

ANTI-TANK DEFENSE OF ANZIO BEACHHEAD

1. Planning Phase.

a. Operation Shingle.

- (1) VI Corps was withdrawn from the vicinity of VENAFRO in the early part of January 1944 and began planning for Operation "Shingle". High lights of coordination of AT defense included:
 - (a) Coordination with G-3 as original beachhead objective was not suitable for AT defense. As a result, the projected line was extended to the MOLETTA River which gave a more suitable road net and at the same time afforded a better natural obstacle on the left flank.
 - (b) Coordination with the Engineers as to priority of demolitions, mine laying and roadblocks.
 - (c) Coordination between British and American units to insure adequate protection of boundaries.
 - (d) Directives to units to insure that they embarked adequately equipped with AT means; to assist units having insufficient equipment.
 - (e) Assurance that the landing plans were such that AT weapons could be unloaded early in the landing.
 - (f) Check on ammunition supply and recommendation as to the ratio HE to AP. It was decided that 80% HE and 20% armor piercing (with base detonating fuze) would be a proper percentage. This allotment of types has proved satisfactory throughout the operation.
 - (g) Plans for AT defense from units to determine that all avenues of tank approach were adequately covered.
 - (h) Close liaison with all units to insure dissemination of all pertinent information.
- (2) As a result of this phase of Operation Shingle the necessity for the following appears:
 - (a) The Anti-tank section of either division or corps should be included in any planning group from beginning to completion of plans.
 - (b) Constant association of the AT Officer with G-3, G-2, and G-4 are imperative in order to advise the General Staff of capabilities and limitations of TD's, of other AT means, and to assist them in their planning estimates.
 - (c) The anti-tank units involved must be informed promptly of changes and modifications in plans, since the smallest change in plans will affect AT dispositions.
 - (d) All units involved in an operation must be informed of the AT plans of the other units so that complete, detailed coordination can be attained.
 - (e) The Anti-tank defense portion of the Corps Order must include specific instructions as to locations of demolitions, mines and other passive means of defense.

2. Operations Phase.

a. Landing Phase.

- (1) Only one TD Bn, the 601st TD Bn attached to the 3rd Division, landed in the assault wave just after dawn. The first 24 hours were spent in unloading and assembling the battalion in the area designated. Due to the soft, marshy ground, considerable work was required before all guns reached the area. Dewaterproofing was accomplished and by the morning of D-1-1 the Bn was ready for operations. During this period the British 81st AT Regiment was in floating reserve and quickly available in case of need.
- (2) During this phase organization of the beachhead was the primary concern. Reconnaissance of the area by all units was made, positions located, and occupied, and AT positions along boundaries closely coordinated. As new units landed constant readjustment of gun positions and boundaries was necessary.
- (3) The landing of the 894th TD Bn on 26 January coincided with the enemy counterattack on the 1st Inf Div (Bn) in the CARROCCETO area with approximately 20 tanks. Two companies of the 894th (under Corps control) were placed in support of the 1st Div and Ranger force who were operating in the CARROCCETO area. Two days later the third company was placed on the left flank under corps control.

b. Offensive Phase.

- (1) On the 28th of January the 1st Inf Div (Br) started its drive toward the north with C Co, 894th attached. M-10's were employed as assault guns as well as anti-tank guns and worked with the infantry battalions. During this period fighting was heavy with numerous counterattacks; the lines fluctuated; units were cut off and then contact rejoined.
- (2) On the 30th of January the 3rd Division began its attack on CISTERNA. The 601st TD Bn supported the attack as assault guns as well as anti-tank.
- (3) In both instances targets of Tank Destroyers included personnel, houses, strong points, machine guns, vehicles, guns, tanks and SP guns, 50 cal. machine guns were used by M-10's constantly and the M-10's were employed in the front lines of the infantry continuously.
- (4) Beginning 4 February 1944, offensive operations, other than counterattacks, ceased and the VI Corps assumed the defensive.

c. Defensive Phase.

