vicinity of BOPPAARD in order to surrender himself. After being turned over to Regimental Prisoner of War Collecting Point and an investigation made, it was learned that he would be able to point out some enemy targets if he were taken to a place where he could see them. We requested the prisoner of war, with a sergeant to act as interpreter, be used by the organization. The request being granted, the prisoner of war and the sergeant were taken to an observation post where they could look back into "Jerry" territory. The first target pointed out by the prisoner of war was a building which he said contained an ammunition dump. Being somewhat dubious about the information, we proceeded to fire on the first target before going to another observation post where further targets would be identified. After three rounds of HE were fired on the building it started to burn and ammunition began to explode. Having more confidence in the information received from the prisoner of war, we then moved to other observation posts, identifying additional targets. As a result of the targets pointed out by the prisoner of war, two ammunition dumps, one large building with food supplies, clothing and additional ammunition, a battalion command post, two machine guns and two mortar positions were destroyed. All firing was done by 1st Platoon of Company "B", with M-36s."

b. In order to facilitate communications between the infantry and our tank destroyer platoons, the infantry battalions have furnished our platoons with SCR 300 radios. In one instance an M-36 was moved into position to neutralize a pillbox being assaulted by the infantry. Fog was heavy and the gunner was unable to see his targets. The gun was laid with map data and fire adjusted by the infantry company commander, using the SCR 300. The range was approximately 800 yards and the third round went into the embrasure. Fire was continued, until lifted by the infantry commanding officer as the pillbox was assaulted. In another instance two M-36s continued firing on a pillbox until the infantry advanced to within 50 yards of the box, when fire was lifted by the infantry commanding officer; the infantry took the box and 10 prisoners without receiving a round of return fire. (S-3, 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion.)

c. One morning during the assault on the SIEPHELD line in the vicinity of ECKTERRAACH, the infantry assaulted 6 pillboxes without supporting fire. They were driven off by heavy fire from the boxes. In the afternoon they reorganized and

attacked again under the supporting fire of one of our platoons. All boxes and 60 prisoners were taken without receiving a round of fire in return.

d. An example of the employment of mutually supporting tank destroyers occurred on 13 February. One section of the 2d Platoon of Company "B" occupied positions in the vicinity of ECHTERNACHERUK to fire on pillboxes. As the M-36 on the left started to fire, an anti-tank gun to its immediate front opened up on it. The destroyer pulled behind a house but the platoon observation post observed the flash and spotted the gun. The M-36 on the right then took the anti-tank gun under fire, knocking it out. While the M-36 on the right was firing, a second anti-tank gun opened up on it and the M-36 withdrew. This second anti-tank gun was then taken under fire and knocked out by the M-36 on the left. (S-3, 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

SECTION III

TANK DESTROYER TACTICS

1. TANK DESTROYERS IN THE ROER RIVER CROSSING:

Tank destroyers in support of the assault crossing of the ROER River were employed in two secondary roles. First, in direct support of the infantry, they furnished direct and indirect fires. Second, they reinforced the fires of division artillery with indirect fires. Tank destroyer guns not employed in either of these roles remained in reserve assembly positions prepared to move across the river.

a. In direct support of the infantry:

(1) During the early hours of the assault crossing fires were placed on enemy positions and installations across the river using indirect laying methods; in most cases ranges were from 2000-3000 yards. Fires for the initial assault were scheduled. Targets selected were enemy assembly areas or avenues of approach which had been determined previously by infantry patrols, aerial photos, air observation, reconnaissance company (tank destroyer) observation posts, and from G-2 information. Targets were plotted on the map by inspection and firing data computed; indirect fires were delivered during hours of darkness.

