

HEADQUARTERS
899TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230 U.S. ARMY

17 October 1944.

SUBJECT: Employment of 90 MM AAA Btrys. Reinforcing T.D. Bns. (SP)
TO : Commanding General, 1st U.S. Army, APO 230, U.S. Army.
(Thru Channels)
Attn: Anti-Tank Officer.

1. In compliance with request for information on "Lessons Learned and Battle Experiences", the following summary of ideas concerning the employment of 90 mm AAA guns in anti-tank defense is submitted.

2. Employment with a battalion of SP guns in mobile reserve is not mentioned as this battalion was not employed in that role while 90 mm guns were attached. Employment of this battalion during the period consisted of attachment of gun companies to Infantry Regiments, in close support of infantry advance and destruction of enemy armor committed against our infantry in small groups of 3, 4 or 5.

For the Battalion Commander:

Daniel M. Carter
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EMPLOYMENT OF 90 MM AAA GUNS IN ANTI-TANK ROLE

A. Following recommendations for employment of 90 mm AA guns in the anti-tank role are based on observation of guns in actual combat positions and conferences between T.D. Officers and AAA Officers concerning requirements when being employed in this manner. It is felt that AA guns should be employed in sections of two (2) and that the fields of fire should be mutually supporting. Distance between guns would normally be controlled by the tactical situation and would depend on their respective fields of fire. Owing to the lack of mobility, compared to the S.P. gun, it is believed AA guns should be employed in rear of the screen created by the destroyers and at key points where the destroyers would normally be in stationary positions, thereby releasing S.P. guns for missions in which mobility is required.

1. Employment: - It is felt that the following procedure would prove quite satisfactory and give a maximum amount of A.T. protection with minimum amount of combat loss.

a. Reconnaissance: During the day, position reconnaissance should be maintained to confirm previously made map reconnaissance and to insure that adequate positions are selected to conform to lines of likely advance. Likely personnel for the reconnaissance parties are believed to be:

- (1) Officer from T.D. Bn. (to recommend and check selection of position) and to insure coordination with T.D.'s.
- (2) Battery Commander of AAA Btry.
- (3) Gun Commanders concerned.

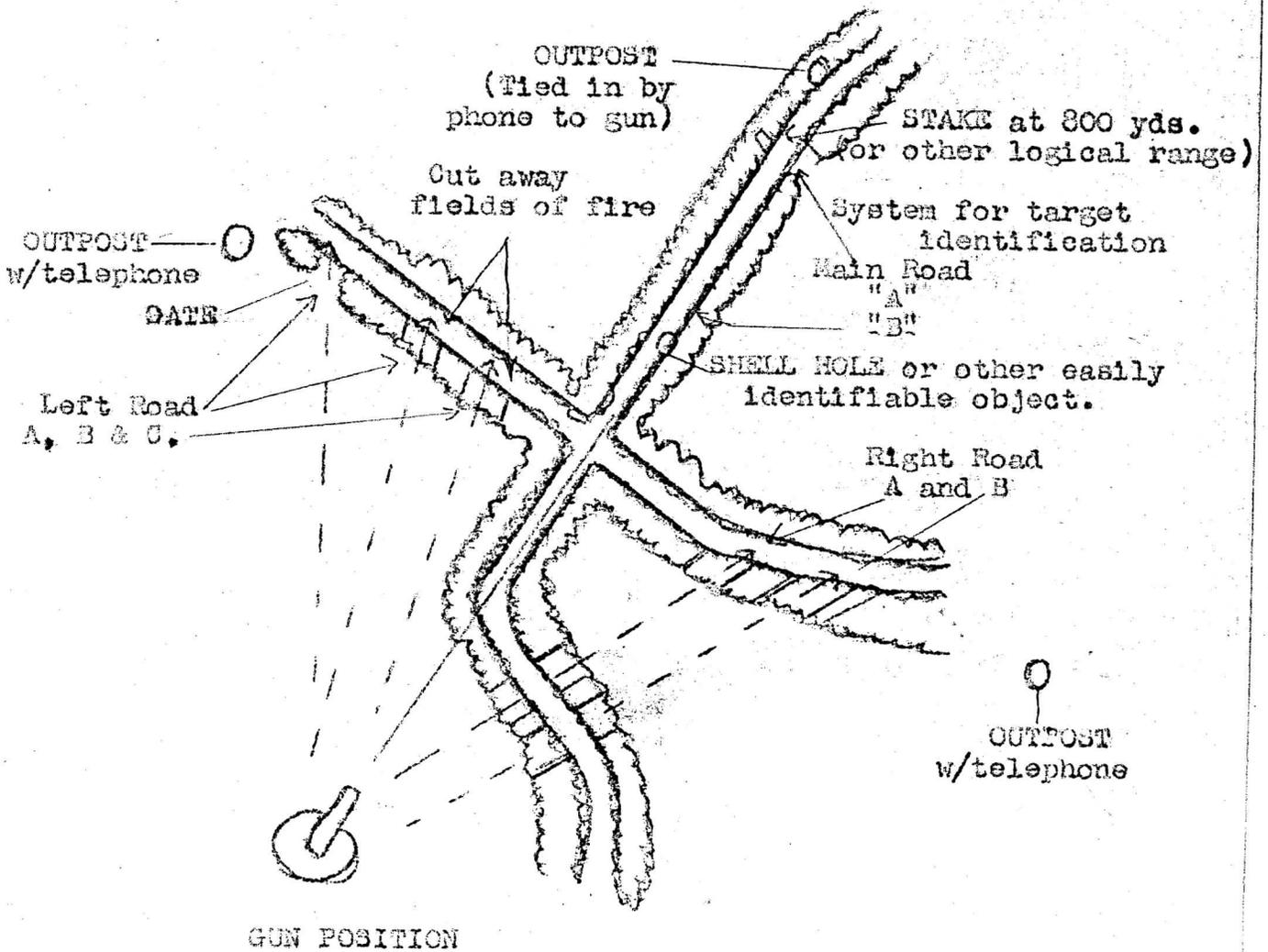
b. Selection of Position: The actual selection of positions should be mutually agreed upon by the T.D. Officer and the AAA Gun Btry. Commander. Points for consideration are believed to be:

