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HEADQUARTERS 1ST TANK DESTROYER BRIGADE  
Office of the Brigade Commander

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TANK DESTROYER INFORMATION )

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SECTION I

CUMULATIVE REPORT OF TANK DESTROYER UNITS TO 28 FEBRUARY

BATTALION	TOTAL TANKS DESTROYED	TOTAL SP GUNS DESTROYED	TOTAL ARTY & AT GUNS DESTROYED	TOTAL * ROUNDS FIRED	ROUNDS * FIRED DIRECT	ROUNDS * FIRED INDIRECT
602	38	8	41	8276	4757	3519
603	58	21		13407	6323	7084
607	58	23	23	61316	7967	53349
609	22	3	9	14697	1041	13656
610	91	2	26	8100	4327	3773
631 (1)						
691	6	2	1	11192	1968	9224
704	55	6	16	1581	937	644
705	43	5	2	21398	6398	15000
773	109	17	46	11668	8500	3168
774	5	1	11	30010	7763	22247
803	19	12	15	13010	2862	10148
808	6		8	35375	3958	31417
811	34	5	5	7456	2090	5366
818	33	5	14	21437	3093	18344
Others**	115	15		90252	30429	59823

In addition to the tanks and self-propelled, anti-tank, and artillery guns destroyed as shown above, Third Army Tank Destroyers have also destroyed 384 machine guns, 600 pillboxes, and 915 other targets, including artillery prime movers, GP vehicles, OPs, AAA guns, troop trains, ammunition dumps, airplanes, etc.

(1) Not yet in action.

\* Reports on rounds fired cumulative to 18 February.

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

603RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-18):

A tiger tank was hit between the sponson and track about the middle of the tank with an HE round T-105 fused. A penetration was obtained and the explosion of the tank's HE completely destroyed the vehicle. The tank destroyer commander had called for APC but in his excitement the loader loaded the wrong round. The range was 150 yards. (Commanding Officer, 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

610TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36):

a. On 6th February, 2nd and 3rd platoons of Company B supported the Infantry Regiment's attack in capturing BRANDSHEID (9881), heavily fortified town in the SIEGFRIED LINE, fired 40 rounds APC and 32 rounds HE (7 T-105 fuses) neutralizing 19 pillboxes and destroying 1 Mark V tank. In addition they fired 1000 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun ammunition in aiding the infantry in successfully repelling an enemy counterattack that followed the occupation of the town. Captain Duchossois, B Company's Commander, commented on the attack as follows:

"At 0730, the foot troops fought for the line of departure to capture two pillboxes which could not be fired upon by the tank destroyers or tanks, and could not be by-passed because of the limited routes of approach.

"After the capture of these pillboxes, the tank destroyers and tanks moved out, one platoon of tank destroyers and one platoon of tanks supporting each of the two assault companies.

"We moved across the line of departure as a tank destroyer, tank, infantry team -- infantry, a tank, and a tank destroyer followed by more infantry, another tank, and tank destroyer. We used this formation because of the poor visibility, the limited routes of approach and uncertainty of the definite location of all fortifications.

"The infantry advanced until they were held up by a fortification. When this happened, the tankers 'closed-up' the aperture with machine gun fire followed by the tank destroyers firing several rounds of 90mm.

"Usually the Jerries would put some white article out of the embrasure, but they would not come out to surrender until the infantry moved in and brought them out.

"We did not have to destroy the fortification to make the Jerries surrender. It was only necessary to show them that unless they did, they would all be killed.

"We used this procedure on all the pillboxes in the town, and by 1730 the town was taken and there were only a few Jerries still holding out.

"During the entire attack, foot reconnaissance was made difficult by heavy enemy small arms and artillery fire. Although the gun commanders could not always leave the tank destroyer, they all had a good idea of what the town looked like, where to encounter most of the fortifications, and what routes should be used. This knowledge was made possible through a study of a drawing of the town and a thorough briefing by the platoon leader.

"We found that we had to keep a tank destroyer right behind the lead tank because our routes of approach were such that unless a tank destroyer was up there initially, it would be impossible for other tank destroyers to pass the tanks in order to fire on the pillbox. As a result, the leading tank destroyer and tank did the majority of the firing.

"It is absolutely necessary to have communications with not only the infantry, but the tankers also. One of the simplest ways to accomplish this is to have both tank destroyer and tank platoon leaders equipped with 300 SCR radio set or the infantry frequency."

b. On the morning of February 8, 1945, the 3rd platoon, Company C, commanded by First Lieutenant John S. Hommes, moved into a small woods on the crest of a hill 700 yards east of the town of NIEDERMELEN. The mission of the unit was to support the advance of Company E, Infantry Regiment, moving up from the southeast to capture the town. By previous reconnaissance, primary firing positions had been selected for one section to move through the woods to its outer edge and fire either at the town itself or the approaches from the north and west. About 0930 hours, an enemy Mark V tank was observed approaching the town along the road running east-west out of town. The range at time of first observation was approximately 1100 yards. The first gun, first section, commanded by Sergeant Ed Flaherty, with Corporal Eddie E. Ailuy, gunner, Tec 5 Leonard Rosano, driver, Pfc John Lander, leader, and Pfc Charles Bovequin, radio operator, immediately moved into

610TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-36) (Cont'd)

position and prepared to fire on the enemy vehicle. Fire was held until the tank was 800 yards from Sergeant Flaherty's position, at which time Corporal Ailey fired four rounds APC, hitting the vehicle in the left sponson, directly below the turret, with the fourth round. The tank immediately burst into flames, making it impossible for any of the crew to escape.