(2) As the infantry advanced up the escarpment, scheduled fires ceased and all fires were delivered on call from the infantry. Contact with the infantry was maintained by reconnaissance company personnel, equipped with radios, who crossed with the leading infantry elements.

b. Reinforcing Division Artillery:

During the assault crossing and establishment of the bridgehead, tank destroyer guns occupied indirect fire positions reinforcing division artillery fires in the Corps sector. Targets selected were those suitable for harassing and interdiction fires such as towns, roads, and road junctions. All fires were scheduled. Tank destroyer guns also fired illuminating shell according to a scheduled fire plan for the purpose of illuminating and directing the movement of the assaulting infantry. (S-3, 6th Tank Destroyer Group).

2. TANK DESTROYER OPERATIONS ON THE COLMAR PLAIN:

During the period 26 January - 15 February 1945 the 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed), attached to the ___ Infantry Division, participated in operations on the COLMAR PLAIN. The following observations are considered worthy of note:

a. The terrain of the COLMAR PLAIN is flat for many miles. In fact, in the area in which we operated, the map showed no contour lines.

b. The plain is cut by canals, approximately 25 feet wide, and to prevent overflowing of these, dikes 3 to 4 feet high have been constructed. The canals are obstacles for tanks and tank destroyers as a general rule. The dike affords some defilade for a tank and can be made into an excellent towed destroyer gun position. To dig "steps" into the bank of the dike and run the gun into it, digging the spades in, and deepening the position. This affords ideal protection from the front as the gun tube is just above the level of the dike. Also, by digging the position properly good protection is secured on the sides of the gun.

2. Tank Destroyer Operations on the Colmar Plain (Cont'd):

Ideal individual shelters can be dug into the di...

c. Because of the flatness of the terrain, towed guns must be well forward. Our guns were always employed with the forward infantry, and, as a general rule, only infantry outposts were forward of the gun positions. This necessitated full use of security by gun crews and calls for alertness. Further, machine guns must be well emplaced and there must be close coordination with the infantry.

d. Excellent fields of fire can generally be obtained, but these must be checked to insure that they interlock. The only deadspace will be that caused by buildings, trees, etc. Positions must be mutually supporting.

e. Positions should be organized in depth. While we attempted to keep one platoon in position behind the other two, this was not always possible, as the width of the regimental front often required 10 to 12 guns for complete coverage. Gun positions should be dug with 360° traverse so guns may cover any approaches from which tanks may attack.

f. In moving across this type terrain, guns which are moving should be protected by overwatching guns.

g. Close liaison must be maintained with the infantry. It is imperative that each platoon commander maintain close liaison with the infantry battalion he supports or in whose sector he operates. It is recommended that wire communication or runner be used to expedite and maintain this liaison.

h. In crossing these canals a bridgehead must be obtained just as in crossing a river.

i. Special attention must be given reconnaissance in flat country. The irrigation system includes ditches which feed into the streams. These may be crossed by a tank or self-propelled tank destroyer gun, but not by towed guns. Unless your route is carefully selected you will probably have guns stuck and, with observation as good as it is in flat terrain, enemy artillery or mortar fire will probably be directed toward you shortly afterwards. (S-3, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

3. TANK DESTROYER OPERATIONS IN COLMAR:

a. In capturing a city such as COLMAR, the tank destroyer guns must follow the leading elements or assault company of the infantry and set up their defense as soon as possible. Success of such a mission may depend on fast occupation of positions to prevent an enemy attack from forcing our infantry to withdraw. Such an action compares favorably to a bridgehead operation. These are often not normal tank destroyer positions but you cannot wait until the city is all taken before the guns are emplaced. However, as soon as possible the tank destroyer guns must be set up in a perimeter defense outside the city.

b. When operating in towns, the halftracks should carry TNT or similar explosive. These can be used for several purposes: Blowing holes in buildings through which gun tube may be pushed, blowing positions in hard terrain, blowing spade holes for guns when emplaced on concrete or other hard surfaced areas, (this will be necessary if positions are set up on streets).

c. When operating in towns, it is wise to place men in upper stories of buildings and particularly to observe for enemy snipers. (S-3, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

4. TANK DESTROYERS IN SUPPORT OF CAVALRY:

Company "A", 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion (M-36), was attached to Cavalry Group during the period 16 March to 22 March. Captain Charles J. Seitz, commanding Company "A", commented on their method of employment as follows:

"The attachment of Company "A", 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion to the Cavalry Group resulted in its employment in the following way:

"One platoon was sent with one squadron and the other two with the other squadron.

