

CO

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
Office of the Commanding General

AGO 403
17 April 1944

AG 370.2 - TD (GNMCS)

SUBJECT: The Employment of Tank Destroyer Units.

TO : See Distribution.

1. GENERAL.

The main purpose of tank destroyers is to knock out tanks. Secondary usages include direct or indirect fire to reinforce artillery fires; destruction of antitank weapons, pill boxes, permanent defensive works; and the support of infantry in defense of beach-heads and bridge-heads.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TANK DESTROYERS AGAINST TANKS WILL BE GIVEN PRECEDENCE OVER OTHER MISSIONS. HOSTILE TANKS MUST BE KEPT AWAY FROM OUR OWN FORCES.

Both towed and self-propelled tank destroyer battalions will be in the Army, and, in many cases, in the same Corps. The organization of the two units is similar, in that both have three gun companies of twelve guns each. The SP battalion has a reconnaissance company of three reconnaissance platoons and a pioneer platoon, whereas the towed battalion has two reconnaissance platoons in headquarters company and no pioneer platoon. The main armament will be either the three-inch or 76 millimeter high velocity gun.

SP battalions will be equipped with either the M-10 or M-70 tank destroyers. The silhouette of an M-10 is high. That of the M-70 is relatively low. Protection to crews is limited. Neither are tanks and cannot be used as such. The towed gun, drawn by a half-track personnel carrier, has a low silhouette and can be moved into concealed positions with relative ease. It has the disadvantage, however, of not being able to shift positions quickly.

2. TANK DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO DIVISIONS AND CORPS.

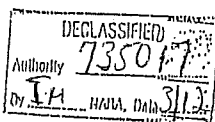
TANK DESTROYER UNITS ARE NOT SELF-SUPPORTING. CONSEQUENTLY THEY WILL BE EMPLOYED IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH OTHER ARMS. THE FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT OF THEIR RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENTS TO SEEK INFORMATION OF HOSTILE TANKS AND RECONNOITER ROUTES TO FIRING POSITIONS IS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR SUCCESS.

Alternate and supplementary firing positions must be selected and prepared for possible use. Tank Destroyers employed well forward with the infantry must have excellent concealment. Their movement forward will be made over reconnoitered covered routes of approach, preferably under cover of darkness.

Tank destroyers will be employed to defeat tanks. In most cases this dictates their use in depth. Towed guns, due to their low silhouettes and comparative ease of concealment, are more suitable for advance positions with the infantry than self-propelled guns. Once in position they must remain relatively quiet until profitable targets appear, otherwise they will draw hostile fire. The infantry, regardless of how much they like to see tank destroyers around, do not wish to have their positions exposed to hostile fire.

It is imperative that tank destroyer commanders maintain liaison with the unit which they are supporting. To be of value they must constantly seek to aid the infantry by intelligent, cooperative action, and be prepared to make recommendations for their employment.

WHEN TANKS APPEAR ON THE FRONT OF A UNIT WHICH HAS TANK DESTROYERS ATTACHED AND THE DESTROYERS ARE NOT PRESENT OR IN POSITION TO FIRE ON THESE TANKS, THEN THE TANK DESTROYERS HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY EMPLOYED. THIS SITUATION MUST NOT OCCUR.



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Employment of Tank Destroyer Units (Cont'd)

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In attack or defense, tank destroyer reconnaissance elements must constantly seek information of hostile tanks. Every possible method of obtaining information and relaying it to the proper place must be utilized; one or two are not sufficient. Employ some of the following means:

Liaison plane and trained observer: Radio communication will allow contact to be maintained. Dropped messages may be used.

Liaison officer and reconnaissance units in front lines.

Liaison officer with artillery forward observers.

Information from front line troops.

Information from Division, Corps, and Army intelligence service.

All of these methods must be used, and the information transmitted in the most expeditious manner.

3. TANK DESTROYERS IN SUPPORT OF TANKS.

When tanks are used in an attack, the tank destroyers must support them. This support can be rendered by moving along the best available covered routes from position to position, prepared to fire on either hostile tanks or antitank weapons.

