

HEADQUARTERS  
823RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO No. 403 U.S. ARMY

26 July 1945

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General,  
Fourth Armored Division,  
APO No. 254, U.S. Army

1. Attached hereto are copies of Studies of T/O  
and T/E Deficiencies of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

STANLEY DETTMER  
Lt. Col. Infantry  
Commanding



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SUBJECT: Study of T/O and T/E Deficiencies of the 823rd TD Battalion.

TO : Commanding General, Fourth Armored Division, APO 254

1. 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

2. a. Towed Tank Destroyer Battalion. (Headquarters Company)  
b. T/O 18-36, 7 May 1943, Change 1, 5 June 1943  
(2) TE 18-36

3. Months in combat: Ten and 14/30 months as of 08 May 1945.

A. ORDNANCE - SNL

4. Addition:

a. One (1) 2 1/2 ton truck and one (1) ton trailer for gas and oil section.

(1) It is necessary to furnish gas and oil for one hundred sixty three (163) vehicles of this Battalion, frequently making long hauls. At present this gas must be hauled along with water and supplies since only one (1) 2 1/2 ton truck and one (1) 3/4 ton truck are available for water, gas, oil, rations and supplies.

(2) Due to the wide deployment of a tank destroyer battalion supply problems regarding each and every vehicle arise. Due to the necessary use of the vehicle for its routine duty of hauling water and rations, gasoline most, of necessity, take second choice in priority and cannot be gotten to the vehicles; this causes a delay in movement in many cases because of lack of fuel.

(3) At the present time it is necessary to run the 3/4 ton and the 2 1/2 ton trucks night and day to meet problems of supply.

(4) This 2 1/2 ton supply truck is also called upon frequently to move our Battalion Personnel Section.

b. One 2 1/2 ton truck and one (1) ton trailer for the Battalion Personnel Section.

(1) The Personnel Section is assigned no vehicle whatsoever.

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When a movement by this section is made it is necessary to take the Battalion supply 2 1/2 ton truck away from it's supply duties to move the Personnel Section.

(2) Each time a move is made it is necessary that the truck be completely unloaded so that it can be returned to the supply section.

(3) Trailer could well be used to hold records and personnel supplies. The 2 1/2 ton truck does not allow enough room for supplies, records, and personnel on a move. Personnel is authorized no tent and no vehicle under the present T/E. Unless there is a building nearby for their use records and equipment are liable to get wet in as much as no cover is provided.

(2) In a rapidly moving situation the personnel section often is left behind because the 2 1/2 ton truck is not available to move them.

c. One ton trailer for Battalion Supply Section.

(1) Hauling space necessary to transport emergency supplies and equipment. At present time the Battalion Supply Section has a 2 1/2 ton truck, a 3/4 ton truck and one command car in which to haul supplies, rations, gas, oil, and water as well as carry on all other functions of supply. Any addition whatsoever would add greatly to the working of this section.

(2) In order to provide as much space as possible for hauling of gas, oil, rations, water and supplies, it is always necessary to unload all vehicles completely at each stop whereas with a trailer this unnecessary labor could in part be avoided.

(3) The one (1) ton trailer would also serve as an extra unit on which supplies could be hauled when necessary.

(4) Trailer could be used as a storage space if the occasion arose in inclement weather.

d. One (1) 1/4 ton truck for Battalion Commander with twelve volt generator system.

(1) The M-20 assigned to the Battalion Commander has the SCR 608 radio which is the Battalion NCS. This makes it impossible for this vehicle to leave the Battalion CP area. All other vehicles available in the CP must remain there for similar reasons. It has been found that it is suicidal to take large vehicles into the front lines where they expose gun positions and draw enemy fire, whereas a 1/4 ton vehicle could safely go into the front lines. A fast means of travel is also necessary for the numerous trips to higher headquarters.

e. One (1) 1/4 ton truck for S-1

(1) Necessary transportation for S-1 on the many administrative trips it is necessary for him to make.

(2) Small vehicle is urgently needed for reconnaissance for CP positions.

(3) This vehicle can also be used for the procuring of mail from the APO and for transmission of incoming mail to the companies and platoons. Also can be used to collect outgoing mail transporting it to the APO.

(4) Can be used for messenger service when inclement weather or other reasons make the use of a motorcycle inadvisable.

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f. One (1) 1/4 ton truck for Battalion Communications Section.

(1) The current T/O makes no provision whatsoever for a communication set up for indirect fire. This Battalion has been called upon many times to fire indirect fire and its communication set-up is more or less make-piece from what is available at the time. If this secondary mission of indirect fire is to be properly carried out a vehicle is necessary for the laying of wire.

