

DECLASSIFIED

735017

hardly

DATE

Several Tank Destroyer Officers have been returned to Camp Hood on rotation, or after recovering from wounds, and are putting their practical experience to use in the army's training program.

The Officer with broadest experience in this field is Col. J. P. Barney, Jr., a New Yorker, who twice was awarded the Silver Star and once the Bronze Star for his gallantry under fire in Italy and North Africa.

Colonel Barney commanded the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion in both North Africa and Italy. His M-10s were the first to go into action in Africa when the Americans broke out of Kasserine valley in March, 1943.

His battalion was at Maknassy with the First armored division and first had its chance to revise the high command's estimates of the various uses to which TDs might be put. . . . other than seeking out and pot-shooting tanks.

Here many dangerous enemy installations were out of range of the "organic artillery" and Colonel Barney offered to prove to the division commander that his M-10s could do something about it. They had been practicing on indirect fire for weeks.

A six-gun battery high up in a pass was silenced by fire from one of his companies, and later a German column in a valley 14,000 yards distant was torn to pieces by TD fire. "Then," said Colonel Barney, "We started firing indirect fire on German positions until April, then marched north for the breakthrough at Mateur and 'covered' the First from then until the German surrender."

These experiences at Maknassy were the real birth of indirect fire for tank destroyers.

Besides more than 30 German tanks his battalion knocked out artillery and anti-tank guns in its vital supporting role.

\*

\*

\*

"We were corps artillery in the landing at Salerno," Colonel Barney said. "We had polished off our indirect fire while on the desert and were used as artillery at the beginning. . . ."

"We were six months in the line. We were used for assault on pill-boxes, in supporting infantry, and in indirect fire missions."

Colonel Barney's battalion had been with the 34th division, the French Second Moroccan division and the New Zealand corps, before it went through Minturno with the 85th division in May, knocking out pill-boxes "and getting a lot of tanks." It went through Rome with the First Armored.

They all liked the TDs. The 776th received six commendations from six different commanders!

"All the tank destroyer battalions did marvellous work at the Anzio beach-head," he said. "They were splendid at Salerno, too. At Anzio they were fighting everything. Those European houses are really pillboxes. We saved losses to the infantry in knocking these houses out, and our own losses were not heavy, either."

CLASSIFICATION CHANGE TO CANCELLED

BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

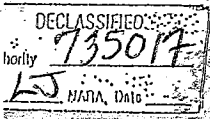
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE Paul J. Zirkle Maj. AGD 1 Oct 46

- 1 -

100-176-0.60

JUL 15 1947

19154 Master



In the Volturno river crossings, the TD battalion was used to destroy distant houses used as German observation posts, clearing the way for the advance. It was used to cover the infantry in many instances, such as the advance on the town of Ollivetta, and in the attack on Montaguilla across the Volturno when no artillery had yet crossed the river.

At Cassino, Colonel Parney's battalion performed many tasks, none stranger than one instance which proved how much confidence the infantry had in the TDs.

"There was a very prominent three-story house in the north west corner of the town," he tells. The lieutenant commanding the platoon "received a message from the infantry that there was a German 50 mm anti-tank gun in the third floor firing through the west window. OUR INFANTRY WAS IN THE GROUND FLOOR! Would he please knock the gun off? As the tank destroyer commander recounted it, he crossed his fingers, said yes, put four rounds in the window, destroyed the gun, killed the crew and never scratched a doughboy!"

Article from Temple Daily Telegram dated 17 September 1944, reproduced at Hq. 776th T. D. Bn., 7 November 1944.

DECLASSIFIED

735017  
NADA, DateTHE TANK DESTROYER BATTALION IN ACTION (24 May 44)Lt. Col. J. P. Banerzy, FA.; CG, 776<sup>th</sup> T. B. Bn.

When the War Department decided to form a new unit of the Armed Forces for the express purpose of combating enemy armor, it decided to call them "Tank Destroyers" in an effort to influence the personnel of the units and the Army as a whole with the idea that here was a unit that could successfully combat the enemy armor and defeat it. The previous name of anti-tank Battalions was discarded as tending too much towards the defensive attitude. The choice of name was in some respects unfortunate as it immediately had the tendency to create in the minds of some of our commanders and in the minds of the newspapers a false impression that here was a band of super-men without fear or care who without adequate armor could brazenly charge into battle with heavily armored enemy units and slay them as easily as Saint George did the dragons. This idea was fostered and played up with lurid pictures and stories that have had a definite influence on the battle experiences of the Tank Destroyer Battalions, in some instances unfortunate experiences.

