

HEADQUARTERS
625TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

AGO 45, U S Army
3 March 1944

SUBJECT: Enemy armor in 45th Division Sector from 16th to 18th February
inclusive.

TO :

1. Types of enemy tanks and S P guns seen and fire upon by this
battalion during period: Mk III, IV and VI, S P guns (Ferdinand?).

2. Area of operation, approaches and positions.

(a) Enemy armor operated in the general area bounded by the 35
grid line on the West, the 23.5 grid line on the South and on the East, by the
31 grid line. Enemy armor came down as far as southern edge of Factory on 16 Feb
1944, 31 grid line, on 17 Feb 1944 and 23.8 grid line on 18 Feb 1944.

(b) Approaches: There were two main approaches; both from the
North. One was the North-South road leading into the Factory from the north,
then on to vic 355315, then SE; or from the Factory due south on main road or
down the SE road from the Factory. The second route was down the North-South
road 250 yards NE of the Factory, turn west at 902338 (RJ), proceed to Factory,
and from there, move as described above, or cut S or SE at RJ (392335).

(c) Positions: Though roadbound, the enemy armor tried to deploy
when possible, chiefly around the Factory area and the vic of grid squares
3331 and 3331. When not moving, he used for positions, houses, and defilade
afforded along the stream from 363329 to 35305.

3. Tactics.

General: Terrain did not allow the enemy to use his armor in mass.
He apparently assembled it in assembly areas in vic of 3936 grid square, and
drew from these "pools" to give armored support to his infantry. With the ex-
ception of one case, the largest amount of enemy armor seen south of the Factory
in any one place was eight in number. The exception was twelve enemy tanks which
came down the main road from the Factory on 18 Feb 1944 about 1645A. Often
an S P gun could be seen in a group or column of infantry.

(a) Infantry and armor: In all reported cases, infantry was with
the tanks. The infantry would often ride on Mk VIs and mortar squads were seen
on Mk IVs and IIIs. However the infantry never dismounted further south than
the 35 grid line. Upon dismounting, they would advance with the tanks behind
them. Tanks could go into position for support. The only times the tanks
were seen to advance in front of the infantry, was when the infantry couldn't
take a point, and had the Mk VIs advance and blast out that point. In short,
the enemy armor was assault, close support, direct artillery. P's have said that
7 - 8 tanks had been put in support of a regiment and 2 - 3 in support of a Bn.

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Enemy Armor, etc. (continued)

(b) General tactics: basic armored tactics were used (deployment when possible and covering forces), but advance elements were sometimes used as decoys, or fired at targets found by having the covering tanks fire and draw fire. Tks IVs and III were used mostly for reconaissance by fire and seldom came within usual anti-tank range, and hardly ever in front of the tk VI at any time. When the enemy fired on houses covering our guns, he would fire on the carrier in an attempt to stop us from coming out, and when he did he was scared in, except for the 12 enemy tanks advancing toward the "overpass" the morning of 1 Oct 1944, no concerted armor attack on any one point was observed.

4. All enemy tanks taken under fire by this Bn were fired upon from the enemy tank's flank. Ranges varied from 40 yards to 3300 yards. AP, APC, and AT were used, the latter predominating. Number of rds required to knock out tanks varied from 1 round to 17 rounds on a tk VI. The situation was not conducive to trying to determine with how little ammunition a tank could be knocked out. In the majority of cases, 3 or 4 rounds were fired and then more if needed. Details on number of rounds fired on each tank can be found in attached tank report. It is apparent the tk VI is still the most vulnerable where the turret joins the hull. One gunner reports he "span" the turret of a tk IV with one AP round.

5. Conclusion: The enemy, under present terrain conditions, cannot and will not use his armor in mass, because he is too roadbound. He has and will probably use his armor in infantry support and as a gun role only, with possible exception of small forces (6 - 14) aimed at a definite strong point.

For the Commanding Officer:

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