- (1) During this period most of the hostile tank action occurred in the ANZIO-ALBANO axis from the 2nd to the 19th of February the enemy employed elements of six divisions on a 3000 yard front, and gained approximately 10,000 yards. An estimate of the enemy armor employed is 125-150 tanks, including both Mark IV and Mark VI types.
- (2) From the 2nd to 16th the 894th TD Bn had two companies employed in the ANZIO-ALBANO sector. Guns were placed well forward to cover vital roads and avenues of approach. Hostile artillery and mortar fire was intense. By the 5th of February, C Co, which had been in heavy action since the 29th of January was depleted to approximately 50% in strength in both M-10's and personnel. The balance of the Company was near exhaustion. B Co took over some of the positions of C Co so that some relief could be affected. A lull in fighting took place for a few days and from the 11th to the 16th the 645th completed relief of the 894th in this sector.
- (3) From the 16th through the 19th the Germans made an all out effort. During this period all 36 M-10's of the 645th battalion were employed with seventeen of them lost. As a result of these losses one platoon of A Co, 894th, which was still committed on the left flank was attached to the 645th. Also A Co of the 701st (A & C Company arrived on 9th Feb, balance of Bn on 23rd) was placed in direct fire positions in vicinity of the overpass to reinforce the 645th. In addition, the balance of A Co, 894th was alerted and B Co 894th was attached to the 56th Div (Br) which was on the left flank of the 45th Division. The 645th TD Bn destroyed 25 tanks in these 3 days and the 701st destroyed six. In addition, all TD's fired at enemy personnel with 50 cal. MGs and 3" guns. Other targets were houses, machine guns and mortars.
- (4) On the 19th the 1st Armored Division counterattacked with C Company of the 701st attached to overwatch the tanks. The action was successful and C Co destroyed two tanks.
- (5) After the counterattack the enemy fighting was reduced to local attacks and patrol skirmishes until the 28th when the enemy had regrouped and struck the 3rd Division along its whole front. The usual enemy tactics of tanks supporting infantry was employed. The attack lasted for five days during which approximately 75-100 tanks were employed by the enemy. The 601st destroyed 25 during this period with the loss of no M-10's although some were damaged.
- (6) Due to the wide front of the 3rd division and the amount of armor available to the enemy, C Co of the 701st TD Bn was attached to the 601st to provide depth to the defense as all guns (36) of the 601st were committed in direct fire positions. On 4 March one platoon of B Co was sent to 3rd Div area to protect the canal crossing NE of CONCA. Thus, a total of 43 M-10's were available in the sector of the division. (C Co, 701st had only 8 guns). In addition, C Co of the 894th was alerted for possible employment, and the balance of the 701st TD Bn was in reserve.
- (7) From 5th of March until 25th March only local actions have taken place. As of 25 March TD units in VI Corps are with units as follows: C Co of the 894th is attached to the 5 Inf Div (Br) on the left flank, A Co of the 894th is attached to the 1 Inf Div (Br) on the right flank of 5 Div (Br) and C Co is in Corps Reserve prepared to back up either forward Company. The 645th is with the 45th Div.

The 601st with C Company of the 805th TD Bn (which arrived on the beachhead March 11th) is attached to the 3rd Div. The 805th TD Bn (-C Co) is attached to the 1st SS Force on the extreme right flank. The 701st TD Bn is attached to the 1st Armored Division, in Corps Reserve with the Division. This arrangement of units covers all avenues of approach and provides an adequate TD reserve.

d. Conclusions.

