

HEADQUARTERS  
607TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 230

9 December 1944

Subject: Report of Action Third Platoon, Company C, 607th TD Bn., 28 Nov 44.

To : Commanding Officer, 607th Tank Destroyer Bn., APO 230.

1. On the morning of the 28th of November 1944 the 3d platoon, Company C, 607th TD Bn was asked to support the attack on the town of Merten, France (coord. 225-729), by reducing by direct fire certain strong points expected in the town and thereafter to secure the town from counter attack.

The 3d battalion, 378th Infantry was to attack from Falck (coord. 198-706) and secure both flanks of the axis of advance by moving one company to the right or south of the road and one company to the left or north of the road. Elements of the battalion were reported to have reached the edge of the town on the west and the TD platoon was to advance at 0930 and meet LT REISGL at the road block at the west edge of the town from which place he would point out the targets the TD's were to reduce.

The platoon advanced as scheduled with three guns moving forward along the road and one acting as overwatch. At point #2 the 2d TD was taken under fire by AT gun "A" and a track knocked off. Subsequently a second shot from the same gun set the TD on fire. The other two guns proceeded to the road block where they found enemy infantry in considerable force and none of our infantry. The platoon leader's M-36 received a hit from a Panzerfaust (German Bazooka) on the final drive housing which penetrated the housing from the front but did not immobilize the vehicle, and after firing H& and .50 caliber machine guns at the infantry in the town guns #1 and #3 were forced to move away from the buildings. During this action TD #1 fired 6 rounds of H& and TD #3 fired 5 rounds H& and both fired 500 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun attempting to destroy enemy infantry and neutralize the AT guns.

In backing and turning around the platoon leader's TD became stuck in the mud and was hit by two rounds from AT gun "B", one round hitting the counterweight and ricocheting down against the drivers hatch, the other round going through the turret, neither caused damage to personnel nor rendered the gun incapable of firing. TD #3 returned unharmed to starting position.

AT gun "A" was moved to alternate position as indicated on sketch and fired two rounds at TD #1 through a space between the buildings. The first missed, the second hit the turret ricocheted inside the turret, killed the gunner, and wounded the platoon leader. This shot rendered the gun inoperative. Two other members of the crew were killed by small arms and mortar fire as they abandoned the TD.

During this entire action the overwatching TD had observed the flash of AT gun "A" and attempted to fire but the firing mechanism failed to function. This was later found to be due to a weak firing pin spring.

The infantry who were to advance along the flanks had met greater



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resistance than anticipated and did not clear the AT gun positions or reach the road block until after the foregoing action had taken place.

No prior reconnaissance of route was made due to small arms fire and no reconnaissance was made along the route followed or to be followed by the infantry, to determine that the intermediate position at the road block was secure before the TD platoon started for that point.

Conclusion: The loss of these two guns is attributed to (1) use of a time schedule to coordinate (a) the clearing of the flanks and securing the first position at the road block by the infantry, and (b) the advance of the TD platoon and (2) the mechanical failure of the firing mechanism of the overwatching TD, and (3) lack of reconnaissance to determine the security of the intermediate position at the road block.

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Major, FA  
Executive Officer

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To: Commanding Officer, 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade, APO 403, US Army.

1. I concur in the conclusions.
2. The above report is submitted in accordance with verbal request of Brigadier General ERNEST.

HAROLD S. SUNDT  
Lt Col., FA  
Commanding

