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Abstract: Battle experiences are published to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of troops that fought the Germans in Europe – brief description taken from paragraph written by Lieutenant General Omar Bradley.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 65

14 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon
C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I. PILLBOX DEMOLITION

Note: Neutralization of a strong pillbox, by a patrol of the 5th Ranger Bn, was effected through use of explosive and gasoline and oil. Considerable difficulty was experienced as indicated in the following extract from a report of the Bn Comdr.

1. Construction. "The pillbox consisted of a 12° steel dome set on a concrete emplacement approximately 30' in diameter. The steel extended 6' below ground to the roof of the concrete emplacement. There were 6 firing embrasures each with a 12° steel door. The pillbox was on a knoll and had a rear entrance with steel doors.
2. Gunfire ineffective. "Fire from 1200 yds with 155mm SP guns and from 300 yds with 3° guns was ineffective. Some rounds from 300 yds stuck in the turret but did not penetrate.
3. First assault. "A plat of 22 men made a direct assault on the box on 17 Sept, reaching the objective at 1500 hours. Supporting pillboxes were engaged by 3° guns. The enemy refused to surrender and a 40 lb charge of C2 was placed in the vision embrasure adjacent to the entrance and fired at 1506 hours. An extremely heavy mort barrage caused the plat to retire and the damage from the blast could not be ascertained.
4. Second assault. "At 2140 hours the same day an 11 man patrol, covered by an arty barrage, moved up to the pillbox again. The patrol consisted of 2 scouts with Tommy guns, the patrol leader, 4 men with pistols each carrying 5 gallon cans of an oil and gasoline mixture, 2 men armed with pistols each carrying a 40 lb C2 demolition charge, one man carrying a 50 lb beehive charge, and one man with a Tommy gun as rear guard. Each C2 charge was placed in a firing embrasure, the beehive charge was placed on the side of the pillbox, and the oil and gas poured around and over the box and in the entrance. The blast was set off with an 18 second fuse, and the box burned for 40 minutes. All men returned safely.

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5. Results. "The entire area surrendered the following day and the following results of the assaults were disclosed: a. The 40 lb charge set in the afternoon blew a 3-foot hole through the shelter wall, causing heavy damage to the concrete box and killing 12 men inside.

b. The charges set in the embrasures at night, together with the gasoline, destroyed the interior of the turret, completely neutralizing the position and killing 3 more men.

c. The 50 lb beehive charge had no effect on the turret.

d. Prisoners taken from adjacent installations stated the effects of the raid were terrifying and that they believed a flame thrower and oil bombs had been used. They also stated that as a result of the raids all personnel remained alerted on the outside of other pillboxes to prevent similar action."

II PANELS ASSIST AIR ARTY OBSERVERS.

"It is difficult for our arty air OPs to see our infantrymen when they move cross country or in split columns along roads. In order to assist the obsrs we have adopted successfully the practice of having a panel carried by the first sqd in each plat. On one occasion one foot of panel held up from a dugout was sufficient to enable the obsr to spot our troops."--Lt, 229th FA Bn.

III MISCELLANEOUS COMMENT.

1. Hand grenades on trees. "A PW stated that in his area hand grenades were atchd to trees. The pins were atchd to ropes leading to fox holes so that the grenades could be detonated from a covered position."--29th Div G-2 Report.

2. Civilian aid. "Two lost EM of a corps unit recently accepted an offer from a civilian to guide them. He led them straight to a German CP where they were interrogated and interned. They later managed to escape and return to our own lines. The incident illustrates that a complete lack of faith in civilians is necessary for adequate security."--30th Div G-2 Report.

3. M-3 Howitzers (105mm). "To correct a tendency of the M-3 how to elevate itself after a round has been fired, we have made a small brake drum, approximately four inches in diameter, with self-snubbing action that will loosen itself and is adjustable. This device has proved quite satisfactory."--Ord O, 9th Inf Div.

IV NO CIVILIAN RESISTANCE.

Section II of Battle Experiences No. 49, dated 26 Sept 44, stated that the 3d Armd Div had reported stubborn resistance from enemy civilians and soldiers on 17 Sept 44. A letter just received from the div comdr states that no civilian resistance was observed by or reported to him and he considers the report erroneous.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 66

17 OCT 1944

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Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I TRAINING IN THE MAGINOT LINE

"Our div, in its preparation for the assault on Siegfried fortifications, has made effective use of the Maginot Line. Rifle plats have been put through problems in the attack of fortified positions using the areas with wire and pillboxes as the training ground. We have found the training valuable as it permits detailed planning and practice for assault teams as well as exercises involving coordination of all areas."--
CG, 83d Div.

II HELPING THE SURGEON

"Bn and regtl surgs will manage evacuation problems more intelligently and alertly if they are kept acquainted with the situation. The indulgent doling out of necessary information upon repeated requests from the surg discourages him and causes him to lose incentive and initiative."--Regtl Surgeon, 115th Inf.

III ENEMY REOCCUPATION OF PILLBOXES

"When pillboxes have been covered with dirt by tk dozers Jerry has often re-entered by digging holes just large enough for a man to get through. The man is armed with an automatic wpn. As he usually has a good field of fire it is difficult to get him out. The answer seems to be to pile more dirt over the opening. The enemy also will reoccupy partially and completely blown boxes and man them with crew-served wpns."--Extract from report of 28th Inf Div.

IV BREACHING THE SIEGFRIED LINE

1. Training. "When we came to attack the Siegfried line we found that our assault dets which had been trained in England had become casualties. This time we trained all personnel on all wpns. That proved valuable on the day of the assault for whenever the leading elements were cut down the nearest man could pick up the wpn and do the job.

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2. 4.2 Mortars. "The arty and 81mm mortars were very effective in reducing movement of personnel outside of pillboxes but it was the 4.2 cml mortars, firing 150 yds ahead of the assault ccs, which most effectively reduced the enemy fire during our assault. It was not necessary to use bangalore torpedoes or wire cutters for the wire had been pretty well torn up by the 4.2 mort barrage."--Bn CO, 117th Inf.

V ENGINEER OPERATIONS

1. Destruction of mines. "When mines are to be destroyed near the front lines they should be collected in one spot and blown all at once and not blown individually or in small piles. We have found that a series of explosions with the resulting black smoke invites enemy arty fire.

2. Security for mine clearing parties. "It has been found necessary to have scouts in advance and to the flank of mine clearing parties for security. The enemy frequently attempts to ambush mine clearance parties operating away from inf elements."--Report of 121st Engr C Bn.

VI REGIMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Antenna repair. "Used lengths of open circuit telephone wire have been found valuable for repairing damaged antenna on the SCR 300 and SCR 536 radios.

2. Map reading. "Our map reading instruction, emphasized in the com plat while in England, has been invaluable. Our men now have confidence in their ability to read maps and can get to the right places easily when using them.

3. Signal supply. "In our div we have found it best during combat to handle signal supplies through com channels. Bn com Os submit requests to the regtl com O, who in turn passes them on to the div signal supply O. The supplies are picked up from the higher unit by the lower using the same channels. The regtl S-4 disregards com requisitions submitted through S-4 channels and thus avoids duplications. Advantages are that signal supplies can be obtained and repairs effected more rapidly. Critical signal supply items can be regulated more easily by the com Os."--CO 47th Inf Regt.

VII SIGNALLING AIRCRAFT

"Two plats of one co were in contact with the enemy and had pushed forward rapidly. Suddenly our planes appeared overhead on a bombing and strafing mission. A hasty check revealed that no panels or smoke grenades were available. During this time one bomb exploded behind the unit and the strafing was close. One plat withdrew one hedgerow to the rear, where the men immediately stripped off white undershirts, which were used with V-mail forms, etc., to form a large U.S. in the middle of the field. On the next run the unit received a friendly sign from one of the planes and the bombing and strafing was confined to an area where it did the most good."--Report of 2d Bn, 47th Inf.

VIII DETAILED PHOTOGRAPHS FOR PLATOON LEADERS

"Aerial photographs are interpreted and annotated in ink, and then rephotographed to provide our plat leaders with an easily read interpretation of German defenses in their areas."--C/S, 28th Div.

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29 OCT 44 AM

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

RECEIVED
G-2 AGF

No. 67

18 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant GeneralI TANK UNIT EXPEDIENTS

1. Use of map blowups for briefing tank crews. "Under present conditions, with plenty of time for the preparation of our attacks against enemy fortified positions, we find it invaluable to use 1/5,000 map blowups in the briefing of tk crews. The blowups are made by hand and take four to ten hours, but data such as pillbox locations can be put on them and shown to the crews very clearly."--Capt, 70th Tk Bn.

2. Tank and antitank gun spotting by artillery planes. "The arty ln planes spot enemy tks and AT guns and communicate the exact coordinates of their locations to us. Our tk co cmdrs keep one receiver on the ln plane frequency for this purpose."--Capt, 70th Tk Bn.

II ENEMY TRICKS

1. Time bombs. "The Germans have laid effective traps by setting two time bombs for detonation within a few moments of each other. On one occasion two such bombs, placed under sidewalks directly across the street from each other, went off fifty seconds apart. The second explosion, as planned, caught some personnel who had run to investigate the damage and assist those injured by the first blast."--WD Board Report.

2. Use of civilian clothing. "That Germans have been sending patrols dressed in civilian clothes across the river and into our area was established when we captured some of them in the act of changing clothes. These soldiers pose as Polish and Russian workers."--Ex O, 3d Cav Gp.

3. Dummy trick. "This is a trick the Germans have used to draw our fire during the day. They fix up a dummy, fully dressed and including a shiny buckle on the uniform. Then they put it, buckle showing, half-exposed, in a foxhole on their side of the river."--Ex O, 3d Cav Gp.

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REF ID: A66542

III SIEGFRIED LINE EXPERIENCES.

Note: Units of the 2d Armd Div report the following lessons learned during reduction of a large number of pillboxes:

1. Organization. a. "One reinforced co observed that the mort sqds and the hvy MG sections slowed the advance of its two assault teams. It was also noted that flame throwers were not always needed and preferably should have been held in reserve. Accordingly, the conclusion was reached that teams of the following composition would be most desirable:

Assault Teams

One plat of med tks (with tk dozer)
One plat of inf, less mort sqd
An arty FO in a tk

"Mop-Up" Team

One plat of lt tks
One plat of inf, less mort sqd
One plat of hvy MG
One plat of engr with flame
throwers and demolitions
Inf plats 60mm mort sqds
grouped as a btry with
81mm plat

2. "Mopping-up". "A hvy MG plat and the lt tks were used advantageously in the "mop-up". All wires had to be cut and all compartments of pillboxes carefully searched, as a telephone operator or arty obsr often attempted to hide and remain behind to direct fire.

3. Flame throwers. "Another bn discovered an unusual method of using the flame thrower for reducing a pillbox. The pillbox would be covered with fire in the usual manner, and the flame thrower team brought forward to test the flame thrower somewhere behind the line of tks, but where the occupants of the pillbox could see the flame. Usually, the pillbox would surrender shortly thereafter. However, hvy arty fire often made it difficult to get the flame thrower team well up.

4. Flanking action. "Outflanking was found to be the fastest method of reduction where there was not a concentration of pillboxes. One assault plat concentrated on the pillbox and was covered by the other assault plat. One section placed hvy fire on the embrasures while the other section moved around and put hvy fire into the back of the pillbox. When the pillbox surrendered, it was sealed temporarily by the tk dozer. Engrs follow us and weld the doors shut as we have found that dozing or blowing the handles off the doors is insufficient."--Report from 2d Armd Div.

IV THE M-10 TANK DESTROYER.

1. Ammunition for M-10. "In planning for woods fighting it is essential that the basic load of 3" am for the M-10 TD be modified to include a majority of AP or APC. The use of HE is greatly limited by the possibility of tree bursts on friendly trs.

2. .50 caliber machine guns mounted on M-10s. "Mounting the .50 cal MG on the right forward section of the turret of an M-10 TD for use against personnel has proved valuable. When this gun was employed against entrenched enemy they shortly surrendered to our accompanying inf.

3. Employment of infantry antitank guns. "The inf 57mm AT guns should be kept well forward behind the inf and as the attack develops, assigned the mission of setting up flank and rear road blocks. This allows the TDs to follow up giving depth to the AT defense and at the same time preserving their mobility."--CO, 773d TD Bn.

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REF ID: A66542

TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 68

19 OCT 1944

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Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I LEADERSHIP EPISODE.

"Cos B and C were attacking against heavy opposition. By afternoon the CO and two plat ldrs of Co C were casualties and only two plats of the co remained. The co comdr of Co B took command of the two plats and with these and the remnants of his co took the bn objective. When the Germans counterattacked, the two plats of Co C were isolated and Co B surrounded. Co B held their position until ordered to retreat. The co comdr then led an attack to relieve the other two plats, during which he personally knocked out two MGs. After reaching the two plats he reorganized and fought his way back to the bn area, managing to bring all the wounded with him"--Report from 35th Inf Div.

II SURPRISE.