4. Tank Destroyers in Support of Cavalry (Cont'd)

"The Cavalry's mission was to exploit the MOSELLE Bridgehead in the North of the MOSELLE triangle and push as quickly as possible to the RHINE and then swoop to the South along the RHINE as fast as possible.

"This meant rapid movement so we found it necessary to place the M-36s in the support sector of the cavalry teams' column, following a reconnaissance troop and a platoon of light tanks. Each team moved along a different route to the objective. The lighter vehicles could move as fast as the situation allowed without being held back by the slower M-36s. Then if something were hit the destroyers would have time to move up to it and size it up.

"In this type of movement good liaison was important. This was achieved in one of two ways depending on the situation. One was that the platoon leader rode behind the team commander, and the other that the team commander had a radio vehicle accompany the platoon leader.

"This method gave the Squadron a two-way check of where their leading elements were and what the opposition was as our platoon reports came in.

"When the cavalry did find opposition--chiefly in towns--the destroyers moved into positions to supply assault fire.

"In one instance the combination of the cavalry's speed and the assault fire of the destroyers persuaded approximately 750 Germans in the BINGEN area to give up to our much smaller force."

5. TANK DESTROYERS IN CLOSE SUPPORT OF INFANTRY:

When tank destroyers are in direct support of the infantry, they MUST be as close to the infantry as the terrain will permit in order to protect the infantry against enemy tanks. This does not mean that the tank destroyer is always sitting beside the infantryman's fox hole. With the proper field of fire the tank destroyer can give the necessary protection from 500 to 1000 yards behind the front line fox holes. On the other hand, the tank destroyers must never forget that their mission is to stop the tanks before the infantry is overrun. To accomplish this mission we have found that about 90% of the time the tank destroyer firing position has to be right with the most advanced infantry positions. This fact is especially important when the infantry is attacking and moving forward rapidly. It is most important that the tank destroyers be familiar with the present and future plans of the infantry commanders. When a tank destroyer company is in support of an infantry regiment, the company commander should be considered a special member of the regimental staff. He should be present when the regimental commander makes his plans and issues the combat orders. When the situation is rapidly changing, or is likely to change, the tank destroyer commander should be in the regimental command post and at no time should he be out of contact with the regimental command post. As a general rule, the three platoons of a tank destroyer company will be in support of the forward infantry battalions. There must be perfect cooperation between the tank destroyer platoon leader and the infantry battalion commander. This is accomplished only when the battalion commander takes the tank destroyer platoon leader into his confidence, discusses plans with him and makes suggestions. It is defeated when the battalion commander attempts to employ the platoon himself. The same applies for the infantry regimental commander and the tank destroyer company commander. To facilitate the liaison and communications, the infantry should have a radio set on the same channel as the tank destroyers. (Officers, "B" Company, 854th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

6. OCCUPATION OF SELF-PROPELLED TANK DESTROYER FIRING POSITIONS IN DEFENSIVE SITUATION:

When the terrain permits, tank destroyers in a defensive situation should occupy the firing positions only in case of enemy attack or when the attack is imminent. A position of readiness located from 200 to 1000 yards behind the firing position is more desirable because it allows the daily running of the motors, which is necessary for proper first echelon maintenance, without disclosing the actual location of the firing positions to the enemy. Also in cases where the firing position is located with the forward infantry position, the utilization of the position of readiness prevents the drawing of unnecessary artillery fire on the infantry positions. However, it must be understood by both infantry and tank destroyers that when the position of readiness is used a warning system that will not fail must be provided. When every means of obtaining information, such as telephone and radio communication with the infantry OPs, command posts, and

