ARDENNES-ALSACE DOCUMENTS

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 60

13 FEB 1945

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By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I ADVANTAGES OF SELF FIRST AID.

"We train our men to apply first aid to themselves. In giving the training some men in each company are declared wounded in a certain manner. They are then checked, timed and corrected on their application of first aid to themselves. This system accomplishes these good results: It decreases the loss of fire power and exposure of individuals trying to help another who is wounded, and increases the men's confidence in their own treatment, thereby decreasing their fear of wounds and their susceptibility to shock. We require each man to carry three first aid packets in battle -- one in his helmet, one on his suspenders and one on his belt."--Report of III Corps unit.

II RAISING THE CENSOR'S JOB.

"An Australian unit has found it beneficial to post censored portions of letters on bulletin boards, with brief comments by the censor officer explaining why they were censored. Enlisted men have praised this as a big help and censors have found it lightened their load to a remarkable degree. The following rules are strictly observed:

a. "No matters having even a remote connection with personal or family matters are posted.

b. "Typed copies of the extracts are posted so there is no chance of the writer's identity being revealed by his handwriting.

c. "Examples which benefit the greatest number are selected and comments are always brief and constructive rather than critical."--Intelligence Bulletin, MID, ED.

III 4.2 MORTARS.

1. Sub-base plate. "A wooden sub-base plate twice the size of the 4.2 mortar base plate served to keep the regular plate from sinking when firing in very wet ground. The wooden plate is made so the spades will fit into it and is always dug in.

2. Spare mortar on position. "One spare mortar is kept at each platoon position and used when substitute parts are needed immediately. Repair is made later.

3. Test fuzes before firing. "All shell fuzes are tested both before firing and at the position during firing to insure against barrel bursts. Three faulty fuzes were discovered in one day when using this method."--Lt. Co C, 92d Cml Mortar Bn.

IV ENGINEERS AS INFANTRY.

An engineer combat battalion committed in a defensive role as infantry during the recent German counteroffensive believes that the following practices would help prepare other engineer units for similar emergencies:

a. "Train as many men as possible with bazookas and machine guns and continue to give short refresher periods of instruction. All personnel should be familiar with these weapons.

b. "Train a large number of men to lay and repair field wire. When woods made our radios ineffective we had to depend on wire for communication. Each company and platoon should carry at least one-half mile of combat wire and one field phone.

c. "Mount litter racks on at least one ¼-ton truck per company."--After Action Report of 168th Engr Combat Bn.

V TRACERS SCARE GERMANS.

"German prisoners attribute the failure of their attack on Bastogne on the morning of 30 December, in large part to the lavish expenditure of tracer bullets by the defenders. All prisoners questioned stated that the illumination by the tracers made every soldier feel that he could not go further without being spotted and that morale was lowered considerably because every tracer bullet 'looked as if it were coming right at you.' Even enemy personnel that already had seen five years of warfare, including the Stalingrad battle, commented that the display was more frightening than anything they had experienced previously."--G-2 Periodic Report, 3d Army.

VI REPAIR OF FIELD TELEPHONES.

1. Maximum use of batteries. "New but defective BA 70 and BA 80 radio batteries sometimes can be made to work by a simple expedient. Remove the battery from the radio, cut around the terminal base with a knife, lift up the base, and reconnect any of the wires found broken loose -- the usual cause of such trouble.

2. Don't throw a telephone away. "Certain damaged EE-8 telephones often can be made to work as follows: If the L-1 terminal only is damaged, one strand of the line wire can be changed to the 'battery minus' post and, with the other strand on the L-2 connection, the phone will work satisfactorily. If both the L-1 and L-2 terminals are damaged, fasten the black wire from the handset to the positive pole and the white wire to the negative pole of the BA-30 batteries; then connect the line wire strands on the 'battery plus' and 'battery minus' terminals. This has worked up to five miles." --After Action Report of 116th Inf Regt.

VII SEARCH PRISONERS.

"Prisoners must be searched immediately for weapons. Several hours after capture one wounded prisoner was found to have a long knife while another handed the medical officer a hand grenade."--Cs of Co H, 376th Inf Regt.

VIII SENSING MORTAR ROUNDS.

"When visibility is poor or there is heavy artillery fire near the target, mortars can be registered by using smoke shell. The two or three rounds of smoke shell will not decrease visibility."--Cs of Co H, 376th Inf Regt.

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R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I CUB MARKS TARGET FOR FIGHTER BOMBERS.

"Cub planes observers with the task of spotting for and orienting fighter-bombers sometimes have trouble getting the fighter-bomber pilots to see the targets on which the cub is briefing them. A successful solution has been to tape together three red smoke rifle grenades, pull all the pins, and drop them from the cub on a point near the target. The target location is then described with reference to the red smoke." --Air OP Officer, VI Corps.

II IMPROVISED 75MM HEAT SHELL.

"High explosive antitank (HEAT) shells for our 75mm guns were improvised by placing the HEAT projectile from the 75mm howitzer shell in the 75mm gun shell case. We obtained excellent results."--Maj, 191st Tank Bn. (Note: The Ordnance Section, Headquarters European Theater of Operations states that there is no objection to this practice but that the substitution produces only a slight improvement in the effectiveness of the fire.)

III RECONNAISSANCE BY FIRE.

"Advancing tanks must employ reconnaissance by fire -- shoot at any object behind which an antitank gun might be concealed. Such fire should be used where possible, at ranges greater than 2000 yards. Failure to shoot up haystacks on one occasion cost several tanks."--Training Directive, 7th Armd Div.

IV LOOK OUT FOR MINES IN A THAW.

"Many enemy mines have been temporarily neutralized by the collection of snow and ice in the detonating mechanism between the prong and the fuze or between the spider and the fuze. These again become a menace when the snow and ice melt."--C/S, III Corps

V FLARES.

1. Many uses. "We have used flares effectively in the following ways:
a. "To call for or stop prearranged fires.
b. "To locate an enemy tank for our tank destroyers. If the tank destroyer does not find the target another flare is fired and tracers are used to point out the target.
c. "As trip flares to prevent our outposts being surprised."--CO, 4th Bn, 143d Inf Regt.

2. Caution. "If tracers are being used do not fire red flares for signals -- they are too easily confused with each other. Changes in the sequence and color of flares must be made frequently to guard against German trickery."--Lt, Co K, 301st Inf Regt.

VI GUARDING MINEFIELDS.

"It is sometimes necessary during an attack to leave one man to guard a located minefield. In one case casualties resulted because a minefield was not marked or guarded after the leading elements passed safely."--Os of Co H, 376th Inf Regt.

VII TRACTION DEVICE FOR LIGHT TANKS.

"The most satisfactory means of providing increased traction for light tanks on snow and ice has been the substitution of a rubber block shoe for every sixth steel shoe, and attachment of six grousers per track, each one spaced about midway between the rubber block shoes."--Maj, S-3, 6th Cav Gp.

VIII 60MM FUZES ON 81MM SHELLS.