When the enemy employs tanks in mass, we must endeavor to employ tank destroyers in mass. If he uses tanks in small numbers, our dispositions must be such as to counteract these tactics. Depth gives flexibility, and will meet both situations.

4. TANK DESTROYERS AS REINFORCING ARTILLERY.

Utilize the enormous fire-power of tank destroyer battalions to reinforce artillery fires when such action does not jeopardize their primary mission of knocking out tanks.

When tank destroyers are echeloned in depth, the employment of at least a portion of them as artillery will be habitual. Firing positions must be selected which will increase and thicken their depth without loss of flexibility. ONE OTHER FACT TO BEAR IN MIND IS THAT TANK DESTROYERS MAY BE ORDERED ON THEIR PRIMARY MISSION AT ANY TIME AND ARTILLERY MISSIONS MUST BE SUCH THAT THEY PERMIT THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

5. AMMUNITION.

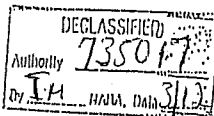
The organic loads of a tank destroyer battalion are for its primary mission and must not be used for artillery fires. The battalion, when employed in its secondary role, will dump the ammunition carried in the battalion trains at the most convenient location. It will utilize its own transportation, insofar as practicable, to haul ammunition for its artillery mission. HIGHER COMMANDS WILL ALLOT ADDITIONAL TRUCKS FOR THIS PURPOSE IF ORGANIC TRUCKS ARE INSUFFICIENT.

6. OFFENSIVE ACTION.

In the advance to contact, the attack, and the pursuit, tank destroyers will be employed with the leading infantry elements.

During the approach march, the enemy, in all likelihood, will use tanks in small numbers to oppose advancing columns. The advance must be aggressive. EMPLOY TANK DESTROYERS WILL FORWARD IN ADVANCING COLUMNS TO FIRE ON TANKS AND TO REDUCE HOSTILE ANTITANK RESISTANCE.

ONCE CONTACT HAS BEEN GAINED, A PORTION OF THE TANK DESTROYERS WILL BE PUSHED WILL FORWARD WITH THE ATTACKING INFANTRY TO MEET ARMORED COUNTERATTACK, DESTROY PILL BOXES, OR IMPLACEMENTS. THE REMAINDER WILL BE ECHELONED IN DEPTH.



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Employment of Tank Destroyer Units (Cont'd)

17 April 1944

TANK DESTROYERS ATTACHED TO A DIVISION MUST BE SO DISPOSED DURING AN ATTACK TO MEET TANK COUNTERATTACKS. TO THIS END, EACH INFANTRY REGIMENT COMMITTED WILL BE SUPPORTED BY A TANK DESTROYER COMPANY, REINFORCED BY A RECONNAISSANCE SECTION OR PLATOON. THE BALANCE OF THE BATTALION WILL BE IN GENERAL SUPPORT. COMPANIES WILL BE EMPLOYED IN DEPTH, WITH AT LEAST ONE PLATOON CLOSELY SUPPORTING THE ADVANCED INFANTRY ELEMENTS. TANK DESTROYER RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENTS WILL ASSIST THE FORWARD MOVEMENT OF THE BATTALION BY CONSTANTLY SEEKING COVERED ROUTES AND SUITABLE LOCALITIES FOR FIRING POSITIONS. The destroyers in general support will be kept echeloned well forward and occupy temporary positions from which they can reinforce any threatened sector on the Division front on short notice. These advance positions may well be anywhere in front of the forward elements of the Division artillery to within one thousand yards of the advance elements of the attacking troops.

Tank destroyers under Corps control will be utilized on secondary missions when there is not actual tank threat. While so employed they must occupy positions from whence they can move at once to meet an armored attack anywhere along the Corps front or flanks. Therefore, provision will be made to echelon them forward as the attack progresses.

During the pursuit, the enemy may use his tanks purely for defense or he may employ them in a counterattack. In either case, tank destroyers will be with the leading pursuit elements to knock out tanks or antitank weapons and prevent delay of our advancing troops.