- (1) One of the important points brought out in this operation has been the necessity for rotation of TD personnel. Formerly the conception of the role of Tank Destroyers has been that of a mobile reserve to deepen the static anti-tank guns and to move to the area where the greatest threat developed. In the perimeter defense of the ANZIO Beachhead it has been necessary to place M-10's in the front lines often under intermittent rifle, MG, mortar and artillery fire. The continuous presence of enemy tanks in the area necessitated that TD crews be alert constantly. Losses in crews and M-10's were heavy. As a result considerable reserve had to be maintained not only to reinforce, but to replace individual guns or units.
- (2) The use of TD's as anti-tank guns sited behind a house or in a hull defilade position waiting for tanks to appear has been the chief method utilized. Terrain of the beachhead is frequently bare of cover and ground is often marshy. This condition has restricted TD movement chiefly to roads and prevented movement to meet the tanks has been impracticable. Against the mass of artillery, mortar, SP and tank fire that the enemy employed during his attacks the only sure way to cover a route of enemy tank approach was to actually have the AT gun dispersed in mutually supporting positions to cover approaches.
- (3) It is pertinent here to point out a weakness in our present anti-tank means. We assume that an infantry anti-tank gun once placed in position will be there when the enemy tanks approach. However, no provision is made to maintain communication (other than visual) with these guns. Thus, if a 57mm crew or gun is knocked out or overrun there is no way of knowing about it and an approach that seems to be well covered may actually have no protection. Wire is not satisfactory as it cannot be maintained. Accordingly, it appears advisable that each infantry or towed anti-tank gun crew be equipped with a radio to enable communication with the platoon and company commander. In the case of the Tank Destroyers a radio in each M-10 provides this necessary communication.
- (4) Another problem of anti-tank defense is the necessity of giving close support to advancing or withdrawing troops. It has proven impractical to move towed anti-tank guns in forward areas in daylight due to thin skinned prime movers and inadequate protection for crews while going into positions. During the hours of darkness only can the towed anti-tank guns be placed in forward positions.
- (5) Another problem is the limited traverse of the towed anti-tank gun. In several instances attempts have been made to move the trails to fire in another direction with the result that the gun crew was destroyed or neutralized by hostile fire. With emphasis on concealment and minimum of movement it must be appreciated that the towed gun generally can only fire in the direction in which it is sited at time of attack. It follows therefore that the M-10 is the most economical AT weapon due to its ability to fire promptly in any direction.
- (7) The tactics of the enemy in employing infantry and tanks together necessitate our placing a large number of anti-tank guns and TD's on or near the front line in order to be in range of the tanks following the infantry. In many cases the Boche tanks follow at a distance of approximately 1000 yards and as many were Mk VI's only the 3" gun could fire on them with effect. During the major German attack, enemy infantry overran the anti-tank positions before they could fire a round at enemy tanks. Also, several attacks were made at night with no tanks involved and AT gun crews were overrun. As a result, two suggestions are made which might alleviate this difficulty.

- (a) Every anti-tank gun should be able to fire on enemy personnel with HE. Approximately 10% of the fighting personnel of a regiment are anti-tank crews. The added fire power in support of the infantry might save a critical situation and keep the gun in operation.
- (b) Anti-tank guns must be able to fire at night. To permit observed fires, some type of flare should be devised in order to see what the enemy is doing at night and allow AT gunfire as in the daytime. It is pertinent that the enemy has a yellow flare which lights up an area for about five minutes.
- (7) One of the most interesting developments in tactics is the artillery-tank Destroyer team. Throughout this campaign tank destroyer OP's frequently observed for division and corps artillery on all types of targets. In one instance a TD Company Commander, while his TD's were firing on tanks at closer ranges, adjusted corps artillery on tanks out of range of his own TD's and in 3 days destroyed 15 tanks and damaged several others. In another instance the artillery and TD's were tied in so well that the artillery fired a concentration on enemy tanks and infantry to cover the TD's who moved into firing position and destroyed 3 tanks and dispersed the rest. Wherever the enemy uses tanks and infantry together such TD-Artillery teamwork is essential to break up a determined attack. This is also a reason for the reserve company of a TD Bn to be in indirect fire positions so that it can cover the forward companies who are in direct fire positions.
- (8) As teamwork is the essence of success, the attaching of a TD Bn to each division on a continuous basis is essential. Only by constant working together can the tricks of combat be refined and confidence in one another be established. For example, a TD Company had destroyed several tanks but the enemy was retrieving them during the night. By getting together with the infantry a trap was laid, on the next night, when the Germans attempted to recover the infantry mortars put up some flares while the TD's shot up the enemy recovery crews. Another example is the employment of this same Company's guns on roving gun missions during the night. Prisoners of War state it is very effective.
- (9) This operation provides innumerable examples of the TD's being used in other than anti-tank roles. It has been a frequent occurrence for an infantry company commander to ask the TD's to shoot-up a house containing enemy personnel. This is accomplished by indirect fire when possible, otherwise from direct fire positions. Utilizing HE-delay fuze, armor piercing with a base detonating fuze and HE-fuze-quick, excellent results are obtained. Such missions should be encouraged so that full advantage of the weapon can be taken.
- (10) A variety of communications are essential to obtain maximum coordination and efficiency. Every TD Bn can be reached by telephone through two different channels. The Corps Anti-tank Warning Net is maintained 24 hours a day with all battalions in the net. Each Bn is on the division net with the divisions to which attached. Liaison officers with radios are at these headquarters also. In addition, roving liaison officers contact all other TD units daily. An average of 3 OP's per battalion are also maintained. All of these channels of communication are desirable to keep Tank Destroyers abreast of the situation.
- (11) Passive means of anti-tank defense have been used extensively here. In the constant shifting and regrouping of units required in any similar operation, indiscriminate mine laying, demolitions and road cratering must be closely controlled. Careful planning and wide distribution of information is necessary to ensure against casualties of our own personnel and equipment. Responsibility for executing demolitions must be clearly defined and all persons operating in the area informed of the plan.