The purpose of this article is to bring out some of the misconceptions that were created and to show, by definite battle experiences, some of the other outstanding abilities of the TD's when they have not tried to be Jack-the-Giant-Killers. Let it be understood now that nothing in this article is intended as a reflection on any phase of the training or commitment to action of any TD Bn., it is simply a statement of things that have happened and the results thereof, in order that they may be considered by commanders and staffs who may have the TD's attached to them, and who have not had the benefits of battle experience with the TD outfit. It will be noted that I will recount instances of action of one certain TD Bn. This is not intended or intimated for this Bn. to be taken as a criterion, but its experiences are quoted first because I have commanded throughout the African Campaign, later in Italy, am therefore

DEC 28 1944  
17154

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NANA, Date

intimately familiar with its actions and secondly because whether right or wrong its actions so far have turned out successfully, and it has so far always been able to accomplish the missions that have been assigned to it.

First, let us consider the organization and power of a TD Bn, not in minute detail, but in general, so as to be able to realize its limitations and abilities. In doing this I am going to use the new T/O rather than the old one under which some units are still operating, as more and more Battalions are being so organized. First, it is a completely self-contained unit, for motor maintenance, for radio maintenance, for supply of all kinds. It contains vehicles that are full-track, half-track, and all types of wheeled vehicles. It has a road space of many miles, ten roughly, and you can't squeeze that into a twenty-five minute time space, as I have had orders to do on some occasions. Next, it contains Artillery, Infantry, Engineers, Signal Corps, Cavalry and QM units, if you want to so consider the various components, all of which must be in position in the column so as to be able to fulfill their primary missions at a moment's notice. Then we have the arms---and what arms they do have---thirty-six 3" self propelled (in some cases towed) guns, that are the match for any German "88" that ever was, and are as fine an artillery piece as a man can ask for, for certain missions. That is the same number of light pieces in the THREE BATTALIONS of light artillery in the Division Artillery. The 37mm's are with reconnaissance units, fine little guns for reconnaissance by fire and for covering flanks from defiladed positions. The .50 caliber anti-aircraft, the number varies depending on the number issued with the cargo trucks, will make a good average of 60 per Battalion. The .30 MG's, the rifles, grenade dischargers, the carbines, the pistols and the Bazookas, and total that up with approximately 750 trained men, and you have a unit that is power personified-----if employed so as to bring it to bear in full force on the enemy when and where needed. Add to this power 105



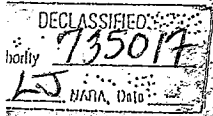
DECLASSIFIED

735017

NADA, Date

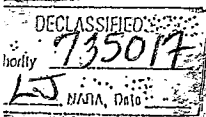
radios, and you then have the communications for flexibility and direct control----- nowhere else can a Battalion Commander talk to the gunner of a piece if he so desires simply by pushing a button, yet, I have done so in battle and directed the fire of a specific gun on a certain target which I could see from my OP. All this added up gives a weapon to a commander that is a dangerous threat to any enemy if he uses it right. It has mobility, fire power, flexibility, and the ability for sustained combat practically as a separate unit. That then is the general picture of what you have. Now how is it organized to accomplish this mission. Under the new T/O it is divided into three gun companies with twelve 3" guns each, a headquarters company, and a reconnaissance company with a pioneer platoon.

In the present set-up of frequencies for the radios of the Battalion each company has its own frequency for its company channel, and in addition the Bn has its command channel which permits uninterrupted communication in most instances. While touching lightly on the subject of the communication set-up of the Bn system, I feel that some slight word should be said as to the operation of the radio sets issued for the TD Bn. The Battalion that I have had the honor to command has been equipped with the new Frequency Modulated sets since August 1942. Initially we had the 600 series which we used in the United States and all through the Tunisian campaign. We were then equipped with used 500 series so that we could be in the Armored net, as it was expected that we would remain in support of an Armored Division. These sets have operated to date through the Italian campaign in extremely rugged, mountainous country, and I feel free to state that those who disparage the FM sets have either not treated them correctly, or else are not familiar with their ranges and abilities, as our communication has been nearly letter perfect at all times. It is definitely true that the 608 and 508 do not have the range necessary for the operation of the Reconnaissance platoons on many of the missions to which they have been assigned, but in most



