

Tank Destroyer Historian

Because I'm retired & don't have a secretary and don't type rapidly myself I'm taking the liberty of sending my answers to your questions dictated on magnetic tape.

Let me first list the questions I find in your letter of October 18th

1. How was the Bn CO & staff employed when his companies & many times platoons were widely dispersed in action.

Answer: - In my opinion there are as many answers to this question as there were Bns in action. Let me start back to the organization of the T.D. I may have organized one of the very first Anti Tank Bn & here is how it was done. I was CO. of the 189th F.A. Bn a 155 mm Bn in the 45th Division Okla NG. We had been called to active duty on Sept 16th 1940. I was proud of my Bn, we had arrived as school troops at Ft. Sill.

One day in the spring of '42 I think I haven't taken time to verify dates as this is conversation

I was called to the office of the chief of staff of the 45th - Jim was a good friend of mine. He said Carl you will probably

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Went to kiss my "somewhere" for the rest of your life - it proved true, - but he said we have just received orders to organize a Anti Tank Bn. We leave on maneuvers in - I think it was 26 days, we have no Tables of organization or material - nothing - all we know is that we will transfer the men & material to you from the Anti Tank platoons now a part of the 4 Artillery Bns. What a challenge. He also said I promise you that there will be no transfer of dead heads by the Bns before you get the Platoons. Well of course there was.

We went to work we begged & stole & borrowed & went to Louisiana as a Anti Tank Bn.

At the same time that we were screening material & equipment we put on a physical fitness program & a psychological program with a slogan "they can be stopped".

We got to Louisiana & in about the second exercise the 45th was on the south along with the 36th Div. from Texas against regular Divisions advancing south - Well to make it short - our Bn in defensive positions stopped Gen Patton's Armor - of course the Louisiana terrain had a lot to do with it - it sure helped our moral & we got a big word up - Photos etc. in life - no copy available here.

We had nothing but Towed 75s which we knew wouldn't work - so we cut pine trees or found telephone poles & put them on

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1/2 Ton Trucks pointing forward & we stopped them

Tactics were learned from what worked - we learned

1. We had to be faster than the Tanks,
2. We had only one Round to Kill 'it', the second was too late.
3. We had to get behind a mask or in cover.
4. We had to really study & know the terrain - every obstacle, every Trail - every mask etc.
5. We had to have communication and the very best observation.
6. We had to have liaison with infantry & artillery because it proved that we called for much indirect fire if we had aggressive observation.

Well you can see I was & am proud of that Bn - it did get a Presidential citation. This Bn was the one I took back to HQ.

We finally moved to Ft. Devens Mass. & were alerted for shipment etc & de-alerted etc - that's another story.

One day the Chief of Staff came by & I asked if I wanted to go back to Ft. Hood. They needed a Post Communication officer - I answered Well no - I thought I was indispensable - I'd given birth to my Bn. He said OK. I'll tell the Pentagon you are not available. Well I was available - found a friend in the Pentagon wanted to get me promoted.

I went & found the job filed

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So I was assigned to a training set up. It broke my heart cause my Bn was shipping to Africa.

To get out of there I went to school took an advanced course in T.D. Tactics. Taught by officers who had never been in a T.D. Bn, or on a maneuver with a Bn. Well I was a maverick - I told them it wouldn't work etc. at first they thought I was nuts - but they saw the light + asked that I be an instructor again it was no - Finally I was assigned another T.D. Towed Bn, + took them back to ha. on maneuvers. - My Towed Bn was attached to the Corps Artillery Gen George Shea. This Maneuver was Corps size and all the Divisions were new - Their first maneuver - No knowledge about T.Ds. Well the General gave me orders to be attached to a different Division each phase + to teach each Div how to employ the T.D. Bn. We had a good time the Div. C.G. liked us because we had more artillery tubes that he had in his Artillery + we initially went into indirect firing positions + with that fire power the Unnies let us advance. Then the T.Ds would hurry forward taking defensive positions against a possible counter attack.

The Bn was stationed I believe it was Camp Park in ha. A terrible place - I found a T.D. Group with order. to ship to England. They needed an exec. I jumped at the chance + finally commanded the 2nd T.D. Group. We shipped to England + were attached to

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the 19th Corps, I found my friend Gen Shea the Artillery Officer. Well the group had practically nothing to do so I was given the job of Teaching all the T.D. Bns then in England how to fire Indirect fire - The simplest method with the fewest instruments scavenged from the Artillery. I became a Trouble Shooter and filled many Artillery Positions in Corps staff & various Divs during the conflict & after.

You can see I'm rambling & get off the subject. But while I'm rambling let me mention one other subject that had a major effect on the T.D.s

General Bruce was the Father of the T.D.s & he built Ft. Hood. I think he was a Cavalry Officer & he was very ambitious to make the T.D.s a separate Branch in the Defense Dept. In my opinion an Artillery Officer was at a disadvantage when assigned T.D. because Gen. B. didn't want the Artillery to take his "branch" over. It effected Tactics and Uniform & most everything. This is my opinion & sure I'm prejudiced I admit.

#2 Question

Please do not accuse me of eliminate the T.D.s - I thought I made that clear in my study. Let me list what I recommended -

1. I recommended that the T.D. Bn become organic to each Div - Similar organized but organic & not Attached ~~Reasons~~.

1. Confidence gained through mutual respect
gain through being a Team member gained

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though having been tested as a team member etc

To me that confidence is very very important from the Division C.G. way down to the Back Provt to the men on his TD, weapon team

2. Supply - attached units are always bastards - even their Am. is delivered last or the unit tries to get it.

3. Promotions & awards are never equal in an attached unit.

4. Replacements of men's material

is that enough - there are many more.

#3 Question, Hyper Am.

1. The first we heard about this Am. it had been made by the French, we saw technical articles on it but it never got through the manufacturing & supply lines to my knowledge.

Maybe it was like the Poset Am. the artillery got - the am that went off about ten to twenty feet above the ground. The Arty had this in the supply line but were not allowed to fire it - for fear the Germans would pick up a dud & learn how to manufacture it - finally as the war was running down - and it was figured if this happened they wouldn't have time the Artilly was permitted to use it if a situation was right for its use.