3. Summary.

a. Regardless of the echelon involved, it is essential that the following be recognized:

- (1) The AT Officer must be informed promptly of enemy information, of contemplated operations and plans, and must be included in all planning. Conversely, the recommendations of the AT Officer should be required in all matters pertaining to anti-tank defense. Otherwise his

usefulness as a staff officer is nil; confusion and inefficient protection will result. The foregoing necessitates frequent consultation of the AT Officer by the commander and action on the part of the various staff sections to insure that the AT Officer is continuously in the picture. This cannot be accomplished by the energy and initiative of the AT Officer alone.

- (2) In order to be efficient the defense against hostile armor must be a planned disposition which incorporates all available means after weighing enemy capabilities. Maximum protection will only result; from careful utilization of terrain for siting of weapons and as obstacles to enemy tanks; from careful integration of all anti-tank weapons in accordance with their capabilities; from maximum use of demolitions and mine fields carefully coordinated with weapon locations and natural obstacles; from the closest cooperation on the part of local infantry groups; and from intimate integration not only into the artillery plan but, equally important, the fire plan of all infantry weapons.
 - (3) In order to accomplish the foregoing it should be exceptional for Tank Destroyer units attached to a division to be further attached to regiments or lower units. The anti-tank defense of the division must be a divisional disposition in which all division weapons are disposed according to their capabilities to include the bazookas, the 37mm and 57mm guns and the cannon companies.
- b. Missions should be given to tank destroyer unit commanders in terms of areas, routes or localities, and the disposition of the guns left to the TD Commander. Otherwise improper use of the TD guns will result. Local infantry commanders are prone to dispose TD guns in localities which limit fields of fire, or in exposed positions which do not permit the advantage of hull defilade.
- c. AT defense between adjacent units and localities must be carefully coordinated to include definite fixing of responsibility, mutual assistance by fire, constant liaison, communication and interchange of information.
- d. Where operations are likely to be continuous and prolonged, a portion of each TD Battalion should be retained in reserve to permit rotation either of single M-10's or platoons for purpose of rest of crews and maintenance of equipment.
- e. It is imperative that TD units participate in combined training with infantry and artillery to the maximum extent possible prior to active operations. Wherever practicable the same TD battalion should habitually operate with the same division in order that the most intimate acquaintance and understanding may be developed and maintained.
- f. This operation has brought out the following regarding training of TD personnel:
- (1) All crews should be proficient in indirect fire.
 - (2) Trained wire men should be provided in each company.
 - (3) Replacements for every job must be trained.
 - (4) Definite steps must be taken to insure that the pioneer platoon is trained in maintenance and construction of roads to gun positions and construction of positions.
 - (5) The maximum number of cannoncrews should be trained and all TD personnel trained to read maps and operate FM radio.
 - (6) Insure that TD personnel know enemy tricks.
- g. Equipment changes or additions as follows have been indicated by this operation.
- (1) Some added armor protection should be added on bottom of M-8 and M-20.
 - (2) Ball-mounted .30 or .50 caliber MG is needed on M-10, for fire against ground targets.
 - (3) Armor protection for radiator of M-10 is needed.
 - (4) Chevron type tread on M-10 will improve the capability of the vehicle.
 - (5) An independent battery charger for each M-10 is seriously needed.
 - (6) Armor plate battery box in M-10.
 - (7) Provide uprights in ammunition racks of M-10s.

h. The following points regarding employment of TD units should be emphasized;

- (1) Infantry must insure local security of M-10.
- (2) Wherever possible, reconnoiter and prepare positions for M-10s prior to occupation; reconnoissance by CO of unit to occupy.
- (3) Insure that AT guns are mutually supporting.