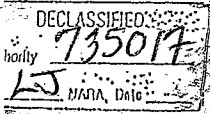
cases the missions were far above the type of mission that the company was originally intended to perform. The operation of the 245 and 193 sets has been superior and no difficulties were encountered in their performance. If such sets were available for the Reconnaissance units it would be a most valuable asset as it would permit the reconnaissance units to work in the same channels as the Divisional Reconnaissance troop and in the Information or Intelligence net whereby they would be in touch immediately with the other intelligence agencies of the unit with which they were operating.

Now after the above brief, general, picture of a Battalion, let's get down to some concrete cases to show what they can do and what they aren't designed to do. Far be it from me to insinuate that the staffs do not know the T/O's and hence abilities of the units sent to reenforce them, but these little episodes may serve to bring to the attention of some commanders and their staffs the real necessity for having at least a general idea as to what they have. When my Battalion reported to the unit it joined for its initiation into battle one gun company was ordered attached to a certain unit. The Company Commander reported to the Commander concerned and his guns started to roll into the bivouac area. He was greeted with "Where in Hell did you get all the captured German Mk IV's?" They thought that the company that was to reenforce them was "TOWED" 37mm guns. The fact that they had the newest and most powerful gun out, to help them, wasn't even considered, and they had no idea as to its abilities or uses. I had to go down later and give them a resume of its characteristics and potentialities so they would have some idea of its uses. Later this unit proved to be our most ardent admirers and advocates and we worked smoothly with them throughout the African Campaign. Later on another occasion when we were with another unit, it became imperative that the advance reconnaissance units of the unit get across a stream. Now wide publicity has been given to the cable ferrying of Jeeps by the TD Pioneers, yet the staff of this unit never had any idea that they had right within call a unit that could throw Jeeps across almost



any kind of a creek in short order. When they were reminded that we could and would do the job, if needed, they fell on our necks with joy, but they had not realized within the headquarters the potentialities of the unit that was there, because apparently they were not familiar with the abilities of the TD Bn.

Now to follow on the campaigns and see what ideas for consideration we can dig out of history. The first mission, after we joined the unit to which we were attached, was as advance guard of a Corps in its debouchment through a defile. Sounds like a unique assignment for a green TD Bn but let's consider the circumstances and I believe that the unusual part will disappear. First, the Bn had anti-aircraft fire power, and lots of it, and the area that had to be traversed had been heavily worked over by the Jerries for a long time. Okay, that was one point in favor of the TD's. Then it had a Reconnaissance Company trained for that type of work, and with communications to work back to the Battalion Command Group. Next, it had Security Sections, Infantry, if you please, to cover and outpost itself. Another point for it--and finally it had its M-10's with the ability to knock out any German tank made. The worst threat in the area was the proximity of numerous German armored units. Score three points for the TD's. In addition to this the parent unit was light in Infantry, and it was desired to hold them in hand so as to be immediately available, in strength, when needed, and not to have them separated and dissipated before it was necessary. Now to counter these advantages we have these points: first, a green unit; second, the area to be covered by the Bn Recon Co was 35 miles deep and 25 miles wide--WOW--some assignment for a Recon Co with only 600 series sets; and lastly, the M-10 had never met the Heinie and, in addition, no one really knew where he was. Add it all up and what do you get? Sure a TD Bn can constitute the Advance Guard for an Armored unit. It's true that the Recon Co had to use four relay stations to get their messages back to the Bn Command Post for retransmission to the big Hq, but they had the necessary equipment and they got the messages back and performed their job even to capturing a grounded Ju "88". It was hard grueling work,



but they could do it, if needed, and as soon as the debouchment was accomplished, the M-10's were the best possible weapon to cover the valleys leading towards the Corps, through which the German armor would have to come. The security was there to cover them, the AA was there to cover them, the Recon was out in front to warn them, and the remainder of the force was all in hand ready to be used as the commander wished, whenever the need arose. All of which adds up into the fact that, although before the Battalion was committed to action the idea of a TD Bn being an advance guard unit had not been brought forth, it is a highly suitable unit for such a mission, and that is particularly true when operating in support of an armored unit.