The unit remained in this position until the commanding officer of a supporting infantry company on the right flank contacted the platoon leader and informed him that three enemy tanks had moved into position and were cutting units of the 1st Battalion Infantry, on our left flank to ribbons, with machine gun and tank cannon fire. Placing the 2nd section in command of Staff Sergeant Eldred Cunningham, the unit leader moved the 1st section into position to fire on those vehicles. One vehicle, due to muddy conditions, bogged down and was unable to move into a position where it could effectively fire. The second vehicle, 1st section, commanded by Sergeant Bert Corbin and crew members Corporal Robert Vanderhoven, gunner, Tec 5 Joseph Forte, driver, Tec 5 Walter Burnett, loader, and Pfc Carl Stachowski, radio operator, moved into position in a small section of woods and opened fire at 2500 yards on a Mark V panther. The first shot set the vehicle on fire and all members of the crew perished in the flames. The other two vehicles immediately disappeared over the crest of the hill, moving away from the infantry positions.

In both circumstances, the close cooperation between the infantry and tank destroyer unit leaders enabled the gun crews to bring effective fire on the enemy tanks, with a minimum of time and movement. (Commanding Officer, 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion).

691ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (Towed):

While in position near the town of TILLET, Belgium, the 1st section, 2nd platoon of Company C got in some good profitable shooting. Two enemy soldiers were observed leaving a small building and entering a large haystack. Sergeant W. T. Hazlewood, section sergeant, ordered a round of HE into the stack at a range of 2,000 yards. After the round was fired, 4 enemy soldiers were seen running from the haystack and entering a small finger of woods about 60 yards from the haystack. Fire was laid all along the strip of woods and good tree burst effect was noted. The platoon leader, Lieutenant George Cushing, informed the Battalion S-2 of the action. The following morning the S-2, with the 2nd platoon of reconnaissance, under the leadership of Lieutenant Martin Stricklen, checked on the results of the firing. Total enemy killed was 15, which included 1 Second Lieutenant, 1 Technical Sergeant and 13 lower ranking non-commissioned officers. One of the men had been killed by the round fired into the haystack. Investigation led to the conclusion that the unit had been a strong combat patrol. (Commanding Officer, 691st Tank Destroyer Battalion).

773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (M-10):

B Company -- The 2nd platoon commanded by Lieutenant Wood in position at 657592: one gun at the crossroads in the northeast edge of town and two guns in the southeast edge of town just behind the infantry in position on the knoll there, repulsed a counterattack at 0400 hours. At 0900 hours four enemy tanks advanced from the northeast toward town. Lieutenant Wood spotted them in the distance, ordered his guns to fire and dispersed the attack. At 1300 hours, the enemy attacked again from the northeast in force with ten to twelve tanks and supporting infantry preceded by an artillery barrage. Lieutenant Wood advanced on foot through artillery, mortar and small arms fire and led one tank destroyer into position to fire on the oncoming tanks. He mounted the deck of the destroyer and directed its fire. Three enemy tanks were destroyed. He then ran to nearby infantry positions and directed and placed the infantry in better positions to repel the advancing German infantry. At approximately 1350 hours, three enemy tanks were reported at the tank destroyers' rear. Lieutenant Wood and Staff Sergeant Pitcher crawled up the bank on the east side of the road and spotted the German tank positions. Crawling back, they each led a tank destroyer forward and opened fire on these three tanks. No tanks were destroyed but one tank destroyer was knocked out by the third tank which began to circle around and enter the town from the southeast. The wounded men were helped back to the other tank destroyer.

in position next to the house. The enemy tank continued to fire at this tank destroyer, hitting the building and setting it on fire. Unable to knock out the remaining tank, surrounded on three sides by enemy infantry, Lieutenant Wood ordered the tank destroyer destroyed before withdrawing back to town. By this time a section of the 3rd platoon came to the aid of the 2nd platoon. Lieutenant Phillips placed his two tank destroyers in position and knocked out the third enemy tank. Ten enemy tanks were knocked out and these were tentatively identified as four Mark VIs and six Mark Vs; also one halftrack and general purpose vehicle. The platoon lost three tank destroyers in this action. Lieutenant Phillips, Sergeant Tomazewski and Tec 5 Court moved down the ravine on south side of town under intense enemy fire to pick up the wounded. The wounded were placed on the deck of the tank destroyer of 3rd platoon, and as they moved back into town, Sergeant Tomazewski was picked off by an enemy sniper. (Commanding Officer, 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

#### 803RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION (11-10):

a. One gun (self-propelled) of 3rd platoon of Company A, in the vicinity of ERPELDANGE (P834416), pushed its gun through a window of a house and flushed out 27 Prisoners of War without firing.