7. DEFENSIVE ACTION.

The use of tank destroyers in defense must not be stereotyped. Defense in depth is desirable, however, if a beach-head or bridge-head is being defended, or maneuver room restricted in a given situation, it will be necessary to employ all, or majority, of the tank destroyers practically in the front lines with the infantry.

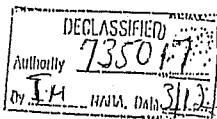
In general, one gun company with one reconnaissance section or platoon attached will support each infantry regiment. Tank destroyers in support of infantry regiments in the defense will be integrated with the antitank defense of the Division. Their guns, whether towed or SP, must be dug in and camouflaged. The reconnaissance elements of the units so employed will be engaged in reconnaissance to locate tanks along the front and flanks, alternate and supplementary positions, and routes thereto.

The battalion, less those units supporting the infantry, will remain under Division control to be used as a mobile reserve. If practicable, they may perform their secondary mission of reinforcing artillery fires. When used as reserves they should not be closer than one thousand yards of the front lines and in positions which permit rapid movement to any portion of the Division front.

8. SUMMARY.

TANK DESTROYERS TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION, WILL BE SO EMPLOYED THAT THEY CAN FIRE ON HOSTILE TANKS BEFORE THE HOSTILE TANKS DO DAMAGE TO OUR ATTACKING OR DEFENDING TROOPS.

The number of tank destroyer battalions in a Division, Corps, or Army will influence their employment. If there are tank destroyers under Corps or Army control, the Divisions can well afford to support each infantry regiment in action with a tank destroyer company. The whole battalion, if necessary, may be well forward with only a small reserve. The hostile tank attack or counterattack will be met by, first, the destroyers with the regiments; second, the small reserve, third, the Corps reserve; and finally, the Army reserve.



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Employment of Tank Destroyers Units (Cont'd)

17 April 1944

If there are few or no tank destroyers in Corps or Army reserve, the decision as to the amount of depth in their employment must be dictated by the particular action.

By command of Lieutenant General PATTON:

/s/ R. W. Hartman
/t/ R. W. HARTMAN,
Lt. Col., A. G. D.
Asst. Adj. Gen.

DISTRIBUTION:

CCs Corps 5
Divisions 5
COs Tank Groups 3
TD Groups 3
TD Battalions 2

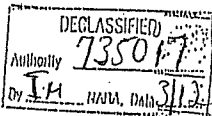
Secy to General Staff 25

Reproduced by Hq., 5th TD Group, 12 Jan 45

DISTRIBUTION:

85 - Ea TD Bn for one copy to all officers and assistant platoon commander, operations and intelligence sergeants and gun commanders.

NOTE: UNDERSCORING AND CAPITALIZATION IN SENTENCES HAS BEEN MADE IN THIS REPRODUCTION TO GIVE ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS TO THESE POINTS.



5th

Basic: Ltr, Hq 614th TD Bn, Sub: "Battalion History", 5 June 44.

514.7 GMS

2d Ind.

(5 June 44)

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH ARMY, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. 17 JUN 1944

THRU: Commanding Officer, 23d Tank Destroyer Group, South Camp Hood, Texas.

TO : Commanding Officer, 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, South Camp Hood, Texas.

1. Paragraph 2, AR 345-105, 18 November 1929, states that submitted histories will refer to pertinent General and Special Orders, and other documentary data.

2. These documentary references should be appended to the basic communication.

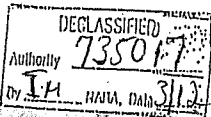
3. Upon resubmission, the history, which is a permanent record, should be transcribed upon bond paper.

By command of Major General LUCAS:

A. Morris, Jr.
A. MORRIS, JR.,
Captain, A. G. D.
Asst. Adjutant General



1 Incl: n/c
(In dup)



**HEADQUARTERS
22ND TANK DESTROYER GROUP
North Camp Hood, Texas**

5 August 1944

SUBJECT: Indirect fire training of 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

TO : Commanding General, XXIII Corps, APO 103, Brownwood, Texas.

FROM : 20th Tank Destroyer Group, Camp Bowie, Texas.