6. Occupation of Self-propelled Tank Destroyer Firing Positions in Defensive Situation (Cont'd):

artillery observation planes, is utilized, the "position of readiness" is a most effective way of employing tank destroyers in that it utilizes their maximum mobility. ("D" Company, 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

7. LIAISON BETWEEN TANK DESTROYER PLATOON AND INFANTRY BATTALION:

It was found by attaching the security sergeant and one man carrying a 609 radio or, when practical, driving a quarter-ton with a 610 radio, to the infantry battalion headquarters we are supporting, we greatly strengthened our liaison and warning net facilities. (Platoon Leader, 3d Platoon, "B" Company, 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

8. 2 1/2-TON TRUCKS TO TANK DESTROYER GUN COMPANIES:

It is advantageous to attach one 2 1/2-ton truck from the ammunition section of the transportation platoon from headquarters company to each of the gun companies. This truck can be used primarily for hauling ammunition to the three gun platoons. This relieves the transportation platoon of the responsibility of getting the ammunition to the individual platoons. This truck may also be used for hauling rations, fuel, and other equipment forward. It has been found through experience that this distribution of these three 2 1/2-ton trucks has greatly aided in the solution of the supply problems in this battalion. (S-4, 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

SECTION IV

TOWED TANK DESTROYER BATTALION AS CORPS ARTILLERY

1. During the period 15-22 March 1945, the 650th Tank Destroyer Battalion (which at that time was equipped with towed three-inch guns) was attached to ___ Corps Artillery and used in the role of Corps Artillery. Given below are some details of the battalion's operations during the period.
2. Each tank destroyer company was attached to a 155mm howitzer battalion, one of which was the medium artillery battalion of the ___ Infantry Division. Each company formed two six-gun platoons. This was done to afford greater fire per firing unit and also permitted one platoon commander to be free to aid the other two. Regular artillery technique was employed. Each company command post was connected to the battalion headquarters it supported, and platoons were tied in by wire directly to the fire direction center. Telephone communication was maintained from the platoon command post to each gun. Computers from each platoon were at the Artillery fire direction center. All fire missions were transmitted directly to the platoons, by-passing the company command post. When the artillery battalion commander went on reconnaissance the company commander would accompany him, selecting the best positions in close proximity to those of the artillery.
3. Due to the difficulty of picking up bursts of the three-inch guns, registrations were often made by platoon (1 round) rather than one gun. We experienced very little difficulty in securing good registration. On one occasion, due to speed required, one company registered its platoons by radio entirely. This was accomplished by having the company SCR 608 at the fire direction center, and it communicated directly with the firing platoons. Most of our registrations were made by air observer.
4. During the 24-hour period 211800-221800 March Company "A" fired 17 harassing missions, 1 registration mission, and 1 continuous harassing mission on a RHINE RIVER BRIDGE, a total of 4160 rounds HE being expended. A total of 2830 rounds were placed on the LUXEMIL SAU BRIDGE over the RHINE RIVER (R 412483) during the period in one continuous harassing mission. Air reconnaissance later reported the bridge was out, and the 13th Field Artillery Brigade credited the company with destruction of the bridge. During this same 24-hour period, Company "B" fired 1569 rounds and Company "C" fired 460 rounds for a battalion total of 6199 rounds HE.
5. During this eight day period the following missions were fired: 14 registration, 37 counter-battery, 160 harassing, 5 interdiction, 18 preparation, 6 enemy strong points. Total expenditures were 9223 rounds HE.

