C.O. Co, 60th!

USE OF ANTI-TANK WEAPONS AND INDIVIDUAL COMPANY TACTICS. We got absolutely nothing from books or manuals in the U. S. They spoke in generalties and offered no specifics. Now that I look back, you would have thought we would gain from the British experience but, as I recall, nothing was gained. Whether we did not ask to right questions or whether the home troops didn't know we did not gain much insight. "Hull down"; "alternate firing positions"; "rapid movement" came to us in North Africa. The Germans were masters at use of terrain. They sought out the ravines, wadis, mounds and used them to the utmost. We went hull-down at every opportunity. If no natural feature existed we created protection by digging the destroyer in. Mutual support was by platoon. Three covering for the one moving. No more that a few rounds from each position -- then pull back and move to an alternate. At El Gauttar, we had such natural mounds, etc and that was our salvation. Spacing of guns was not according to yards or feet but according to the terrain. Often a gun might be covering a wadi only.

In an attack we used the same tactics. Movement was from cover to cover with 3 covering one. Movement was to be a highest speed possible. Each gun selected its next position from the protected one. None of this business of sitting out in the open to be picked off.

From what I can piece together, the debacle at Faid was a result of positioning. The tanks of 1st Armored sat out on the flat ground, silhouetted like sitting ducks. It was no problem for the tanks or 88 crews to pick them off. I certainly am not blaming the Ist as maybe that was the way Montgomery fought in the Western Desert. I do not remember that we had smoke bombs or flares. Flares were a big help as they high-lighted each tank and motor carrier. Smoke bombs could help in extricating from an exposed position.

Whether true or not, it was commonly accepted that the German tanks had their machine guns synchronized with their main gun. Thus at night, if the machine gun got a richochet the main gun was fired. This might have resulted in firing at boulders but also caught our armor in the open. We did not have this capacility on the TD or tank. More the reason to get "hull down".

Due to ammunition shortage, we never really had enough actual firing practice. Gunnery with the 75mm was much like artillery adjusting.

ARMOR AND EQUIPMENT -- USA.

M3, 75mm gun. Everyone knew this was a joke. Realistically we recognized that the army had to get something quick and this was the stop-gap. It certainly beat the towed guns we originally had. The gun was less than 1,000 velocity and it had limited traverse. Armor plate might deflect machine gun fire but nothing bigger. Being a 1/2 track one had to be careefull so that it did not kick a track.

M10, 3" gun. We found this destroyer to be very good. Ours were twin deisels and problems were not that bad. Our armored divisions envied that deisel which did not flash burn easily. I remember an incident when one of our M10's was to accompany a Sherman (at night) to an exposed position to fire on German positions. The Sherman was leading and he hit a mine in the rear and it became a "flamer" immediately, much to the horror of our people. I had no experience with other models.

Everyone knows about the JEEP and the 2-1/2 ton 6 x 6.

Somehow in North Africa word was circulated ----------that the American Attitude was "let George do it". Meaning let someelse. I had a company formation in which I gave the men a stern lecture explaining that we were "George". Some wag muttered: "Captain, my name is Harry".

ARMOR AND EQUIPMENT OF GERMAN ARMY. Time has dimmed by recollection of specifics but certain things do stand out. The tank mostly encountered in Tunisia was the Mark IV. I do not remember a Tiger until later. We could contend with the IV with a good hit.

Their light machine gun was superior to anything we had. One thing that galls me is that in all the movies, TV shows, etc. none of them recreate the ripping sound made by the gun. It was no "rat-tat-tat"; but that ripping sound. I often think that the psycological effect was as great as the rate of fire. Barrell replacement had to be rapid and often. Author Martin Blumenson wrote (in one of his books) an analysis of equipment which I found to be highly accurate.

The famed 88 was after all an anti-aircraft weapon. I do not know how it started, but they used it as a ground support weapon in North Africa. Their crews were dashing and quick to setup. They had no special armor to protect them. It was amusing to me, that almost any type of artillery fire was called an 88. Infantry troops would call anything as 88. I have been under regular artillery fire which bears the usual "incoming" sounds. The 88 came with a "crack".

Mortar fire was also very accurate. Tank and TD crews got to know that given time, the Germans could put a round in the turret.

Aircraft were not that superior. At El Guettar I remember a flight of at least 20 "Stukas" approaching. Our first AA burst seemed to be right on the nose of the lead plane whereupon they all dumped their loads short of our positions. This was the last I saw of the Stuka.

The Tiger and Panther were awesome. Heavy plating and high velocity gun. As I recall they did not have great speed. The Germans had loaded the suspension system to the limit and it was the cause of later mechanical failures. At Anzio some of our men told me that they bagged several which had simply broken down. As I understand it, the U. S. Army had the same problem -- suspension. You can load only so much tonnage onto the suspension. Either plate protection or gun.

The Germans had a small heater which was a gem. It was about 6" high and 4" in diameter. It did not require a pump to heat up like a COLEMAN. They were highly prized for providing heat for food and drink.