1. On 29 July 1944, the 614th T.D. Bn. completed three weeks of intensive indirect fire training. Although the training time was short it included all provisions of T.C. #2, 7 Jan 1944. On completion of this training to ascertain the degree of proficiency attained, this Hqs conducted an indirect fire test (see inclosure #1) on 3 Aug 1944, with the following results.

2. General

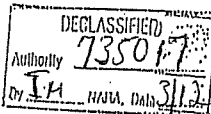
The training of this unit in its secondary role has been very sound as evidenced by the thoroughness and accuracy of its actions. The firing platoon, fire direction team, survey team, and the observers were all thoroughly familiar with the procedure required by their respective jobs. The errors that were made resulted mostly from lack of practice and experience.

3. Firing Platoons

The firing platoons were VERY SATISFACTORY. Although the speed that comes from continued practice was lacking, the platoons have been well trained. The errors made were minor and were corrected immediately.

4. Survey and Fire

The survey and fire direction teams were VERY SATISFACTORY. This team acts in a dual capacity in that the same personnel accomplish the survey and operate the fire direction center. Their knowledge of procedure and accuracy of plotting was proven by the effectiveness of the fire delivered on 3 targets designated by coordinates and altitude. In all cases the effect of the fire was within 50 yds in range with no deflection error. The only deficiency noted was a general lack of speed that again is due to the lack of practical experience.



B. Axial Precision and Bracket Adjustment

(a) Axial Precision.

Three axial precision problems were fired. Two by officers and one by a Hon. Sgt. All problems were SATISFACTORY. All observers had a thorough knowledge of axial precision methods and portrayed confidence during firing. The effect of fire in all problems was within 1 mil in elevation and deflection.

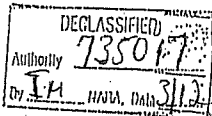
(b) Forward Observation.

Twelve bracket adjustment problems were fired. All were SATISFACTORY. The group of observers was made up of 5 officers and 7 EN members of the Reconnaissance platoon. The effect of fire in each case was within the limit standards. All observers clearly demonstrated knowledge of forward observation methods. Although the observers had only fired an average of two previous problems the estimation of initial data and judgement during the firing was EXCELLENT.

C. Conclusions

This unit can satisfactorily accomplish its secondary mission as reinforcing artillery.

P. M. MARTIN
Colonel, Cav.
Commanding



R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS, SEVENTH ARMY
APO 758 US Army

CIRCULAR)
NUMBER 34)

28 November 1944

Use of Morning Reports in Court-Martial Trials.	I
Marriage of Military Personnel.	II
Battlefield Appointments.	III
Handling of Historical Documents in Seventh Army.	IV

I - USE OF MORNING REPORTS IN COURT-MARTIAL TRIALS

1. Since morning reports are required to be kept by the commanding officer of each unit (par 42, AR 345-400, 1 May 1944) who is also custodian of the report (par 13, AR 345-5, 5 Aug 1944), a morning report made up and signed by a personnel adjutant in an administrative center is not admissible in evidence because the entries are not based on personal knowledge nor does the personnel adjutant have the duty to know the facts. (Par 117 a, MCM, 1928.)

2. Hereafter, in cases where the morning report is prepared and signed by a personnel adjutant, the second (yellow) copy, when received by the unit commander, will be checked for accuracy and signed (even though already signed by the personnel adjutant). Thereafter said copy, or an extract thereof, may be used in any trial by court-martial as fully as if it had been originally prepared and signed by the unit commander.

II - MARRIAGE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

Circular Number 2, this headquarters, cs, pertaining to Marriage of Military Personnel, is rescinded.

III - BATTLEFIELD APPOINTMENTS

1. Paragraph 6, Circular 23, this headquarters, cs, which places a restriction of twenty (20) appointments per three (3) months period multiplied by the number of Divisions in the Army in excess of Table of Organization or Allotment vacancies, is rescinded.

2. Battlefield appointments will be accomplished without regard to vacancies.

IV - HANDLING OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS IN SEVENTH ARMY

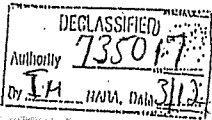
1. All previous instructions and directives published by this headquarters relative to submission of unit histories are rescinded and the following substituted therefor.