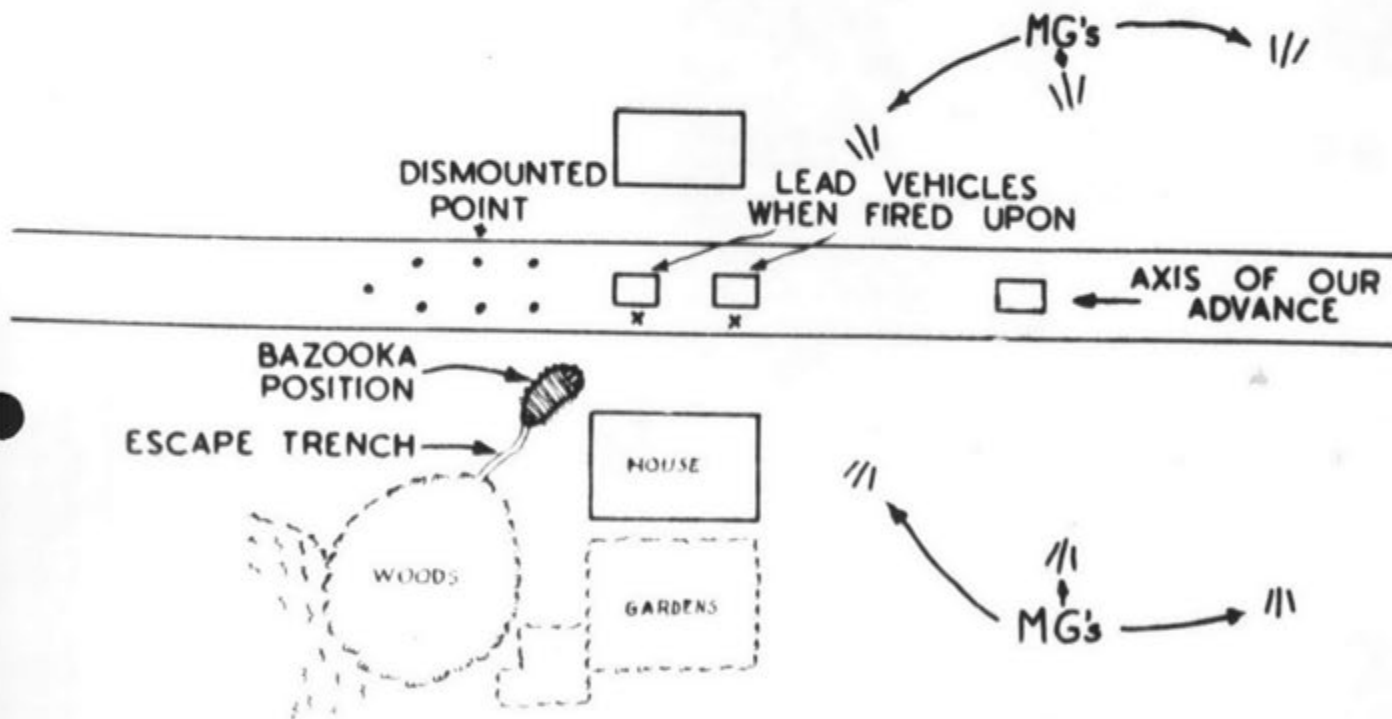
"While going through the Siegfried Line a plat was given the mission of knocking out a bunker situated on a steep and heavily wooded hill. The plat proceeded slowly in line of sqd columns on a 50 yd front with scouts out 20 yds. The plat ldr and plat sgt acted as the center scouts to facilitate control. Upon reaching the edge of the woods about 75 yds from the bunker the plat halted. Three Germans were walking along the edge of the woods but the plat held its fire until discovered. It then shot the three Germans and rushed the bunker. Two Germans outside promptly surrendered and two grenades thrown in the entrance of the bunker brought about the immediate surrender of the garrison of 22 men. The element of surprise brought about the reduction of the bunker without a shot being fired by its crew."--2d Bn, 47th Inf.

III EXTRA ARMOR PLATE FOR CAR, M-8.

"A reinforcing plate of $\frac{1}{2}$ " armor on the bottom of the M-8 armd car, installed by our ord co, has proved of value. In one instance one of these cars, partially reinforced, ran over a mine with the result that the two men in front protected by this armor were only slightly injured, whereas the two turret men with no added protection, were killed."--CO 5th Hcn Tr.

IV NAZI ANTITANK TACTICS.

The 7th Arm Div has recently encountered a type of German delaying position designed to destroy the leading tks of an arm column and cause confusion and delay. The particular set-up has been encountered repeatedly and the div has evidence that the Germans have been studiously practicing and perfecting the technique. As shown in the diagram below, a covered and perfectly camouflaged foxhole for a two man bazooka team is normally dug in a semi-circular shape around the corner of a house or building near (5 to 50 yds) a road. A camouflaged escape trench leads from the rear of the bazooka emplacement to any nearby cover such as woods, garden shrubbery, or additional buildings. MGs are placed in a V formation with the open end of the V from 300 to 400 yds from the road in the direction from which our approach is expected. When the column is preceded by a dismounted point, fire is withheld until the bazooka team is certain of knocking out the lead vehicles. When the bazooka fires, all MGs open up on the remainder of the column, not principally to cause casualties, but to cause confusion and make it difficult to ascertain from where the bazooka fire has come. Due to the excellent camouflage of the positions and escape trench and the confusion caused by the cross-firing MGs, it has been found extremely difficult to determine the location of the resistance. A possible solution offered by a member of the div, is to have foot patrols, preceding the armor, advance with two columns on each side of the road, at distances of 20 yds and 70 yds from the road.



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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 69

20 OCT 1944

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C. R. LANDON

Colonel, AGD

Adjutant General

I POOR LEADERSHIP.

Examples of good leadership have been presented in previous issues of Battle Experiences. The following incidents, illustrative of poor leadership, were reported by an inf bn cmdr and may be of equal value in the formation of a picture of that quality.

1. Poor discipline. a. "At the midpoint of a long foot march by an inf bn the bn adjutant passed through the column in his vehicle on orders of the bn cmdr. As he passed through the column one cmdr called, 'Do you have to bring that ---- jeep through here?' Later the adjutant was again called forward to billet the bn and as he passed the trs the same co cmdr called, 'I know that ---- bn doesn't know what it is doing. We are probably lost again.' When the adjutant returned to take the co cmdr to his area he refused to go, whereupon the adjutant took the executive and pointed out the area to him.

b. "During the CHERBOURG campaign the bn dug in on a crest on which the enemy was accurately registered. The bn cmdr decided to move the cos forward to lower ground. The co cmdr mentioned above believed this to be dangerous and showed marked hesitation and his hesitation continued in the face of a direct order. The bn cmdr assumed command of the co and directed the second in command to move the unit forward. The co cmdr retired to the rear. This occurred in the presence of the Os and men and was largely responsible for the decline of the co. The co cmdr was relieved."

2. Poor judgement. "During the advance on LESSAY, a co was ordered to follow the route of another co to a certain point and then swing S to the objective. Without rcn the co cmdr took another route across open terrain without deploying and ran into about 100 Germans. Some 40 casualties were incurred before the resistance could be by-passed. Upon reaching the objective the co cmdr placed most of his men and his CP on a CR. Early the next morning German arty fire fell on the CR and inflicted ten casualties among the massed personnel. Because of poor leadership, lack of rcn, failure to use common sense and failure to obey orders, the co lost 50 men. The co cmdr was relieved."

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II EMPLOYMENT OF THE 155mm GUN, SELF-PROPELLED.

1. "The 155mm gun SP should be employed by direct attachment of a btry to the div arty. There should be careful evaluation of requests for its fire and an ample allowance of time for the btry comdr to select positions.
2. "In deciding as to its employment the following factors should be considered;
 - a. The noise of the wpn and the maximum rate of march of 20 miles per hour.
 - b. Its limited rate of fire due to the difficulties of loading without elevating the tube.
 - c. Its high silhouette in firing position.
 - d. The absolute lack of protection for the crews from SA fire. The gunner is particularly vulnerable due to his open position on top of the tk.
 - e. The huge muzzle blast which draws counterbattery fire."--CO, 196th FA Gp.

III REGIMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS.

1. Alternate radio link to battalions. "We have obtained SCR 610 radios for use within our AT and cn cos. In addition to providing longer range com for these cos, this also permits a possible alternate means for the regt to contact the bns. When the cn co FO is at the bn CP, the cn co channel can be used to reach the bn CO.
2. Transfer of wire from DR-4 reels to DR-8 reels. "We improvised a means for transferring our W-130 wire from the DR-4s to the DR-8s by using a captured German pack reel unit, some parts of a reel unit RL-39 from a CE-11, and a bicycle sprocket and chain. The bn com Os collect the empty DR-8s and send them to the regtl wire section for refill."--CO, 47th Inf Regt.

IV PATROLLING.

"Our patrols report that in wooded or hilly terrain the enemy will allow the lead man to come through their lines and when the other members of the patrol can be observed the Jerries start shouting, whistling, and firing a few rifle shots from either flank. The patrol leader immediately gets the impression that he is surrounded and endeavors to pull out, sometimes leaving casualties and with his patrol disorganized. During such action, the enemy is careful not to disclose his positions by firing automatic wpns; usually he will rely on a few rifle shots to create this confusion."--2d Bn, 47th Inf.

V ANTITANK GUN POSITIONS.

1. Displacement. "We have adopted the procedure of digging new gun positions before displacing the gun. In fast moving situations this is impractical but when there is time, half the sqd goes to the new position, leaving the other half to man the gun. Time for emplacing is thus cut to a minimum.
2. Siting. "AT guns should always be placed several hundred yds from the road they are covering to obtain flanking fire, better camouflage, and safety from German arty fire which usually falls along the road."--CO, AT Co. 115th Inf.

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Tactics

Gen. Staff

TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 70

21 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

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Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I LEADERSHIP

"Leadership is based on knowledge. First, every O and man must know his job -- this yields faith in each other. Second, every man must realize that his Os and NCOs know their jobs -- this gives confidence in command. Third, each man must know his mission and the mission of the unit -- which gives continuity of effort regardless of losses. The first is obtained in training, the second in maneuvers and combat, and the third by careful briefing and orientation on the ground. Results of such briefing were shown in a recent operation in which 200 Germans were killed and 800 captured at a cost of 16 casualties. After each engagement critiques should be held in each plat followed by one for the Os."--Bn CO, 6th Armd Div.

II FORWARD OBSERVERS

1. Proper use of artillery. "One of the FO's most important jobs is to get across to infantrymen the types of targets on which he can give them the maximum support. After a little combat experience the infantryman learns the true value of arty and doesn't call for support unless the target merits it. He then doesn't want to waste valuable am that he knows he may need more on some other target.

2. "Innocent bystanders" at the Observation Post. "Well meaning infantrymen who attempt to crowd about the OP to observe the results of the fire or to steal a look through the BC telescope must learn that they are inviting fire from the enemy. OPs are high on the priority list of enemy targets and the importance of their camouflage discipline can't be over-stressed.

3. A morale builder. "During heavy shelling from enemy btrys the FO can give the men a boost if he can tell them the type of shells the enemy is using and where they're

coming from. It also helps to know that he is there sending in the shell reports and preparing to return that fire many times over."--Capt, 111th FA bn.

III ARTILLERY-INFANTRY COORDINATION.

1. Problem. "The problem of coordinating the inf advance with the lifting of close-in arty fire has been solved in several ways but there is general agreement on two points. First, the method used is dependent on the particular situation and such factors as the type of terrain, light conditions, availability of maps, and the degree of training of the inf in following arty fire. Second, the method of coordination must be simple and carefully worked out by the arty and inf comdrs and the information disseminated to all troops.

2. Solutions. "Following are some methods that have been used:

- a. Arty FO informs inf co comdr when last volley is on the way and he informs the plat ldr by SCR 536. This is dependent on all SCR 536s being in good working order and presents the important problem of quickly notifying each man in the plat.
- b. Firing the last one or two volleys as high bursts (time fire). This is dependent upon time fire not being part of the concentration itself, upon inf oban not being cut off by trees or hills, and upon absence of trees in the impact area to cause air bursts.
- c. Lifting fire on a closely coordinated time schedule. This is normally practicable only for preparatory fires up to about H plus 10 or H plus 15.
- d. The use of a block of schedule fires modified to fit the actual rate of advance by repeating fires, when necessary, on call. This again presents the problem of notifying all troops of changes in the schedule.
- e. Designation by arty FO of inf front line locations during the advance, using 1:10,000 maps with fields numbered. This is dependent on having accurate maps available and the time in which to number them.
- f. Firing of colored or white smoke in one of the last two volleys. This has several disadvantages:
 - (1) The only easily distinguishable colors--red, violet, and yellow have other important uses. Green is not easily distinguishable, and white is easily confused.
 - (2) The enemy can fire white smoke into an arty concentration.
 - (3) Enemy is warned that the concentration is lifting.
 - (4) Colored smoke cannot be seen during darkness or at dusk and dawn.

3. Additional aids. "Desirable features in any method include:

- a. If possible, more than one system of warning.
- b. Inf plat ldrs having their men organized well ahead of time to permit moving forward without delay.
- c. Use of wire to forward plats when possible."--VIII Corps' Os.

IV TANK DESTROYER GUNNERY.

