

HEADQUARTERS 640TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
Office of the Commanding Officer  
APO # 159

2 August 1945

VICTORY V - OPERATION

The Battalion was relieved of its combat missions of the M1 operation on 20 March 1945 and all elements assembled at the Mack-nack Country Club, near MANILA, for staging for subsequent operation.

During the period 20 March 1945 and 30 March 1945 while in this staging area, all elements of the Battalion were engaged in preparations for a combat mission. All equipment was thoroughly checked, and all shortages possible were received. Track on 70% of the M10 Tank Destroyers was replaced.

As the Battalion had been in combat constantly since landing at LINDAYEN BEACH 9 January 1945 until 20 March 1945, it was extremely difficult to attend to the maintenance necessary on the armored equipment. Spare parts, and parts necessary to put the armored vehicles in combat readiness were difficult to obtain. The Battalion left ILOON with no spare parts for the M10 Tank Destroyers and the armored cars. All possible effort was made to obtain these before leaving, but the ordnance was unable to fill the requisitions.

Upon arrival at MINDORO, P.I. on 4 April 1945, the 640th Tank Destroyer Battalion passed from control of the 6th Army to the 8th Army and was attached to the 24th Infantry Division for further staging and movement to MINDANAO for the Victory V operation.

At the staging area on MINDORO we were able to proceed with necessary maintenance and re-supply. More track was received here and all track laying vehicles were made operative. Here, as before, critical parts for armored vehicles were not available.

At this area the Battalion conducted driving schools and test fired the 3 inch, 37 mm, 2.36 rocket launchers and machine guns.

Just before leaving ILOON the Battalion received the first issue of smoke shells (H.C.) for the 3" gun. Test firing was conducted with the ammunition on MINDORO and found it unsatisfactory for use -- apparently the charge for this shell was reduced and the ranges were erratic. The reduced charge failed to open the automatic breech of the 3" gun M7.

On 11 April 1945, "C" Company, 1 platoon of Reconnaissance Company and S-2 section from Headquarters were alerted to accompany the combat echelons of the 24th Division for the amphibious landing on MINDANAO. The remainder of the Battalion was designated as Division reserve and remained at MINDORO to accompany the rear echelon of the 24th Division to arrive at MINDANAO on 14 plus 10 days.

The advanced echelon, consisting of Company "C", one Reconnaissance platoon and the S-2 section of Battalion Headquarters arrived at MINDANAO on 20 April 1945 and went into a bivouac at PIRANG, MINDANAO, P.I., coordinates (74.4 - 92.8) Map Island of MINDANAO 1:50,000 POLLOC HARBOR quadrant, and was attached to X Corps.

On 25 April 1945, the advance echelon was relieved from

attachment to I Corps and was attached to 31st Infantry Division. This element was assigned the mission for the defense of the south half of the PARANG perimeter. Guards consisting of 6 men each were placed on the first 4 bridges south of the town of PARANG. Two road blocks were placed on roads south and east of PARANG. In addition to road blocks established, motorized patrols were established to patrol 3000 yards beyond each road block.

The Battalion less Company "C", one reconnaissance platoon, and the S-2 section, left MINDORO, 24 April 1945, boarded in LSTs, and arrived at PARANG, ISLAND OF MINDANAO on 28 April 1945. Upon arrival at PARANG, these elements were relieved of attachment to the 24th Infantry Division and attached to the I Corps. "C" Company reverted to Battalion control, but remained on mission of bridge guard and road block as assigned by the 31st Infantry Division. The Battalion was in bivouac area at PARANG.

On 1 May 1945 the entire Battalion was assigned the security of the south PARANG area with the following missions:

1. Place guards on all bridges between and including the bridges over the NITUAN and SIBUAY rivers. (Total of 7)
2. Place road block at coordinates 80 - 93 Map Island of MINDANAO, TOLONOG HARBOR quadrant.
3. Establish out post at 74.4 - 92.8.
4. Remainder of Battalion in reserve.

8 May 1945, Company "B" with one Reconnaissance platoon and Battalion S-2 section attached left the PARANG area for DAVAO area by land and water movement. Remainder of Battalion continued assigned mission of south PARANG area.

"B" Company and attachments arrived at TALLOO 1500, 10 May 1945, and were attached to 24th Infantry Division.

On 12 May 1945, 1st platoon Company "B" was attached to 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment offering direct fire support for the advance of the infantry in vicinity of BANGAL. Fired very successfully at pillboxes, caves and machine gun nest.

