

Mondan  
19 Nov. 1984

The ETO Board Report is, in my opinion, an exercise in semantics as it relates to the history of the 601st T. D. Battalion. Fortunately, the Battalion was never privy to the tactical principle of Field Manual 18-5, dated 18 July 1944, because it was in almost continuous combat from November 1942 until the end of the war in Europe.

The emphasis on defensive policy had little place in our concept of employment. As pointed out in the report, our units operated almost exclusively in the front lines supporting the infantry regiments. To all intents and purposes, it had the effect of adding another tank battalion to the Division's augmentation.

The only time the 3rd Infantry Division went on the defensive for any length of time

was at Anzio, and unusual measures were taken to deal with the situation. The Battalion Commander was designated (see inclosures) Assistant Division AT Officer (The Assistant Division Commander, then Brig. Gen. O' Daniel, was the AT Officer), and ordered and assisted by Gen. O' Daniel to position and coordinate the AT defense of the Division sector. Two line companies from the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion from the First Armored Division were attached to the 601st to assist in its mission. All the other anti-tank weapons in the Division plus the towed guns of another T.D. Battalion fell within the purview of this arrangement. This authority continued in effect until the breakout in May for the dash into Rome.

On the question of liaison, the Battalion staff, particularly the C.O., Exec., S-3, and S-2,

devoted a major portion of their time in maintaining contact with supported units. I do not recall any instances where company officers had to neglect part of their tactical duties to act as liaison officers.

The sum and substance of our organization for combat was an equitable and orderly distribution of firepower that would best enhance the performance of the supported infantry regiments, and it seems rather apocalyptic that most TD Battalions adopted a similar combat mode.

So much for my philosophizing at this time. If you have additional queries, I will be happy to try to respond.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Walter E. Sandy