Now to continue on the Cook's tour of Africa with this same Bn for a time. The next mission, after the debouchment of the Corps and its initiation in the attack to the East, was the withdrawal of the units that had been covering to the North, including the TD's. Having the same qualities as have been considered for the use of the Bn for the advance guard, what could be more reasonable than for it to be used as the REAR GUARD to prevent any armored attack from the rear as the unit collected itself for its own main effort. None--surely--hence, this time the Bn was the rear guard, and the unit was permitted to assemble in its assigned locality without molestation. Here the Bn was assigned to another mission that had never been brought out in the initial phases of its training. It was that of covering and protecting the parent unit from armored attack. In this instance the terrain was all in favor of the TD's----fairly flat, offering excellent fields of fire, but with just enough rolling swales to provide excellent covered positions and positions in hull defilade, where the destroyers could be under the maximum cover, but with the ability to fire at their best ranges when needed and with hills to the rear where adequate OP's could cover the possible avenues of approach. Their own security to cover the guns, their own AA to protect from the enemy air, and their own Reconnaissance out in front to



DECLASSIFIED

735017

LJ NADA, Date

warn them--perfect set-up if there ever was one, and a mission that the Bn was later assigned on numerous occasions, and which they accomplished to the perfect satisfaction of the commander for several months. It was not taught in the books, but was simply the outgrowth of the commander's employment of his attached units to do something that they were organized to be able to accomplish, and a mission that should definitely be kept in the mind of any commander, especially an Armored Commander.

Here I beg leave to make a slight digression before going further into the missions that have been assigned to this one Battalion and bring out a few points that, although I was not a witness to them, were told me by officers of the units who were attached later with my Bn as observers. It will be noted that in the missions assigned to the Bn up to this time, the Battalion had been used as a unit under the direct command of the Bn Commander, who was simply charged with certain missions and who directed these operations after the necessary coordination with the higher staff; the incident here recounted will show the difference in the outcome of the operations when the battalion is split up into one small ineffectual units instead of keeping its power massed and readily available. One Bn that was in the earlier fighting was broken down so that in numerous instances one lone gun was assigned to a mission with an Infantry platoon whose commander had not the faintest idea as to its uses or capabilities. This unit lost heavily on account of this fact. Another unit was given the mission of attacking a hill held by the enemy in force. They did, and they had some slight measure of success, but that was because the men simply would not quit. They attacked through heavy woods up a steep hill with machine guns firing, as there were no suitable targets for their 75s. Another instance was the attack of a TD company on a town heavily defended by German AT guns across a flat open field. They were decimated. With 75s on half-tracks and armor proof against only .30 caliber bullets they took on a task suitable for a Medium tank company at the least. They were ordered into the action by someone who was not

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NADA, Date

familiar with their capabilities. These are but a very few of numerous instances that might be recounted of the definitely improper use of the TD's which may be directly traced to the mistaken idea of their abilities created in the minds of staffs who were not familiar with them. It is true that in those trying days everything had to be done to stop the German breakthrough in Africa, but it is my belief that had these Bns been employed as units they would have succeeded in their missions with far less losses and far greater loss to the enemy.

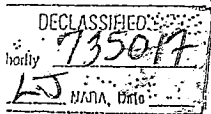
To return to the travels of this certain Bn. The parent unit moved forward on a forced night march, definitely no place for a direct fire heavy gun, hence; it moved in its place in the column well forward but protected this time by the Infantry, until such time as suitable targets should appear--not in the rear of the column, although it was the reserve, but well forward where it could immediately leave the road and enter action in event of armored threat. That is a point often forgotten, that the big M-10 is a big job, and although it can go as fast as anything, it is better to put it well forward where it can throw its weight into the early stages of the fight, and not have to fight its way to the front. Another point is the effect those TANK chassis have on the wire lines of the command. If the destroyers have to come forward after the Artillery has entered action and has laid its lines and the Infantry lines have gone in, THEY ARE GOING TO WRECK COMMUNICATION, and they cannot help it. Its the nature of the beast and when lines are rapidly laid and not well policed while being laid, the commander will simply have to count on wire trouble if the TD's are too far in the rear. This point has been so well learned by two units with which this Bn has been associated that now the destroyers are almost always to the front for the communication reasons only. May I suggest that all staffs and commanders who may be unfortunate enough to read this remember this point, as it has put white hairs in one commander's head, and murder in his soul many times when he was "eaten" for chewing up the Divisions' wire.