(2) The addition of an indirect fire mission without any change in transportation allocations has created a critical shortage of vehicles and a critical situation with regard to the laying of wire and the carrying of wire equipment. Companies of this unit have been on indirect fire mission up to eighteen (18) miles apart and while this is not normal all situations have required a wire laying vehicle.

g. Side cars for Headquarters Companies motorcycles.

(1) This unit has turned in four motorcycles, having lost the trained personnel to drive them because of numerous accidents. Night use has been completely prohibited and no officer is allowed on one. It is felt that the addition of side-cars would make the motorcycle safer, more nearly an all weather vehicle and permit it to be driven at all hours. This would also increase their utility by adding cargo and passenger space for tactical and administrative needs.

h. One (1) 3/4 ton truck in communication section.

(1) Inadequate cargo space for wire, radio repair and wire personnel and equipment. At present no spare wire can be carried. Consequently before wire can be loaded for performance of an indirect fire mission it must be picked up from a higher headquarters causing considerable delay.

5. Substitutions:

a. Four (4) 1/4 ton trucks for motorcycles in recon platoons.

(1) Battle experience has proven the motorcycles inapt for reconnaissance work. Individual cyclist cannot be dispatched with any degree of certainty due to muddy roads and cross country maneuverability. Cycle riders when ambushed have not been able to dismount and defend themselves adequately. Ability of Reconnaissance elements to side slip enemy pockets and perform a Reconnaissance mission is impossible when accompanied by a motorcycle because of the excessive noise.

b. Light tanks instead of M-8's in Recon Platoons.

(1) Additional fire-power and protection for performance of his duties.

(2) To the enemy an M-8 looks like a tank and therefore its presence in front lines always draws tremendous fire. Without having the armor, or maneuverability of a tank it is therefore relegated to a four-wheeled motor-driven SCR 608. Greater fire-power, armor and maneuverability such as a light tank possesses would enable Recon units to function with some degree of success.

(3) Protection is the prime consideration and it is felt an M-8 which operates a little further to the rear than the Recon platoons could accomplish this.

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6. Deletions: None

7. Modifications: None  
B. ORDNANCE - WEAPONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

8. Addition:

a. Ground mounts for all MG's  
 (1) For better defense of gun positions against enemy infantry accompanying tanks.

9. Substitution:

a. 29 cal 45 pistols for supply section and drivers in transportation section in lieu of M-3 sub-machinegun.

(1) The type of work performed by men in these sections is such that the M-3 is cumbersome and unwieldy for instantaneous use. A pistol could be carried on the person at all times and provide the necessary protection.

b. Carbine and M-1 rifle in lieu of M-3 submachine gun for the CP group.

(1) Combat experience has proven that CP group must be able to defend themselves against isolated or infiltrating enemy pockets and patrols. A lack of long range small arms weapons has placed members of CP groups at a decided disadvantage and exposed them unnecessarily to enemy fire.

c. Carbine and M-1 rifle in lieu of M-3 submachine gun for reconnaissance platoons.

(1) At least eight (8) of each of the above weapons per platoon. Recon personnel when forced into a fight with small arms to accomplish a mission have found the M-3 sub-machine gun has placed them at a disadvantage and compelled them to dangerously expose themselves to deliver fire on the enemy.

10. Deletion: None

11. Modification: None

C. ORDNANCE VEHICLES

12. Addition: None

13. Substitution: None

14. Deletion: None

15. Modification: None

D. ORDNANCE - MOTOR TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT

16. Addition: None

17. Substitution: None

18. Deletion: None

19. Modification: None

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E. ARMY AIR FORCES

- 20. Addition: None
- 21. Substitution: None
- 22. Deletion: None
- 23. Modification: None

F. SIGNAL



- 24. Addition:
  - a. Three (3) reels RL-31  
 Two (2) linesman's equipment TE-21  
 Ten (10) miles of wire W-110  
 One (1) switchboard BD-72  
 (1) Essential for the accomplishment of secondary mission of the TD's.
  - b. One (1) SCR 506 per Recon platoon.  
 (1) Necessary because reconnaissance often works more than fifteen (15) miles in advance of the Battalion.  
 (2) Radio SCR 608 does not perform reliably at more than ten (10) miles on the European continent.
  - c. One (1) SCR 608 for Companies 1/4 ton vehicle (12) volt system  
 (1) When companies are sent out on separate missions Battalion Commander needs SCR 608 to keep in contact with all Companies and Battalion Headquarters when he is on the move between them.