/s/
/t/ RUFUS S. RILEY
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CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS
645TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 45, U S ARMY

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

1. The first of February found the entire Battalion under Corps control in the bivouac area in the vicinity of 900228. At 2200 hours, 1 February 1944, Company B moved to the vicinity of 977223, and occupied firing positions along the Mussolini Canal, protecting the Corps right flank. Platoon positions were at 945240, C03221, 994182.
2. On the following day, Company moved to the area at 798268, and bivouaced in the heavy woods along the coast. Reconnaissance was immediately carried out and firing positions were selected and improved. Company B established two OP's across the canal, while Reconnaissance Company set up three at 000150, 004175 and 021221. During the afternoon, the Battalion less Companies A and B, moved to 913210. With the exception of the movement of one section of Company B, and the establishment of the second platoon, Reconnaissance Company at 942-288, the 3rd of February was very quiet. The same was true of the fourth, as only minor movements of individual guns and sections were made as reconnaissance and more thorough knowledge of the terrain indicated better firing position. Company C prepared indirect fire positions in the area at 947326. Two platoons were registered in, adjustment being observed by the 171st Field Artillery Battalion. A total of 25 rounds HE, and 12 rounds smoke was fired; these were the first expended by us on the new beachhead. An OP maintained by Reconnaissance Company was shelled and sustained one casualty.
3. During the following five days, extensive reconnaissance was carried out along the entire front for anti-tank, as well as alternate positions, and routes of ingress. Numerous positions were dug-in and made ready covering all possible approaches. In this interval our principal role became artillery and the following missions were carried out. On 5 February, Company A expended 68 rounds of HE at enemy personnel in buildings at 765330. Hits were observed on the buildings, but effect on personnel was not ascertained. During the night, Company B let loose 318 rounds HE at the road junction near 10862006. These were followed up the next day by 135 rounds from Company A on enemy personnel at 75-23, and 258 rounds from Company B on a road junction 0272165, the town of LITTORIA, and the watertower at 078182. During the night of 7 and 8 February, Company B put out 778 rounds on road junctions at 088158, 103158 and at LITTORIA. The night of 8 February was very quiet, only 350 rounds interdictory fire by Company B, being placed on the road junction at 051304.
4. At 1200A, 9 February, the Battalion less Company B, was attached to the 45th Infantry Division. Company B remained in attachment to the SSF, occupying fire positions 051204 along the Mussolini Canal. Once more Company B was the only active unit, putting 200 rounds HE into LITTORIA, and 400 rounds into BORGO ISONZA. Forward observers of the 456th Field Artillery Battalion stated that Company B fire on the nights of 8 and 9 February was very accurate. This unit also experimented with the possibility of using 3 inch ammunition equipped with the M54 fuze. Accurate results and clearly observable bursts were obtained at 10,000 yards, which was the maximum fuze range. Company C was committed for the first time on the beachhead, and occupied platoon positions near 808295, 906284, and 915306, in the area of the 180th Infantry Regiment.
5. Company B opened the 10th of the month with 85 rounds on LITTORIA and BORGO ISONZA, followed up the next day by 350 rounds in the same areas. At 2300 hours, 12 February, Company A relieved Company C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and was emplaced in the vicinity of 875314, 802310, 865310 and 880298. During the night, Company B again hit LITTORIA with 94 rounds. The 13th of February was uneventful, the only activity being the relief of Company B, by Company C of the 994th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Our unit moved to an assembly area near 8525. The 14th and 15th were quiet. Throughout this period on the beach, Reconnaissance Company had maintained their OP's and had conducted and observed numerous fire missions for the artillery.
6. At 0630 hours, 16 February, the enemy started a determined thrust, which was to continue for four (4) days. Company A saw little action on the initial day, although the Commanding Officer, Company A, was very industrious in adjusting artillery fire. All platoons were subjected to continuous shelling during the

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entire night,

7. In company B, at 0900 hours, the first platoon, less security section, moved to the vicinity of 863297 and went into position on the east-west road, near some farm houses. Around 1100 hours, the second platoon, less security section, was alerted and moved into position around 863206, the general vicinity of the underpass, the second platoon was later recalled to an assembly area. The third platoon remained in assembly area. At approximately 2100 hours, one destroyer of the first platoon struck a mine and was almost immediately taken under fire by enemy artillery and was set on fire. All members of the crew escaped unharmed, leaving one destroyer in position at 863292, the first platoon commander proceeded north along the main Anzio road, and was putting his two remaining destroyers into position near the railroad station 86202995, when it was discovered that enemy infantry had infiltrated. The platoon commander's jeep command car would not start; so he ordered it to be run over by an M-10 to prevent it falling into enemy hands. The two destroyers attempted to withdraw, proceeding south, west of the railroad. Both vehicles bogged down and were abandoned. All crew members of both vehicles escaped. The CP area was taken under enemy artillery fire, this date, and one 6 x 6 ammunition truck was hit and set afire, the fire was extinguished with a loss of four rounds of HE ammunition. The truck was salvaged.

