

OPERATIONS OF THE 640TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

While the Battalion was attached to the 40th Infantry Division our Reconnaissance Company was used for the Division reconnaissance mission under the direction of the Division G-2. They performed the mission normally assigned to the Division Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop. Direct radio communication was maintained between the Battalion S-2 and Division G-2 with Reconnaissance Company commander maintaining communication with Battalion S-2.

9 January - 31 January 1945

As no threat of enemy armored attack developed the firing companies remained attached each to an Infantry Regiment for direct fire support to the ground troops. The principal targets attacked were caves, pillboxes, and machine gun nests. The 3-inch gun proved to be very effective against these targets and the Companies destroyed many. Often the M-10's were used for direct fire against Jap artillery of various calibers, destroying many. However often this heavy armor was employed for missions normal to organic Infantry weapons. At times the M-10 Tank Destroyers were used continuously while the M-7's and 57MM Anti-tank guns of the Infantry were idle.

When working as direct support for an Infantry advance the Tank Destroyers must be provided with friendly ground troops for protection from infiltration by the enemy. Engineers should be made available to the Tank Destroyers as mine sappers. There are not sufficient personnel available in the Tank Destroyer Battalion for this job.

Misuses of the Self-propelled destroyer were sending them on missions in enemy held territory with no attempt to provide protection for the Destroyers from enemy ground troops. On several occasions in the vicinity of the Bamnan hills the M-10's were used by the Infantry commanders to spearhead their drive through rough terrain. (Terrain not suitable for operation of M-10's).

Often the Platoons were attached to a Battalion or Company and were kept in the front lines for days at a time making it impossible to perform proper maintenance on the M-10's. Here again it is felt that this was not an economical use of weapons as the towed 57MM's were available for this mission.

When companies are detached from the Battalion and attached to Infantry Regiments the Battalion loses communication, supply is very difficult and maintenance so vital to armored equipment is next to impossible. Because of the distances involved when the companies were detached it became impracticable to send Battalion maintenance section to aid the companies.

31 January - 19 March 1945

On January 31 the Battalion minus "B" Company, who remained attached to the 40th Infantry Division, reverted to control of XIV Corps and attached to 1st Cavalry Division. The elements attached to 1st Cavalry Division left Capas 1 Feb. and arrived at Mayayap 2 Feb. where we were attached to the 12th Cavalry Regiment, and given mission of protecting the north and east flank of the Division, and to reconnoiter area Mayayap to Cabu. While here Reconnaissance Company sent daily patrols to Cabu River and secured the Cabanatuan Prison Camp No. 1. "A" Company established a road block north and "C" Company established road blocks on the east.

On 5 Feb. the Battalion received orders to send "A" Company south to contact 1st Cavalry Division. "A" Company arrived at Grace Park, Manila, 1400 on 6 Feb.

On 8 Feb. the Battalion minus "A" and "B" Company with the 85th Chemical Battalion minus "B" and "C" Companies attached was given the mission of guarding the bridges in the Cabanatuan area and maintain contact with the 6th Division on the north.

On 10 Feb. the Battalion was relieved of its mission by the 112th Regi-

mental Combat Team and ordered to move south to Manila. The movement took two days arriving at Rosario Heights, Manila at 1030 11 Feb. Here we passed to control of the 1st Cavalry Division.

On 12 Feb. the Battalion was ordered to send "C" Company to Dinalupihan to pass to control of the Commanding General of the IX Corps, upon arrival there.

During the rest of the operation Headquarters and Headquarters Company remained in the Manila area. The principal duty performed here was to maintain liaison between "A" Company, Reconnaissance Company and the 1st Cavalry Division. Supply and maintenance were continued to the companies in this area although they were attached to other units.

The Battalion was ordered to assemble for staging at vicinity of the Wack Wack Country Club, Manila area by 2400 19 March.

"A" COMPANY

On 5 Feb. "A" Company was attached to 1st Cavalry Division and left Mayagap for Manila. They moved by stages and arrived at Grace Park, Manila area on 6 Feb. Here the Company was attached to the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. On 9 Feb. the Company moved to Wack Wack Country Club, Manila, and was attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

During the period from the 9 Feb. to 15 Feb. the Platoons were used as direct fire support for the 1st Brigade in the vicinity of Guadalupe. The principal targets attacked in this area were caves, field pieces and machine gun nests. The units employed were sections or Platoons. The 1st Platoon of "A" Company was sent to the junction of the Mariguina and Pasig River to cover that area and destroy any enemy troops attempting to escape along that route. They fired into caves and at enemy observation post's in towers in the town of Pasig. Good results were obtained. Many enemy troops were killed and some equipment destroyed. The first Platoon remained in this same general

area until on this assigned mission until 2 March.