The following consolidation of a report from the 628th TD Bn indicates that even at extreme ranges the German Mark VI (Tiger) tk is vulnerable to the M-10 TD. A plat comdr reports the following results, within a 30 minute period, of a recent action in Germany:

- a. "No 1 gun hit its first tk at a range of 1800 yds. The enemy crew abandoned the tk and four more rounds of APC were fired at it, three of which could be seen to bounce off the front plate. The fourth round hit the gun shield and ricocheted down through the top of the tk. Two rounds of APC BDF were then fired which exploded on the front of the tk. A second tk at the same range was hit with two rounds of APC BDF which caused it to burn. Both enemy tks were facing directly toward the gun that knocked them out. Later a third tk was knocked out by a hit on the side from a range of 3000 yds.
- b. "No 2 gun knocked out one tk by getting three hits with an APC in rear of the tk at a range of over 3200 yds.
- c. "No 3 gun knocked out one Mark VI tk with three APC hits in the side at a range of 1900 yds."

END

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 71

22 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I COMPANY ADMINISTRATION

1. Problem. "Considerable difficulty has been experienced in obtaining casualty information and strength figures because of casualties among 1st sgts. When evacuated, the necessary information and records often went with them and time was lost in getting these records back. In other cases, the 1st sgt was used as a plat leader and, therefore, slighted administration.

2. Solution. "As a remedy the bn sgt major and his clerk now keep complete rosters of all cos in the bn. They make duplicate copies of all reports and keep these rosters up-to-date. It is then possible for the sgt major, when the 1st sgt is a casualty, to take over the administration of that co until another NCO can be acquainted with the routine. In cases in which the co is so separated that a report is impracticable, the sgt major can go ahead and submit one based on the best available information. This system has been quite effective."--115th Inf Regt.

II LOCATING ENEMY WEAPONS

"When we receive reports of flat trajectory wpns being fired from any given direction we make a contour study of the map and select possible locations for the gun. Arty fire is then placed on these locations. We have been extremely successful in silencing such guns."--Regtl CO 79th Div.

III RADIO DISCIPLINE

"We need more radio discipline. Even old timers slip up on this. I had quite a conversation with a Jerry one day until he slipped up on the call sign."--Capt, 11th Inf.

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IV COMMUNICATION WITH PATROLS

"When we patrol toward important terrain features we send either an SCR 300 or SCR 536 with the patrol depending on the range. If the patrol reaches an important locality we can direct it to remain while we decide whether to reinforce it. As a result we have never had to fight for an important point that we have once held."--Regtl Ex O, 79th Inf Div.

V ATTACKING ENEMY TANKS IN WOODS

"We find that enemy tks in woods generally fire from prepared and camouflaged positions. We get as close as we can with our inf and register our morts with HE shell in the vicinity of the tk. Then we change to smoke shell and blind the tks while we close in with bazookas and bayonets. We use the same system on hostile strong points in woods."--Regtl CO, 79th Inf Div.

VI WIRE HEAD

~~"We use a forward wire head to assist in servicing our wire lines. It is manned by two men and is placed immediately in rear of the point where the regtl line diverges to the various bn locations. Using this system we can determine more quickly the exact location of a break."~~-- Regtl CO, 79th Inf Div.

VII SALVAGE

"We have set up a reclamation sqd which searches our zone of action after we have passed through. As a result we have reclaimed more than enough material of all classes to make up for the battle losses, not including damaged material, that we sustain."--Regtl Ex O, 79th Inf Div.

VIII MAP READING BY REPLACEMENT OFFICERS

"Replacement Os have been found weak in map reading on the ground. They are inclined to pay too much attention to works of man, particularly roads and trails, and not enough to natural terrain features."--Regtl Ex O, 4th Inf Div.

IX MINE DETECTORS WITH BATTALIONS.

"Div ordinarily attaches a plat or co of engrsr to the regt. From them we attach a mine sweeper detachment to the reserve co of the bn to clear the way for vehicles. This system has saved a lot of jeeps and ambulances."--Regtl Ex O, 4th Inf Div.

X MINES

"In mine clearing operations any area which cannot be searched due to temporary obstacles should be marked. The warning should not be removed until that area has been searched. On one occasion a wrecked jeep was removed and a trk attempted to cross the area it had occupied. It struck a T-mine which the wreck had covered."--After Action Report, 295th Engr Bn.

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REPLACEMENT

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 72

23 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

AMERICAN USE OF ANTIPERSONNEL MINES AND BOOBY TRAPS

Note: The first detailed report of extensive use of antipersonnel mines and booby traps by American troops comes from Co A of 297th Engineer Bn (C) which was attached to the 4th Cav group during the period 17 Sep to 2 Oct, 1944. The Cav group was occupying a wide front and made free use of booby traps.

I METHODS AND EXTENT OF USE.

1. Procedure. More than 100 booby traps of various types were set and maintained under close supervision of the two plat comdrs. Traps were checked daily. Exploded ones were replaced and changes made to conform to changes in the front line or to provide for special situations. In certain special locations, the traps would be installed at dusk and removed at dawn.

2. Location. The traps were placed on roads, trails and paths leading from the front, and near gates and similar traffic bottlenecks. On a number of occasions traps were laid at special locations after a tactical buildup designed to cause the enemy to send personnel to the points selected. For example, a patrol would establish contact with the enemy during daylight. They would then place a line of traps at the point from which contact was established and withdraw slightly at dusk. They capitalized on the observed habit of the enemy of sending special patrols to investigate points from which we had made contact with them. In a number of cases, booby traps were placed in temporarily abandoned German locations, frequently with good results.

II IMPROVISED DEVICES.

1. The bean can. An ordinary No. 2 can was loaded with three pounds of dynamite pressed as hard as possible with 60d nails along the inside edge of the can. The center of the can was kept clear of nails to permit inserting the firing device. These were

detonated with a No. 8 blasting cap, trip wire and a pull-type fuse. The trip wire is ineffective if over 15 feet long. This same type was made with C-2 compound which proved more effective than dynamite.

2. Another was constructed from an American AT mine with a half-pound block of TNT, equipped with pull-type detonator, attached to the spider. A variation of this was to place a few hundred rounds of MG am on top to act as additional shrapnel.

III THE GERMAN REACTION.

1. He is a "dummkopf". Results proved that the German soldier is poorly trained against mines and booby traps and an easy prey to the quick-thinking and imaginative American in a battle of wits.

2. He is careless. On 18 Sep a mine, attached to a gate so that opening of the gate would set it off, was blown. The German soldier's leg was broken and shrapnel pierced his body. A new mine was immediately placed in a slightly different position and a short time later two Germans tried the same gate. One was killed and the other severely wounded.

3. He is unhealthily aggressive. An engineer party, out looking for locations for additional traps, met a German patrol and had a fire fight with them lasting about an hour. During the firing they set up their mines with trip-wires and then withdrew. About ten minutes after they had withdrawn they heard one of their mines explode. Upon returning they found one German dead and the other with a broken leg and shrapnel wounds in legs and arms.

4. Surprises for him at home. a. One night one of our patrols located an enemy bazooka position with wpns still in place but no personnel around. They put 4-lb of TNT with a No. 8 blasting cap and a pull-type device in the loaded bazooka and attached a trip wire to a nearby tree. The next day the bazooka was found wrecked with a dead German soldier lying near it.

b. Another temporarily abandoned position was found to contain a MG, some Tellermines and a box of MG am. One of the Tellermines was dug in and rigged with a pressure release device under the box of MG am. Three days later a check showed the Tellermine had been set off, exploding the box of am. Two German soldiers were found dead.

IV THE SUPPLY ANGLE.

An unexpected by-product of this activity was the frequent supplementing of the ration with beef, venison and rabbit, as a result of animals running into the trip wires.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 73

24 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

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Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I ARTILLERY FORWARD OBSERVATION PARTIES.

"All lts of the bn take their turn as FOs with the inf in tours of 4 days duration. Btry comdrs can only be spared for two day tours. The bn comdr and staff visit OPs and inf bns in the line. Personnel of the FO parties are rotated so that even the canoneers get up with the inf. This creates a high unit spirit, a profound respect for the hard job of the inf, and makes each man personally realize the necessity for accurate shooting."--Report of 110th FA Bn.

II USE OF WHITE PHOSPHORUS SHELLS.

"The use of WP to mark initial rounds for ground and air obsrs should be discouraged in medium FA bns. With reasonably accurate initial data, and by noting the time of flight from the range tables the medium burst can usually be picked out. Excessive use of WP for marking initial rounds not only is wasteful but adds to the obsrs' difficulties by increasing the battle haze."--Report of 227th FA Bn (155mm How).

III EMPLOYMENT OF 81MM MORTARS.

1. Organization. "In terrain that is poor for normal use of 81mm morts a system of employing 4 morts in battery, controlled from an FDC, has been quite effective. Two FOs, with SCR 300s, operate with the forward rifle cos. The third section of the plat furnishes the necessary FOs and radio operators.

2. Advantages. "Using this method it has been possible to keep the morts between 500 and 1000 yds to the rear, where they draw very little enemy fire. This distance makes it possible to cover a wide sector of fire, without moving base plates and re-registering from new positions. Four morts have been found sufficient to fire almost all bn missions."--Cpl Jerome S. Metzger, 115th Inf. Regt.

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IV ENEMY REACTION TO MARKING AIR TARGETS WITH SMOKE.

"On one occasion when our arty used red smoke to mark a target for our fighter-bombers, the enemy immediately returned the fire with mort shells of the same type. These shells landed at least 500 yds in rear of our forward elements. The fact that these rounds were fired into our lines only a few seconds after ours had landed indicates that the enemy may have used radio intercept."--G-2, 2d Armd Div. (Note: Some units have reported that when our aircraft are in close support they use an arty O P plane to watch for and immediately report this enemy tactic.)

V OPERATIONS AGAINST PILLBOXES.

1. Demolitions. "Where firing slots and embrasures cover the door and each other, making it impracticable to place a charge against the door, an explosive charge placed on the roof has proved effective. The concussion was so severe as to black the eyes of the occupants."-- Report of 9th Inf Div.

2. Burning gasoline. "Attempts to cause the surrender of pillbox garrisons by pouring gasoline through the ventilators and then lighting it, have been unsuccessful. The ventilating systems are so designed that the gasoline goes through the vertical shaft and runs out the side of the box. Air is taken into the pillbox by a ventilating shaft that is an offshoot of the vertical one."--Report of the 9th Inf Div. (Note: The 5th Ranger Bn recently reported successful neutralization of a pillbox, using gasoline and oil in addition to other weapons.)

VI TIPS FROM A PLATOON SERGEANT.

1. Keep your equipment. "There should be some way, prior to going into combat, of showing men how foolish it is to throw away equipment, such as grenades and grenade launchers. After a while our men found out how valuable they were, but often it was impossible to get some of these abandoned articles when we needed them most. With our close air support, a front line panel display often gives the troops a much better feeling. These panels are bulky and easily thrown away--don't let them do it.

2. Get rid of prisoners. "Don't keep prisoners too long. Get the information from them and send them back. Above all, don't let men group around them and give other Germans a good MG target.

3. Don't give away positions. "Don't use tracer am. It gives your position away. On the other hand, German smokeless powder makes their locations hard to find. Wait for them to move and then let them have it.

4. Watch the noise. "When advancing to the attack keep the noise down. Prisoners have told us that we lose surprise effect by our noisy approach to their positions.

5. Help the new men. "Work hard with inexperienced men. They will help you in battle if you help them in training. Don't forget extra hours on the drill fields save lives on the battlefield."--T/Sgt Benjamin Frishman, Co A, 129th Inf Regt.

VII MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

1. Grenades. "Men should be taught to remove grenades from pockets and put them in handy holes when occupying defensive positions. We have had several exploded when the men were hit."--S-2, 9th Armd Bn, 6th Armd Div.

2. Teletype from corps. "The use of teletype machines from corps arty hq to FDCs takes a great load off our telephone lines."--CG, XII Corps Arty

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 74

24 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I LEADERSHIP EPISODE.

1. The following routine report of a combat operation submitted by a T/Sgt of Co E, 109th Inf Regt, presents a picture of aggressive leadership which is a partial indication of why that T/Sgt is now a 2d Lt.