6. The supply of ammunition for the above firing presented a considerable transportation problem. Ammunition trucks were running continuously. 21 loads of ammunition were hauled by the battalion during 7 hours at night. The artillery battalion which Company "A" supported aided in transporting the ammunition by using some of their trucks to transport three-inch ammunition. We adopted the practice of loading empty brass immediately after unloading the ammunition. By this means we were able to evacuate all brass. This practice is recommended as tank destroyer units are subject to being placed on primary mission with little prior notice. (S-3, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

SECTION V

INTELLIGENCE NOTES

1. GERMAN SABOTAGE PLANTS (Reproduced from Third US Army G-2 Information Bulletin No. 25, 21 March 1945. Source: VII US Corps.)

a. General. Many warnings and orders concerning the enemy's plans to leave behind sabotage agents have been received. The most definite evidence of the truth of these warnings was discovered in REIFFERSCHWEID (F 3901) on 9 March 1945, by S-2, 3rd Battalion, 8th US Infantry, in the form of complete demolitions kits buried around the town, obviously to be used by trained sabotage agents.

b. Method of Discovery. During a routine CIC check of the town, a girl mentioned having seen a box buried near the church. The following background story was given. A first lieutenant (Tortsten, FP No. 18233) arrived in REIFFERSCHWEID on 18 February with 24 men. The officer wore the regular Wehrmacht Engineer Officer's uniform. He stayed until 7 March 1945. On 6 March, after dispersing all civilians and military persons from the area, the officer had two of his men bury the boxes. This was seen by the girl from a nearby window. The general area was pointed out by the girl and the exact location readily found with a mine detector. After finding one box further search revealed two other boxes. They were buried from four to six inches below the surface; one near church, one near cemetery and one by a partly demolished building. It could not be determined from the civilians by whom and when the demolitions were to be used.

c. Description of Box. The box was of heavy wooden construction lined with sheet metal. A rubber cushion under top made it waterproof. A screwdriver was attached on top; dimensions -- 24 x 18 x 18. The contents were separately wrapped in waterproof paper and each marked with luminous paint code to facilitate night selection. The items included hand grenades, triangle blades for vehicle tire destruction, explosives, waterproof fuses, caps, firing devices and matches. The box had a wooden partition about halfway which appears to be reserved for mines although this section was empty in each box.

2. ROAD MINING (Reproduced from Third US Army G-2 Information Bulletin No. 29, 26 March 1945.)

In order to facilitate road mining in front of swiftly-moving Allied columns, the enemy employs prepared pot-holes for quick installation of anti-tank mines. A hole large enough to accommodate a Tellermine is made in a hard surface road and lined with concrete in order to support the walls.

These pot-holes are sited near roadblock positions and are normally filled with a concrete disc of the same size as a Tellermine and fitted with a lifting ring. When the necessity arises, the concrete filling disc is removed and replaced by the mine. The hole may be made sufficiently deep to accommodate both a mine underneath and the concrete disc on top, so that the road block would appear to be free of mines, yet detonation would occur should a sufficient weight pass over the pot-hole. Anti-personnel, or other types of anti-tank mines, could also be used in pot-holes of suitable size.

3. THE GERMAN JAGD TIGER

The 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion recently had their first engagement with the German JAGD Tiger and submitted the following description of this weapon:

"The tracks were approximately 32 inches wide. The bogie system differs from that of the Mark VI tank in that the system has two pair of bogie wheels mounted

parallel on each track, with the track guide running between each pair of bogie wheels. A pair of calipers was not available for the accurate measurement of the armor, but the following approximate measurements were made:

Thickness of side armor	4 inches
Thickness of gun shield	9½ inches
Front plate	7 inches
Overall length (excluding tube)..	24 feet
Overall width	12 feet

The JAGD Tiger mounted a 128mm gun. The ammunition was separate loading. The HE projectile was 19 inches long, without fuse, and the casing for the powder charge was 33¼ inches long.

The APC-BD had no difficulty in penetrating the side armor of the JAGD Tiger. Inspection showed that one round of APC-BD hit the ammunition racks in the hull of the tank, detonating the ammunition. The turret and sides of the tank were blown off." (S-3, 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion)

4. CLASSIFICATION OF GERMAN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY BRIDGES

The following information is based on captured military documents and an official civilian publication dealing with bridge classification.