"We have found that the use of the 60mm quick fuze on the 81mm shell gives much greater antipersonnel effect. The 81mm fuze permits the shell to dig in too deeply for maximum effect. The 60mm fuzes that are made of plastic often crack when being removed -- the metal fuze can be removed without trouble. A tool made by the Kelly Tool and Die Company and which can be obtained through the quartermaster, facilitates removal of the 60mm fuzes."--CO, Co D, 399th Inf Regt.

IX WINTERIZED WATER TRUCK.

"We boarded in the sides and rear and put a zinc roof on our 6 x 6, 2½-ton service company water truck to prevent our water cans splitting during freezing weather. The sides and rear door are of refrigerator-type construction. Provisions are made for heating, if necessary. The truck has saved many water cans and makes unnecessary the heating of each can before using."--S-3, 749th Tk Bn.

X SURPRISE ATTACK.

"We have had excellent results by attacking at unexpected hours with little or no preparatory fires. On one occasion we attacked on the run following three volleys of assault gun fire and found the Jerries in foxholes with their heads down awaiting four or five minutes more of preparatory fire. The position was easily cleaned out with hand grenades."--CO, 4th Cav Gp.

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BATTLE EXPERIENCES

DECLASSIFIED

No. 62 15 FEB 1945

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By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I. TANK ACTIVITIES.

1. Reports speed maintenance. "We facilitate tank repair by requiring a detailed damage report as soon as the tank is hit. This enables maintenance personnel to go to the scene with the proper material to do the job.

2. Tankers are too tank bound. "Many tankers are too tank bound. Tank platoon leaders and sergeants can give better advice to the infantry commander on tank employment if they reconnoiter on foot before an attack."--Co B, 774th Tk Bn.

3. Vehicle recovery tip. "When a tracked vehicle has knocked a track off its bogie wheels the track can be spun on with ease if a T-2 recovery vehicle is used to raise the trackless side."--Bn Maint Section, 774th Tk Bn.

4. Extra rifles on the outside of tanks for infantry. "We carry extra rifles on the outside of our tanks to replace those lost or damaged by the accompanying infantry in battle."--Co C, 774th Tk Bn.

II. CLOSE SUPPORT BY 4.2 MORTARS.

"We have found that the most effective close support from mortars is obtained by making the heavy weapons company commander responsible for all mortar support, both organic and attached. He coordinates the mortar fires with the artillery. Observer teams from the heavy weapons company are placed with each rifle company. They are composed of one noncommissioned officer, a telephone operator and a lineman and are equipped with an SCR 300 and a telephone. Fire control is through a fire control center but it only designates the section or platoon to fire. Fire adjustment is handled directly between the observer and the gun position."--CO, 3d Cml Bn.

III. WHITE PHOSPHORUS IN SNOW.

"White phosphorus loses much of its effectiveness in snow--the particles are buried and the amount of smoke given off is greatly reduced."--CO, 3d Cml Bn.

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IV COUNTERBATTERY FROM PROPAGANDA SHELLS.

"We have received counterbattery fire nearly every time we fired propaganda shells. These shells do not explode and the Germans locate our positions by the strike and angle of fall. To eliminate this we fire propaganda shells from a roving gun or just before we move to a new position."--14th AD, Div Arty Section.

V .50 CALIBER MACHINE GUN COMPANY.

"We organized a machine gun company of six platoons in order to fully employ our .50 caliber machine gun. One platoon was organized from each infantry battalion and one each from the antitank, service and cannon companies. No men were taken from rifle companies."--CO, 175th Inf Regt.

VI CANDLES IN FOXHOLES.

"Candles, especially of the German trench type, have proved valuable in foxholes for drying socks and for warming hands and feet. They can be used in covered foxholes without violating blackout discipline."--CO, 2d Bn, 275th Inf Regt.

VII ANTI-FREEZE METHODS FOR WATER PURIFICATION UNIT.

"We have kept our portable water purification unit from freezing by placing it in an enclosed one-ton trailer heated by a tent stove. The trailer bows are raised to a height of six feet and a sand filter and sterilizing unit is placed inside. A tent stove, M-1941, with oil burner, is used to maintain the desired temperature. Placing the tarpaulin over the improvised top gives added protection."--CO, 63d Engr (C) Bn.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PATROLS.

1. Markings. "White cloth sewn on the back to provide identification was too conspicuous though the night was dark. A one-inch band of white material around the head covering is better.

2. Clothing. "Denims are better than wool as they dry more rapidly. Their use also permits having a dry woolen uniform to change into.

3. Buddy system. "The buddy system probably saved a life when a man was seized with cramps while swimming a stream."--Lt, 2d Bn, 115th Inf Regt.

IX REPORTING OF FRONT LINES BY LIAISON PLANES.

"The division artillery furnishes an SCR 610 to each regiment and the regiments, tank destroyer battalions, and all forward [illegible] monitor the artillery observation plane channel. [illegible] in the location of our front lines as much as [illegible] obtained by ground means."--S-3, 83d Div Arty.

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No. 58 17 FEB 1945

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I BULLDOZER-DETECTOR TEAMS FOR CLEARING MINES.

In Battle Experiences No. 41, 20 January 1945, a mine clearing team developed by British engineers was described. Further tests have established that back-blading by a bulldozer cannot be relied upon to detonate Schu mines, due to unevenness of the ground. Also the use of the EZ 44 anti-lifting device by the enemy would make removal of the mines impracticable.--Report from 21st Army Group.

II USE OF CAMOUFLAGE NETS AS ROAD MATS.

Camouflage nets were used as road mats to move bogged down vehicles. A truck got stuck one night and two other vehicles mired trying to move it. Finally, using camouflage nets as mats, the vehicles moved out under their own power.--Co B, 279th Engr (C) Bn.

III CONTROL OF SMALL UNITS.

We used the following standing operating procedure for small unit control at halts and in bivouac: When the platoons disperse, the platoon leader selects a spot easily identified even in the dark and designates it as the platoon assembly point. The section, if any, and squad leaders then take similar action. After each unit is dispersed a runner is sent to the next higher echelon. A leader allows no man to leave his squad area or even to move about indiscriminately within this area after dark. To assemble, the men move successively to their squad, section and platoon assembly points.--1st Inf Div.

IV TRICK TO CAPTURE PRISONERS.

We use a simple trick to gain additional prisoners. We force those already captured to move along a trail with their hands down. Other Germans will join them -- and when they discover the trick it is too late to do anything about it. On one occasion a group of five was increased to 12 by using this method.--Company Commander, 329th Inf Regt.

V REINFORCEMENTS.

We organized 35 reinforcements into a platoon led by a battle-tested sergeant. They were given a 48 hour training course followed by a battle mission on which they were thoroughly briefed. The balance of the company provided supporting fire while this platoon attacked. In 45 minutes the platoon took the objective killing eight and capturing 14 at a cost of three wounded. Units larger than a platoon should not be organized entirely of reinforcements and no company should have more than one such platoon. If only enough reinforcements are received to organize a squad, organize it rather than distribute the reinforcements.--G-1 Section, 45th Inf Div.

VI REDUCING ROAD MAINTENANCE.

*Freezing, thawing, and prolonged wet weather are accelerating the breakdown of roads in Belgium and Luxembourg. Breakdown usually starts at the shoulder and works toward the center. Maintenance requirements can be reduced by:--

a. *Making traffic one-way where possible.

b. *Requiring all vehicles to use the center of the road and prohibiting passing by vehicles over 1½-tons.

c. *Enforcing speed limits.*--Engr O, VIII Corps.