2. a. Situation. "Our understrength co was held up by German mort and MG fire on a hill just inside the German border. A German machine gunner was covering the draw in front of us from the left flank. There were also Germans in a pillbox up the road in front of us, from where they were apparently directing mort and arty fire.

b. Mission. "Our acting co comdr gave orders that my plat (we had had no plat ldr for some time) of about 12 men, assisted by a tk, was to take and hold this pillbox.

c. Preparation. "I looked over the map and terrain and saw there was a fire trench directly behind the pillbox. I got my men together and after dark withdrew to where we were to meet the tk. The tk comdr and I made our plans together and I carefully oriented my men.

d. The approach. "We started moving at 1030 hours closely following the tk down the road, and shortly ran into mort and arty fire. The tk fired at the pillbox every once in a while as we advanced. When we got to the area where the tk had to stop, the tk comdr asked when he should stop firing at the pillbox. I told him, "When we get so close you have to stop, then stop". I started one of my sqds toward the pillbox about 350 yds away. They ran into some barbed wire which they started to cut, but I figured we couldn't waste time at that. I found a way around the wire and led the sqd forward. We had been getting mort fire and about that time I ran into MG fire and some of my men had stopped following me. Sgt Moulding got the BAR and three riflemen to keep moving toward the pillbox. I yelled back to them, 'Keep coming, these Heinie bastards can't hit us'. Another sgt and three of his men kept coming but we were down to nine men now.

e. Attacking the pillbox. "I got to the pillbox and about that time the tk cut loose again. It threw a little dirt on me but I figured and hoped it would be his last round. My men were still coming and one of them had 10 lbs of TNT. While I waited for them, I tossed a couple of hand grenades at the back door just to keep the Germans in until I got

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some help. When they arrived one sgt and two men covered the fire trench in the rear, and our demolition men placed the TNT by the door of the box but it didn't go off. The rest of our co had advanced to within 200 yds and they sent up a man with two more 10 lb charges. The second one also failed to go off and I was sweating. We finally got the third charge in and at last she blew. It didn't even bother the box but I guess it jarred the Heinies. I left two men to guard the box in case they came out and the rest of us (now eight men) pushed on to the fire trench. It was empty as was a Heinie sleeping quarters into which we threw a couple of grenades through an open door. About that time I heard a shot from the pillbox and ran back to see what was happening. Twenty-one Germans, including a capt and two lts, were marching out with their hands over their heads. One had tried to make a run for it but got himself a couple of slugs from an M-1 rifle. The rest figured it was time to quit.

f. Reorganizing. "I searched the prisoners and figured we had better take a look inside the pillbox. I took one of the prisoners and made him start moving stuff in case there were any booby traps, but fortunately there weren't any. I sent the prisoners back with three of my men and set up a defense with the rest of my men who had come up by this time. There were only nine of us but it was all that could be spared at the time. In the morning they sent us some help and we held the position for several days before withdrawing to reorganize."

II SALVAGE AND MAINTENANCE.

1. Arms repair crew. "The grouping of rifle bn artificers in the service co train under the supervision of the regtl munitions O and his assistant has proved effective. It has speeded up the return of both individual and crew served wpns to the line and has relieved the load on the div ord co. Results: Since D-day we haven't requisitioned a single M-1 rifle.

2. Salvage crew. "A salvage crew of one O, one NCO and four men with the duties of clearing the areas of all salvage, evacuating the dead, and handling the effects of casualties, has made it possible to reclaim and reissue large quantities of ord and individual clothing and equipment.

3. Radio repair. "The regtl hq co radio repairman operates his repair shop on the service co train, handling all radios issued in the unit. Radios are now repaired more rapidly and a considerable burden is taken off the div sig co.

4. Maintenance inspection. "The maint section has been divided into inspection crews with the responsibility of making periodic, systematic inspections of all organic T. They have detected minor deficiencies that might soon have become more serious."--S-4, 115th Inf Regt.

III ARMORED INFANTRY.

"Our armd inf fight from their vehicles just as long as possible. This permits maximum use of vehicular wpns, some protection from SA fire and shrapnel, and the men are fresher for the final assault."--6th Armd Div.

IV REMOTE CONTROL OF RADIO IN RECONNAISSANCE VEHICLE.

"As it is sometimes inconvenient or dangerous to get into the vehicle when we want to use our radio, we have worked out a satisfactory system of remote control. We use an interphone box BC-606-D and wire it with four-conductor cable, similar to an interphone hook-up. The box with the speaker and headset atchd can be kept near the operator in a dry place, and has been used satisfactorily with as much as 100' of extension wire."--CO 5th Rcn Tr.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 75

25 OCT 1944

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A By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I USE OF 40mm GUNS AGAINST GROUND TARGETS.

1. Air bursts. "The 40mm AAA gun, firing am with the supersensitive fuze is particularly effective against emplaced wpns and personnel because branches or underbrush will cause detonation and air bursts. Care must be exercised that the shells hit no trees or branches near our own troops.

2. Employment. "When used close to the enemy lines, the 40mm guns should be dug in deeply and a parapet built with three rows of sand bags. The parapet should be extended around to the front, leaving only a limited sector of traverse, and the top covered with logs to protect from overhead and nearby shell bursts. With this preparation there is no need to change position frequently. Frequent changes of position make obsn of enemy gun locations less accurate and unnecessarily expose the crew.

3. Firing at night. "Night firing is inadvisable. The tracers soon bring down enemy arty and mort fire. Also, there is a possibility of hitting unseen branches or other minor obstacles, endangering our own troops."--AAA Notes No. 8, Hq 12th Army Group.

II ANTI-TANK COMPANY.

"When employed on the line of forward rifle cos we have often found our AT sections so far away from the cos that enemy infiltration cuts them off. Bazooka teams closer to the rifle cos could serve the same purpose and the AT co guns could be used for coordinated protection of the flanks and rear of the regt."--AT Co, 47th Inf Regt.

III STAY IN YOUR HOLE.

"It always pays to stay in your hole when you're not advancing and come under mort and arty fire. I've often seen men get excited and run for safer places, but they always ended up as casualties. Just remember these things: Always dig in, and when you come

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under fire -- stay in that hole and 'sweat it out'. That's what you dug it for!"--S/Sgt H.E. Carlson, 115th Inf Regt.

IV SUPPLY BY ARTILLERY SHELLS.

"Arty was used to shoot medical supplies to the 3d Bn, 120th Inf, when it was cut off from more normal methods of supply in the Mortain area in August. None of the plasma got through intact but bandages, tape and some morphine were recovered."--After Action Report 120th Inf.

V TANKS IN TOWNS AT NIGHT.

"Tks should never be left in towns at night. A town in our hands is a good target for the enemy at any time and the presence of tks will almost insure an enemy arty concentration."--CO, 747th TD Bn.

VI EFFECT OF ANTITANK GUNS ON PILLBOXES.

"Excellent results have been obtained with 3" HE am with delay fuze against small pillboxes. Prisoners removed from small emplacements so attacked have had bloody noses, cut faces, and other wounds. Inspection of some of the captured boxes indicates that the concussion caused splintering of the concrete inside the pillbox."--AT O, V Corps.

VII RIVER CROSSINGS.

"In the planning of assault boat river crossings provision must be made for the replacement of lost boats. In a recent operation a co of engrs was to ferry personnel at three points and construct an inf bridge at a fourth. Boats used in the assault crossings were necessary for building the bridge. Twenty-five of these boats were sunk by the enemy and construction of the bridge was greatly delayed."--Report of 9th Inf Div.

VIII FORGET THE HEDGEROW.

"The quicker we can forget the hedgerow style of fighting and get back to the idea of using our hvy MGs in support, the better off we will be."--T/Sgt L.A. Coleman, Co H, 115th Inf Regt.

IX REGIMENTAL REHABILITATION CENTER.

"We have established a rehabilitation center staffed by a medical aid man and an NCO for our combat exhaustion cases. Such cases are sent to the center by the bn aid station. They are kept there for at least 48 hours undergoing marches and athletics. They receive hot food and are provided with recreation in the form of movies and books. The surg examines each man daily. When the man is declared fit for combat by the surg he is returned to the service co for re-equipping and return to his orgn. In 14 days of heavy fighting we had 128 men pass through this center. All were returned to duty and only 12 were again returned to the rehabilitation center. We thus reclaimed 90% of our combat exhaustion cases within one week."--Regtl Exec O, 79th Inf Div.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 76

25 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

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C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

Note: The following material is extracted from a report of Hq VIII Corps and is a study of the methods employed and the technique developed by three inf divs. Other discussions of this subject were published in Battle Experiences No. 50 and 61.

I CITY FIGHTING IN BREST.

1. Boundaries. "Streets formed the boundaries between units. In some cases the entire street was included within the zone of a unit; in other cases the boundaries were drawn down the middle of the street. Many felt that the responsibility for the street was immaterial, since no one dared use it.
2. Zones of action. "Plats and sqds must be assigned definite groups of buildings. Where the near side of a city block is held, one unit (sqd or plat) should be assigned the group of buildings on each side of the block while a third unit remains on the friendly side of the block to give support by fire into the windows of the buildings on either side. Such support is very necessary. If only two units are available one should remain to support by fire. The blocks usually form roughly a hollow square of buildings across the center of which the supporting fire is delivered. Bazookas, BARs, tommy guns and the SMG M-3 are effective for such support.
3. Routes of advance. "Routes of advance for plats and sqds varied. Hallways, stairways, rooftops and basements were used. Sometimes it was only necessary to blow two or three walls in an entire block of buildings. It was found best to cross streets near the center of blocks. To make sure that the doors of buildings across the street were open, the locks were shot away or the doors blasted open with bazooka or AT grenades. The street was then filled with smoke from WP hand grenades and the men dashed across under its cover.

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4. Enemy firing positions. "Sometimes a single brick was removed to provide a loop-hole for firing from a basement. MGs located in the upper stories of buildings often were able to get effective fire from ricochets on the stone streets.

5. Entry of buildings. "A front line plat ldr felt that it was better to enter the lower floors of buildings -- for, if necessary, the building could be burned from the bottom -- and the Germans could do the same if our troops were above. The plat ldr also found that, when the ground floor was captured, a few AP shots from the M-1 or BAR through the floors would usually bring the Germans down with their hands up. The German point of view was explained by a sqd ldr. Said he, 'The German quits when we enter the building he is in. Of course he could hold out for a while but he figures our men might not play 'Kamerad' if he did. When he finds himself surrounded he gives up. When the Germans held out in the basement, a well-tamped charge of TNT on the floor above usually was effective.

6. Demolitions. "Pole and satchel charges were used generally and were prepared by the engrs in almost all cases. Care was necessary in determining the amount of the charge since it was difficult to estimate the thickness of the walls, which averaged about 18". In a few cases, a too heavy charge brought the entire building down into its basement, forming an obstacle. Our men were not injured in these cases, since they would always be two or three buildings back at the time of the explosion. One solution to this problem lay in placing the charges in fireplaces where the heavier side walls of the fireplace would prevent collapse of the walls.

7. Demolition teams. "A & P men were at a premium as advance was limited by the number of demolition teams available. The front line troops joined with the men from the A & P plats to form demolition teams. One unit reported that if the A & P plat sent down a four-man team, four three-man teams were formed, using one A & P man in each.

8. Burning buildings. "Buildings were set afire with 81mm WP shells, but only as a last resort because this left a difficult obstacle. Such fires were set at night so as not to interfere with daylight combat.

9. Relief of units. "One co comdr recommended that the relief of a forward co, be accomplished in daylight. He pointed out that routes forward led through basements, around buildings, through holes in walls, and over half-demolished walls. If men were brought to their stations during darkness, they had no idea what they were guarding against.

10. Interpreters. "The use of men who could speak German to call upon small groups to surrender proved extremely valuable. One sgt's ability to speak German resulted in many prisoners being taken. A hundred and twenty men came out in answer to his calls in two days and many smaller groups were similarly taken.

11. The 60mm mortar shell. "The 60mm mort shell was extensively used for direct fire through windows, launched from rifles by wiring to the grenade projector adapter M-1. (See Battle Experiences No. 10)

12. Aerial photographs. "There was a uniform desire for aerial photographs in quantity and it was pointed out that they should be taken almost daily in city fighting if they are to show accurately which buildings remain."

END

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 77

26 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I. CALIBER 50 ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE ON GROUND TARGETS

Note: The quadruple .50 cal MG mount installed in the M-2 half-track has been designated the "M16B".

1. With infantry. "On several occasions when there was no air activity the M16B was teamed with the 40mm gun for support of inf units, the M16B acting as the prime mover (for the 40mm). The 40mm would fire obtaining air bursts against trees, hedges, buildings etc. At the conclusion of the firing the M16B would move the 40mm out before the enemy had time to register with mort or arty fire, covering the move with its cal 50 fire.

2. With armor. "The M16B has been used effectively with tks to protect their rear when there was a possibility that the tks might make a deep penetration and the inf would have difficulty keeping up.

3. With artillery. "A plat of M16Bs was providing protection for an arty bn on a march when the column was attacked by some 400 Germans. At the end of a three-hour battle approximately 100 enemy were killed and 250 taken prisoner. There were no casualties or damage to the column and the arty comdr gave much of the credit to the protection afforded by the AA unit."--AAA Notes No. 7, Twelfth Army Gp.

II. ARMORED BATTALION COMMUNICATIONS

1. Tying in tank destroyer units. "Atchd TD units are added to our command channel by allocating to them one of the three SCR 509 radios in the mort plat. The morts generally are used in btry, thus freeing a radio for this purpose.

2. Fire control. "The channel normally taught as 'administrative' is used by the executive who controls the fires of the morts, assault guns, arty, and of one of the

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cos when it forms part of the base of fire. He is also charged with effecting the forward displacement of these elements as necessary, and has found this channel greatly facilitates his control."--CO, 68th Armd Bn.

III ARTILLERY NOTES

1. Use of base ejection shell. "Base ejection smoke shells which were set for a 200 yd height of burst, were found to burn with a bright light all the way to the ground and to continue burning for a period after landing. When fired over German front line positions simultaneously with a few shots from a flare pistol, they caused the confused Germans to fire their SA in all directions, apparently certain they were being attacked."--Lt, 84th FA Bn.