On 17 Feb. the Company minus 1st Platoon moved to the Malate District in the city of Manila. These elements of "A" Company remained here until the 2nd of March. During this period the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were employed as direct fire support to elements of the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. The normal practice here was to attach a Platoon of Tank Destroyers to a Squadron of Cavalry to support their advance. The M-10's were used for direct fire into caves, pillboxes, and concrete buildings. The machine guns mounted on the M-10's and M-20's were used against enemy foot troops and proved very effective. Many Japs attempting to advance toward the Platoon or escape from buildings were killed by the machine guns.

On the 2nd of March the Company was relieved of the mission in the Walled City area and moved to a bivouac in vicinity of Wack Wack Country Club.

March 9th the 1st Platoon was attached to the 8th Cavalry Regiment and the 2nd Platoon was attached to the 12th Cavalry Regiment. The Platoons left the Company area and moved to vicinity of Taytay.

On these missions the platoons closely supported these two Regiments firing at caves, artillery pieces, machine gun nests, and enemy bivouac areas. The 2nd Platoon laid a heavy concentration of fire on a suspected enemy area destroying one 75mm enemy field piece, two 6-inch mortars and killing at least 25 enemy personnel.

"A" Company reverted to Battalion control on 12 March and assembled with the Battalion for staging in the vicinity of Wack Wack Country Club, Manila.

"B" COMPANY

When the Battalion reverted to XIV Corps control "B" Company remained attached to the 40th Infantry Division.

On the 1st of Feb. the company was moved from Capas to Mamatitang. Here

the Company less 3rd Platoon was attached to the 160th Infantry Regiment, and the 3rd Platoon was attached to the 129th Infantry Regiment. The 3rd Platoon remained attached to this Regiment, until 8 Feb. when they were attached to the 108th Infantry Regiment. During this period the TD Platoon was used for direct fire support to the advance of 129th Infantry Regiment. The 1st and 2nd Platoons worked with the 160th Infantry Regiment.

It was the practice of the Infantry Regiment Commanders to attach a Platoon of Tank Destroyers to a Battalion or Company of Infantry to offer direct fire support to their advance. The attached Tank Destroyer Platoons followed very closely the advance of the Infantry front line elements, firing into caves, at pill boxes and machine gun nests. The machine guns mounted on the M-10's and M-20's were used against enemy foot troops. At times the M-10's were used to fire at troop concentrations.

On 11 Feb. the 2nd Platoon was attached to the 185th Infantry Regiment.

The respective Platoons remained attached to the Infantry Regiments until 3 March.

The Tank Destroyer Platoons often remained with the front line companies for days at a time. During these periods the Company supplied them with food, fuel and ammunition. Maintenance was very difficult during these periods. The terrain in this area was steep, rough and proved very difficult to operate over.

On the 3rd of March "B" Company was attached to the 43rd Infantry Division.

On the 6th of March the Company was released from the XIV Corps and attached to the XI Corps, but remained with the 43rd Infantry Division and on 10 March the Company passed to control of the 38th Infantry Division. They remained attached to this Division until 19 March when they reverted to Battalion control and moved to vicinity of Wack Wack Country Club, Manila, for staging with the Battalion.

"C" COMPANY

From 24 to 31 January, while in the Bambang area "C" Company worked with the 160th Infantry Regiment and supported with direct fire, the advance of the Infantry. The principal targets were caves, field pieces and machine gun nests.

Company "C" accompanied the Battalion on the move to Manila. In the Cabanatuan area they were assigned the mission of protecting the east flank of that area from attack and guarding bridges in this area.

The Company arrived, with the Battalion minus "A" and "B" Companies, in the Manila area on the 11th of Feb.

On the 12th of Feb. "C" Company was ordered to move to Dinaluphan and upon arrival to pass to control of the XI Corps.

Upon arrival in the Dinaluphan area the 2nd Platoon was attached to the 149th Infantry Regiment to assault enemy fortified positions in the Zig-Zag Pass area.