VII LIGHT TANKS USED WITH INFANTRY IN WOODS.

1. Employment. *We gained surprise in using our light tanks with infantry in woods by having them follow the infantry from phase line to phase line. When resistance was met they would go up quickly, with guides, and spray enemy positions with canister and .30 caliber machine gun fire. One section of tanks was assigned each assault rifle company. Mine removers moved just behind the infantry and cleared routes for the tanks. All clearings were checked by the infantry for antitank positions. When possible, the tanks moved off the trails and covered one another. On each tank the bow gunner covered the area to the left and the coaxial gunner the area to the right.

2. Infantry on the tanks. *We had two infantrymen ride each tank -- one was an automatic rifleman and the other manned the tank antiaircraft gun. Each carried grenades and used the turret for protection. It was found best to give them definite fields of fire.

3. Additional mines. *Four mines and fuzes were carried in each tank and used by the infantry for local protection.*--774th Tk Bn.

VIII ENGINEER SUPPORT.

We have a standing operating procedure which we believe improves the effectiveness of engineer support of the infantry. One of our companies is assigned to each regimental combat team and keeps a liaison officer at regimental headquarters. An engineer platoon leader with a squad equipped with shovels and mine detectors is assigned to each infantry battalion and is kept ready to move out -- usually on mine removal -- without delay. The remainder of the company is held in readiness to reinforce the squads or perform other tasks. A tank dozer is given to the engineer party with the leading battalion or other battalion moving down the main supply route.--CO, 111th Engr (C) Bn.

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No. 14 20 FEB 1945

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I EFFECT OF AMERICAN ARTILLERY FIRE.

Two American soldiers hid for a considerable time in a German occupied town, which was under fire from American artillery. They made the following comments on the fire: 'Shells with instantaneous fuze would explode when they hit the roofs causing little damage to the lower floors. Shells with delay fuze were very effective in destroying buildings. The Germans suffered few casualties from the artillery -- they stayed in the basements at night and would go into them during the day when the fire began to fall.'--CO, 1st Bn, 143d Inf Regt.

II PATROLLING.

When a patrol reaches its objective and finds no enemy it should radio the information back so that the position may be quickly occupied in strength. When we crossed the Moselle River, a patrol sent into Koenigsmacker found the town clear of enemy and a company was moved up immediately to occupy it.--S-2, 357th Inf Regt.

III MARCHING FIRE.

When employing marching fire we provide a continuous and well distributed volume of fire by having the odd and even numbered men advance alternately. Each group moves forward four or five yards and the men stop, fire to the front, right, and left, then move forward again. The light machine guns are fired from the line on the march. The heavy machine guns deliver fire either overhead or through gaps in the line. We have found marching fire equally valuable in woods and villages and recently used it in capturing a town and over 400 prisoners.--CO, 329th Inf Regt.

IV IMPROVISED MAP PROTECTORS.

To protect maps used by our forward observers, we have made coverings from the transparent powder sacks in 155-mm howitzer ammunition. These sacks may be used as they are or made into envelopes by cutting them and sealing the edges with adhesive tape. Infantry units can obtain these powder sacks from the artillery for every medium battalion receives more than they can use.--Ex O, 974th FA Bn.

V GETTING CABLE ACROSS STREAMS.

1. By boat. *The first boat to cross a swift stream should be a light boat with a small outboard motor, carrying two or three men and a light line to be used in drawing over a cable. Large boats are harder to handle before the cable is in and the larger propellers are likely to strike obstacles and become disabled.

2. By grenade. *On one occasion when two boats had been lost while attempting to carry a cable over a swift stream, we used a rifle grenade to do the job. Engineer tape was tied to the grenade and fired across the river. Men on the far shore then pulled over a telephone wire and, finally, the cable.*--CO, Reserve Combat Command, 6th Armored Div.

VI PACKBOARD WIRE CARRIER.

1. Description. *A packboard wire carrier from which wire unreels from a man's back was made from an ML-27-B axle, a DR-4 reel (made 10 pounds lighter by cutting the metal from between the spokes) and a pike pole. The axle is cut and fitted into a bearing housing, which is welded to strap iron braces bolted to a plywood packboard. A pike roller mounted on a pivot that swings through a 90 degree arc at the bottom of the packboard prevents the wire from kinking.

2. How used. *The first man of the regular two-man team carries this special reel. The second man uses a packboard to carry wire that has been removed from its reel and wound for the packboard reel. When the first wire pays out, this second load is merely slipped on to the wire carrier on the first packboard.

3. Advantages. *Elimination of the second reel lightens the load 22 pounds. An additional half mile of W-110 wire can be carried by the two man team. The two men also have their hands free for wire tying, climbing, and using their weapons.*--37th Inf Div (Pacific theater).

VII STREET FIGHTING.

1. Organization. *We organize each rifle platoon into two sections for street fighting -- one to assault and the other to cover. Each section has two automatic rifle teams and a bazooka team. All men have several hand and white phosphorus grenades.

2. Procedure. *We attack rapidly and aggressively, clearing each building in the order of first floor, second floor and cellar. Each succeeding building is covered from the top floor of the building just cleared.*--CO, 329th Inf Regt.

VIII REGIMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS.

An SCR-284 radio for the battalion [illegible] netted with the regimental service train and regimental command post will expedite battalion supply activities. In one instance the use of the radio resulted in the movement of emergency ammunition from the dump twenty minutes before the foot messenger arrived with the request for it.--CO, 116th Inf Regt.

IX SUBSTITUTE ANTENNA FOR SCR-300 RADIO.

The flexible steel antenna from the German pack set mounted on the antenna base for the SCR-300 radio has proved more efficient and durable than the AN-130. It is not affected by weather.--CO, 116th Inf Regt.

END

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BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 65

21 FEB 1945

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Adjutant General

I MAKING "SNOW CREAM".

"Our kitchens made ice cream by filling a marmite can insert with snow and adding two cans of evaporated milk, sugar and flavoring. Flavoring can be vanilla, cocoa, fruit juices, peaches, pineapple or fruit cocktail. Fresh eggs, if obtainable, help the mixture. Individuals can make similar ice cream by filling canteen cups with snow, adding lemon or orange powder or chocolate mix from the 'K' or 'C' ration, and stirring to a smooth paste. Milk improves the mixture but is not essential. Freshfallen snow is best."--398th Inf Regt.

II WRISTLETS FROM WOOLEN SOCKS.

"Improvised wristlets were helpful in cold weather training operations. Field Manual 31-15 describes them as follows: 'A convenient and comfortable wristlet can be improvised by cutting off the toe of a wool sock, pulling the leg of the sock up over the forearm, allowing the fingers to project through the toe of the sock, and making a hole in the side of the sock foot for the thumb.'"--Hq, Sixth Army Group.

III ENEMY TRICK.