2. Simultaneous missions fired by an air observer. "An arty air obsr while beginning an adjustment on enemy tks saw four P-47s bombing other tks. An enemy AA btry was firing on the P-47s and preventing effective bombing by them. Continuing his adjustment on the tks, the obsr called for the fire of another bn on the AA btry. Both missions were conducted simultaneously, the obsr giving his sensings and commands first for one and then for the other until the tks were knocked out and the AA btry neutralized."--FA Report, VII Corps.

3. Cooperation. "A system of delivering simultaneous counterbattery fire from two directions has been devised by the VII and XIX Corps artys, both using TOT fire. Increased efficiency is also obtained from coordination of obsn."--Ex O, XIX Corps Arty.

IV QUARTERMASTER TIPS

1. Danger from water cans. "In the ki area mess gear cleaning cans should not be filled and left uncovered overnight. Water-filled cans will reflect flares dropped during air raids like mirrors.

2. Crating for personal effects. "We use the fiber containers of grenades and am up to 155mm to ship personal belongings of evacuated personnel to the Effects Quartermaster. The only other materials needed are tape and address labels.

3. Use of wrappings and cans. "The waterproof wrapping of Class II clothing makes an excellent liner for dugouts and slit trenches. Cardboard from the 10-in-one ration makes a sanitary floor in the field ki."--29th M Co.

V MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

1. Oral messages. "The importance of training in oral messages cannot be overstressed. They are used time and again in the front lines and they must be passed on accurately."--O's and EM, Co K, 358th Inf Regt.

2. Cannon Recoil System. "A day to day check of the recoil systems on our cannon insures the proper functioning regardless of the am charges that are used."--CO, Cav Co, 11th Inf Regt.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 78

27 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I GERMAN PIGEON SERVICE FROM LIBERATED AREAS.

1. General. "Information has been received that German agents are transmitting information from behind Allied lines to Germany by means of pigeons. From small lofts behind the lines messages are carried by these pigeons to larger more centrally located lofts from which the information is re-transmitted to Germany by wireless. The majority of the German birds carry on their leg-rings the marking 'Wehrmacht' or 'Wehrmacht Briefftauble' besides several numbers. Additional birds commandeered from France, Belgium and Holland have other markings.

2. Warning. "All personnel are cautioned to capture or kill pigeons that are suspected of being carriers of these messages."--7th Armd Div periodic report.

II TANK DESTROYER EMPLOYMENT.

1. Positions for towed guns. "There is a feeling in many towed TD units that they should be far back behind the inf line to 'stop a breakthrough'. In certain types of terrain, defense of reverse slopes is essential. Guns too far behind the MLR are useless, for if a breakthrough occurs the enemy is intermingled with our own troops and TDs cannot fire. Breakthroughs must be prepared for locally -- not in areas 1800 to 2500 yds to the rear."--4th Armd Div Memo.

2. Movement of towed guns into firing position. "In many cases the towed 3" gun cannot be pulled into position by the prime mover because of the danger of drawing enemy fire. To avoid manhandling the gun, we reinforced the jeep front bumper, mounted a pintle on the front of the jeep and pushed the gun into position."--CO, 644th TD Bn (SP)

III IMPROVISED BATTERY.

"Substitutes for BA-40 batteries for 600 series radios can be made by taping together four BA-2s stacked two high, two BA-23s placed alongside them, and a plate

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plug from an old BA-40 added to the top of the stack. The BA-2s are connected in series and the BA-23s in parallel."--Com O, 12th Inf Regt.

IV GERMAN TANK-INFANTRY NIGHT ATTACK.

1. German tanks will attack at night. "On one occasion the Germans launched a tk-inf attack at night over muddy ground against our position. After taking the objective the tks withdrew before daylight leaving their inf to hold the ground. A counterattack restored our position.

2. The attack. "The Germans sprayed the area with fire and used star shells and flares in an attempt to frighten our troops. The enemy tks were not road bound but maneuvered across country racing their engines and milling around to cause confusion among our inf. Our inf fired MGs at the sound of the tks and the sparks from ricochets located them sufficiently for the TDs to fire. One German SP gun was knocked out in this manner."--CO, 813th TD Bn.

V DEFENSE OF DIVISION COMMAND POST.

1. Organization. "A CP defense bn of eight cos has been formed from personnel of div hq, special troops, and atchd troops. Bn strength is 1550 Os and EM. Each co has four rifle plats and one wpns plat. Wpns plats employ .50 cal MGs, Bofors of AA units, M-51s (quadruple mount .50 cal AA MGs) and the 57s of the defense plat. There is a sig plat from the div sig personnel in one co; another co has a T plat from CM co; and the rcn co is made up of TD bn hq using scout cars and 1-ton trks.

2. Training. "Training was conducted daily for three weeks and each unit dug in and organized its positions. Now that positions are organized thoroughly and personnel trained, one alert period per week is held."--CG, 8th Inf Div.

VI COMMUNICATIONS IN THE FIRE DIRECTION CENTER.

1. Simplification. "To reduce confusion in FDC com installation, we have housed the S-3, HCO, VCO, and computers in one tent and used a system which gives us the features of a switchboard without the necessity for an operator.

2. Installation. "Twelve phones are placed side by side in a wooden carrying case--these phones are as follows, one simplex phone to each of the three firing btrys, one remote control phone to each of the three btry radio sets in com with the FOs, one remote control phone to the SCR 608 at bn, one phone for use with any supporting or atchd arty, two lines to the bn switchboard, one to the div arty FDC and one to the cn co for use when acting as an arty btry. Atchd to the six phones that are used the most is a small bulb that lights when the phone rings, thus simplifying the identification of the incoming call. The wires from the 12 phones run through a 12 circuit cable of short length to the outside of the tent where they are atchd to a terminal strip. A five pair cable runs from the terminal strip to the bn switchboard linking the three simplex phones and the two direct lines. Radio operators atch their own remote control wires to the terminal strip.

3. Modifications. "Two additional modifications have been recently installed which have proved very helpful.

a. "Two plugs from a head-and-chest set were connected and used to bridge any two phones so that any one calling in may be put in com by wire or radio with any obsr.

b. "A loudspeaker was atchd to the SCR 608 thus enabling all FDC personnel to hear calls for fire missions, particularly those originating with ln Os. By the time the message has been 'Rogerred' by the FDC O, the HCO and VCO have plotted the target and data is on the way to the computers. Also all personnel were able to hear the progress of the missions and the effect upon the targets."--Report of 11th FA Bn. -END-

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 79

31 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I ARTILLERY EXPERIENCES DURING THE REDUCTION OF BREST.

1. Organization of artillery fires for continuing operations in an area. a. "Targets in an operation of this type remain relatively fixed. It was found advisable to assign a concentration number to each target as soon as it was located, and to publish a list of these concentrations to all units to be plotted on firing charts. This eliminated the duplication of concentration numbers on the same target and furnished a common reference system for all units.

b. "Additions to the list were published daily as new targets or corrected locations of old targets were given. The targets in each div area were grouped daily, a code name assigned each group, and a fire plan published assigning the concentrations to bns. The fire plan scheduled each concentration to be fired with a one bn volley. The time necessary to fire through the plan was indicated on the schedule.

c. "When inf was to follow the fire, the div arty called for the appropriate preparation by code word through the corps arty FDC. The volume of fire could be increased as desired by requesting double or triple the basic rate on each concentration.

d. "It was found that buildings, even though fortified, should not be destroyed by heavy arty unless the direct support arty could maintain neutralization until the inf assaulted the area. If the fire was lifted the Germans would move back in and construct fortifications from the rubble which were often harder to reduce than the original buildings would have been.

2. Harassing fires. "PW reports indicate that intermittent harassing fire had little effect on troops provided with adequate cover, even when the fire was from heavy arty. As soon as the troops were convinced that their cover was adequate occasional rounds did not disturb their normal routine.

3. Civilian reports. "Friendly civilians were generally unable to give precise locations on a map but were frequently able to pin-point locations on a photograph.

4. Shellreps. "It is not reasonable to expect troops under fire to turn in complete

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shellreps. As in previous operations continuous pressure was required to get this information to assist our counterbattery fire."--VIII Corps Arty report.

II DEMOLITION AND SEALING OF PILLBOXES.

1. Escape hatch. "The amount of TNT needed to blow pillboxes can be considerably reduced if the escape hatches can be found and plugged first. These hatches, found in nearly all pillboxes, are about two feet square and plastered over so as to be scarcely noticeable.

2. Ventilation pipes. "Pillboxes have been blown effectively by putting charges in the ventilation pipes which run vertically through the side walls near the pillbox entrance. First the bottoms of the pipes are plugged, then 30-50 lbs of TNT dropped in, primed and tamped. In one case the firing of the charge breached the wall completely and surviving occupants were either stunned or wounded by flying concrete.

3. Welding embrasure openings with thermite grenades. "By closing the door and placing the grenade on the slideway a mass is formed which prevents the door being opened. The door itself is not welded but is jammed by the obstruction in the slideway. One grenade is sufficient for small doors but two should be used on large doors with armor plate thicker than two inches. If the grenade cannot be placed in the slideway a trough of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch metal may be used to cause molten material to run into the slideway. The surface on which the weld is to be made should be clean and dry. Doors that work on hinges cannot be welded with thermite grenades as the molten material cannot be controlled sufficiently to make a strong band between the door and the frame."--Asst G-3, V Corps.

III TRAINING OF REPLACEMENTS.

Note: The following comments regarding replacements were made by an O who has commanded the same rifle co through 16 months service in Iceland, 10 months in England and Ireland and five months in the present campaign.

1. The old soldiers' attitude. "The replacement is dealt off to all orgns like a card from a deck. The old-timers look him up and down and go back to their own circle. The old-timers will always ignore a recruit. This is bad psychology. The new boy may be fighting Germans within the next 30 minutes or in one or two days.

2. Common replacement faults:

-
- a. "He will say 'yeah' instead of 'Yes sir'.
 - b. Every arty shell makes him jump.
 - c. He is slow to shoot. He has been told to hold his fire and not give away his position. This is wrong. If you see the enemy, shoot him whether you give away your position or not.
 - d. His physical condition is not so good.
 - e. He lacks pride.
 - f. He is a 'buncher'.
 - g. He won't move.
 - h. He won't take care of his equipment.
 - i. He has no knowledge of what may be called 'combat sanitation'."

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 80

31 OCT 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I STREET FIGHTING IN AACHEN.

1. Reasons for success. The CO of a regt which fought through Aachen attributed his success to several factors:

- a. "All available fire power, common sense, and normal tactical principles were employed.
- b. "The operation was not unduly hurried; it was realized that street fighting is a slow, tedious process which requires much physical exertion and time if buildings are searched thoroughly.
- c. "The enemy was forced to fight on our terms. At every opportunity we would attack from the direction he least expected. We would first isolate a small section, then leave a small holding group, and work around to the rear.

2. Value of mopping up thoroughly. "At no time during the operation did the enemy fire a shot from behind our lines. To accomplish this, every room and closet of every building was searched and every sewer was blown. It paid dividends because fighting troops didn't have to fear being sniped at from the rear, and command and supply personnel functioned more efficiently.

3. Supporting weapons. "To avoid detection we put the tks, TDs and SP guns into position just before daylight or at dusk. We had the engrs and the pion plat blow a hole in the near wall of a building. We then ran the gun through this hole into the building and fired through another hole in the opposite wall just large enough for the gun barrel.

4. Enemy fire. "The enemy covered all avenues of approach with AT guns and used his tks and SPs as roving guns in constantly changing positions. Their 120mm mortars were used effectively at 400 yds and were difficult to locate."--CO, 26th Inf Regt.

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II RECONNAISSANCE.

"Valuable road and bridge information can be obtained quickly by simply changing the crystal in the SCR 510 on the rcn plat 1-ton so it can communicate with the arty in plane."--53rd Armd Inf Bn.

III TANKERS USE GRENADES AND FLAME THROWERS.

12 26

"In the absence of inf, tks have made effective use of hand grenades to clear the enemy from entrenchments and places of concealment. On enemy defensive positions the tks run along the entrenchments and drop in the grenades. Along roads the grenades are tossed into foxholes or suspected positions, thus discouraging the enemy use of bazooka and AT grenades. Each tk carries ten or more grenades for this purpose. We have also found flame throwers on tks effective against enemy bazookas and personnel placed along side the road."--CO, 70th Tk Bn.

IV ENGINEER SUPPLIES.

1. Use of local materials. "Supply rcn by our S-4 has facilitated getting considerable quantities of vital engr materials. With civilian cooperation, our group now operates four sawmills and a rolling mill, which cut lumber and provide I-beams to our specifications. We haul the logs to the mill for cutting.

2. Standard bridges. "A 400 ft, two-way class 40 (one-way class 70) bridge using I-beam stringers, has proved to be a standard type for most purposes. Each bn has shifted its basic loads to permit carrying sufficient material for one of these bridges. Additional material for their maintenance is carried in the group dump."--S-4, 1137th Engr Group.

V INFANTRY-TANK COOPERATION.