8. The second platoon of Company C was the only unit to see action on the initial day of the attack. They engaged and destroyed two (2) Mark VI tanks and a self-propelled gun, possibly a Ferdinand, near 877330. All of the enemy vehicles were set afire.

9. At dawn on the 17th, the first platoon of Company A was subjected to a terrific bombardment at their positions near 881311. At 0900 hours, one section opened fire on a Mark IV tank and set it on fire. Then the platoon opened up on enemy mortars, infantry, and strong points with good results. One destroyer was hit during the afternoon. The second platoon sighted a Mark III tank, accompanied by infantry near 851317, which they immediately destroyed, forcing the rifleman to be dispersed. One M-10 was hit and burned in this unit. Later in the day, this platoon engaged five (5) enemy tanks, three (3) Mark VII's and two (2) Mark IV tanks, destroying two (2) Mark VI tanks and forcing the remainder to withdraw. One destroyer was hit in one motor and sent to the rear. Throughout the day, the unit was subjected to machine gun and small arms fire, and retaliated successfully with their .50 calibre guns. In action with six enemy tanks near 854326 at 1000 hours on this day, the third platoon hit two of the enemy vehicles one of which burned. One M-10 caught fire and burned while being evacuated.

10. At approximately 0730 hours, the second platoon, Company B, was called back to their previous position at 862386. The third platoon was still in assembly area. The first platoon, Company B, sighted an enemy Mark VI tank and expended seven rounds HE and 13 rounds APC. The tank was probably knocked out. The second platoon, Company B, expended five rounds HE and 15 rounds APC on enemy tanks. Results unknown.

11. On the morning of the 17th, the first platoon of Company C was in position near 915307, the second platoon near 892304, while the third platoon was at 916309. The second platoon was the only unit to see action on this date, engaging two (2) Mark VI tanks, spotted at 883333. Both vehicles were destroyed, although only one burned. The action was completed by 1200 hours. Shortly thereafter, a Mark IV tank was destroyed by burning at 864314, and at 1300 hours, two more of Jerry's Tigers were fired upon and wrecked. The latter action was at 864318. At this stage the destroyers had to be abandoned as our friendly infantry had withdrawn to the rear of them. The vehicles were immobilized before abandonment.

12. On the third day of the attack, the first section of Company A destroyed a Mark IV tank, but lost an M-10 due to artillery fire during the afternoon. At 1700 hours, the second platoon lost a destroyer, which received a direct hit from an enemy mortar. The third platoon engaged four (4) Mark IV tanks at 863300 and destroyed one, disabling another. One of our guns was disabled at this time, and subsequently abandoned, due to a building collapsing on it. Shortly before noon, two additional Mark VI tanks were engaged and knocked out near 865305. An enemy mortar was destroyed at 868300. That evening all guns had to be abandoned as our front lines had withdrawn to the beachhead line, and avenue of escape for Company A had been cut by the enemy. During the day, the Commanding Officer, Company A, had observed and conducted numerous missions for the artillery and as a result of his work reported that eleven (11) tanks, one (1) self-propelled gun, two (2)

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vehicles, and three (3) possible additional tanks were knocked out.

13. At approximately 1400 hours, the third platoon, Company B, left assembly area to take up position in vicinity of 860286, near the underpass. At the request of our infantry, one destroyer of the second platoon brought fire on the house at 863287. Exact results are not known as the house is still in enemy territory. However, it is definitely known that there were enemy troops in the house, as they were firing on our infantry. The fire was observed to be extremely accurate, and numerous casualties must have been suffered. 17 rounds of HE were expended. Word of twelve enemy tanks proceeding south to main ANZIO road was received, and the platoon commander of the second platoon maneuvered two destroyers to take them under fire, himself riding in one. Three enemy tanks were definitely destroyed. The M-10, in which the platoon commander was riding, was knocked out, but later recovered. 44 rounds of HE and 4 rounds of APC were expended. At approximately 2200 hours, a mortar shell struck a third platoon M-10. The vehicle was salvaged. The remaining first and second platoon vehicles were reorganized and went into position in the general vicinity.