b. 1st platoon of Company B fired 14 rounds AP and 24 rounds HE direct fire, knocking out 1 Mark V tank vicinity (P855524), 1 armored car at (P846527), and fired at a house vicinity of (P844527) killing an estimated 15 enemy. 2nd platoon of Company B fired 11 rounds HE and 1 round AP direct fire, knocking out either a Mark IV or V tank at (P842528); also killing an estimated 30 enemy personnel. 1st platoon of Company C fired 205 rounds HE and 45 rounds AP direct fire knocking out 2 Mark V tanks, 3 halftracks, and 2 anti-tank guns. An estimated 90 enemy personnel were killed. Forty-five rounds HE and 35 rounds AP direct fire was fired into the town of HESCHEID (P813509) at dug-in tanks and machine gun nests. Reconnaissance Company continued to contact units on our left and right getting information and positions of other tank destroyer units. 1st platoon of Company C, vicinity of GRALINGEN, Luxembourg (P827499), observed a platoon of enemy personnel on foot, approximately 2000 yards away, moving down a road, north from HESCHEID. Four guns 3-inch HE opened upon them killing some and dispersing the rest. What was left of the platoon tried to get away by one man moving out at a time, but each time a man would get up to run, one more round would be fired at him. None got away. Battalion expended 285 rounds HE and 95 rounds AP during the period. Six Prisoners of War taken. All of this in one day. (Commanding Officer, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

### SECTION III

#### TANK DESTROYER TACTICS

##### 1. RESULTS OF HOLDING TO BASIC PRINCIPLES:

a. Since initial commitment on 28 July 1944 in Normandy, this battalion has lost a total of 7 M-18 tank destroyers to enemy action against 53 tanks and 15 self-propelled assault guns destroyed. Our vehicles were destroyed by the following means:

- 1 -- Enemy tank fire
- 1 -- Enemy artillery
- 5 -- Enemy anti-tank guns

Six of these vehicles were burned completely. The vehicle destroyed by artillery was recovered and stripped. Other vehicles have been hit by artillery, bazookas, mortars and anti-tank guns, but have come out of action under their own power and were repaired for further fighting.

b. The enemy 75mm PAK anti-tank gun has been the most difficult weapon we have faced. The low silhouette and great mobility of the weapon makes it extremely hard to detect and destroy.

c. Our extremely low loss to enemy tank fire is attributed to the basic tactics taught at Tank Destroyer Center. The enemy tank can be easily out-manuevered, and is extremely susceptible to two-way attack. The policy of dismounted reconnaissance for targets by gun commanders and platoon leaders has paid big dividends. Lack of this reconnaissance has caused our worst casualties. (Commanding Officer, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

2. USE DISMOUNTED RECONNAISSANCE:a. This Unit Did:

At 1300 hours, the 1st platoon was ordered to move up to the high ground southeast of NIEDERWALDACH and was given only 45 minutes to get ready, although they had their guns stripped down for cleaning. Since the tank destroyers were not ready to move with the infantry, a guide was left to lead them up. When the guide showed some hesitancy at a crossroads, Lieutenant Vargo found that the guide had never been up there before. Lieutenant Vargo then proceeded to his destination, although the roads had not been swept as promised. Lieutenant Vargo and Lieutenant Napier went out on a foot reconnaissance into the underbrush on the east side and the south side of the hill. They continued their reconnaissance until enemy outposts were contacted. No friendly troops were found. Returning to his destroyer, Lieutenant Vargo contacted his company commander over the radio and was advised to return to NIEDERWALDACH. Upon arrival there, it was learned that the infantry commander whose battalion he was supporting had called off the attack and had failed to notify the tank destroyers. (Commanding Officer, 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

b. This Unit Did not:

A section of M-18s was to take up positions at night in the edge of a woods that was supposed to have been cleared by the infantry. An infantry guide led the destroyers to the woods. On the way the tank destroyers noticed through the darkness three German tanks off to one flank. The section sergeant was assured by the guide that the tanks had been knocked out by the infantry the day before; the sergeant made no investigation and put his guns in position. At daylight an enemy tank approached the section position from the front and was taken under fire. Scarcely had the M-18s fired at this tank when the three "knocked-out" tanks opened fire on the M-18s and destroyed them.

3. ROVING GUN:

In defensive positions we have employed a roving gun against the enemy. The gun must be moved into position at night, preferably with a small amount of artillery fire in the sector to hide the noise. It is necessary to stray from normal tactics in this type of employment, therefore the rewards must be great. After finding a target and destroying it, the gun must be immediately pulled out and sent to another part of the sector the next night. (Commanding Officer, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

4. ATTACHMENT VS. SUPPORT:Views of Tank Destroyer Group:

1. The operations of the \_\_\_\_\_ Corps during the period 22 December 1944 - 28 January 1945 (against the ARDENNES breakthrough) presented an excellent opportunity to observe and make a comparative study of the policies of:

- a. Sub-attaching tank destroyer companies and platoons within a division, and
- b. Placing tank destroyer companies in direct support of infantry elements.

2. As a result of daily command and staff liaison with tank destroyer units in the Corps by this headquarters (tank destroyer group), the following facts were determined:

- a. When tank destroyer companies, platoons, and sections were sub-attached:
  - (1) Loss of tactical unity precluded preparation of any feasible tank destroyer plans to combat enemy armor in strength. In one instance, early in the operation against the ARDENNES bulge, Corps, at the instigation of this headquarters, ordered each division to prepare plans to rally one (1) tank destroyer company per division on Corps order. This was considered necessary due to paucity of tank destroyers and serious enemy armored threat. It was necessary for one (1) infantry division to completely readjust its tank destroyer dispositions in order to comply. The armored division reported it was physically impossible to rally one (1) tank destroyer company.