"We insure coordination between inf and tks by requiring our NCOs and plat ldrs to get together with the tk NCOs and plat ldrs and talk over their difficulties. Each man is allowed to express his opinion and as a result we get better cooperation between units."--Capt, 41st Armd Inf.

VI SQUAD LEADER'S ADVICE.

"Each man should be alert to pick up arty targets and to send the information back to the arty FO so fire can be brought down on them. This also holds true when enemy arty is firing. It is foolish to take arty fire and not try to locate the guns so the fire can be returned."--Sqd Ldr, CO I, 41st Armd Inf.

VII IMPROPER EMPLOYMENT OF TANKS.

"Instances of improper employment of tks with inf units have been observed recently as a result of the following practices:

- a. "Specifying SOP assignments for supporting tks which break down tk units to the extent that the employment of tks in mass and depth is not possible.
- b. "Employing tks under conditions where tk crews did not have visibility even as far as enemy bazooka range.
- c. "Using tks to draw fire along routes which offered no place for maneuver and employment of wpns.
- d. "Having tks occupy exposed positions for long periods of time without inf protection.
- e. "Operating tk dozers with inadequately trained crews.
- f. "Employing tks as fixed pillboxes or MG posts for long periods of time, thus violating the principle of fire and movement, and drawing excessive fires upon nearby inf."--XX Corps Memo. - END -

HEADQUARTERS ARMY GROUND FORCES
Army War College
Washington 25, D. C.

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REMARKS

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DISSEMINATION DIVISION
G-2 Section

HEADQUARTERS ARMY GROUND FORCES
Army War College
Washington 25, D. C.

SUBJECT: Report, Army Ground Forces Board _____

Number _____ Inclosure _____

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 81

31 OCT 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I DESTRUCTION OF PILLBOXES BY 155MM GUN SP, M-12.

1. Method of attack. "Our bn attacked 43 pillboxes by short range M12 fire. We adjusted with delay fuzes changing to fuze T105 on obtaining a hit. Evidence of penetration was obtained on all targets.

2. Conclusions. a. "Effective destruction of a point target depends on range and not whether the method of fire is direct or indirect. When it is possible to use short range indirect fire by the expenditure of two or three rounds for adjustment, this should be done. Two guns were lost occupying positions for direct fire; none was hit employing indirect fire.

b. "HE shell with fuze T105 does not obtain its maximum effectiveness at ranges under 2000 yds if supercharge is used. Evidence exists that when the terminal velocity is excessive the shell begins to shatter slightly before the delay fuze operates. This was eliminated by firing normal charge instead of supercharge at short ranges. With very little instruction the gunner can be taught to employ the direct laying sight, graduated for supercharge, with normal charge."--258th FA Bn.

II MAKE YOUR WEAPON COUNT.

"During 'rest periods' wpns are rezeroed and all personnel are trained with the bazooka if possible. At 200 yds with a rifle and 75 yds with a bazooka our boys can handle anything Jerry can offer. Longer ranges too often are attempted when patience would mean a certain 'kill'."--53d Armd Inf Bn, 4th Armd Div.

III REPLACEMENT AND SUPPLY.

"Losses of vital ord material can be replaced in 75% less time if the losses are reported to the div ord O by the fastest means available. We use radio when wire is not available. We also find that sup sgts can keep better informed on the sup status

by traveling with their units rather than with the train."--53d Armd Inf Bn, 4th Armd Div.

IV TANK DESTROYER EMPLOYMENT.

Note: The following comments were made in an after combat discussion conducted for plat ldrs and TD comdrs of the 703d TD Bn. These men had used the M-10 TD's with considerable success, destroying 34 tks, 12 SP guns and numerous trks, pillboxes, etc, while losing only three TDs. It is noteworthy that comments of these battle-experienced men principally re-emphasized existing tactical doctrine.

1. Targets. a. "On enemy inf use HE, fuze delay, and aim slightly short. Ricochets will often cause low air bursts over the enemy."
b. "Use the .50 cal MG on thin-skinned vehicles up to 300 yds. Over that distance use three inch HE."
c. "Range cards are still necessary. Get exact ranges from the map in daylight, and if possible, zero in on critical points and record the data."
2. Movement. "Move into position slowly. The vehicle can be better controlled and better prepared to fire. Fast movement attracts attention and causes considerable noise."
3. Orders. "Orders must be complete and precise, and given with an air of confidence. Too often they lack the information necessary for even a simple operation."
4. Personnel. a. "A well disciplined outfit goes farther with fewer losses. Even at the front the disciplined outfit is marked by its morale, pride of unit, saluting, appearance and wearing of the uniform."
b. "New men should be thoroughly oriented and put at ease as soon as they join an outfit. They must be made to feel that they are an important part of the crew."
c. "The best place to get away from mort and arty fire is in the M-10 TD. A long slit trench under the hull will also make excellent protection for the whole crew."
5. Equipment. a. "Keep your equipment on the vehicle so you can move quickly."
b. "Field glasses can be used effectively in the moonlight."
c. "Always completely destroy an enemy vehicle before you leave it."
6. Security. a. "The security outposts for road blocks should have wire com to the guns."
b. "When MGs are dismounted for security work, dig them in. The tendency is to throw the gun on the ground and forget about it."
c. "Learn more about booby traps and mines, and forget about the souvenirs."
d. "If you have no inf support at night, pick a position with open fields to the front. Then put your outpost out quite a ways and get the arty to prepare a fire plan for the front."

V ARTILLERY EMPLOYMENT.

1. Planning artillery fires. "In planning attacks our inf and arty comdrs get together and plan fires for the attack, and defensive fires after the objective is reached. After taking the objective it pays dividends to mass arty fire on all sounds and observed movement, as this will prevent reorganization by the enemy. On one occasion we broke up a counterattack by firing at sounds coming from the woods."

2. Artillery support of night river crossings. "We plan only defensive fires for a night river crossing for if the crossing is not discovered there is no need for fire. We have been extremely successful with this procedure."--CO, 46th FA Bn, 5th Inf Div.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 82

2 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I USE OF TANK DESTROYERS.

1. Aggressiveness. "The practice of holding TDs back -- the inf going forward, then the tks, followed by the TDs -- tends to foster timidity and lack of aggressive action. Plat leaders and M-10 comdrs should go forward with the inf, locate effective firing positions, and then have their vehicles brought forward.

2. Employment by junior infantry officers. "Senior inf Os generally understand the correct use of TD but junior Os sometimes do not realize their capabilities and limitations. For example, a section of TDs atchd to an inf plat was ordered into impossible terrain where the vehicles became hopelessly bogged down."--CO, 634th TD Bn.

3. Infantry-tank destroyer communications. "Inf cos and TD plats must be tied in by wire, and by radio if possible, to insure mutual support and coordination.

4. Concealing noise of approach. "Arty fire placed on three enemy tks caused them to button up and prevented the enemy from hearing our TDs moving up. The TDs knocked out all three tks without loss."--S-2, 813th TD Bn.

II USE OF WOODED AREAS IN THE SIEGFRIED LINE.

"Dense woods usually were less heavily defended than roads and more open terrain. Frequently the enemy has failed to continue the line of dragon's teeth through woods which appeared too dense for tk movement. In most such cases, tks, with inf support, have been able to move through the woods. The effectiveness of tk HE fire is increased by the number of tree bursts obtained."--Report of 1st Div.

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III TANKS IN VILLAGE FIGHTING.

Note: Os and EM of the 70th TK Bn, which has fought its way from the beaches into Germany, make the following comments on tk participation in village fighting.

1. During the approach. a. "Main roads or CRS near small villages should be avoided as they are often mined and generally have one or more road blocks.
- b. "The enemy's first line of defense has usually been outside the village. These defenses must not be permitted to separate the tks and inf. If the tks pass them ahead of the inf, they become subject to short-range AT fire, and cannot fire at the by-passed enemy without endangering our own troops.
- c. "A base of fire should be formed with tks and other direct fire wpns, while additional tks encircle the village and attack from the flanks.
- d. "When inf are carried on tks, they should dismount before entering a village. However, in one night attack, the inf remained on the tks and fired at enemy on roof tops and in upper stories of buildings.

2. Within the village. a. "It is not necessary for inf to precede the tks into small villages, but they should remain abreast of or close behind them to provide AT protection.
- b. "If more than one street is available, parallel attacks should be made. Narrow streets should be avoided, as only the fire power of the leading tk can be employed in them.
- c. "Hand grenades were found to be of great value as tk comdrs could throw them through windows without leaving the tk, and sometimes cause the enemy to evacuate buildings. This conserves tk am and is less dangerous to our inf than use of the tk wpns.
- d. "WP can be of great value in village fighting but a definite plan for its use must be made before the attack begins, and explained to all elements. WP rounds should hit in or behind buildings. If they hit in front the enemy can escape in the smoke without being seen. A round of WP will usually cause the enemy to surrender or leave the building.
- e. "Where resistance is stubborn, all buildings should be fired upon and either burned or destroyed. Enemy soldiers often seek cover in buildings, but a few rounds of HE usually will bring the survivors out.

3. After the attack. Both inf and tks should move out of a village as soon as it has been taken, to avoid mort and arty fire.

IV MARKING TARGETS FOR AIRCRAFT.

"When we use colored smoke to mark enemy targets for air support, our air support O contacts the planes and the arty that is to mark the target. He gives the command to fire when the planes reach the target area and when the arty announces 'on the way' the air support O repeats this to the planes so that the pilots can watch for the burst. In less than a minute from the time 'on the way' is given to the planes the target is marked and the planes sweep in for bombing or strafing or both."--G-3, 5th Div.

V USE OF CAPTURED ARTILLERY AMMUNITION.

"The projectile of captured 105mm am will fit our shell cases and guns but the case will not. To use the captured am we have modified some of our shell cases so that they can be used over and over. The case is cut down to the size of the German case and the primer from the German case is removed and screwed into the American shell case. It requires about three hours to complete this modification."--Ord O, XX Corps.

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DISSEMINATION DIVISION
G-2 Section

HEADQUARTERS ARMY GROUND FORCES
Army War College
Washington 25, D. C.

SUBJECT: Report, Army Ground Forces Board

Number 63 2 52 Inclosure

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No 83

5 NOV 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

NOTES ON WOODS FIGHTING

NOTE: The material in paragraphs one to seven was extracted from an operations memorandum of 4th Inf Div. Paragraphs eight, nine and ten were taken from a report of the 14th Inf Regt.

1. Organization. "Each assault rifle co may be organized into two assault groups and two support groups. The assault groups are armed only with hand wpns and grenades. They normally advance in column preceded by scouts. The support group follows its assault group within the limit of visibility, provides flank protection, and gives support with 60mm morts and light MGs. Reserve groups should be held far enough to the rear to insure against their becoming involved in the fight of the assault cos. They are employed in localities where the advance is successful. When employed, they should be furnished guides and moved rapidly over previously reconnoitered routes.

2. Control. a. "Individuals are designated in each assault group to maintain direction by compass.

b. "Each assault group keeps in com with the co comdr by laying a wire line as it advances. This ties the assault group together and provides a route for runners, an carriers and litter bearers. The distance advanced can be determined easily if the wire line is tagged every 100 yds prior to starting.

c. "Phase lines are desirable to permit the advance to be made by bounds, to provide opportunity for periodic lateral contact, and to facilitate supporting arty and mort fire.

3. Security measures. a. "Roads, trails, clearings and buildings must be avoided as they usually are included in the enemy's prepared fire plan.

b. "Overhead cover should be provided whenever possible. When halting temporarily each man should get close to a large tree as this affords some protection from tree bursts. The danger from tree bursts is somewhat lessened by the enemy's lack of obsn.

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4. Antitank guns. "Enemy counterattacks can be expected along the routes through which his reserve armor can be employed. AT guns should be leap-frogged forward to cover these probable routes of approach and not held in reserve coupled to their prime movers. AT guns should be emplaced so as to permit firing while under arty or mort fire themselves.

5. Light tanks. "Light tks can be used effectively to support an assault group after contact has been made. Time must be allowed for orientation of the tk plat leaders, and recon and marking of the tk route to the area from which the assault is to be made. The tks lead the assault, closely followed by the assault group. All tk wpns are fired and the accompanying inf use assault fire, advancing rapidly and making as much noise as possible. Each tk plat has atchd to it one inf sqd, one engr mine removal sqd, and a bazooka team. A telephone is affixed to the rear of each tk and connected with the tk intercommunication system. The sqd leader can make contact with the tk comdr over the telephone and point out targets with tracer rifle fire. Prearranged pyrotechnic and smoke signals or hand and arm signals also may be used.

6. Enemy positions. a. "Concrete fortifications encountered by assault groups should be contained by minimum personnel and a special task force with the means for reduction sent forward.

b. "Clearings and fire breaks are usually strongly organized and should be given special consideration.

7. Emerging from woods. "Prior to debouchment supporting wpns must be brought up, a suitable formation adopted, and arrangements made for arty fire. These steps should be taken before reaching the edge of the woods. The exit from the woods may be made rapidly or by infiltration, depending upon the amount of fire encountered. Scouts should precede the debouchment by at least 500 yds or as far as the next terrain mask."