14. At approximately 1200 hours, the first section of Company C sighted five Mark VI tanks at 900295. Two tanks were destroyed and the remainder retired after knocking out one M-10. In the early afternoon, another Mark VI was lost by the enemy due to action by this unit. During the early morning of 18 February, the men of the second platoon returned to their guns, but as the infantry had withdrawn again, they were forced to render the weapons useless and retire. They reorganized as a rifle platoon and reinforced the infantry line in that sector. The third platoon saw no action on this date.

15. On 19 February, Company A had only three destroyers ready for action. They had been called back to their company C.P. area as a Battalion reserve and were committed again at 1630 hours at the road junction, 922287, in support of Company C.

16. At approximately 0500 hours, the third platoon, Company B, moved into position behind houses in the vicinity of 846299. At 2100 hours, the enemy laid a heavy mortar barrage on these buildings, causing them to collapse, and completely burying two destroyers and crews. All vehicles were recovered. While withdrawing from this position, a 4 ton vehicle went over an embankment. The vehicle was not recovered.

17. The third platoon of Company C, was the only platoon to see action on 19 February. They destroyed three (3) Mark VI tanks at 905317, and three additional plus one possible at 904324.

18. The excessive number of M-10's lost during these days, were caused by the infantry withdrawing without notifying the supporting platoons. The nature of the terrain and the marshy character of the ground necessitated much time and labor in extricating a destroyer, once it had occupied a position. Due to the rapid retirement of our troops and equal rapidity of the German thrust, these vehicles could not be saved.

19. During the night 21 February Company A, plus the second platoon, Company C, relieved Company C and attached platoon of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The attached platoon was then released to its parent unit, and Company C was placed in Battalion reserve, vicinity of 913210. Company B moved one platoon vicinity of 885275, leaving six (6) guns in reserve at the Company C.P., near 875249. The 22nd and 23rd of February were uneventful, the only movement being of two (2) guns to the vicinity 925276, to utilize a better field of fire. All companies and OP's on the line were remaining alert but contact with the enemy was not made.

20. The remainder of the month was notably on our front for the seemingly deceptive quietness. The only movements within the Battalion were in waking reliefs, one of which was accomplished on the 25th, when personnel from the first platoon, Company B, and the first and third platoons, Company C, replaced men of Company A. This change was made in men only, the guns being taken over by the new crews.

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21. On 29 February, the last day of the month, another change was completed by gun crews of the first and third platoons, Company C, and second platoon, Company B, taking over from Company A, in the sector of the 180th Infantry Regiment. At 0200 hours, Company B moved two guns to prepared dug-in positions at 880278.

22. During the month of February, the combat efficiency of the battalion was superior, the morale of the men was excellent, and supply of the battalion was good.

23. The following changes in assignments and duties of officers were directed: On 5 February, Captain LEROY E. SCHILLER, Dental Officer joined the Battalion. On 6 February, Lt. PETE E. PRATT took over the position of S-1; Lt. VERNON S. SMELTZER ASSUMED THE DUTIES of Liaison Officer; Lt. CHESTER P. IREY JR. was assigned to Company C, as Executive Officer; Lt. BERNARD SACKS took over the command of Reconnaissance Company; and Lt. WILLIAM D. HOBBS assumed command of Headquarters Company.

24. During the month of February, this Battalion received its first group of casualties on a large scale. The forwarding of Battle Casualty Reports to the Battalion was expedited by the Companies in every case. The major difficulty in consolidating Battle Casualties Reports was caused by men being evacuated in many cases through British hospitals, who were necessarily slow in forwarding notification to this Headquarters, due to their large number of patients.

25. As the Personnel Section has been located at VARIANO, ITALY, the ensuing delay of five day courier service caused some errors in consolidated Morning Reports, but this situation has been rectified whenever errors appeared.

26. Administrative details have not been normal, nevertheless, no serious complications have arisen.

C O N F I D E N T I A L