"During relief of a front line unit in darkness and rain, five men were heard moving between the lines and the outpost. A man in an adjacent foxhole heard one of the five say: 'It's a hell of a night, isn't it?' Next morning occupants of the outpost were missing and there were footprints leading toward the enemy lines. The enemy had taken advantage of the limited visibility and bad weather for a successful 'sneak raid'."--G-2 Report, 100th Inf Div.

IV RELIEVING WEAPONS UNITS.

"We relieve units of weapons platoons and of the heavy weapons companies in daylight if possible. This gives relieving units a daytime check on range cards and firing data."--398th Inf Regt.

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V UNEXPLODED MINES.

"A mine checking detail from our ammunition section goes ahead of the battery to check newly prepared positions for the presence of mines unexploded because of frozen ground. Many such mines have been discovered since the thaw began."--Pvt Tom Hazard, Btry C, 500th Armd FA Bn.

VI CHALLENGING.

"An effective check for a sentry in doubt is to ask the challenged person to give his serial number and his service command, then check whether or not the proper figures in his serial number correspond to the service command."--Pvt Tom Hazard, Btry C, 500th Armd FA Bn.

VII ARMORED BATTALION NOTES.

1. Smoke. "Our artillery and mortars use one round of white phosphorus to every five of high explosive to smoke the front and flanks of enemy positions and effectively screen our movements. On several occasions the white phosphorus has caused enemy tank crews to abandon their vehicles only to come under the high explosive bursts.

2. Protecting vehicles from shrapnel. "Drivers can reduce shrapnel damage to tires and radiators by taking care to park vehicles along the off sides of buildings or in defilade away from the direction of enemy artillery. Placing a ten-in-one ration box in front of the radiator also affords protection.

3. Light tank (M5A1) antenna. "Moving the antenna from its position behind the turret and mounting it in front eliminates the damage to the antenna caused by swinging against the turret door. This mounting also permits the tank commander to bend the antenna toward him when going under trees and other obstacles instead of tying it down as before and reducing its range."--Os, 1st Bn, 33d Armd Regt.

VIII GRAVES REGISTRATION SQUAD.

"Our battalion organized a four-man graves registration squad to recover our own and enemy dead and turn them over to the regimental graves registration office. The squad is attached to the battalion aid station and uses a jeep and trailer from the heavy weapons company. The squad also has the secondary mission of battlefield salvage."--O, 398th Inf Regt.

IX USE OF BENZEDRINE.

"Members of a r[illegible] party found that [illegible] benzedrine tablet before moving out increased alertn[illegible] and reflex action."--398th Inf Regt.

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X SKIN PROTECTION.

"We have found that rubbing brushless shaving cream into the skin will prevent chapped hands and face."--After Action Report, 110th FA Bn.

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END

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I. FILTERING GASOLINE FOR LANTERNS.

"Lanterns will burn longer without failure if leaded gasoline is first filtered through a discarded gas mask canister."--99th Inf Div.

II PROTECTION FOR 57-MM GUN BORES.

"A 'K' ration cellophane bag over the muzzle will keep the bore of a 57-mm gun clean and it does not have to be removed for firing."--99th Inf Div.

III POWDER BAGS PREVENT TRENCH FOOT.

"To keep feet warm and dry, put on thin socks then cellophane paper bags from 155-mm ammunition, then another pair of thin socks. Be sure shoes are large enough that the added thickness will not impair blood circulation."--99th Inf Div.

IV COMPASSES FOR VISUAL CONTACT AT NIGHT.

"Night wire crews and small patrols tied wrist compasses to the rear of their cartridge belts. The luminous dials served as guides and thus eliminated the need for noisy signals."--99th Inf Div.

V LAYING ANTITANK MINES IN SNOW.

"Because forks freeze and strings often break, mine laying teams have trouble pulling safety forks at night in cold weather. This can be overcome by pulling the forks in daylight and reinserting them carefully with the string outside the spider. We use W130 wire as a base line when laying mines in snow because it is more easily seen than white tracing tape."--99th Inf Div.

VI HOT FOOD FOR FRONT LINE TROOPS.

"Put heating units in defiladed dugouts in rear of company positions. As meals are brought up, reheat them in these dugouts before sending them to front line platoons."--99th Inf Div.

VII KEEPING AXES AND PICKS.

"In woods fighting carry at least one extra axe per squad. Do not let axes or pick mattocks be evacuated with wounded or sick. They save lives when it is necessary to dig in and provide overhead cover rapidly."--99th Inf Div.

VIII SPEEDING UP REQUISITIONS.

"Our ordnance light maintenance company gives each truck a voucher register rather than requiring that all papers be vouchered at a central office. This eliminates the bottleneck of several units appearing at the same time with requisitions to be validated. It also allows the issuing clerk, who is in daily contact with the using unit, to have at hand the status of dues-in, dues-out, the number of deadlines and critical items under his control."--802d Ord Light Maint Co.

IX INFORM LITTER BEARERS WHEN CASUALTIES ARE LEFT IN MINED AREAS.

"If a casualty occurs in a mined area, litter bearers who are sent up should be so informed. A man trained in mine removal can then accompany the litter team and prevent additional casualties."--Lt. 1st Bn, 333d Inf Regt.

X ENEMY RELIEF OF UNITS.

"The enemy places heavy artillery and mortar fire on us while relieving his front line units. After heavy shellings be alert for new enemy unit identifications."--99th Inf Div.

XI PROPHYLACTICS SAVE EQUIPMENT.

"Rubber prophylactics keep breath moisture from collecting on radio and telephone mouthpieces and freezing. They also make good covers for antitank gun sights."--99th Inf Div.

XII REPELLING TANK-INFANTRY ATTACKS.

"Machine gun fire on tanks will draw tank fire. Use rifle fire to button up tanks and concentrate machine gun fire on accompanying infantry. Meanwhile maneuver bazookas to get a shot at the tanks."--99th Inf Div.

XIII SIGNAL LIGHTS FOR SWITCHBOARDS.

"Cords on switchboards BD-91 and BD-96 obstruct operators' view of supervision and line signals during heavy traffic. With headset HS-30, audible signals are unsatisfactory. By modifying the night alarm circuit to include two lights, one connected to the supervisory signal, the other to the line signal, a visual signal is provided. Lights should be mounted on the front panel, one on each side of the dial. With the supervisory light red and the line signal the natural color, operators soon become efficient in operating by this code."--99th Inf Div.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 68

24 FEB 1945

"Battle Experiences" are published periodically to disseminate rapidly combat information which may have training value for other units. Although not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items are based on actual experiences and are recommended for careful consideration. Contributions of similar material will be welcomed from all individuals and units; reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired.

By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I MACHINE GUN FIRE DIRECTION CENTER.

"One of our heavy weapons companies during recent defensive operations set up a small machine gun fire direction center. Each squad submitted range cards and concentrations were consolidated on an overlay which was issued to all units. Each gun had aiming stakes for all concentrations in its sector. Fires were requested by concentration number and a heavy concentration could be furnished within a few moments."
--29th Inf Div.

II TANK DESTROYER SIGHT.

"Glare can be greatly reduced by painting black outside the aperture of the direct fire sight on the outside of the turret of the M-10 tank destroyer."--CO, 823d TD Bn.

III CHECKING MASK CLEARANCE.