8. Tanks and tank destroyers. "We have effectively used tks and TDs in woods, both on and off roads. They need some terrain feature to guide on and reasonably firm and dry ground. The sound of our tks has a demoralizing effect on the German soldier.

9. White phosphorus. "WP smoke is very effective in woods and the employment of 4.2 cml mortis would be of great value.

10. Stopping counterattacks. a. "Mortis and SA fire are most effective in stopping enemy inf counterattacks. Mortis, due to their high trajectory, are not subject to the difficulties of the arty and are particularly effective in the woods. Troops must concentrate SA fires on suspected enemy localities when a counterattack threatens because observed targets are seldom found. Prisoners stated that our mortis and SA caused the most casualties in their counterattacks.

b. "When the enemy is known or suspected to be preparing a counterattack, concerted fire to the front by all wpns at prearranged intervals will break up his plans. This entails the possibility of giving away our locations, but the enemy is usually well aware of our approximate location after he has made one or two counterattacks."

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

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No. 84

6 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGF
Adjutant General

I COUNTERING ENEMY TANK TACTICS IN WOODS.

1. Attacking. "Enemy tks in woods usually fire from well camouflaged, dug in positions, where our tks and TDs can not get at them. We fire smoke from our 81mm mortars on the tks and at the same time maneuver our tks to the enemy flanks or rear. The enemy tks move to avoid being screened and this permits our TDs and bazookas to 'draw a bead' on them.

2. Avoiding harassment. "Dug in enemy tks in woods remain comparatively quiet during the daytime, but during the night they move around and shoot just enough to keep our troops disturbed. Keeping TDs and tks well up toward the front counters this threat and greatly increases the morale of the men.

3. Defending. "German inf and tks attacking at night seem to move in alternate bounds, the inf advancing first about 25 to 50 yds and then hitting the ground until the tks come up. We fire 60mm mort illuminating shells up to a range of 800 yds, shoot hand flares close in, then open up with everything we have, including TDs and tks. We shoot like hell when the inf is advancing because if you stop the inf you stop the tks."--Os of 314th Inf Regt.

II ROAD TRAPS.

"Wire cable has been found stretched across roads at a proper height to decapitate individuals riding in a vehicle. Two traps of this type have been found recently, one well behind our lines and probably strung by civilians. Attachments to vehicles prevented injury to the occupants in both cases."--XIX Corps Periodic Report.

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III USE OF FLAME THROWER IN ATTACK ON SIEGFRIED LINE.

"An inf regt equipped with 75 flame throwers reported only one successful use of the wpn in three weeks' fighting in the Siegfried line. In that case the flame thrower was used from a captured pillbox and fired through an embrasure into an adjoining fire trench. When pillboxes were outflanked, they usually surrendered or were knocked out by pole charges, and flame throwers were not required."--Cml O, 30th Inf Div.

IV ARTILLERY OBSERVER WITH INFANTRY PATROLS.

"Inclusion of an arty obsr in large patrols has proved valuable. Arty support obtained through his radio often has been the deciding factor in driving back enemy patrols and accomplishing the mission of the patrol."--V Corps Obsr.

V AFTER ACTION REPORTS BY PLATOON LEADERS.

"Instruction in the application of tactical doctrines for future operations is facilitated in the 70th Tk Bn, by requiring plat leaders to make simple after action reports as soon as possible after an engagement with the enemy. These reports, usually accompanied by a rough sketch, are turned in to the S-3, and used during after action discussions."--Os of 70th Tk Bn.

VI TIPS FOR TANKERS.

1. Indirect fire by tanks. a. "Tks customarily use the center tk as the base gun. When this is done the arty unit to which the tks are atchd should be notified as the arty practice is to use No. 1 gun as the base piece.

b. "Greater accuracy is obtained by placing the tk broadside to the direction of fire and on level ground.

c. "Tks are able to confuse enemy counterbattery fire by buttoning up and continuing to fire. The enemy apparently decided that they were firing in the wrong places as the fire usually ceased or shifted to another location.

d. "We put a captured German telephone in each tk to permit the gunners to hear fire orders while buttoned up."--CO, Co C, 709th Tk Bn.

2. Tank escape hatches. "We have removed the backs of seats to facilitate handling of am and access to escape hatches. The escape hatch levers have been removed as they frequently stick. The hatches are then fastened with wire."--Plat Leader, Co C, 709th Tk Bn.

VII LINE ROUTE MAPS.

"We have speeded wire repair by making it SOP for all units to send a line route map with the wire crew to the wire chief of the unit to which the line is being laid. If such a map is not available, or security makes its use inadvisable, the wire crew makes contact with the wire chief receiving the line and marks the route on his map. This facilitates the work of repair crews."--Com O, 188th FA Group.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 85

6 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I. COUNTERMORTAR MEASURES.

NOTE: The recent comparatively static situation has resulted in increased emphasis on countermortar measures. Following are extracts from a report dealing with the 4th Inf Div activities along this line. Similar procedures in the Mediterranean Theater are discussed in paragraph 6.

1. Organization. "We are training obsr and survey teams of one O and four EM for each rifle co and heavy wpns co in each regt. They forward mort reports similar to shellreps, through normal command channels. Each hq takes such action as is indicated to bring fire on the mort. The reports finally get to the div G-2 section where the data is plotted on the div mort report board. We also have a section of the sound and flash bn, and one btry of FA working on this project.

2. Method. a. "Direction of hostile morts may be determined by listening posts manned by specially trained men in forward co areas. The direction of the sound of the mort propellent must be determined prior to the arrival of the shell. As the enemy will cross-fire morts, it is necessary that the azimuth of the sound of the mort propellent and time of fire be reported by adjacent units also.

b. "The shape of the crater is influenced by the direction of flight and the angle of descent of the mort shell. A shell falling vertically will cause a round crater. The greater the range from the mort, the smaller will be the angle of descent in relation to the ground; and, as the angle of descent decreases, the shape of the crater gives an increasingly clearer indication of the direction of flight.

c. "The general area of the enemy mort positions may be determined by plotting on a map the crater and lines of flight as determined from the crater and from azimuths reported by listening posts. As the enemy doctrine of mort employment corresponds to our own, careful examination of a large scale map often will permit tying down the

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probable mort positions to a small area.

3. Examining the crater for clues. a. "The ground around a crater is serrated by grooves which form a definite pattern. The grooves extending furthest outward from the point of impact run perpendicular to the direction of the mort.

b. "The mort fin and fuze splinters will bury themselves along the line of the trajectory at the bottom of the inner crater and in front of the point of detonation. They can be found by gentle probing and a clue to the direction to the mort obtained by extending a line along the tunnel made by the fin to the point of detonation.

c. "When the crater is quite distinct, the line of flight can be determined more easily, as the edge of the crater farthest from the mort will have under-cut turf but the nearest edge will be shorn of growth and much serrated.

4. Determining size of the mortar. "Examination of the fins permits determination of the type of mort. Fins of the 120mm mort have a diameter of 4-3/4" while those of the 80mm mort have a diameter of 3-1/4".

5. Results. "We are using this system and all echelons have been enthusiastic about it. There is no question as to its effectiveness in static situations. The real test will be in a fast moving attack situation."

6. Mediterranean Theater. A memorandum of the Mediterranean Theater indicates the use of a similar system in that theater. Points of interest include;

a. "Appointment of a 'Div countermortar O' in each div arty hq. The assistant S-2 of the div arty is considered a logical appointment.

b. "Designation of a 'Bn countermortar O' within each light arty and TD bn to operate in the FDC.

c. "Tying in of inf heavy wpa cos and cn cos, and atchd 4.2 mort bns, to the FDC whenever possible.

d. "Use by the div countermortar O of aerial photographs, PW interrogation, and reports of air OP surveillance of suspected areas, to determine probable mort locations. He also anticipates periods of maximum enemy mort activity and directs appropriate countermortar concentrations just prior to these periods. He maintains the same type of records as those kept by the div counterbattery O."

II MASSING .50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS.

"A btry of twelve .50 cal MGs was organized for one operation by taking guns from hq, service AT, and cn cos. The CO heavy wpns co of the reserve bn located positions for the guns, assembled the crews and supervised preparation of the positions. The btry gave direct support to the bn making the main effort by neutralizing known enemy positions. This fire was effective and permitted the rapid advance of the leading cos. The fire was then lifted to a high ridge which was the regtl objective. When the ridge had been captured, four .50 cal MGs were placed on the MIR of each bn. The fire from these guns helped to break up two enemy counterattacks."-- Os of 313th Inf Regt.

III SECURITY.

"Carelessness in carrying classified data recently resulted in valuable information for the enemy when a bn comdr and part of his staff were captured with documents and memoranda containing much information as to our dispositions. In another instance, two staff Os carrying important documents went on ren and barely avoided capture."-- V Corps Obsr.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP
BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 86

7 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I MAINTAINING CONTACT

1. In woods. "Physical contact is the ideal. While moving through the thick underbrush in the Forret de Parroy the CO of the co on my right and I agreed to keep our flanks in sight of each other. By this means we were able to search every foot of ground and not one enemy was by-passed."--CO, Co F, 313th Inf.

2. Using the SCR 536. "SCR 536s furnished to adjacent plato of adjoining cos facilitates lateral contact. These radios work on a frequency different from those employed by either co command net."--Exec O, 314th Inf.

3. Using the SCR 300. "The SCR 300 provides adequate lateral contact if the country is not too wooded, but we like to keep it off the air as much as possible. Cos of adjoining bns or regts maintain lateral contact during an attack by obtaining the frequency of the adjacent bn, and making contact through the bn cmdrs, who often have an additional SCR 300 radio for this purpose."--CO, 313th Inf and Exec O, 314th Inf.

4. By patrols. "Contact patrols should be SOP with all cos. This provides the surest means of contact, particularly if phase lines are designated on which contact must be made before resuming forward movement. The attack is slowed somewhat by this method, but particularly close contact results."--CO, 313th Inf and Exec O, 314th Inf.

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II ARTILLERY COOPERATION

"An excellent example of the value of shellreps and of close cooperation among corps arty sections involving action and ccm across corps and army boundaries occurred as follows:

- a. At 0630 hours the enemy began to shell a town in V Corps zone of action.
- b. V Corps counterbattery sent the shellrep to VII Corps counterbattery.
- c. An obsn bn of VII Corps reported a sound location from the XIX Corps sector that fitted the shellrep.
- d. VII Corps FDC requested XIX Corps FDC to fire the mission.
- e. XIX Corps fired at 0715 hours and the shelling on the town ceased."--Arty O, VII Corps.

III REPLACEMENTS

"We have adopted the practice of assigning not more than two replacements to a sqd at one time. This enables sqd and plat leaders to know their men and makes it impossible for a sqd to be made up entirely of green men. It has been found unwise to regard the MOS numbers appearing on replacement unit special orders as always correct. Often this indicates the last job a man held in his previous orgn, even though he had held other jobs for longer periods. Specialists are often discovered by checking the Form 20's."--Adj, 313th Inf Regt.

IV CONTROLLING 81 MM MORTAR FIRES.

The following methods of controlling 81mm mort fires have been used by Co M, 313th Inf with the indicated advantages:

1. In the attack. "Control of fires is based upon use of a map divided into numbered thousand meter grid squares. FOs using SCR 300 call for fire in a particular section of a given square. The mort plat leader computes the data and fires on the area. By using this system obsrs can place fires accurately without knowing the exact location of the mortars.

2. In the advance. "A continuous band of numbered target areas is planned across the entire front and an overlay given to each rifle co comdr. The mortars are laid so as to permit at least one piece to fire on each area without moving the bipod. As a result, accurate fire can be placed within a few seconds after the call is received. By use of this method, mortars have been successfully used to drive off hostile night patrols, thereby eliminating the necessity of disclosing the position of automatic wpns."

V CONCERTINA WIRE AND BOOBY TRAPS IN BUILDINGS

"The enemy recently effectively defended a building by stringing concertina wire throughout all rooms on the ground floor and hooking to it booby traps which could be controlled from the basement by other wires. When a member of the attacking force entered a room or cut the concertina a booby trap in the room would be set off by a man in the basement. Three attacks on this building were repulsed, and the building was taken only after it had been demolished by arty fire."--CG, 90th Div.

VI SMOKE GENERATORS

"A smoke generator co proved valuable in a daylight river crossing. The smoke screened the bridge site during the construction period and was used to cover the area as long as the enemy had obsn of it."--Report of 11th Inf Regt.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 87

8 NOV 1944

"Battle Experiences" are published regularly by this headquarters to enable units in training to profit from the latest combat experiences of our troops now fighting the Germans in Europe. Although the experiences of certain units at a particular location are not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items published will be those based on practical experience and are recommended for careful consideration by units which may encounter similar problems. Reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired in order that the validity of the indicated battle lesson may be determined.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I COORDINATED ATTACK ON A PILLBOX AREA.

NOTE: The following description of a coordinated attack by an inf rifle co reinforced by one medium tk plat, a plat of TDS and a plat of engr, and supported by arty, is extracted from a report by the CO 634th TD Bn to the CG, 1st Div.

