

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

APO 45, U S Army
3 March 1944

SUBJECT: Loss of M-10s from 16th to 18th of February 1944.

TO : Commanding General, 5th Army (Attention, Artillery Officer)

1. Between 16 February 1944 and 18 February 1944, inclusive, this Battalion had twenty (20) destroyers (M-10) put out of action; of these, seventeen (17) were lost and had to be replaced. Break-down of loss is as follows:

A Co....9
B Co....3
C Co....5

2. Causes for loss were as follows:

A Co: Three hit by direct fire, (one hit twice in tracks and once in motor; one hit twice in rear by HE direct fire; one hit in left motor by AP) and have not been recovered as they are in enemy territory. Complete destruction was not possible as enemy infantry was entering position at the time they were hit. One destroyer hit by mortar fire between counter balance and started to burn. Could not put out fire. Now in enemy territory. One had transmission trouble and started to burn. Tried to recover it but blaze could not be controlled. All hand extinguishers used, but had to leave destroyer vicinity 863289. Unable to recover as yet. Three destroyers were hit by direct and indirect fire and had house collapsed on them. Territory in enemy hands (dead-end road vicinity 875297). One hit in motor by SA fire, recovered but had to be replaced.

B Co: One M-10 hit a mine vicinity 864298 and enemy took it under artillery fire and burned it. Two M-10s had positions over-run with enemy infantry (ours had withdrawn without our knowing it in time) vicinity 863295. They fired all their ammunition and tried to get out but vehicles bogged down and had to be abandoned. Now in enemy territory.

C Co: One was lost by receiving direct fire from an enemy tank which set the M-10 on fire. The destroyer kept on firing until gunner could not see any longer, and had to abandon burning destroyer while still being fired on. Four destroyers lost on 18 February 1944 because of enemy over-running position. Vehicles were bogged down, and friendly infantry had withdrawn. Firing pins removed and destroyers abandoned. Destroyers not destroyed because it was thought that the ground would be retaken that day as it had been the previous day. Terrain now held by the enemy.

For the Commanding Officer:

JAMES H. LEGENDRE JR.
Capt FA
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