Now back to the African tour. Upon arrival in rear of the expected line of



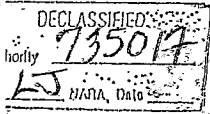
resistance of the enemy, orders were received to attach one gun company to a task force. This, please note, <sup>s</sup>if the first time that any unit has been taken from the Bn, as the company previously referred to was returned to Bn control before debouchment. The Company Commander left with his company in the early morning hours and reported to the Commander concerned. Instead of assigning to this Company Commander the mission that it was desired for him to accomplish, he was given explicit directions as to what would be done with his platoons, including the attachment of two of them directly to Infantry units that were entering action in an area that was composed of deep wadis, and sharp hills, and where it was barely possible to even get the guns through. It was definitely the last place in the world where an M-10 could help the Infantry, as there were no positions, no fields of fire, and a very small chance of encountering enemy armor. The result---8 guns pinned down in a steep sided ravine where they could not come out, as every time they tried they had to "belly up" on the steep ridge could not bring their guns to bear, and were met by the concentrated fire of emplaced enemy AT guns and tanks dug in positions, and driven back. Here they were subjected to indirect fire from all the artillery available to the Jerry and to Infantry Mortar fire from just over the ridge. The commander concerned would not relieve them and allow them to attempt to get back to suitable positions, and as a result they sat in the hole for five days suffering the destruction of three destroyers and numerous casualties. It was definitely not the terrain to send long-range heavy destroyers into, and especially when suitable positions were available within effective range to the rear of the area, where they could have protected the Infantry by their fire power.

The remainder of the Bn then moved over and joined the remainder of this company, and the Bn again came back to the control of the Bn commander. Here the first lessons in semi-position warfare were learned. The terrain here again was all in favor of the destroyer in that it was slightly rolling, with good defilade and deep wadis, but was absolutely barren of trees to any extent. Those that were there were the constant target of German Dive Bombers. The Bn was



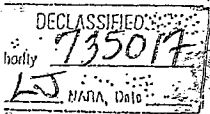
was disposed in depth covering the entire front of the parent unit, with deeply dug-in cover positions for every gun, and numerous DEEPLY dug-in alternate firing positions. All light vehicles were deeply dug-in in the manner of the Jerries. It was necessary to move the platoons every night, because, if they remained in the same position for two days Jerry visited them with both Artillery and Air. By the constant movement the losses were kept to almost nothing for a period of over a month. Very little firing was done as it was the desire of the commander to conceal from the enemy the fact that a new weapon had come into the area. However, after the initial firing at some tanks that were foolish enough to show themselves and pay the penalty of giving a dug-in M-10 a fair crack at them, the guns were used on many different missions. It is believed that the present trend, of using the TD to support the organic artillery, started here, as the guns of the Bn were used to interdict roads, fire on enemy batteries and to knock out located OPs at long ranges where the organic artillery could not fire. Although initially crude, as no precise instruments were available, the fire was nevertheless effective, and the Bn was credited by the Artillery with having accomplished many successful missions for them. This fire became more and more effective with experience and became an accepted part of the role of the Battalion with the unit. Two primary lessons are to be learned from this period; one, that dug-in destroyers with excellent fields of fire can cover an immense amount of front EFFECTIVELY against armor, if they are sited to be mutually supporting, and that armor cannot break through destroyers so dug-in without insupportable losses; and secondly, that the destroyer is a real piece of armored artillery that can sustain a huge amount of indirect fire, if it is dug-in and moved around, without much loss.