- (1) Likely avenues of enemy armored approach.
- (2) Fields of Fire.
- (3) Cover and concealment afforded.
- (4) Proximity to probable locations for enemy registration or harrassing fire.

c. Organization of Positions: Pioneer personnel provided by the Pioneer Platoon of T.D. Ren. Co. should be adequate for mine removal and possible necessary demolitions to permit occupation of position. AAA personnel should be able to clear brush and do normal digging, filling of sand-bags and other routine tasks. Exact coverage of guns and field of fire should be taken into consideration during the organization of positions. In the location of outposts for fire control, vulnerable spots in road and terrain should be picked. In as much as 800 yards is about the maximum expected range, points should be selected and paced so that they may later serve as a control point for fire delivered in daylight or darkness. Outpost personnel should be qualified in the identification of enemy armor and should control the fire delivered.

(2) - Employment of 90 mm AAA guns in anti-air role.

e. Cont'd. - Typical position and field of fire is set up as follows. Designations and points as illustrated have been used in one system. Any similar routine designated would be satisfactory, as long as it is thoroughly understood by all personnel concerned. Absolute understanding is necessary between outposts and gun crew personnel.



(3) - Employment of 90 mm AAA Guns in anti tank role.

d. Occupation of Positions:

(1) It is believed that movements to positions should be made under cover of darkness or during the period of dusk in the evening. If the distance involved is great, the gun may be moved to an intermediate position, left limbered and concealed and moved to position as soon as it is sufficiently dark to prohibit enemy observation. The noise of the tractor can occasionally be disguised by taking advantage of noise made by passing traffic, armor, engineer tractors, etc. SOP measures for concealment of personnel and equipment common to any unit engaged in battle should be sufficient for 90 mm AAA gun installations.

2. Communication:

a. Communication difficulties can be greatly overcome by installing telephone communication between the Btry. CP and CP of the supported T.D. Bn. 600 series net is adequate for communication within the battery; outposts and installations in and about the gun positions should be connected by telephone. In some instances where distances are reduced, telephone communication should be maintained between Battery CP and Gun positions.

3. Additional Equipment:

a. Employment in A.T. role being a secondary mission, it is believed that adjustments in allocation - in accordance with present T/O & E are preferable to request of additional equipment for a short period of time. Administration and supply will function more smoothly if carried on thru normal channels. Equipment can be arranged to meet the situation by coordinating closely between the AAA Btry. and the supported T.D. Bn.

B. Employment of AAA Guns to strengthen the A.T. defenses of a Division or Corps Sector.

1. During the time the Division to which this Battalion is attached was in the vicinity of St. Pois, France, a plan was made to use 90 mm AAA guns to add depth to the A.T. defenses of the sector. A conference was arranged between an officer from the AAA Btry. and this T.D. Bn. All batteries were in position in accordance with primary mission defending supply dumps and rear installations from attack by enemy aircraft. After a thorough map reconnaissance the two officers made a ground reconnaissance and selected positions. Factors used as a basis of this defense plan were:

a. Present location of AAA Btrys. and location of existing A. T. defenses and probable forward displacements with regard to likely avenues of enemy armored approach.

b. Time involved in necessary movement from AA to A.T. positions.

(4) - Employment of 90 mm AAA Guns in anti-air role.

1. c. Avenues of approach to A.T. positions.
- d. Protection afforded gun and crew after occupation of position.

2. A system was worked out whereby all AAA Btrys. had A.T. position areas assigned in the closest possible proximity to their existing locations. Fields of fire were indicated, positions selected and staked, routes of approach applied from AA to AT positions and azimuth recorded for each gun's field of fire along with a list of likely control points. Each Btry. Comdr. and gun crew were familiarized with their part of the A. T. plan. It was believed at that time that although enemy armored threat did not merit the employment of AAA Guns in the A.T. role, the selection of positions discussed would provide a sound workable A.T. defense in depth, committed in whole or in part, when and if the situation so warranted.

For the Battalion Commander:

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