- 25. Substitution:
  - a. One (1) 608 in 3-4 section in lieu of SCR 610 and 506.  
 (1) This substitution would place the 3-4's radio communications in the 600 series with ability to link up with all elements of the Battalion at a maximum range for the SCR 600 series. 3-4 is usually well within range of SCR 608.
  - b. One (1) 608 in lieu of 610 for Communications Officer.  
 (1) This set would be used primarily as a spare set in the Battalion.

- 26. Deletion: None
- 27. Modification: None

G. ENGINEER

- 28. Addition: None
- 29. Substitution: None
- 30. Deletion: None
- 31. Modification: None

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H. QUARTERMASTER - ORGANIZATIONAL EQUIPMENT

## 32. Additional:

(a) Combat clothing for all personnel. This Battalion is motorized and as such has little call for marching or other movement sufficient to keep the men warm. In addition, all motor marches expose the men to the cold due to the fact that the vehicles are open.

33. Substitution: None

34. Deletion: None

35. Modification: None

I. QUARTERMASTER-ORGANIZATIONAL EQUIPMENT

## 36. Addition:

a. Gasoline cans, 356.

(1) Present authorized number does not permit sufficient hauling capacity to maintain the one hundred sixty three (63) vehicles in a towed battalion for maximum performance.

b. Blackout CP Tents (two per Bn. Headquarters)

(1) One tent needed to perform routine command functions during darkness. One additional blackout tent necessary for fire-control center when Battalion is performing secondary mission. (Indirect fire).

c. Pyramid Tent for Personnel Section.

(1) Present T/E does not provide any kind of coverage for this section. Unless a building is available this section has been unable to properly care for records and perform their duties.

37. Substitution: None

38. Deletion: None

39. Modification: None

J. QUARTERMASTER - INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

40. Addition: None

41. Substitution: None

42. Deletion: None

43. Modification: None

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K. CHEMICAL WARFARE

- 44. Addition: None
- 45. Substitution: None
- 46. Deletion: None
- 47. Modification: None

L. MEDICAL

- 48. Addition: None
- 49. Substitution: None
- 50. Deletion: None
- 51. Modification: None

M. OFFICER PERSONNEL

- 52. Addition: None
- 53. Substitution:
  - a. Battalion Motor Officer to be Captain instead of a 1st lieutenant, due to the fact that the Battalion is motorized, an enormous responsibility rests on the Battalion Motor Officer. If he fails to function as he should, the vehicles are not properly cared for and the Battalion suffers imparable delay. To commensurate with responsibility involved, the Officer should be a Captain.
- 54. Deletion: None

N. ENLISTED PERSONNEL

- 55. Addition:
  - a. one (1) wire chief Staff Sergeant
  - two (2) switch board operators Tec 5.
  - Three (3) linemen (two Tec 5 and one Private)
  - b. Present T/O does not include any personnel for a wire crew, it has been found that trained wiremen are highly essential for efficiency in accomplishing indirect fire missions.
  - c. One morning report clerk.
    - (1) Under the present T/O the Battalion must rely on one of the Company clerks to take care of the Morning Reports. Time devoted to this task has prevented maximum performance on upkeep of company records.





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(2) Attention is invited to the fact that the T/O for a Field Artillery Battalion with a strength of slightly over 500 rates a Tec 4 for a morning report clerk as well as 5 Battery Clerks. The TD Bn rates only 4 company clerks with a strength of 729.

56. Substitution: None

57. Deletion: None



O. ANY SUBJECT NOT COVERED ABOVE

58. Additions:

(a) Request that T/O 18-35 be revised to include a Reconnaissance Company. Attention is invited to the fact that while a self propelled Tank Destroyer Battalion has a reconnaissance Company the towed Tank Destroyer Battalion has two (2) platoons and a reconnaissance Officer on the staff.

(b) This unit has found, through practical experience, that a reconnaissance company is needed as much in a towed battalion as it is in a self propelled Tank Destroyer Battalion for the following reasons:

- (1) Reconnaissance for gun positions.
- (2) Preparing gun positions.
- (3) Keeping contact with front lines.
- (4) In the present type of terrain and warfare the three

firing companies are used to protect separate organizations therefore three platoons could, and should, be used to the advantage of the Companies.

(c) At the present time this organization has established a provisional third reconnaissance platoon in order that each firing company may have some reconnaissance and added security. This platoon has been made up from the Bn Reconnaissance Officer as platoon leader and enlisted personnel from various departments of the rear echelon. The equipment has been gathered from where it was needed the least.

59. Substitution: None

60. Deletion: None