#### 4. ATTACHMENT VS SUPPORT: (Cont'd)

(2) The valuable training and experience of the battalion commander and staff was not utilized.

(3) Attachment of a highly specialized tank destroyer company to an infantry regiment encouraged, and in fact, resulted in sub-attachment of tank destroyer platoons to infantry battalions, thereby nullifying the control of the company commander and wasting his training and experience.

(4) As a direct result of (3), the platoon, never designed to operate separately, was required to assume liaison responsibilities and was exposed to improper employment.

(5) In several instances, tank destroyer sections were attached separately (once to the division reconnaissance troop). The difficulties of liaison and control mentioned in (4) became multiplied for the tank destroyer section sergeant.

(6) On many occasions there was a definite tendency to employ the chassis of the vehicle rather than the gun. Infantry commanders kept the tank destroyers well forward as a morale factor. As a result, tank destroyers were often unable to occupy positions to engage enemy armor from the flank.

(7) Sub-attachments prevented rotation of platoons within the company or companies within the battalion. As a result it was impossible to rest personnel or perform necessary maintenance on equipment.

(8) Each time the Corps artillery commander desired to employ tank destroyers on indirect missions, it was physically impossible to do so, since it would have meant a complete revision of attachments and dispositions.

b. When tank destroyer companies were employed one (1) company in direct support of each combat team, one (1) company in general support:

(1) Tactical unity and unit integrity were maintained.

(2) Battalion commander advised division commanding general on employment and was able to prepare feasible plans for massing his unit.

(3) Control remaining with battalion commander precluded misemployment.

(4) Companies were rotated to rest and refit men and equipment.

(5) Units were always employed in accordance with accepted doctrines which had a definite influence on morale.

#### 3. Conclusions:

a. The tank destroyer battalion is a highly specialized unit, and to gain the best from it, control must remain with the commanding officer and his trained staff.

b. The military balance of three; two in direct support and one in general support, has been proven in combat and is especially applicable in a unit that is expected to mass its guns at a single point, quickly and smoothly.

c. The chain of command within the battalion must be preserved and respected.

d. Tank destroyers must be given "mission-type" orders and their decision as to how to best accomplish the mission be regarded as one based on training and experience and, as such, respected.

e. "Selling" the division on the principle of "direct support" may present difficulties, on some occasions, for the battalion commander. This head-

4. ATTACHMENT VS SUPPORT: (Cont'd)

quarters (tank destroyer group) has found it advisable to alleviate the difficulty by command liaison with Corps and personal contact with the division commanding general and chief of staff. In every instance, the division has been extremely receptive and adopted the suggestions at once.

f. The average division is interested only in results. Any intelligent plan, properly presented, will ordinarily be approved. The ability of a tank destroyer battalion to furnish superior anti-tank defense within a division zone by the "direct support" method is easily demonstrated and quickly proved. (Commanding Officer, \_\_\_ Tank Destroyer Group).

## SECTION IV

## INTELLIGENCE NOTES

1. ENEMY EQUIPMENT:

a. German Frequency Induction Igniter. (Source: Sixth US Army Group Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 19, 27 January 1945).

The igniter is used to detonate S-Mines. One igniter is placed for every ten S-Mines. The purpose of the igniter is to prevent the use of electric mine detectors. It functions on the same wave length, and when the detector approaches the igniter, the waves are picked up by a coil antenna, thus firing the mines by means of electric detonators. The sensitivity of the igniter is such that it will be detonated by any strong wave sent out in its vicinity. Although this igniter has not yet been employed on the Western Front, it is essential that troops remain alert for its employment and report all new information on the subject to higher headquarters without delay.

b. Tank and Anti-Tank Guns of Panzer Divisions. (SHAEP Intelligence Notes No. 44, 13 January 1945).

A comparative tabulation of tank and of anti-tank battalions belonging to Panzer divisions in the ARDENNES counter-offensive is given below. They represent the strength of these units at the time of commitment as given by prisoners of war and captured documents. Totals include 5 Panthers in Regimental Headquarters.

Tk Regt(Div)	I Bn	II Bn	Total	Remarks
1 SS (1 SS) WE/TO	1, 2, 3, 4 cos, on 17 Mk V, plus 5 in Bn Hq	5, 6, 7, 8 cos, on 17 Mk IV, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	78 Mk V 73 Mk IV	Plus one or two engr cos.
Actual	1, 2 cos, each 17 Mk V; 6, 7 cos, each 17 Mk IV, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq		30 Mk IV 39 Mk V	Supported by 501 SS Hvy Tiger Bn (45 Mk VI)
2 SS (2 SS) WE/TO	1, 2, 3, 4 cos, on 17 Mk V, plus 5 in Bn Hq	5,6,7 cos, on 14 Mk IV; 8 co, 14 assault guns, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	78 Mk V 56 Mk IV 14 AGs	Flak panzers may form an additional co or may be in Bn and Regtl Hq Cos.
Actual	1, 2, 3, 4 cos, each 14 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6,7 cos, on 14 Mk IV; 8 co 14 assault guns plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	66 Mk V 47 Mk IV 14 AGs	
9 SS (9 SS) WE/TO	1, 2, 3, 4 cos, each 17 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6 cos, each 17 Mk IV; 7, 8 cos, each 14 AGs, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	78 Mk V 39 Mk IV 28 AGs	Evidenced is very scanty
Actual	1, 2, 3, 4 cos, each 12 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6 cos, each 14 Mk IV; 7, 8 cos, each 14 AGs, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	58 Mk V 33 Mk IV 28 AGs	