It will be noted in the above paragraph that much emphasis was laid on the words DUG-IN and FIELDS OF FIRE. That of course means selection of the ground to give the gun the advantage over the enemy armor. During this period another Bn in action had an experience that it is thought advisable to bring out here, as a contrast in an effort to emphasize the importance of choice of position



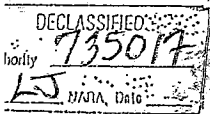
and emplacement. This unit was in ground quite similar to the terrain above described and it was subjected to a heavy armored attack. This unit was directed to attak this armored unit, and did so, not with fire; the prin d ple weapon of the destroyer, but actually closed-in to the attack of the German armor. Its losses due to its lack of cover and armor were extremely heavy. This is brought out to show the effects of those same newspaper stories--Jack-the-Giant-Killer cannot work against a souped-up, long barreled German 75 nor an 88, and it is suicide for a destroyer to punch noses with a tank. The weapon of the destroyer is MASSED fire from the Bn from the best concealed and prepared positions that it can possibly obtain. This will destroy the enemy attack before it can close. Dispersed destroyers in the open, fighting tanks, are simply a red entry of \$75,000.00 each against the balance book. Please, gentlemen, bear this in mind, that the attack of the TD Bn is an attack by massed fire from positions selected in advance after careful and a coordinated reconnaissance by the Battalion Commander, his Company Commanders, and his Platoon Commanders, if it is humanly possible. It is not a wild scramble of charging destroyers deployed or dispersed over the hillsides, rushing into battle with "frightened German Tankers"----as the Irishman said about the giraffe--"Hell", there ain't no sich animule". A scared German tanker when he enters battle, can and does shoot like the devil, and the only way he can be really crushed is to out-shoot and out-smart him, and that can be done. Lay the trap, suck him in, and then blow hell out of him, and never stop fire until every tank is blazing, not just knocked-out.

From this sector we moved again, as the reserve of the parent unit, to the North for the final KILL. Here the policy of utilizing the capabilities of the Battalion for covering the parent unit were used effectively and smoothly until the very last minute before the final breakthrough. Here, we learned another use for the TD's that had not come out before. When the unit arrived at its jump-off position, the commander had ordered us forward as usual to cover the Armor, and the companies had been pushed far forward into carefully reconnoitered



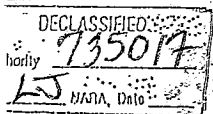
positions with one gun company and the recon company covering the right flank of the unit. A forward OP was established for the Bn CO from which the entire field of action could be seen at short range. It was immediately seen that numerous German AT gun positions could be definitely located, and the destroyers proceeded to work over the entire area to be attacked by the Armor. Every suspicious spot was attacked by direct fire, and the results, as later determined from the destroyed and abandoned gun positions, ~~were~~ little short of amazing. Many of the gun crews allowed, that had they known how many guns the Germans had, they would have been scared stiff. The results of these several hours' fire was that ~~when~~ the armor went through in the afternoon THEY DID NOT LOSE A TANK FROM ENEMY FIRE. This covering of the armor was so successful that in the plans for the final attack the commander based the time of the attacks, of the various tank units, on how fast the destroyers could displace from one firing position to another, so that they could be in position to cover the several attacks contemplated. In the final attack the destroyers leap-frogged the tanks to the succeeding ridges and worked over the ground before the tanks attacked, and in addition they over-watched the tanks in the attack, shooting out anything that offered resistance. This allowed the tanks to conserve their ammunition and to throw the whole weight of their numbers into the attack. The accuracy of the destroyers' guns and the power of the gun very successfully accomplished the mission of covering the armor and permitting them much longer range of action, as they did not have to worry about ammunition resupply. At this time the Bn was equipped with the 600 series radio and hence could not work successfully with the 500 series of the armor, but since the equipment of the Battalion with the 500 series, direct communication with the tanks and their commander is now possible, and it is believed that the cooperation can be even closer. The tank Bn now operating in conjunction with the unit to which we are attached has a channel set up whereby the tank Bn commander and the TD commander can communicate direct, and it is felt that the acme in close support will be realized when the opportunity presents itself.



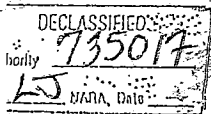


After the German defeat, the Ramblin' Wrecks were sent with the rest of the Allied forces to the rear for reequipment and training, and here we concentrated on the perfecting of the TD-Arty team whereby the TD's could lend their long range to the Artillery in support of the Division. This was worked on with the hearty support of the higher commanders concerned, and with the assistance of the Divisional Artillery Bns a scheme for the cooperation was worked out. Its results in several tests indicated that it was feasible, and the Bn was attached to the invasion forces for use in Italy with the mission of firing as Artillery at long ranges. This was a far cry from the original concept of the TD Bn, but the results after two months of operation in the Italian invasion have been such that it is the opinion of various headquarters, that it has a very definite place in the use of the TD's, and I will, therefore, attempt to describe the very simple organization by which it operates, in order that other units may have the value of the lessons that we have learned.