"When infantry is directly to the front in bushy or wooded terrain, we fire a round of AP(C) to check mask clearance as a precaution against bursts with subsequent HE fire."--CO, 823d TD Bn.

IV LUBRICATION OF M-10 TRAVERSING MECHANISM.

"During cold weather the traversing mechanism on the hand operated turrets of the M-10 will work more easily if the heavy grease is removed and the gears are lubricated with SAE 90 gear lubricant."--CO, 823d TD Bn.

V BAZOOKA POSITIONS.

"When placing bazooka teams along roads a dug in machine gun should be located nearby. Firing on enemy tanks with the machine gun will cause them to button up, inflict casualties on any personnel riding outside, and give the bazooka team time to get in effective shots."--CO, 35th Engr Bn.

II HOW TO CHALLENGE.

"One unexpected shout is hard to locate; a second, expected, can usually be spotted. Sentries can protect themselves by letting a man they are about to challenge get fairly close - 25 yards or less - and then shouting 'Halt' just once."--Sgt Homer A. East, 2d Inf Regt.

III NIGHT FIRING SUGGESTION.

"Whenever possible at night we use hand grenades rather than small arms. Hand grenades don't give away the position."--Sgt Homer A. East, 2d Inf Regt.

IV ELIMINATING NOISE IN PATROL RIVER CROSSINGS.

"Here's how we help infantry raiding parties across a river without the noise of paddling. Send a party across by swimming, carrying one end of a half-inch rope. The far shore party then can pull across the boats carrying the infantry. This eliminates the noise of a motor or of rowing. For more than one trip, attach ropes at each end of the boat and let the far and near shore parties pull it across in turn. Don't forget an infantry security detail for the far shore party."--121st Engr Bn (C)

V DON'T THROW AWAY AMMUNITION.

"My company was crossing a river and they had really loaded us down with ammunition. They gave me a mortar round, a bazooka round, a rifle grenade, three hand grenades and two bandoliers of armor-piercing. And I already had my own belt full of ammunition. How I griped; 'Here I am 37 years old,' I said to myself, 'how can I carry a load these 21 year olders are staggering under!'

"But I did manage to carry it and thank God I did. We crossed the river and Jerry attacked. We finally repulsed him but, before we did, we had fired not only all our ammunition but all the Jerry ammunition we could lay our hands on. Like all infantrymen, I like to travel light, but I've learned the hard way that I must carry every round of ammunition issued to me."--Pvt H. Israel, Co. K, 357th Inf Regt.

VI NO TRACERS IN MIST.

"In daytime when mist limits visibility, tracers don't help the firer but they do disclose his position."--Sgt Herbert Wells, Co. I, 357th Inf Regt.

VII GERMAN BOOBY TRAP.

"The Germans have booby trapped American dog tags by attaching hand grenades to the dog tag chains so a pull on the chain will [illegible] grenade. The grenade is concealed in the clothing and the chain partly exposed around the neck."--Graves Registration Service.

VIII SPEEDING UP THE FIRING BATTERY.

"We have found that it speeds up a firing battery to send gunners, section chiefs and other key enlisted personnel out with the forward observer occasionally. If time permits the fire direction center should describe the target and the results of the shoot to the battery. I have seen my men shaking hands after being told that they had destroyed ten enemy vehicles."--102d FA Bn, 26th Inf Div.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

DECLASSIFIED

No. 69 — 25 FEB 1945

"Battle Experiences" are published periodically to disseminate rapidly combat information which may have training value for other units. Although not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items are based on actual experiences and are recommended for careful consideration. Contributions of similar material will be welcomed from all individuals and units; reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired.

By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I MORE TRACTION FOR ARTILLERY TRUCKS IN MUD.

"Flotation and traction in mud can be greatly increased by adding the two spare wheels to the two front wheels of the trucks and adding a pair of dual chains. Our prime movers are usually driven only a few miles per day and we find that this system works very satisfactorily."--102d FA Bn, 26th Inf Div. (Note: The Ordnance Section, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, recommends that this modification be considered as proper only for use in mud and states that it should not be used on hard roads.)

II MEDIUM AND HEAVY ARTILLERY AGAINST TANKS.

"We broke up a 14-tank enemy counterattack with fire from medium and heavy artillery. Tank destroyers were not available and the light artillery proved inadequate so we used a battery of 8" howitzers and two battalions of 155mm howitzers. The fire destroyed some of the enemy tanks, drove the rest into the open where they were destroyed by our infantry, and stopped accompanying enemy infantry."--CG, Div Arty, 84th Inf Div.

III SOUND-POWERED SWITCHBOARD.

"We improvised a satisfactory sound-powered switchboard and eliminated the need for three or four handsets in the command post. The board is made from radio repair wire, stove bolts, test clips, diaphragms from sound-powered telephones, and a switchbox -- or improvised switches. Each incoming line is attached to the board by test clips and is connected on the board to a diaphragm for signalling and a switch to connect it to the handset at the board. To call from one of the platoons a man simply whistles into his phone and the operator at the board throws the switch corresponding to the diaphragm responding to the signal."--Lt, Co H, 407th Inf Regt.

DECLASSIFIED

IV LESSONS LEARNED BY 9TH [illegible] DIVISION.

1. Hectograph sketches. "We issued hectograph sketches of town and factory areas, made from aerial photographs, to squad leaders 24 hours before the attack. Using these, every man was briefed to know his exact job.

2. Lesson in patrolling. "We took our patrol leaders on a tour of inspection of a recently captured area in which we had held a static line and had patrolled nightly. A study of the terrain from the enemy's side showed us mistakes we had made in our patrolling.

3. Communication between observation posts. "On a static front we tied all observation posts in on one telephone line. Also on the line were the observers for the cannon company and the artillery, .50 caliber machine guns and 75mm assault guns. A report by any observer could be followed by any other observer and a mass of fire could be delivered in a few minutes.

4. Azimuths. "We have facilitated the recording of azimuths by our observers by furnishing each observation post with a large black metal disk on which the face of the compass is painted in white. A revolving metal arrow with a sighting device enables the observer to lay on objects quickly.

5. Ski patrols. "We formed a ski patrol of men without skiing experience, giving them 10 days training under an officer who was an experienced skier. The patrol was divided between the two assault battalions in an attack and used as special runners between the battalion command posts and the companies. Continuous control of the assaulting companies resulted.

6. Modification of M-67 fuze. "Long range marking for air bombardment and the blinding of distant observation posts has been simplified by using the modified M-67 mechanical time fuze to fit the M116HE smoke shell. This fuze, which is now stocked by ammunition supply points, permits firing the 155mm howitzer HE M116 HC shell on all marking or screening missions up to the maximum range."--Report of 9th Inf Div.

V MORTAR RANGE DEFLECTION FAN.

1. Purpose. "A mortar range deflection fan improvised from celluloid material has facilitated both the obtaining of fire data from maps and aerial photos and the correction of these data. Its use permits putting effective 81mm mortar fire on new targets with maximum surprise and minimum adjustment rounds.

2. Description of fan. "The index point of the fan represents the mortar and base stake and the center line is the base line. Six lines spaced at 150 mil intervals radiate from the index point on each side of the base line on the azimuths of the six left and six right [illegible] stakes. Broken lines are placed between them at 50 mil intervals. Range scales are added.