Tk Regt (Div)	I Br	II Br	Total	Remarks
130 (Pz Lehr) WE/TO	Note: Not clear whether a full WE/TO was ever seriously intended:			
Actual	Mixed Bn Two cos, each 15 Mk V Two cos, each 15 Mk IV plus 5 Mk V? in Bn Hq			The old organization. No indication that it has been raised
3 (2 Pz) WE/TO	1,2,3,4 cos, each 17 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6 cos, each 14 AG's; 7,8 cos, each 17 Mk IV, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	78 Mk V 53 Mk IV 28 AG's	
Actual	1,2,3,4 cos, each 15 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6 cos, each 14 AG's; 7,8 cos, each 15 Mk IV, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	70 Mk V 35 Mk IV 28 AG's	
16 (116 Pz) WE/TO	1,2,3,4 cos, each 17 Mk V, plus 5 Mk V in Bn Hq	5,6,7,8 cos, each 17 Mk IV, plus 5 Mk IV in Bn Hq	73 Mk V 73 Mk IV	
Actual	43 Mk V in Bn	22 Mk IV in Bn	43 Mk V 22 Mk IV	15 Mk V received on 21 Dec.
	Strengths by Captured Document Dated 16 Dec 44. Distribution to companies not known.			

AT Bn (Div)	1 Co	2 Co	3 Co	Remarks
130 (Pz Lehr)	14 7.5cm AG's	12 7.5cm towed	12 7.5cm towed	This given for Div when initially committed. Current strength not known.
50 (9 Pz)	12 7.5cm AG's	12 7.5cm AG's	12 7.5cm towed	
228 (116 Pz)	10 7.5cm AG's	10 7.5cm AG's	12 7.5cm towed	

One of the interesting features is that none of the SS divisions' anti-tank battalions were identified, but they cannot yet be ruled out. As for tanks, the evidence is not yet complete, and some of the figures given above are based on only one or two prisoners of war of limited knowledge. What seems definitely true, however, is that Panzer divisions will almost never have their full complement of tanks, although they may still cling to the old WE/TO. If they were not able to mobilize the full complement for the ARDENNEN offensive, it seems doubtful that they will be able to in the future. A fair estimate for a reformed or well-rested division coming into the line would seem to be between 60 and 100, with wide variations from division to division. Identifications are too scanty to allow for any generalizations on the anti-tank battalions, but the Germans seem to be attaching the two assault-gun company and one towed company WE/TO.

c. Pz Kpfw IV Models H and J (SHALP Intelligence Notes No. 46, 27 January 1945)

It was thought that the production of the Pz Kpfw IV would decline and possibly even cease during 1944. This, however, does not appear to have been the case, as the tank is still found playing a fairly important role in German armored regiments.

The two models which are being met are Model H and Model J. Model J appears to have no exterior difference from the H, except that some of the later



## c. Pz Kpfw IV - Model H and J (Cont'd)

ones have small mesh wire apron plates protecting the hull, instead of the mild steel plates. The main differences are modifications inside the tank. In both models the main armament consists of one 7.5cm Kw K 40, 48 calibres long, with a co-axial machine gun in the turret and a hull machine gun by the wireless operator.

The armor for these two models differs from the previous Pz Kpfw IV and even the earlier Models H that were produced. The main difference has been a thickening of the frontal armor; the nose and front vertical plates have been increased to 85 mm. The forward sloping section of the turret roof has been increased from 10 mm to 16 mm, and the rear horizontal section to 30 mm. To compensate for this increase, other plates have been made thinner; the glacis plate is now 20 mm compared with 25 mm, and the undercut lower nose plate 30 mm as against 50 mm. The engine dock is only 10 mm thick.

The turret is of the same design as on Model F<sub>2</sub>; this dispenses with a number of vision ports. The driver is provided only with direct vision. This conforms to the general tendency in German tank design of dispensing with as many apertures in the armor plate as possible, even though it makes the tank more blind.

2. ENEMY TACTICS:

a. Radio Discipline. (Source: First US Army G-2 Periodic Report No. 239, 4 February 1945).

Prisoners of war frequently report that information on Allied strength, location, and intentions, gained by intercepting radio communications, proves particularly helpful as air observation by GAF planes is often lacking. Tank radio operators intercept Allied communications without difficulty. Slang expressions, rapid speaking, and lack of repeats tend to make understanding difficult, but enough can be gathered from "a lot of unnecessary talk". Even when not understood, radio communication reveals the presence of reconnaissance cars or tanks equipped with shortwave transmitters.

b. Patrols and Agents. (Third US Army G-2 Periodic Report #250, 15 February 1945)

Units must be constantly alert for enemy soldiers infiltrating through front lines and posing as Americans in order to catch our troops off guard. A five-man enemy patrol, taking advantage of intense darkness and rain, recently approached an outpost position from the rear and captured all its personnel without firing a shot. The Germans frequently use women and children as agents to obtain military information. No stranger, however innocent in appearance, should be permitted to pass our positions or observe our activities.