Civilian bridge classifications are given as:

Class IA	-	40 tons
I	-	24 "
II	-	16 "
III	-	7 "
IV	-	under 7 tons

The German official document states that these classifications may have an accompanying bracketed figure, this latter indicating the permissible load for a single heavier vehicle, under the condition that no other vehicle is on the bridge at the same time. Examples of this are given as III (I) and II (IA) which would indicate that the Germans envisage a Class III (7 ton) bridge as being capable of bearing a single vehicle of 24 tons, and similarly a Class II (16 ton) bridge capable of bearing a single load of 40 tons. A military document states that for military purposes the civilian classification may be exceeded by 30 per cent, and if single line traffic keeping to the centre of the bridge at 30 yard spacing, at a maximum speed of 6 m.p.h., is enforced, an increase of 60 per cent may be allowed over the civilian classification.

Under the latter proviso therefore, which is similar to the British system of classifying for military purposes, the following approximate conversion table can be assumed.

<u>German Civilian Classification</u>	<u>British Military Classification</u>
Class IA	Class 70
" I	" 40
" II	" 24
" III	" 12

It should be noted that the German civilian classification applies to each single lane of traffic only, and therefore a Class II bridge, having for example three traffic lanes is capable of taking a single load well in excess of 16 tons, even without adding the 60 per cent allowed for military purposes. The estimation of maximum single loads for such bridges would need to be calculated according to the design of bridge and its state of repair.

5. FACT OR RUMOR (Reproduced from Third US Army G-2 Information Bulletin No. 24, 20 March 1945. Source: III US Corps.)

The many reports regarding observation of our bridgeheads by women with telescopes and telephones from houses situated on commanding ground; of civilians and soldiers operating W/T sets; beautiful Mata Hari's behind our lines; enemy soldiers in uniforms, miles within our lines marking their maps; flashing lights, para-

5. FACT OR RUMOR (Cont'd)

chutists and snipers -- all must be looked into and fully investigated. The answer is "WHAT DID YOU DO ABOUT IT?" In short this means that personnel observing these alleged activities of the enemy must take immediate action themselves. When the incident is taking place is the time to act. Passing the information on to higher headquarters is proper, but asking them to investigate is questionable since too much valuable time is lost. When you are informed of any of the above, before reporting to higher headquarters, ask "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ABOUT THIS MATTER?" It is the direct responsibility of every enlisted man and every officer to take IMMEDIATE necessary action. Remember -- "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE"? Reporting what you heard or saw is not enough.

6. HOW GOOD IS GERMAN INTELLIGENCE? (Reproduced from Third US Army G-2 Information Bulletin No. 19, 15 March 1945. Source: III US Corps.)

The answer showed up at III US Corps in the form of an Order of Battle Chart of Army Group "B", dated 11 January 1945. The map covered almost the entire Western Front and gave the breakdown of all Army Groups, by Armies, Corps, Divisions, and included Cavalry Groups. G-2 declared the maps almost entirely accurate as to names of units and approximately 90 per cent accurate as to command posts of units. Detail of maps went so far as to give rear-area and operational reserves.

Recent capture of enemy interrogators revealed that in their opinion 50 per cent of Americans taken prisoner, give only name, rank and serial number. But the other 50 per cent talk. We know the enemy has agents behind our lines, but front-line soldiers can do their part if taken -- name, rank and serial number only.

G-2 information is disseminated in daily bulletins issued by Army G-2. They cover enemy activity, capabilities, identifications made, air activity, and captured and destroyed enemy equipment. Identifications are mostly only given down to Regiments. Many reports are made on movements of our units, all within one or two days after observation. Evaluation is usually accurate. It is evident that the speed with which reports on movements sift thru to the enemy cannot be due to prisoner of war statements only. It gives further proof of the thoroughness of operations of the net of enemy agents.