The 2nd Platoon closely supported the 149th Infantry Regiment. In this action the Tank Destroyer Platoon pushed through Zig-Zag Pass clearing the enemy and making a junction of the 149th Infantry with other elements of the 38th Division possible. The Platoon destroyed one medium Jap tank, 8 machine guns and killed an undetermined number of enemy troops. The Platoon reverted to Company control on the 18 Feb. and joined with them in their bivouac.

On 18 Feb. "C" Company moved to Balanga and was attached to the 149th Infantry Regiment. The same day they were relieved from attachment to the 149th Infantry Regiment and attached to the XI Corp.

Feb. 20th the 3rd Platoon was attached to the 1st Infantry Regiment. The 1st Platoon was given the mission of establishing a road block at Road Junction coordinates 820.5 - 1770.4, Map Luzon, 1:50,000.

On Feb. 22nd the 1st and 3rd Platoons reverted to Company control. The next day the 1st Platoon was attached to the 149th Infantry Regiment for tactical support.

On Feb. 24th "C" Company minus 1st Platoon moved to Hermosa. The 1st Platoon followed the next day. While in this area the Company was assigned reconnaissance and patrol missions on the road net working around Hermosa.

March 8th the Company was ordered to Fort Stotsenburg area and arrived there about 1300 8 March. In this area the 2nd Platoon supported the mopping up operations of the 149th Infantry Regiment. This mission continued until 13 March.

On 18 March "C" Company was relieved of assignment with the 149th Infantry Regiment and reverted to Battalion control. The Company joined the Battalion in the staging area, vicinity of Wack Wack Country Club, Manila area on the 19th of March.

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY

Reconnaissance Company was relieved of its mission with the 40th Division on the 31st of January and moved with elements of the Battalion to Mayayayap arriving there on 2 Feb. In this area the 2nd Platoon was attached to "A" Company to aid in a road block east of Mayayayap. The remainder of the Company was assigned the mission of reconnoitering the area east of Cabanatuan to Cabu. Several enemy contacts were made. On this mission they also reconnoitered the Kalipid Air Strip.

On 3 Feb. the Company minus 2nd Platoon was ordered to secure the Cabanatuan Prison Camp No. 1 and bring back historical documents. The records taken here were turned over to the Commanding Officer, 12th Cavalry Regiment. Other elements of the Company pushed on to Cabu and engaged the enemy there. Pioneer Platoon placed mortar fire on an enemy bivouac area with good results.

The Company retained the reconnaissance mission in the Cabu area until

10 Feb. when they moved with the Battalion to the Manila area. The Reconnaissance Company preceded the Battalion on the march and were used as road guides.

During the period 11 to 14 of Feb. the Company made daily security patrols on the road net east and north of the Battalion bivouac area, at Rosario Heights Extension, Manila.

One section of Pioneer Platoon was attached to "C" Company and was sent to Dinaluphan to join them. They were to assist "C" Company in removing mines in their path of advance. They returned to their Company on 19 Feb.

On 16 Feb. the 1st and 2nd Platoons and one section of Pioneer Platoon were ordered to report to the Commanding Officer, 112th Regimental Combat Team in the vicinity of Santa Maria for missions in that area.

While on a reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of Presna the elements of Reconnaissance Company rescued 46 enlisted men and one officer of Company "B", 1275th Engineers. In this action the enemy was vigorously engaged and held down, allowing the engineers to withdraw. Reconnaissance Company lost one officer and one enlisted man killed. One $\frac{1}{2}$ ton C & R truck was lost. The enemy then moved in and captured the radio from the $\frac{1}{2}$ ton. The vehicle was later destroyed by 37MM fire from our guns. The Company was relieved of this mission on 19 Feb. and returned to Battalion control.

22nd Feb. the Company was attached to the 302nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop and moved to Fort McKinley. Here the 1st and 2nd Reconnaissance Platoons were assigned the mission of patrolling the McKinley area, destroying any enemy encountered. The 3rd Reconnaissance Platoon and Pioneer Platoon moved to Angono. Here they were assigned mission of patrolling the highway and adjacent area to a depth of 2000 yards from Taytay to Cardona.

On the night of 23rd - 24th Feb. the Japs attempted a Banzai attack on the two platoons, but were repulsed. In this attack 26 Japs were killed.