US Infantry Division reported recent capture of 2 German non-commissioned officers wearing civilian clothes. Both told the same false background story and intended to pass as civilian refugees. It is important that all troops be alert and apprehend line-crossers in civilian clothes. Any person crossing our lines is a suspect and should be turned over immediately to the CIC. Preliminary interrogations of such persons should be avoided as this allows the suspect to gain information and build up his story.

c. German Tank Tactics. (SHAEP Intelligence Notes No. 47, 3 February 1945)

Two items of interest regarding the theory and practice of German tank tactics have recently been noted. The first is the following extract from a captured order of Supreme Commander, Army Group HF, dated 3 January 1945:

(1) SUBJECT: Commitment of Tanks, Assault Guns and Tank Destroyers.

Sharp measures have to be taken to fight the tendency prevailing in the infantry to commit up assault gun, anti-tank and tank destroyer companies into very small groups in order to obtain security in all places. Success is only achieved by commitment in a body on points of main effort, at least in troop or company strength.

If tanks, assault guns or tank destroyers, due to enemy action or mechanical defects, lose their full mobility, they must under no circumstances be retained in line merely to utilize their weapons.

### c. German Tank Tactics (Cont'd)

The fuel and spare parts situation does not permit one meter of unnecessary travel. It is for corps and divisions to decide on and to supervise the shifting, routing, and timing of tanks and assault gun units. I herewith order:

1. The above mentioned weapons will be committed at least in company or troop strength.
2. If in a company or troop the number of weapons ready for commitment drops to less than 5, the unit will only be committed in conjunction with other tank or assault gun units until its T/E can be replenished.
3. I prohibit the piecemeal commitment of tanks, assault guns or tank destroyers.
4. Divisions which have tank, assault gun, or tank destroyer units assigned to them will always keep a reserve of these weapons in readiness, preferably in company strength. After a commitment this reserve will be reformed as quickly as possible. The weapons will, for security reasons, NOT remain in the main line of resistance.

Signed: STUDENT, General.

(2) The second item, from the interrogation of a well-informed and capable prisoner of war, reiterates and reinforces several known tenets of German tank doctrine and shows the disastrous results of certain impromptu variations on them. As explained by the prisoner of war, the primary mission of the German tank is to provide the heavy mobile punch. That is the reason why the Germans have gone to such great lengths to increase the caliber and muzzle velocity of their tank guns. The better the gun, the better the tank, according to German thinking. Machine guns play a secondary role, and are comparatively little used. Further, the Germans have built their recent tanks on the theory that the enemy will at all times be superior in mechanization and mobile weapons of war. Therefore, a hard-hitting, steel-crushing tank is necessary to clear the way so that the Panzer Grenadier armored infantry element can move up with its automatic weapons. Conforming to this tactical doctrine, the Panther has a super-long 75mm gun. The prisoner of war declared they were trained to engage a Sherman tank at a range of 2000 to 2200 meters without hesitation. The preferable range of 800-900 meters will improve accuracy, but not add much to the punch. The gun has an optical sight which bears three graduations; one for high explosive shells, one for armor piercing shells, and the third for the co-axially mounted machine gun. Each graduation has its own range subdivision. According to the prisoner of war the gun is seldom, or never, used as indirect artillery.

### 3. GERMAN INTELLIGENCE

#### a. Captured IPW Report. (Source: Third US Army G-2 Periodic Report)

A document was found in HURRIGEN which proved to be a German IPW report of the 277th Volks Grenadier Division. It clearly illustrates the necessity for continuous checking to see that personnel details, cables, letters and other means of identification are also checked. It must be reported and reported to war soldiers that in the event of capture they give NAME, GRADE AND SERIAL NUMBER ONLY. The translation of the document follows.

277 Volks Gren Div  
G-2 Section

Div CP, 27 January 1945

#### Interrogation of PW #99C - 1001

The 6 prisoners of war were captured on 26 January 1945, at 0530A near the hill HEISTERT by members of 990 Grenadier Regiment.

Identifications: Although the prisoners of war initially refused to give any information concerning their identifications, their unit could be determined easily thru the addresses of letters found on them. They belonged to 1st Platoon, "G" Company \_\_\_ Infantry (\_\_\_ US Infantry Division).

### 3. GERMAN INTELLIGENCE (Cont'd)

History of US Infantry Division: A booklet found on one of the prisoners of war gives a detailed, illustrated history of the Infantry Division up to September 1944. Afterwards Infantry Division penetrated into German territory south of ROETGEN on 13 September 1944. Infantry was first Allied regiment which broke thru the West Wall. and Infantry fought in the HURTGEN forest. Notes in the diary of prisoner of war #2 gave detailed information about the further employment of Infantry Division and the replacement situation. According to it, prisoner of war's transport left NEW YORK on 17 September, docked in ENGLAND on 25 September, stayed there until 10 October and then crossed from SOUTHAMPTON to OMAHA Beach. By truck they went to LE MANS (14 October). On 20 October they arrived at the Replacement Battalion in BELGIUM. On 21 October they were in EUPEN at the Division Command Post of Infantry Division. On the next day prisoner of war #2 arrived at the front. One day later his division was relieved by Infantry Division and went into a reserve position near MONSCHAU. On 5 November transferred to a reserve position near PRUM where Infantry Division was relieved. Five days later they relieved Division and again appeared in the area ELSENBOEN MONSCHAU. On 5 December by truck to HOLLAND. On 10 and 11 December fighting at D HORN, SCHLICK and MENDRODE. After the beginning of the German offensive back to ELSENBOEN. On 13 December and 16 January the diary is marked "back to rear areas".