DECLASSIFIED

3. Operation. "Fire is adjusted on the base point and two check points. The check points are selected prominent objects and should be about four or five stakes right and left of the base line. First the base point is fired, base deflection marked and stakes set out. Then, placing the deflection fan on the map, the right and left check points are selected and the data for each determined. Fire is then placed on each check point and recorded on a correction table. Data for the intermediate targets are based on corrections determined by firing on the check points."--Lt, Co D, 302d Inf Regt.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 70 26 FEB 1945

"Battle Experiences" are published periodically to disseminate rapidly combat information which may have training value for other units. Although not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items are based on actual experiences and are recommended for careful consideration. Contributions of similar material will be welcomed from all individuals and units; reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired.

By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I EMPLOYMENT OF TANK DESTROYERS.

1. Location and advantages. "We employ our tank destroyers well forward both in attack and defense, assigning them zones with the forward elements. Within these zones they move about to avoid hostile fire and to obtain better firing positions. They withdraw only upon agreement with the infantry commander. The forward employment permits immediate support to the infantry, insures infantry protection for the tank destroyers, facilitates reconnaissance, and usually makes unnecessary any hurried movement into position.

2. Reconnaissance. "We insist upon reconnaissance on foot and have trained the reconnaissance platoon especially for it. They have also been trained to fight as infantry when necessary.

3. Attack. "The destroyers accompany the infantry in the attack, a platoon with an infantry battalion. The platoon moves forward by bounds, generally with the reserve company. The platoon leader goes ahead on foot with the leading company commanders, reconnoitering routes and gun positions, keeping in touch with the front line infantry situation, and directing the forward movement. For communication SCR-536s have been acquired -- one for the platoon leader and one for each vehicle. Any force holding up the infantry is a suitable target. On targets other than tanks, usually only one gun is employed; the others lie concealed ready to engage enemy armor if it appears when the first gun opens up.

4. Defense. "In defense the guns are kept close to the front line positions, carefully camouflaged, and their action is closely coordinated with the infantry. In a recent engagement it was agreed that the infantry would take care of the enemy infantry and the destroyers would handle the tanks. Everyone understood and it worked well. The tank destroyer battalion knocked out 43 enemy tanks and lost only four guns.

5. Illuminating shells. "Illuminating shells from 60mm mortars have proved very valuable for firing on tanks at night. The mortar is fired a little distance from the destroyer to avoid disclosing the position. The bipod and base plate are not used. Every tank destroyer section should have a mortar."--CO, 705th TD Bn.

II GERMAN PANZERFAUST.

1. Additional bazookas. "We have trained every man in the use of captured German Panzerfausts and employ them to supplement our bazookas.

2. Characteristics and precautions. "The Panzerfaust has a range of only about 40 yards but the projectile is more sensitive and carries a heavier bursting charge than our bazooka shell. The detonator is packed separately in the original container and is often placed, reversed, in the explosive head to make it safer to carry. Before using the Panzerfaust the head should be unscrewed and the position of the detonator checked. Luminous sights are provided for night firing. It is a one-shot weapon and is discarded after firing.

3. Effect. "We fired one against the frontal armor of a Mark V tank and it penetrated six inches of armor and smashed the transmission. It is similarly effective against steel doors or embrasures of pillboxes."--CO, 3d Bn, 22d Inf Regt.

III AIR ADJUSTMENT OF MORTAR FIRE.

"In a defensive situation we send an 81mm mortar observer up in an observation plane to register on targets defiladed from ground observation."--CO, Co M, 116th Inf Regt.

IV WIRE TO RIFLE COMPANIES.

"We have rifle company wire teams lay assault wire back to the battalion. This is simpler and quicker than having battalion lay it forward because the company wire teams know the exact location of the company command posts."--CO, 3d Bn, 22d Inf Regt.

V STERILIZATION OF MESS GEAR.

"Mess gear of front line troops is collected and taken to the kitchens where it is washed by mess personnel. When the next hot meal goes forward, mess gear is sent along in 32-gallon cans of boiling water, and arrives hot and sterilized."--Div Medical Inspector, 87th Inf Div.

VI ANTIAIRCRAFT ARTILLERY NOTES.

1. Protection of power cables. "Power cables from the generators to the radar, guns, and control instruments should be covered with straw and sand bags before being placed underground in cold weather. Then, even if the ground freezes, they can be taken up without damage when movement is necessary.

2. Radio. "We get better reception with our SCR 543, SCR 177 and Motorola FM T50 BC radios by using a tall mast type antenna on a 45 to 50 foot pole rather than the regular flat top antenna."--Os, 217th AAA Bn.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 21 — 28 FEB 1945

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By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I BOOBY TRAPS.

"The enemy has been booby-trapping dead bodies with egg and rifle grenades. The grenades are placed in the pockets with the pull string staked to the ground so that when the body is moved the string is pulled exploding the grenade. Check the pockets before moving bodies."--Engr Intelligence Summary, XX Corps.

II TIRE CHAINS.

"To eliminate the catching and tearing of the brake hose by the loose end of tire chains we have removed two links from the inside longitudinal chain. When being mounted the chain must be laid out to insure that the short chain is on the inside."
--After Action Report, 634th Engr Light Equip Co.

III BATTALION INTELLIGENCE SECTION.

1. Training and selection. "Careful selection and thorough training of our battalion intelligence personnel has paid dividends. In addition to more normal intelligence subjects, they have become specialists in the detection and deactivation of mines and in the operation of enemy equipment.

2. Activities. a. "In the reconnaissance phase of an operation an intelligence scout is attached to every patrol sent out by our battalion.

b. "When operation of an observation post covering the battalion front is not feasible, the section is split and attached to the companies in the attack or on the line to assist them in intelligence matters, scouting and patrolling, reporting of enemy information, and evacuation of prisoners. Company commanders find this system of great value.

c. "The section also is frequently used to help disseminate information of the enemy situation to all the troops in the battalion. This helps morale."--CO, 3d Bn, 379th Inf.

IV COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE TEST.

1. General. "To determine the amount of information that might be gathered by German agents in American uniforms a counter-intelligence test was conducted by a Corps G-2 Section. Agents without credentials, without the password, and who spoke with heavy German accents were sent to various units.

2. Information obtained. "A member of an artillery battalion disclosed his organization, the number and caliber of guns, and conducted th agent to the battery position where he explained the operation of the gun and ammunition. A soldier directed two agents to his command post where an officer gave them directions to reach another town. Two agents posing as correspondents photographed a battery and upon being challenged explained that they had no credentials; the officer then posed the battery for them. Upon photographing another battery the agents were challenged and being unable to show credentials were taken to the executive officer who gave them blanket permission to photograph the guns.

3. Correspondents' credentials. "War correspondents will present credentials upon demand. Public Relations Officers know many of the correspondents and can assist in identifying them."--G-2 Periodic Report, Hq, XIII Corps.

V COORDINATED OUTPOST ACTION.