On the 3rd of March the remainder of Reconnaissance Company moved to An-

gone and reverted to Battalion control. Reconnaissance Company with one platoon of "A" Company and 97 guerrillas attached was given the mission of protecting the right flank of the 1st Cavalry Division, patrolling and securing road Taytay to Cardona on Highway 21, and establishing road block at Angono. This mission was continued with one minor contact with the enemy until 12 March when the Battalion was relieved of this mission. Reconnaissance Company then moved to Battalion bivouac area vicinity of Mack Mack Country Club, Manila.

COMMUNICATIONS

When operating as a Battalion the organic communications in a Tank Destroyer Battalion proved quite adequate. However because of the distances involved in operations with separate units, it is felt that a SCR 506 or SCR 193 radio should be made available to each firing company. Often, when a Company was operating some distance from the Battalion Headquarters, communications with the 608 radio was impossible. Attachment of a Company to a Division or Brigade necessitated a 193 or 506 to communicate with higher headquarters. During the last stages of the present campaign one of these sets was made available to the Company commander and proved very valuable.

Within their range limit the 610 and 608 radios worked very well. Spare transmitters and receivers should always be available in the field in event of a failure as repair on the spot is not always possible.

One difficulty encountered while working with the 40th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division was that the assigned frequencies of the Tank Destroyers and the Field Artillery units were so close that receiving was often impossible due to interference from the artillery sets. This was especially true in the Manila area where all elements were close.

The practice of attaching a Tank Destroyer Platoon to an Infantry Battalion or Cavalry Squadron presented a problem in communications. The organic T.E. allowance in the Platoon does not provide sufficient radios for this connection. The Infantry Battalion or Cavalry Squadrons must provide the radios for communications between the Platoon and supported element. This can be accomplished by the supported unit attaching a radio and radio operator to the Tank Destroyer Platoon Commander to communicate directly with the Infantry Commander. While working with elements of the 40th Infantry Division the Infantry Commanders failed to do this making coordination between the supported and supporting elements very difficult, and often resulted in the

Tank Destroyer Platoons not being able to give proper support unless the Platoon Commander performed foot reconnaissance with the Infantry thereby losing control of his Platoon during that period, something entirely foreign to Tank Destroyer procedure.

The supported units of the 1st Cavalry Division provided a radio and operator to the Tank Destroyer Platoon Commander to work directly with the Squadron or Troop Commander. This method proved very satisfactory and close coordination between the two were possible.

AMMUNITION

Early operational procedure called for close support of the Infantry. Responsibility for ammunition resupply was left to the Battalion despite the plan providing for haulage by the Regimental Combat Teams. The ammunition train was not brought in until the operation was over making resupply an overwhelming obstacle. On operations calling for close support of the Infantry the unit of fire should be enlarged or more than three units of fire should be carried.

At least 80% of the ammunition carried should be H.E. Very little use was found for APC in this operation. Even when working near Walled City in Manila, H.E. with delay fuse proved more satisfactory than APC on caves, pill boxes or any type of obstacle encountered here. W.P. Smoke was not available, however it is felt that this type of ammunition would have been valuable against targets encountered.

One round of APC penetrated the rear of a Jap medium tank, passed through it, and exploded in the bank of dirt about 20 yards away. H.E. with delay fuse fired at the same tank penetrated the armor and exploded inside causing much more damage.

Often quite heavy concentrations of fire were placed on targets in front of advancing Infantry troops. H.E. only, was practicable for such missions.

Vagueness of information, from the Infantry, with regard to target locations, and insistence that fire be laid down, necessitated the expenditure of ammunition not contemplated by allotments.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Direct fire from the 3-inch gun proved very effective against targets encountered during this campaign. In the Walled City area of Manila they were used extensively against concrete emplacements and buildings.

In the Bambang area the principal targets were caves, field pieces, pillboxes and observation posts. The 3-inch gun because of its speed and accuracy proved to be one of the most valuable weapons for these missions. The presence of M-10's on the front lines was of great assistance as a morale factor for Infantry.

It was the practice in this operation to attach a Tank Destroyer Company to a Division or Regiment. This made the supply and maintenance of all equipment difficult. Often the Companies were so far removed from the Battalion that it was impossible to attempt to supply or provide them with maintenance. There are no supply vehicles in the organic equipment of the Destroyer or Reconnaissance Company, nor does the equipment in their maintenance section provide for separate operations, especially for armored vehicles.