7. SUMMARY OF ENEMY ARMORED SITUATION ON THE WESTERN FRONT

During the month of March all Panzer Divisions on the Western Front were seriously mauled in a futile attempt to halt the Allied advances. The remnants of all the Panzer Divisions that were salvaged from the west side of the RHINE River were committed against the Allied bridgeheads on the east bank. At the close of the month the 10th Panzer Grenadier Division was committed against the Second British Army front; the 116th Panzer Division against the Ninth US Army front; the 9th, 130th, elements of 11th Panzer Divisions and the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division against the First US Army front; the 2nd and elements of the 11th Panzer Divisions against the Third US Army front; and the 17th SS in the Seventh US Army zone. The total tank strength in the Third US Army zone as of 31 March was estimated to be 45 tanks and/or assault guns. (S-2, 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade)

SECTION VI

TANK DESTROYER TROOP LIST

The latest available list of Tank Destroyer Brigade, Groups, and Battalions, with their commanders, is furnished for your information below.

BRIGADE

1ST TANK DESTROYER BRIGADE -- Colonel LOGAN C. BERRY

GROUPS

1st TD Group	-	Colonel STEVENS	8th TD Group	-	Colonel LARTER
2d TD Group	-	Lt Col BELL	9th TD Group	-	Lt Col DARLING
3d TD Group	-	Lt Col HAYS	12th TD Group	-	Colonel DEERY
4th TD Group	-	Colonel BRUGHING	14th TD Group	-	Unknown
5th TD Group	-	Colonel J. COBY	16th TD Group	-	Colonel WHEATON
6th TD Group	-	Colonel SEARCY	20th TD Group	-	Colonel SARGENT
7th TD Group	-	Col BROWNE	23d TD Group	-	Colonel MARTIN

TANK DESTROYER TRUCK LIST (Cont'd)

BATTALIONS

601 TD Bn	-	Lt Col TARDY	704 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BIDWELL
602 TD Bn	-	Lt Col CONLIN	705 TD Bn	-	Major DIBBLE
603 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McCURRY	771 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH
605 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BUCKWOLD	772 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McCLELLAN
607 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SUNDT	773 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SPIESS
609 TD Bn	-	Major SHONOLA	774 TD Bn	-	Lt Col STURGES
610 TD Bn	-	Lt Col FERGUSON	776 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MOOREHEAD
612 TD Bn	-	Lt Col DEBBLEY	801 TD Bn	-	Lt Col HORSFALL
614 TD Bn	-	Lt Col FRITCHEARD	802 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MONTGOMERY
628 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GALLAGER	803 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GOODWIN
629 TD Bn	-	Lt Col COLE	807 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH
630 TD Bn	-	Lt Col JONES	808 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McDONALD
631 TD Bn	-	Lt Col CADENHEAD	809 TD Bn	-	Lt Col LAWSON
634 TD Bn	-	Lt Col DAVISSON	811 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BRGTFIELD
635 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH	813 TD Bn	-	Major McCUTCHEON
636 TD Bn	-	Lt Col WILBUR	814 TD Bn	-	Lt Col JONES
638 TD Bn	-	Lt Col DAVIS	817 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BARDES
643 TD Bn	-	Lt Col FARR	818 TD Bn	-	Lt Col HALL
644 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GRAHAM	820 TD Bn	-	Lt Col PATRICK
645 TD Bn	-	Lt Col AUSTIN	821 TD Bn	-	Lt Col AEBURY
648 TD Bn	-	Lt Col STEVENS	822 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAINS
654 TD Bn	-	Lt Col HINTON	823 TD Bn	-	Lt Col DETMER
656 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MENDOR	824 TD Bn	-	Major SMITH
661 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MILLER	825 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MESSING
679 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McGRAYNE	827 TD Bn	-	Lt Col VANDERSWEEF
691 TD Bn	-	Major FINLEY	893 TD Bn	-	Major CARLIN
692 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MORSE	899 TD Bn	-	Lt Col TINCHER
702 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BEMILL	RPMI * TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAGGIAR
703 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SCHWALTER			

* Regiment Blindo Fusiliers Marines.

Logan C. Berry

LOGAN C. BERRY
Colonel, Cavalry
Commanding

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NOTE: Please send your contributions in early for May issue.