Replacements: Among the prisoners of war there were two men older than 30 years. A letter found on one of the prisoners of war proved how short of replacements the Americans are. "I assume that you fellows in the foxholes are satisfied with the recent drafting of all men between 26 and 37 unless they are in an essential industry". Prisoners of war #3 and #4 joined their company only after the beginning of the German offensive. Prisoner of war #6 was in a hospital at LISON for four weeks and returned from there only 2 days ago. Significant is that prisoner of war #2 has only been drafted in April and already has the rank of sergeant. He had his basic training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

Codes: The following code was found: Ammo--Paper; Rations--Oil; Tank--Cracker Box; AT--Cracker Box Sr.; House--Mayfair; Main Road--Scotch; Attack--Kill; Counter-attack--Kill Hero; Mortar--Dark Ones; Artillery--Zombie; no information could be obtained whether or not the code was still valid.

Signed for the C/S - Illegible, Capt.

### 4. SUMMARY OF ENEMY ARMORED SITUATION ON THE WESTERN FRONT:

During the last week of January and throughout the month of February the enemy shifted the major portion of his armored strength from the Third US Army's zone to the Eastern Front and to other sectors of the Western Front. The 116 and 130 Panzer and 15 Panzer Grenadier Divisions moved north to the First Canadian Army zone. The 9 Panzer and elements of 11 Panzer Divisions have been in contact on the Ninth US Army front, and the 3 Panzer Grenadier Division has been in contact on the First US Army front. The 1 SS, 2 SS, 9 SS, 12 SS, and 21 Panzer Divisions, and 25 Panzer Grenadier Division were reliably reported to have moved to the Eastern Front. The 10 SS Panzer Division was also reported to be moving to the Eastern Front but recent indications tend to place this division somewhere in the COLOGNE-DUREN area. The 17 SS Panzer Grenadier Division remained in contact on the Seventh US Army front.

At the close of the month the 2 Panzer Division and elements of 11 Panzer Division were the only major armored units in contact on the Third US Army front. The 11 Panzer Division was reported to have moved north but the recent identifications of elements of the division in the TRIER area indicate the movement was not completed, due largely, according to prisoner of war statement, to our constant air attacks. (S-2, 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade).

### SECTION V

#### TECHNICAL NOTES

#### 1. HVAP AMMUNITION:

a. 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion: The 3 enemy Mark V tanks reported destroyed in report of 19 February 1945 were confirmed as 2 Mark V tanks and 1 Mark V assault gun. The frontal armor of the Mark V tanks was pierced at 1000 yards by 3-inch HVAP ammunition.

1. HVAP AMMUNITION: (Cont'd)

b. 300 rounds of 90mm HVAP ammunition are expected for Third Army tank destroyers by the end of March; each month thereafter the allotment will be about 1500 rounds per month.

Approximately 1500 rounds of each 3-inch and 76mm HVAP will be allotted Third Army for March and for each month thereafter.

2. FUZE SETTING DATA FOR M43 FUZE:

The 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion expanded the FT 90AA-B-3, C-4, data on the M43 fuze as follows:

FUZE, time, mechanical, M43A2, M43A3, M43A4 or M43A5

Range	Fuze setting graze burst	Displacement of burst for change of 0.2 seconds (1) in fuze setting				Probable error in height of burst.	
		Height		Range		mils	ft
yd.	sec	mils	ft	yd	mils	ft	
0	0.1 (2)	1.2		180	.5	0	
1000	1.3 (2)	1.2	4	164	.5	0	
1250	1.6						
1500	1.9						
1750	2.2						
2000	2.5	1.3	7	148	.5	3	
2250	2.8						
2500	3.1						
2750	3.5						
3000	3.9	1.3	12	134	.5	5	
3250	4.3						
3500	4.7						
3750	5.1						
4000	5.5	1.3	16	120	.5	7	
4250	5.9						
4500	6.3						
4750	6.8						
5000	7.3	1.4	22	106	.6	9	

Each destroyer has been furnished a copy of the above. When enemy personnel or installations are encountered behind an obstacle that resists direct fire, an air-burst round above or to one side of the obstacle has proven a successful method of attack.

3. M36B1:

During February the 803rd, 808th and 818th Tank Destroyer Battalions were converted to M-36 units. Some of the M-36s received were the M36B1. The M36B1 has the standard M-36 turret and 90mm gun on the M4A3 tank chassis. Major points of difference between the M-36 and the M36B1 are:

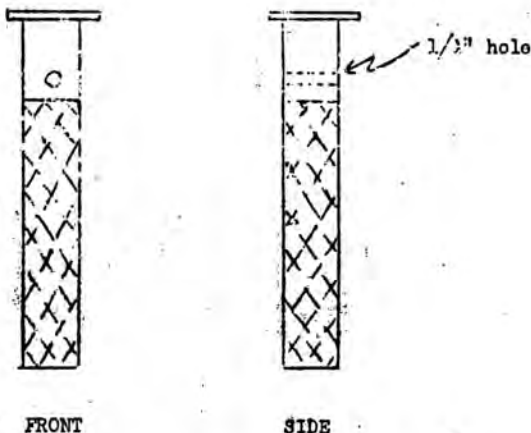
- The M4A3 tank hull of the B1 presents a different silhouette.
- The B1 has the M4 tank's heavy hull armor and the sponson .30 caliber machine gun.
- The B1 has equilibrators to relieve the elevating mechanism of shock when the destroyer is moving with the gun pointing to the front.
- The B1 has a cable reel as a part of the interphone system which allows the gun commander to move 50 feet away from the destroyer when it is necessary to "spot" targets from outside the destroyer.