1. Enemy position. "The objective was a group of three concrete pillboxes located on the far side of a dense woods which the Germans apparently depended on to stop armd vehicles. The pillboxes had a field of fire of less than 100 yds and were not covered by AT fire.
2. Armored reconnaissance. "A route for each armd vehicle was reconnoitered completely through the woods after the attack order was issued.
3. Covering noise of movement. "The tks and TDS crashed their way through the woods under cover of the noise of the arty preparation.
4. Covering the debouchment. "The debouchment from the woods was covered by a rolling barrage. As the assault groups advanced, every vehicle and man kept up a continuous fire. These fires kept the enemy buttoned up in the pillboxes until the inf and engr were practically in position to reduce them.
5. Security for reorganization. "While the individual pillboxes were being reduced and the ground was being organized, the armd vehicles deployed to the right and left and to the front. When the reorganization was complete, the armor was withdrawn to replenish its supplies."

II EVACUATION DURING A RIVER CROSSING.

The following material, extracted from a report of the Surg, 10th Inf Regt, pictures the problems of evacuation occasioned by a river crossing, and the subsequent bridge construction.

1. Plan of operation. "The plan was for two bns of the 10th Inf Regt to cross in assault boats, one behind the other, under the supporting fires of the third bn, establish a bridgehead and cover the construction of an adequate bridge for the div. Evacuation was to be by assault boats until rafts or bridges were completed. Two outboard motors were to be furnished for the medical boats. Orders were issued by the regtl comdr at 1400 hours, 9 Sept, and the crossing was to begin at 0055 hours, 10 Sept.

2. Crossings. "The first bn to cross surprised the enemy and secured a foothold but encountered heavy opposition a short distance from the river. Casualties were heavy. Initially the bn evacuated its casualties by means of assault boats returning for new loads. As soon as spare assault boats became available the regtl surg began evacuation by boats using outboard motors. This system worked well. The second bn completed its crossing during the early hours of daylight and by 0600 hours both bns were on their objectives. Repeated enemy counterattacks continued until about 1330 hours, however, inflicting many more casualties. The third bn crossed by boat in the afternoon, secured and mopped up a town bypassed by the two leading bns, and, after nightfall, assembled in a reserve position.

3. First day's evacuation. "By midnight 10-11 Sept, 120 cases had been evacuated. Evacuation was by litter to the river, by boat across the river, then again by litter from the near shore, across a small canal by foot bridge to the ambulances. Some litter hauls were as much as 2000 yds. It was not until dawn 11 Sept that the first litter jeep was ferried across.

4. Second day's crossings. "The second morning a bn of the 11th Inf Regt crossed at the same point to assist in enlarging the bridgehead. This bn's casualties also had to be evacuated by the 10th Inf ferry. By this time the litter bearers of the first bn to cross were nearly exhausted and it became necessary to send them all remaining litter bearers. By the end of the morning all litter jeeps of the first two bns had been ferried across, easing the problem somewhat. On the near shore the condition was also relieved by running jeeps from the shore to the ambulance.

5. Heavy enemy fire. "The evacuation continued through heavy enemy mort and arty fire until 0130 hours, 12 Sept, when evacuation was temporarily stopped. By that time one ferry had been sunk, all the assault boats had been sunk or filled with holes, and all work on the bridge had ceased. It was not until dawn, that a medical sgt found one unshattered assault boat on the far shore, and the evacuation continued. From then until completion of the bridge, evacuation by ferries and assault boats continued despite heavy mort and arty fire. In the meantime additional litter bearers had to be secured from corps units and ferried over to assist the litter bearers on the far shore. By midnight 12-13 Sept all aid men and litter bearers showed signs of fatigue.

6. Completion of bridge. "Finally, on 13 Sept the bridge was completed and casualties could be evacuated across the river in litter jeeps to a point where ambulances picked them up. Three litter jeeps, however, were knocked out by enemy fire. The next problem was the dispersion of the aid stations which had set up together on the far shore. The engrs constructed a bn aid station farther up the hill and one bn was moved to that point. The expansion of the bridgehead continued with heavy casualties. On 18 Sept the regtl CP and aid station moved to the far shore.

END

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 88

9 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I MORTAR FIRE.

1. Eighteen-mortar battery. "We fire 81mm mortars as bn btrys, employing control similar to that used by arty. This has made possible the simultaneous use of the mortars of all three bns on regtl targets.
2. Types of fire. "The types of fire employed are as follows:
 - a. "Mortar time on target (MTOT), in which all rounds strike a selected target at the same time.
 - b. "Mortar time on line (MTOL), in which all rounds strike along the same line simultaneously.
 - c. "Mortar time on area (MTOA), in which each bn btry fires on a bn line, each bn at a different range, giving simultaneous area coverage.
 - d. "Rolling barrage, which employs either MTOL or MTOA fire, increasing the range for each succeeding round.
3. Time of flight. "No time of flight tables are available for mortars. In order to place simultaneous fire on regtl missions, it is necessary for each btry to register on the prescribed target and record time of flight.
4. Method of firing. "When using this type of barrage on known targets, it has been found most effective to fire one round per mortar, repeating the fire any number of times at odd intervals. The enemy usually finds cover before a second round strikes.
5. Results. "Enemy PWs stated that the fire was very effective chiefly because they never knew when it was going to strike next. In one case they were even afraid to get out of foxholes to feed in their co area. Small details had to be sent around from hole to hole with the food. We also developed a technique of sniping at these details with 60mm and 81mm mortars."--CO, 117th Inf Regt.

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~~SECRET~~II ATTACK OF A FORT.

NOTE: The following "lessons learned" are extracted from a report of the 90th Inf Div covering the period of the attack on Fort Driant.

1. Engineer activities. a. "Engrs must determine the amount and type of explosives needed to breach the casemates.
 b. "Once a casemate is breached, gasoline and oil should be poured into it and ignited, preferably with a WP grenade. Flame throwers can be used but are of limited effectiveness.
 c. "Sandbags must be provided after each casemate is captured to seal tunnels running to the next casemate.
 d. "Oxygen masks should be made available for underground operations.
2. Use of tanks. a. "Tks are useful in reducing pillboxes, but are not effective against casemates.
 b. "Tks must be withdrawn at night and protected from enemy infiltration. Tankers must assist in their own local protection. They must not all get in their tks and 'button up'.
3. Artillery and 4.2 mortars. a. "Arty was generally ineffective on casemates, but some casemates were knocked out by SP 155mm guns at a range of 800 yds.
 b. "Cml morts were not effective against casemates, but were useful for smoking enemy obsn.
4. Air support. a. "The 1000 lb HE and 'jell' bombs dropped on the fort were not effective.
 b. "The 2000 lb HE bombs dropped on Ft Verdun, similar to Ft Driant, did some damage.
 c. "It is believed that 4000 lb HE bombs would cause the desired destruction. Air preparations using these bombs should be made the day preceding the attack."

III HEAVY ARTILLERY SHARPSHOOTING.

"Pinpoint accuracy by supporting heavy arty was reported by the 90th Inf Div in a recent action. A large building, strongly held by the enemy, was holding up the clearance of a town. Inf troops were on three sides of the building and within 100 yds of it in some places when the task was turned over to a 240mm how and one 8" btry. The guns were fired from a range of 9000 yds and controlled from an OP 1000 yds from the target. Due to the proximity of friendly troops, the arty registered 300 yds beyond the target and crept back to it. A total of thirty-seven 8" shells and seventeen 240mm shells were fired, completely destroying the building and killing all of the defending enemy plat except one O and five men. Friendly troops within 100 yds of the fire were untouched."--Report of CG, 90th Inf Div.

IV DESTRUCTION OF GERMAN RAILWAY GUN.

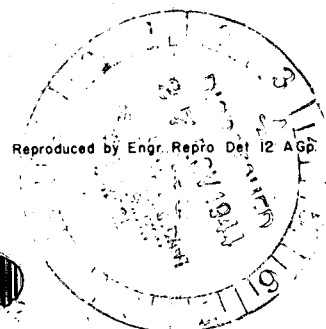
"Destruction of a German heavy cal (probably 280mm) railway gun in the Metz area, is claimed by XX Corps Arty. The gun was reported as hidden in a shed on a track in the railroad yard. The corps arty intelligence section, with the cooperation of French railroad officials traced the gun to a particular 100 yd area within four hours. A btry of 155mm guns, adjusted by a high performance plane fired 140 rounds. As a result the gun was demolished and 22 casualties were reported. A few WP rounds caused fires lasting several hours."--Report of XX Corps Arty Hq.

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TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 89

10 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

I ADDITIONAL .30 CALIBER MACHINE GUN FOR TANKS

Substitution of a .30 cal MG for the .50 cal MG on the tk AA mount has been reported as desirable by tk Os in the Mediterranean Theater. They feel that Allied air superiority makes the .50 cal MG unnecessary and that the additional .30 is desirable for use against personnel. Other advantages mentioned are that am sup is simplified and that more am can be carried in the same space. Units which have tried the modification find the gun "very handy".--Report of Armd Group to WD Board.

II CITY FIGHTING

1. Fire power. "I learned to use the fire power of every available wpn in the Aachen fighting. We took one strongly held position without a single casualty by laying an arty barrage, a closer-in mort barrage, and having every man in the assault wave throw a grenade as the fire lifted and the assault started.

2. Infantry-tank coordination. "We kept the tks and TDe well forward, usually one to a street. Four infantrymen were assigned to protect each vehicle from bazookas and other AT wpns."--Bn CO, 26th Inf.

III SUPPLY AND REPAIR OF ORDNANCE ITEMS.

"Ord sup and repair has been speeded by placing the responsibility for the requisition, issue, and repair of all wpns on the regtl am section. The mun O has given one of his sgts the specific duty of collecting items for repair and of receiving them from the div ord co for reissue."--Report of 11th Inf Regt.

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IV ATTACK AGAINST REVERSE SLOPE DEFENSE (Extracted from memo of 83d Inf Div)

1. Jerry's short range weapon. "PW reports verified by actual contact with combat patrols indicate the enemy is arming units of co size with a 1944 model automatic rifle. This wpn is efficient only at short ranges and is no match for the M1 rifle at medium and long ranges.

2. His defense. "One method used by the Germans for obtaining close contact has been the use of reverse slope tactics in defense. Only a few of the defending force are placed on the forward slope near the crest. The bulk of the force with supporting wpn is well dug in on the reverse slope. Any force attacking such a position finds little trouble reaching the crest of the hill, but once it starts across the crest it comes under heavy fire at short ranges from a mass of automatic wpn, including MGs.

3. How to crack it. "The proper method of attacking such a position is to quickly drive the defenders from the forward slopes, and cross the crest only after the reverse slope has been thoroughly swept and plastered with WP and HE mort and arty fire. Once the reverse slope is thoroughly covered by fire the attackers must move quickly over the crest and attack with marching fire, hand grenades and the bayonet.

4. Countering the counterattack. "The German counterattack is almost automatic and usually hits a flank just as the attack approaches its climax or immediately after it succeeds and before reorganization can be effected. The best method of countering the counterattack is by a reserve composed of tks and inf so disposed as to permit hitting the counterattacking force in its flank. Defensive arty fires to assist in breaking the counterattack should be planned before the action starts.

5. Action after successful attack. "Immediately after the position is taken, action is necessary to prevent heavy loss from arty and mort fires which are almost certain to follow closely. If the attack is to proceed, the attacking forces should move forward from the position quickly; if not, a small holding or observing force should be left and a position organized for the bulk of the force on the reverse slope."

V MINES

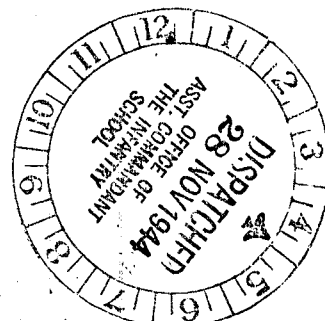
1. Antipersonnel. "Increasing numbers of antipersonnel mines have been encountered--some nonmetallic and not susceptible to location with the mine detector. Antipersonnel mines are normally placed in groups. In one instance the lead man of a patrol stepped on a Schu-mine. Three other men, including the patrol leader became casualties from other mines when they attempted to assist him.

2. Antitank. "Enemy AT mines now are being more carefully camouflaged. Mines on hard surface roads are even being covered with a light layer of tar to give the appearance of a repaired hole. Some of our units locate German mines and then ring them with mines and booby traps to catch German inspection parties--but the Germans sometimes do the same to ours."--Report of V Corps Obsr.

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BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 90

11 NOV 1944

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By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

C. R. Landon

C. R. LANDON
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

NOTICE: This index of previous "Battle Experiences" is the last issue of this publication by Twelfth Army Group. Succeeding issues will be from Hq, European Theater of Operations, U.S.A. Policies governing the distribution of information and the publication of "Battle Experiences" material will continue unchanged. The address of this activity is now: Commanding General, European Theatre of Operations, U S Army, attention G-3 Combat Lessons Branch, APO 887, U S Army.

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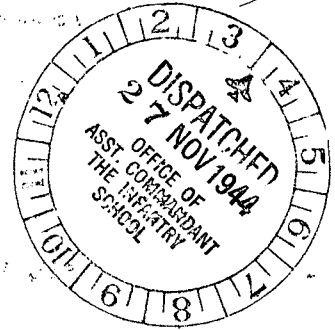
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