13th May 1945, 3rd platoon attached to 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment in the same general area. Many caves, huts, machine gun nests and mortars were taken under fire. "B" Company with attachments remained attached to the 24th Infantry Division. The three days were all the platoons were active until the remainder of the Battalion minus "C" Company arrived at TALLOO.

The Battalion minus "B" Company and attachments remained at PARANG with the mission of security of the south PARANG area until relieved on 23 May 1945 for movement to the TALLOO area.

On 16 May 1945, two platoons of Reconnaissance Company were attached to the 102d Infantry Regiment and moved to DIGOS to be used as road patrol. One platoon patrolled from DIGOS to TALLOO, one platoon from DIGOS to FORT PICKET. These patrols made no contacts. The difficulties experienced here were that the vehicles were on the road constantly during daylight hours, and maintenance of vehicles was extremely difficult. As a result the life of the vehicles was greatly reduced.

The remainder of Reconnaissance Company remained with the Battalion at PARANG.

Headquarters, Headquarters Company, "A" Company and Reconnaissance Company less three Reconnaissance platoons left PARANG by water and land movement on 25 May 1945. The over-land convoy consisting of light vehicles left PARANG at 0825 hours on 25 May 1945 and arrived at TALLOO at 1510 on the 26th. The road from PARANG to TALLOO was very poor, but all vehicles made the trip without mishap. These forward elements, occupied

a semi-permanent bivouac area in vicinity of TALOMO. "C" Company remained at PANAO awaiting shipment to join the Battalion.

Upon arrival in the DAVAO area, the Battalion less Reconnaissance platoons with the 162d Infantry Regiment at JIGOS, was attached to the 24th Infantry Division, and "E" Company reverted to Battalion control.

From the period 26 May to 30 May the only elements of the Battalion active were the two reconnaissance platoons and one platoon of Company "E" with a Reconnaissance platoon attached. The Tank Destroyer platoon with the reconnaissance platoon attached worked with the 21st Infantry Regiment in the area north of BANGAL. They were used for direct fire support of the infantry elements. On 30 May 1945 the Tank Destroyer platoon and Reconnaissance platoon with the 21st Infantry Regiment reverted to Battalion control and joined their parent organizations at TALOMO.

On 6 June 1945 the third platoon of Company "A" with one reconnaissance platoon attached were attached to the 19th Infantry Regiment and moved from TALOMO to PANAO by LCMs.

From 6 June 1945 until the close of the V-5 operation, the Battalion furnished one Tank Destroyer platoon to each of the Division's Infantry regiments. Here as before they were used for direct fire support.

At the close of the operations the two reconnaissance platoons were still at HIGSET on routine road patrol.

For daily operations of the platoons, see attached 8-2 and 8-3 daily reports.

#### OBSERVATIONS

Direct fire from the 3 inch gun proved very effective for assigned missions during the campaign. The high velocity shell made it especially adaptable for the destruction of caves, pill boxes, and gun emplacements.

The terrain encountered during the operation was not at all suitable for our operation. The thick vegetation made observation very difficult and the M10's were vulnerable to Japanese ambushes.

It was the practice throughout the operation to attach one Tank Destroyer platoon to an Infantry Regiment. Since the distance involved in this operation was not so great, supply and maintenance did not present such a problem as in previous operations. The platoons could be changed often, thereby giving them a chance to return to the Battalion for resupply and maintenance. Cooperation received from the regiments of the 24th Division was excellent.

The Battalion was not always able to give maximum support due to adverse terrain conditions. Bridges were weak and streams not fordable.

No indirect fire missions were given the Battalion or individual companies during the entire operation.

#### AMMUNITION

In operations calling for close support of the infantry the unit of fire for Tank Destroyers should be increased. At least 50% of the 3" ammunition should be H.L. Very little use was found for the armor piercing shell during this operation.

4. P. smoke was not available, however it is felt that this type of ammunition would have been very valuable against targets encountered.

#### COMMUNICATION

The organic communications of the Battalion proved quite adequate. The 610 and 608 radios worked very well. Spare transmitters and receivers should be carried by each platoon as repair on the spot is not always possible.

The supported infantry must furnish communication between them and the Tank Destroyer platoon. The organic Table of Equipment allowances in the platoon does not provide sufficient radios for this connection. The normal practice was for the infantry elements to place a 300 radio and operator with the platoon during active operations.

#### ANNEXES:

- # 1 - Roster of Officers
- # 2 - Casualty Reports
- # 3 - S-1 Journal
- # 4 - S-3 Reports
- # 5 - S-3 Journal
- # 6 - S-1 Report & S-3 Journal