#### 4. FILLING M-36 GAS TANKS:

a. The Screen Vent Fuel Tank on the gasoline tank of the M-36 tank destroyer will not permit the filling of gas tanks in a minimum amount of time. The time required to install five (5) gallons of gasoline is two minutes and twenty-five seconds.

b. A 1/4" hole drilled thru the screen vent, as per diagram below, permits the filling of gas tanks in a minimum amount of time. The time now required to install five (5) gallons of gasoline is one minute and five seconds. (Motor Officer, 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion)

### SCREEN VENT, FUEL TANK, M36



#### 5. SUBSTITUTE RECOIL MECHANISM FOR THE M-18:

The recoil system of the 75mm tank gun will function on the M-18 76mm gun, although not as well as the organic recoil. (Commanding Officer, 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion).

#### 6. AUXILIARY GENERATORS:

Twelfth Army Group has recommended to ETOUSA that each M-10 and each M-20 in tank destroyer units be provided with an auxiliary generator. There is as yet no information as to whether the recommendation has been approved. (S-4, 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade).

#### SECTION VI

##### CHANGES IN T/O AND E

Since the M-24 light tank is replacing the M5A1 light tank in armored units, this headquarters has requested that the M5A1 light tank replace the car, armored light, M-8 in Third Army tank destroyer reconnaissance platoons. Although there may be insufficient light tanks to replace all M-8s at once, it is believed that a partial conversion will take place during the coming month. (S-4, 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade).

#### SECTION VII

##### COMBAT TIPS

##### Lack of Security in Towns

Recently many small units have suffered heavy losses while billeting in, or defending towns. Poor planning and technique have been two chief causes for these incidents. Some specific faults have been:

## Lack of Security in Towns (Cont'd)

- a. Failure to post and maintain an all-around alert security, thus allowing the enemy to infiltrate.
  - b. Failure to maintain tactical unity, due to dispersing elements throughout the town to obtain sleeping quarters.
  - c. Failure to make advanced plans for fires, including artillery, anti-tank, and mortars, to break up enemy attacks.
  - d. Failure to establish adequate communication to alert units for action.
- (Source: XVIII US Airborne Corps).

## SECTION VIII

### 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 MAYS	12th TD Group	-	Colonel DEERY
4th TD Group	-	Colonel BROTHING	14th TD Group	-	Colonel MADDOX
5th TD Group	-	Colonel JACOBY	16th TD Group	-	Colonel WHEATON
6th TD Group	-	Colonel SEARCY	20th TD Group	-	Colonel SARGENT
7th TD Group	-	Lt Col BROWNE	23d TD Group	-	Colonel MARTIN

#### BATTALIONS

601 TD Bn	-	Lt Col TARDY	704 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BIDWELL
602 TD Bn	-	Major CONLIN	705 TD Bn	-	Lt Col TEMPLETON
603 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McCURRY	771 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH
605 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BUCKWALD	772 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McCLELLAN
607 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SUHDT	773 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SPIESS
609 TD Bn	-	Major SHOTOLA	774 TD Bn	-	Lt Col STURGES
610 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BERGSTROM	776 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MOOREHEAD
612 TD Bn	-	Lt Col DEBLEY	801 TD Bn	-	Lt Col HORGSPALL
614 TD Bn	-	Lt Col FRITCHARD	802 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MONTGOMERY
628 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GALLAGER	803 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GOONWIN
629 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GOLE	807 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH
630 TD Bn	-	Major JONES	808 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McDONALD
631 TD Bn	-	Lt Col CADENHEAD	809 TD Bn	-	Lt Col LANSON
634 TD Bn	-	Lt Col OLVISSON	811 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BROWNFIELD
635 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH	813 TD Bn	-	Major McCUTCHEON
638 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 HAIL
644 TD Bn	-	Lt Col GRAHAM	820 TD Bn	-	Lt Col PATRICK
645 TD Bn	-	Lt Col AUSTIN	821 TD Bn	-	Lt Col ARBURY
648 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAYO	822 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAINS
652 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MINTON	823 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BELCHER
656 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAJOR	824 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SMITH
661 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MILLER	825 TD Bn	-	Lt Col HEADING
679 TD Bn	-	Lt Col McGRAYNE	827 TD Bn	-	Lt Col VANDERSWEEP
691 TD Bn	-	Major PINLEY	893 TD Bn	-	Major CARLIN

## BATTALIONS (Cont'd)

692 TD Bn	-	Lt Col MORSE	899 TD Bn	-	Lt Col TINCHER
702 TD Bn	-	Lt Col BEALL	RBFM * TD Bn	-	Lt Col MAGGIAR
703 TD Bn	-	Lt Col SHOWALTER			

\* Regiment Blindes Fusileers Marines.

*Logan C. Berry*

LOGAN C. BERRY  
Colonel, Cavalry  
Commanding

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 9 - Pres, TD Observers Board, c/o G-3 Section, Hq ETOUSA, APO 887.

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