"While in a defensive position we numbered our outposts and ran wire between them. One night an enemy patrol came towards post number one. This post, to avoid disclosing its position, called post number two and had it fire a flare. The flare disclosed the enemy patrol and it was destroyed."--Member 3d Plat, Co B, 116th Inf.

VI WITHDRAWAL FROM PATROLLING.

"Many patrols have successfully accomplished their mission only to lose personnel by a hasty, noisy withdrawal. Patrols go out at night stealthily, with all precautions but all of that is forgotten in getting back to safety. Remember it is as easy to get hit in the back as in the belly."--Plat Leader, Co B, 116th Inf.

VII PATROLLING.

"On a night patrol only one man carried the grenade signal for supporting fire--he was the one man that was lost. Such signals should be carried by two or three men in the patrol."--Lt, Co C, 116th Inf.

VIII EMPLOYMENT OF WHITE PHOSPHORUS SMOKE.

"Before deciding to use white phosphorus artillery observers should consider the following points:

a. "Is it the most suitable shell to perform the mission?

b. "How much is available; if smoke is used will it mean a shortage of smoke for a more important mission later?

c. "What will be the effects other than the primary effect sought? In considering this question, the following points are important:

(1) "Will the screening effect interfere with important observation for subsequent fires?

(2) "Will the smoke drift so as to hamper the operations of an adjacent unit?

(3) "Will the screening effect assist the enemy by permitting movement under its cover?"--Bulletin, 95th Inf Div Arty.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 73 — 4 MAR 1945

"Battle Experiences" are published periodically to disseminate rapidly combat information which may have training value for other units. Although not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items are based on actual experiences and are recommended for careful consideration. Contributions of similar material will be welcomed from all individuals and units; reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired.

By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I CHANGE IN BATTLE EXPERIENCE NO. 59.

1. Error as to unit. In paragraph 6b of "Battle Experiences" No. 59, dated 12 February 1945, the unit referred to was the 80th instead of the 90th Infantry Division.

2. Later information about DUKWs. In connection with paragraph 16d of the same publication, further information is that only two DUKWs were actually used in the operation. Because of the steepness of the river banks it was not possible for them to get in and out of the water each time and the loading and unloading on the far shore was effected with the DUKWs moored alongside the bank. It was necessary to steer them well upstream of the intended landing point.--Former G-3, 90th Inf Div.

II SPEEDING BRIDGING OPERATIONS.

"Bridging operations can be speeded up and lives frequently saved by these practices:

a. "Attaching an artillery liaison officer to the engineer unit at the bridge site.

b. "Delaying the start of work until all possible enemy observation points overlooking the site, are occupied by friendly troops. This can be done only if profiles of the area are prepared in advance.

c. "Witholding until darkness all preparatory activities for a bridging operation which must be undertaken under enemy observation. This will lessen the probability of his registering on the site."--After Action Report, 60th Engr Combat Bn.

III WET WEATHER OPERATIONS.

1. Road repair. "We have found tile roofing better than brick rubble for quick repair of roads because it lasts longer and carries the traffic load better."--Div Engr, 35th Inf Div.

2. Log mats for tanks. "Log mats are effective in getting tanks over soft and boggy ground. Two mats are hung on each tank when the need is anticipated, and laid down as a corduroy road when re[illegible] Co, 761st Tk Bn.

V AVOID CARELESS MOVEMENT ON OBSERVATION POSTS.

"Officers visiting front line units must be warned against actions that might reveal to the enemy the location of important installations such as observation posts. In one case an observation post was located in a wrecked building. The inside walls of rooms used for observing had been camouflaged to give a dark background, instruments had been set well back in the rooms, and the observers were careful to move about only in the shadows. Blackout was carefully observed. Visiting officers arrived one day and moved about freely, even leaning out of the windows with their field glasses. Within half an hour after they left, the building was completely destroyed by enemy action and one observer was killed."--CG and Asst Div Comdr, 1st Inf Div.

VI INFILTRATION.

"We require units to search their areas -- especially buildings -- every morning for enemy that may have infiltrated during the night. We almost always find some. Sometimes they do not know where they are. Once several Germans started digging a machine gun position 200 yards behind our front lines."--CO, 3d Bn, 414th Inf Regt.

VII WELDING TRAILER.

"We have improvised a low-silhouette, mobile welding trailer from a German ammunition trailer. Salvaged ½-ton truck wheels and tires were mounted on the trailer; lug bolts were obtained from telephone poles. The bed of the trailer was removed and a steel box mounted to provide space for hose, forch, tips, etc. Welding tanks were mounted horizontally on either side of the box and held in place by clamps. An anvil on the front, and a steel welding table and vise on the rear completed this compact unit."--T/4 Ronald Bowden and T/4 Anderson M. Nunnelley, Service Co, 71st Inf Regt.

VIII INTELLIGENCE TRAINING.

"To train our men in map reading, observation, and accurate reporting, we require every man -- including cooks and reinforcements -- to observe some military activity and write a message giving the location and describing what he saw. Improved G-2 information has resulted."--G-2, 5th Armd Div.

IX ENEMY SMALL ARMS FIRE IS INACCURATE.

"We find that many new men are unnecessarily afraid of enemy small arms fire. This fire is very inaccurate and we have had very few casualties from it in any of our operations. Most of those were from snipers using telescopic sights."--T/Sgt Collum, 3d Bn, 414th Inf Regt.

X DOUBLE-BANKING ON ROAD.

"Traffic tie-ups are made worse by officers who ride forward to ascertain cause. They could accomplish as much by going forward on foot -- and eliminate the double-banking."--Asst G-4, XXI Corps.

END

BATTLE EXPERIENCES: HQ, ETO, US ARMY

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

NO. 74 — 5 MAR 1945

"Battle Experiences" are published periodically to disseminate rapidly combat information which may have training value for other units. Although not necessarily applicable to all units in all situations, the items are based on actual experiences and are recommended for careful consideration. Contributions of similar material will be welcomed from all individuals and units; reports of corroborative or contrary experiences are particularly desired.

By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. Lovett
R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

I ARMORED DIVISION COMMUNICATIONS.

1. Half-track as wire vehicle. "Use of a half-track to lay wire in forward areas provides protection from small arms fire and has saved us casualties. The 2½-ton trucks are used in the rear areas.

2. Half-track for radio maintenance crews. "We have mounted two radio maintenance teams in half-tracks for use in the forward areas. Each carries normal maintenance equipment and one radio of each type to permit quick replacements. They wait for calls at the division forward echelon.

3. Radio half-track for landing strip. "We station a half-track equipped with an SCR 506 and 510 at our landing strip to speed transmission of information to and from division headquarters. The machine guns of the half-track also help protect the air strip.

4. Communication with attached tank destroyers. "By placing an SCR 508 with each tank destroyer company and an SCR 510 with each platoon we enable the tank destroyer units to contact on division headquarters channels the armored units to which they are attached."--Signal O, 5th Armd Div.

II USE FOR OLD BA-70 BATTERIES.

"Old BA-70 batteries which are too weak to operate the SCR 300 can be used to light command posts. One battery and a 40 watt bulb will provide good light for 24 hours."
--CO, Co G, 406th Inf Regt.

III TANK-INFANTRY COMMUNICATIONS.