It is felt by this Headquarters that a better plan would be to keep the Companies under Battalion control. The companies could then be dispatched to Infantry Regiments or Battalions requesting support through the Division. The Battalion should retain control of the elements in event an armored threat should develop.

While operating with the 40th Infantry Division the Tank Destroyer Platoons with their heavy equipment were often left with the front line Infantry elements for days at a time making maintenance of the equipment impossible. The M-10's were in easy range of enemy artillery or mortar fire. The Destroyers

were too often called into positions without definite targets. This naturally shortened the life of the equipment.

Excellent cooperation was received from the 1st Cavalry Division. While working in areas where enemy foot troops and land mines were a constant threat to the Destroyers, Engineer and friendly foot troops were allotted to the Tank Destroyer elements. A Squad from the Engineer Squadron was provided and who remained with the Tank Destroyer Platoon.

In addition to the .50 caliber machine gun normally mounted on the turret of the M-10's a provisional .30 caliber machine gun was placed on the turret immediately in front of the gun commander where it could be employed by him against foot troops or to mark targets. By using tracer ammunition the target can be marked for 3-inch fire thus conserving ammunition. With the .50 caliber mounted in the rear and the .30 caliber in front it gave the crew all around protection from enemy ground troops. In the Luzon campaign this arrangement proved highly successful.

The three 81MM mortars of the Battalion normally assigned one to each firing company, were placed in Pioneer Platoon of the Reconnaissance Company and manned by the organic personnel. The ammunition was carried principally in the platoon vehicles and an M-10 trailer which was made available to augment the supply. This proved to be a good plan as the mortars were frequently used.

The M-8's and M-20's in Reconnaissance Company proved to be very good reconnaissance vehicles over terrain where a road net existed, however over difficult terrain their ability to reconnoiter for track vehicles is very limited. The armor on these vehicles afforded sufficient protection for the personnel against Japanese small arms fire. The M-3 Half-track personnel carrier was substituted for the 1½ ton cab in Reconnaissance Company, Pioneer Platoon, to provide armor protection for the personnel. The winch on Half-tracks

enabled the entire Company to make crossings of streams otherwise impossible to ford.

ENEMY LOSSES

The following is a list of enemy equipment destroyed or damaged, and casualties inflicted upon the enemy:

Destroyed

Medium Tank	1	90MM Gun.....	2
Small Fuel Dump.....	1	75MM Gun (1 Mobile AA Mt).....	5
Truck.....	1	47MM Anti-tank.....	2
Truck, gas.....	1	37MM.....	3
Mortar.....	1	40MM.....	5
6-inch Mortar.....	2	20MM.....	18
Sampan.....	1	20MM (Twin).....	3
7.7MM Machine Gun.....	1	5-inch Gun.....	2
Ration Dump.....	1	Machine Gun Nest.....	13
Hvy. .50 Cal. Machine Gun.....	1	Light Machine Guns.....	6
Twin Barrel Machine Gun.....	1	Machine Guns.....	15
Caves.....	30	Ammunition Dumps.....	5
Pillboxes.....	47		
Bunkers.....	3	<u>Damaged</u>	
Huts.....	15	Truck.....	1

Enemy Killed in Action.....505
 Enemy Probably Killed in Action.....250
 Prisoner's of War.....5

OUR OWN LOSSES

The following is a list of casualties to our own men and equipment:

- 1 M-10 Tank Destroyer, complete with all equipment lost in Agno River.
- 2 M-10 Tank Destroyers damaged by enemy land mines . At the close of this report only one has been made serviceable.
- 1 CAU (M-20) destroyed by enemy land mine. All equipment saved.
- 1 1/2 ton truck destroyed by enemy action. All equipment lost.
- 1 1/2 ton 6x6 Destroyed by enemy land mine.
- Slight damage was inflicted on 2 more M-10's by the Jap's Yardstick Mine.

Personnel Killed in Action.....7
 Wounded in Action.....42
 Missing in Action.....0

Leslie H. Conrady
 LESLIE H. CONRADY
 Lt. Colonel, TD
 Commanding, 640th TD Bn.

Inlosures:

- # 1 Excerpts from G-3 Journal
- # 2 Battalion Location Map
- # 3 Headquarters Company Journal
- # 4 "A" Company Journal
- # 5 "B" Company Journal
- # 6 "C" Company Journal
- # 7 Reconnaissance Company Journal
- # 8 Intelligence Report
- # 9 Situation Map