First, the Bn operates directly with the Divisional Artillery Headquarters. It normally works out so that each gun company is divided into two six gun batteries with each company attached to one certain light Bn of the Division Artillery. It has been found that this six gun organization has some points in its favor over the use of three, four gun platoons, as it leaves a surplus of officers, who may, and have been used, as forward observers with the attacking units, and also makes it possible for some needed rest for the "Battery Executives". Each six gun unit has its small fire direction center located in the M-3 half-track of the platoon commander, and the recorder and computer for the platoon work therein. The Company Commander has a fire direction center comparable to the artillery Bn set-up, but on a smaller scale. The personnel to operate these centers is composed of the Reconnaissance Sergeants, and Reconnaissance Corporals of the companies, and in addition to this the necessary Instrument Operators were trained from the personnel of the Security Sections to lay the batteries. This was done without any severe troubles and the men have quickly and accurately learned to operate the aiming circles and to do a perfectly

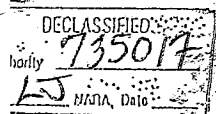


acceptable job. The companies were tied in directly by telephone to the Battalion to which they are attached and work directly under them for fire missions while they are with the Bn. You will note that I have used the expression "With the Artillery Bn"; that is intentional; so long as the Divisional Artillery is within range and there is no positive tank threat the Companies of the TD Bn work with the Artillery Bn. This is customarily expressed in all order as "attached", but it is a working agreement which means that they work with them, but all supply and other matters are handled by the TD Bn as usual, and we do not in any way add to the work of the organic Bn of artillery. In the assignment of fire missions it has been found highly desirable to use the organic Bns for the close-in support of the front lines, and the TD's for the longer range targets for several reason, namely: First, due to the flat trajectory of the TD gun the danger of hitting trees, etc., short of the targets that may be close in front of our infantry is much greater; second, the difference in range for a slight change in quadrant elevation is much greater with the TD gun in night or rapid firing would therefor be much more dangerous to the Infantry; third, for long range work the steeper angle of fall obtainable for the guns is a great advantage, and in addition to the greater range that the TD gun has, its dispersion is much less than the 105mm at long ranges. There is another distinct advantage in the use of the TD gun for long range interdiction that has been well illustrated in Italy, namely, the use of the guns for interdicting important roads at long ranges. We have fired better than 10,000 rounds of HE from this Bn on these missions primarily for the following reasons: When the 3" HE shell hits a hard surfaced road it bursts instantaneously making only a very slight crater that may be easily traversed later by vehicles, whereas the 105mm blows a hole that may close the road. The burst radius of the two shells is practically the same and hence, the high velocity TD shell works better than the 105mm for this work, as it will not deny the road for our use later, yet it will absolutely deny the road to the enemy for transport or any other type of work--and don't forget that Heinie hates that sizzling



high velocity shell just as bad as we hate high velocity guns. In mountainous country the TD gun batteries with their 360 degree traverse can be shifted to cover the crooked mountainous road with no thought as to shifting trails, and all that work, and hence, can be shifted to follow tortuous roads with great facility. Due to their very small dispersion they can concentrate on a section of road and give it a very thorough plastering with a minimum of wasted rounds. This last point was very definitely demonstrated at Maknassy when we moved only one destroyer way up into the mountains to support the 91st FA Bn in the shelling of the retreating German columns. The 91st had a battery that was giving Jerry hell along a stretch of road that they could reach, and he pulled off into the sand to avoid them, lost beaucoup vehicles, and came back on the road. I adjusted one gun at 14,800 yards on the intersection of the two roads where there was a cut-bank and a defile, and as soon as they straightened out on the road again we plastered them. Our guns were new, the ammunition was new and all things were definitely in our favor, it is true, but the results were what counted, and after many years in the Field Artillery, I was still astonished to see round after round burst within effective range of that cross road. The effect I make no claims on, but I do know that one prisoner we got soon after, who had been forced to abandon his vehicle there by our fire, was astonished that we had been able to capture 88s and learn to shoot them so accurately.