"We attach a liaison officer and a half-track equipped with an SCR 508 radio to the headquarters of each infantry regiment with which we work. They provide communication between the regimental headquarters and the tank battalion and furnish a point through which supplies can be forwarded to front line tanks. Because of their power they sometimes are used for communication, through other tank sets, between the infantry regimental and battalion headquarters."--CO, 761st Tk Bn.

IV OPERATION OF A BATTALION MEDICAL SECTION.

Note: A battalion medical section of the 116th Infantry Regiment is credited by the regimental commander with having achieved superior results during six months of combat in spite of "radical" methods. Some details of the section's standing operating procedure are given below.

1. Preparatory steps. a. "The battalion S-2 keeps us supplied with aerial photographs and tactical maps. As soon as a field order is received we study the maps, call a meeting of all medical personnel and give them complete information and announce a tentative evacuation plan. Reconnaissance is then made by litter squad leaders of evacuation routes.

b. "Communication by telephone and SCR 300 is established whenever possible. The radio operator is furnished with maps and photographs and is responsible for keeping abreast of the situation by monitoring. The aid station operates in the radio net as a regular station but is used only when wire lines are very crowded. The radio is operated by the clerk on duty, assisted by the section leader when necessary.

2. Organization for operation. "Aid station personnel are divided into two groups, each consisting of a surgical technician, a medical technician, a clerk-radio operator and a driver. Thus organized the teams can operate simultaneously when casualties are heavy, at two different locations when necessary, or alternately, permitting one team to rest in reserve when casualties are light.

3. Conduct during action. a. "The aid station is located as close as possible to the anticipated area of maximum casualty density. It is frequently ahead of the battalion command post. On one occasion its forward element was set up on the line of departure and a Red Cross prominently displayed. This permitted many of the advancing infantrymen to note its location with the result that many of the less seriously wounded reached it unaided, instead of waiting for litters. On another occasion half the aid station moved to the objective with the attacking companies carrying medical supplies by pack because of the threat of minefields.

b. "The radio and telephone operators direct litter bearers when necessary and call the ambulance forward from its protected location only when required.

c. "The noncommissioned officer in charge of each litter squad directs his squad, keeps informed of the situation and passes information to the aid station. Normally the litter squads are well forward, two working and one resting. When the aid station cannot get well forward, advanced litter stations are established, usually in protected areas near company command posts. At times litters are left near company command posts and the infantry aids in removing casualties. Each litter squad has a telephone and test clips, thus permitting them to tap battalion wire lines and keep in touch with forward units and with the aid station.

4. Reinforcements. "Reinforcements receive a period of training at the aid station and as members of litter squads before being placed in the line as company aid men. They are then assigned [illegible] period, to a unit with a 'battle-wise' aid man."--Surgeon and Asst Surgeon, 1st Bn, 116th Inf Regt.

V DON'T PATROL WHEN RELIEFS ARE EFFECTED.

"Care should be used in sending out patrols when units are being relieved as they often draw enemy artillery and mortar fires on the area."--G-2, XIII Corps.

END

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

BATTLE EXPERIENCES

No. 75 — 8 MAR 1945

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By command of General EISENHOWER:

R. B. LOVETT
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I PROJECTING CABLE BY MORTAR.

1. Description. "We have used the 81mm mortar successfully to project a cable across obstacles and rivers. We remove the charge from a high explosive or smoke shell and insert in the shell a one inch pipe long enough to project past the muzzle of the mortar when the shell is seated. Four fins or grapnels are welded to the upper end of the pipe and a 'U-bolt' screwed or welded to the same end. A ¼-inch cable is bolted to this 'U-bolt' by means of a cleat or shackle welded to the cable.

2. Operation and precautions. "The cable must be at least 215 yards long as the harpoon will be propelled that far. Great care must be taken to insure that the cable pays out freely as failure to do so may cause injuries due to its whipping. We improvised a cable holding plate about 3 x 5 feet, to which we welded two winding posts sloping sharply to a point to minimize friction. The cable is figure-eighted onto the posts very carefully to insure against kinks and overlapping. Before firing, the plate must be tilted up at an angle of 45 degrees with the posts pointing in the direction of fire. About 30 feet of cable should be paid out and coiled in front of the mortar to allow for play and prevent a violent jerk. When the cable has been fired and the harpoon seated, the cable may be pulled taut by a vehicle winch."--Co, 39th Inf Regt.

II EFFECT OF THE GERMAN PANZERFAUST "60".

"In experiments, this antitank weapon proved effective against hasty field fortifications and houses, and probably would be effective against personnel because of its great concussion effect. It has a high degree of accuracy at its extreme range of about 80 meters. Over a distance of 40 meters, holes two feet in diameter were blown in a stone wall two feet thick. Two direct hits also proved sufficient to blow a gap in three-strand concertina wire. In the experiment, 33 rounds were fired and only three were duds. During the firing there was no recoil or flashback."--G-2 Report, XX Corps.

III ARMORED TACTICS AND TECHNIQUE.

1. The gyrostabilizer. "We lay much stress upon the care, adjustment and proper use of the gyrostabilizer, which is not properly appreciated by the average tanker. They do not use it enough, overdo manual control when they do use it, and frequently fail to give it proper care. In one 1500-yard advance over plowed fields, our tanks through use of the stabilizer, maintained as effective fires as if they had been standing still, destroying several pillboxes."--CG, 12th Armd Div and Lt, 714th Tk Bn.

2. Attack of towns. "Attacking towns just before daylight permits use of daylight to regain control. If the area is strongly held, forces should be sent out to block counterattacks from nearby towns.

3. Fire against German armor. "When German armor attacks frontally we fire a round of high explosive and then change to armor-piercing. The high explosive usually forces the German tank to change its course and expose a more vulnerable part to our armor-piercing. In any case, it will disturb his laying or impair his sight."--G/S, 12th Armd Div.

IV ANTITANK PLATOON IN DEFENSE.

"A front line rifle company which had received no mortar or artillery fire was shelled constantly when the antitank guns took up positions within its area. When the guns were withdrawn the firing ceased. We now locate them outside the area but in supporting distance, and place bazooka teams and mine 'daisy chains' in the forward positions."--Lt, Hq Co, 333rd Inf Regt.

V TIPS FROM AN ANTIAIRCRAFT BATTALION.

1. Tracking of planes. "Requiring gun crews to track all planes provides tracking experience, insures more accurate initial leads, and gives us a decided edge when friendly planes are discovered to be flown by Germans.

2. Warning to cub planes. "We use one FM radio channel to warn artillery cub planes when German planes are spotted near by.

3. Mobile gas chamber. "Using a 2½-ton truck as a travelling gas chamber permits testing gas masks at each battery position."--CO, 443rd AAA AW Bn.

VI DAILY MAINTENANCE CHECK.

"A daily check of vehicles is facilitated by placing the maintenance truck between the battalion kitchen train and the [illegible] of the main supply route."--Motor O, 2d Bn, 398th Inf R[illegible]

VI LAYING WIRE CIRCUITS.

"Laying a sound-powered line in a circle -- a complete circuit-- will prevent its going out in case of a break in the line."--CO, AT Co, 377th Inf Regt.

END

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