2. Authority. According to the provisions of AR 345-105, dated 18 November 1929, and Change 4, dated 10 August 1944, and Letter, Headquarters ETOUSA, subject: "Handling of Historical Documents in the European Theater of Operations", file AG 312.1 Op History, dated 14 July 1944, periodic unit reports after action will be written and submitted by all units.

-1-

(Over)

R E S T R I C T E D



Cir #34, Hq Seventh Army, R E S T R I C T E D
28 Nov 44, cont'd.

a. Each corps, division, regiment, battalion not forming part of a regiment, and independent company, troop, battery, or similarly organized unit will submit through channels its reports after action in sufficient copies that three reach Headquarters Seventh Army, (Attention: Historian). The original and one copy will be forwarded by this Headquarters through the Theater Historian to the War Department.

b. Reports after action will be prepared and forwarded so as to reach this Headquarters by the 20th of each month for the preceding month.

3. Composition of Reports after Action.

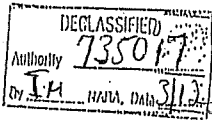
a. Narrative Report: Monthly reports will consist of a running, factual narrative account of the operations and activities of the unit or organization for the period covered, including items pertaining to its plans, orders, administration, and supply. These reports should be so written as to give a true, detailed, historical picture of the period covered.

b. Reports of Staff Sections: According to the provisions of paragraph 10, Change 4, AR 345-105, and FM 101-5, each general and special staff section of corps and divisions will prepare a monthly report of its activities. Section reports will include a summary of activities, peculiar problems encountered and the solutions thereof.

c. Supporting Documents: Unit and Staff journals of units down to and including battalions will be submitted accompanied by their supporting documents including:

- (1) Plans and orders.
- (2) Messages.
- (3) Reports.
- (4) G-2 (S-2) and G-3 (S-3) Summaries.
- (5) Situation maps and overlays.
- (6) Troop list (including changes during the period).
- (7) Such data of the following categories as is compiled for normal or special use:
 - (a) Casualties.
 - (b) Prisoners of War.
 - (c) Roster of key Personnel.
 - (d) Promotions.
 - (e) Own and Enemy materiel losses (guns, tanks, etc.).

R E S T R I C T E D



Cir #34, Hq Seventh Army, R E S T R I C T E D
28 Nov 44, cont'd.

- (f) Any other records of historical interest as important memoranda, decorations, citations, awards, photographs, charts, drawings.

Every effort should be made to enter in journals summaries of important oral or telephone conversations and orders.

4. Reports after action are source material from which the army and theater reports are compiled, also from which the definitive military history of the war will be written. Attention is invited to the necessity of units submitting complete and comprehensive reports in order that their operations be properly evaluated and accredited.

5. Because much of the information included in reports after action is of a classified nature these documents will be strictly safe-guarded and assigned appropriate security classification in accordance with the provisions of AR 380-5.

By Command of Lieutenant General PATCH:

ARTHUR A. WHITE,
Brigadier General, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

W. G. Caldwell
W. G. CALDWELL,
Colonel, AGD, 288
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION: "B"

S E C R E T

REF NO. L-12

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY
APO 758 US ARMY

.....
S E C R E T
Auth: CG 7th Army
Init: RUS
Date: 3 Dec 44...
3 December 1944

AG 370.5-C

SUBJECT: Attachment Orders.

TO : See Distribution.

1. Having arrived 7th Army area and having reported to the CG, 7th Army, the 614th TD Bn (Towed) is attached for operations to VI Corps effective 0001A, 5 December 1944.

a. Commanding Officer will report without delay to the CG, VI Corps.

b. Movement of unit to VI Corps area will be coordinated with Transportation Officer, 7th Army.

2. Further assignment and attachment orders will be issued upon receipt of orders from higher headquarters.

By command of Lieutenant General PATCH:

W. G. Caldwell
W. G. CALDWELL,
Colonel, AGD. *for*
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION:

"Special"

- 1 -

S E C R E T