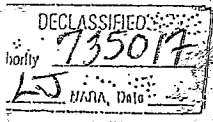
After the above slight digression to try to bring out some points let me continue with the discussion of the use of the TD's with the Div Arty. Where we have been able to render a very signal service to our Artillery is, I believe one that has been like Topsy and simply grown here. As will be immediately seen our greater range will allow us to stay in position while the organic Bns move up and that is exactly where we have been working; we work under the organic Bn till it approaches its limit of range, then say "adios" and pull out and hook their telephone line in direct to the Bn CP. The TD Bn Hq then takes over the fire direction of the companies as the organic Bns make their



displacements, and the Div Arty calls on us direct for the fire missions they desire. We assume all missions during this period, both close in and long range until the organic Bns are again ready to shoot.

One point that was not brought out before is the cooperation of the organic Bns with us in the survey operations. We do not have the necessary instruments for extremely accurate survey, so the organic Bn runs that in for us. When it is humanly possible the TD company commander accompanies the organic Bn commander forward on his reconnaissance and they select their positions together. The organic Bn runs the traverse to the new position for the TD's as well as for their batteries. In this connection there is a point that should be brought out here, and that is the position selection. At first there was the mistaken idea that perhaps the TD's would interfere with the organic artillery in selecting positions, but we have found from experience that this is absolutely false for several reasons. Namely, first, the howitzers want the bottoms of the little folds in the ground and we want the reverse slopes of the higher land so we can get the desired elevations without too much digging, and also so that we will be in a cover position from which we can quickly move to the ridge lines to fire as anti-tank weapons if immediately needed. Secondly, due to our mobility and abundant power we can occupy positions and quickly move from them whereas the organic artillery cannot get into them. Thirdly, we can, and have, moved into positions that were more exposed to enemy fire where our armor protects us from all but direct hits.

The last phase in this operation of the TD Bn with the Artillery is one that has also grown like Topsy and is one that must be remembered by all commanders. This is the mission of the TD's, to destroy enemy armor whenever it appears. Our commander has solved this matter in a manner that is so simple that it does not seem reasonable till you see it on paper, and which has worked so well that we know that it is the answer. You will remember that I stressed the point that our companies were "attached" to the organic Bns in the written orders, but that it was only a way of saying that we worked "with" those Bns. The



standing orders are that the ENTIRE TD Bn belongs to the Bn commander whose mission it is to protect the command from all armored attack, and in order to swiftly and positively accomplish this mission, the orders, understood by all Artillery Commanders, are that whenever tank threat is imminent or develops, every man of the TD Bn belongs to the TD commander and that his orders are complete and final--that he will immediately take any or all of the companies, no matter on what mission engaged, to move at once to destroy the armored threat. The employment of this order has been necessary within this unit, and it has always worked with the smoothness and precision that we pray for, and I say without reservation that with a proper understanding between the commanders concerned, the TD Bn can become a very valuable asset to any high commander if used in conjunction with his organic artillery, and it will still be able to accomplish its mission of DESTROYING ENEMY ARMOR even if it may not be able to fix bayonets and charge them like the newspapers say they do.

In summing up the information stated above I would like to enumerate a few "does" and "don'ts".

DO inform or see that your staff and unit commanders are informed as to the capabilities and armament of the TD Bn.

DO use the TD, in its secondary role of an artillery piece, to its utmost to interdict roads at long ranges.

DO assign the TD's the mission of close support of a Tank attack.

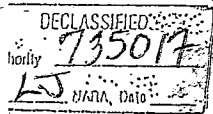
DO call upon your TD Commander to do the things like mine sweeping, ferrying, and other pioneering works, when they will help your engineers.

DON'T under any conditions send the TD Bn "chasing" tanks. It was proved in the Tunisian Campaign that the TD will come out on the losing end of a head-on encounter with enemy armor in numbers.

DON'T split up the TD Bn into small forces of four guns or so, and then send them to engage the enemy under the command of an officer knowing nothing of the tactics of the TD.

DON'T expect your wire communication to stay in when you leave the TD's back, and bring them forward after the rest of the Division has displaced.

DON'T try to tell the TD commander HOW to do his job, just tell him what you want and let him do it. He knows, he will do it, he knows that his guns and vehicles



can do a certain job better than a staff man might know. It is the most powerful one-man command in the Army, and if handled properly it can do wonderful work, and if mishandled it can waste your income tax for the next forty years to no avail. Follow the old adage and "Ask the man who owns one", first before you make up your mind.