May-June 1995

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THE 1942 AMERICAN TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

Early in 1942, the US Army finalized battalion organization. Specialized equipment was soon ordered along with the construction of tank destroyer training facilities. The program's development was swift and by year's end several battalions were field ready. These were immediately shipped to North Africa, experiencing their baptism of fire against Rommel's younted Afrika Korps.

The father of the American tank destroyer was Gen. Lesley McNair. McNair, after studying the Polish and French Campaigns of 1939-40, concluded specialized services beyond the general means of contemporary doctrine were needed to defeat tanks. McNair believed the tank a poor antitank weapon. His reasoning was founded both in economics and doctrine. Why, McNair postulated, waste a \$35,000 (remember, we're talking 1942 dollars) medium tank to do a job just

as well done by a gun costing a fraction of that amount? Furthermore, he concluded, a tank's purpose was to defeat all elements of the enemy force, not just its tanks.

In keeping with an aggressive doctrine, the first tank destroyer battalions were organized as totally independent units. Each battalion consisted of a headquarters and headquarters company, one light (towed 37mm) company, and two heavy (self-propelled 75mm) companies, one reconnaissance company, and one antiaircraft company.

By January 1943, however, each TD battalion was attached to either an armored or infantry division. With the need for total autonomy passed, redundant staff and administrative personnel were sluffed. The light company was replaced with a third heavy company and the antiaircraft element was eliminated. This leaner and meaner organization is reflected in the following page two diagram.

GHQ RECEIVES AWARD AT NUREMBERG TOY FAIR

February 15th, 1995

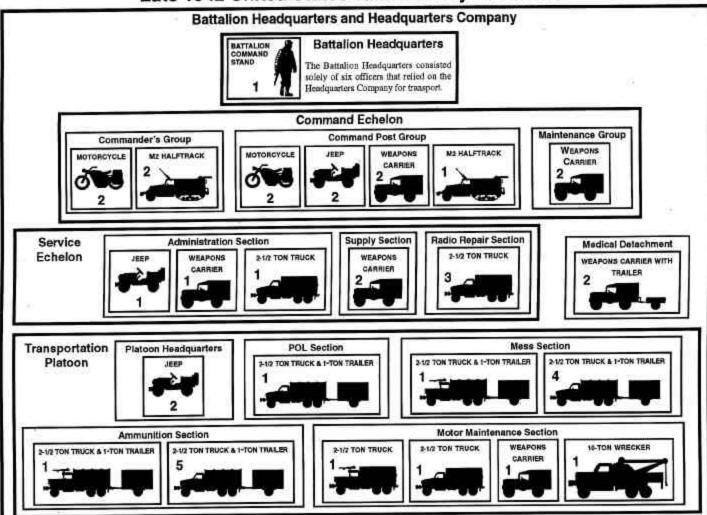
At the Nuremberg Toy Fair, Modell Fan Magazine presented GHQ with its "1994 Model of the Year Award" for ships. GHQ's 1:2400 scale pewter Great War Micronauts® beat out all model types in this range, including large-scale plastic kits and extremely expensive collector items.

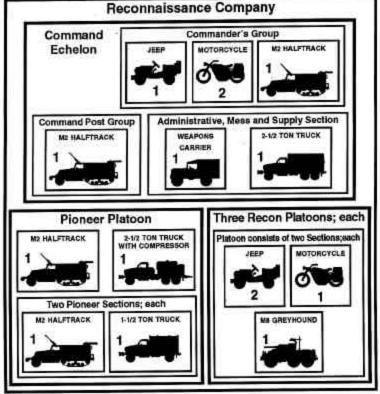
Great War Micronauts®, several of which are featured in this newsletter, are the newest and fastest growing line of GHQ military models. Nobody makes World War I ships better.

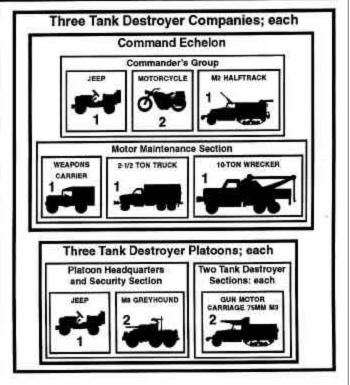
Germany's most prominent model magazine agrees. Isn't time you find out why?

Order today!

Late 1942 United States Tank Destroyer Battalion







STATS, SPECS, AND FACTS



SdKfz 9 Famo

SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:

15,130kg (w/o crane)

LENGTH:

8 25 meters 2 6 moters

WIDTH: SPEED:

50 km/hr (road speed)

RANGE:

260 kilometers

WINCH PULL:

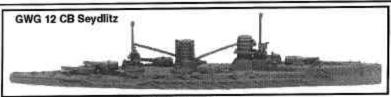
7,000kg

TOWED LOAD:

18,000kg

The SdKfz 9 Heavy (18-ton) Military Tractor was the Wehrmacht's heaviest half track in World War II. The vehicle, which entered production in 1938, saw a variety of roles including artillery tractor, tank recovery vehicle, and mobile crane (vehicle pictured). As an artillery tractor, the Sdkfz 9 pulled the 24cm K3 heavy gun (broken into five loads), the 21cm K38 gun, and the 24cm H39 howitzer. It also towed 88mm and 12.8cm antiaircraft guns.

As a recovery vehicle, the SdKfz 9 sufficed until the appearance of the Tiger and Paather tanks which were too heavy for it to handle. Until the deployment of specialized recovery vehicles for these tanks, it took three Sdkfz 9s to tow one disabled Tiger.



SPECIFICATIONS (as built)

DISPLACEMENT SPEED:

DISPLACEMENT: 27,500 tons

24.610 tons 26.5 knots

ARMOR:

SPEED:

ARMOR:

11.8-3.9-Inch bell, 9.8-2.8-inch turrets ARMAMENT

Ten 11-inch guns, twelve 5.9-inch guns,

The Soydlitz was essentially an improved Moltke, mounting the same armament and protection on a slimmer hull. The resulting design was faster and with improved handling in heavy seas.

Seydlitz had an active war career. She bombarded eastern British seaports in 1914. Later, during the Battle of Dogger Bank, she lost two turrets and suffered heavy casualties. At Jutland she took more punishment (21 heavy caliber hits, 2 medium hits, and 2 torpedoes) than any other ship. Saved through the extraordinary scamanship of her crew, the Seydlitz managed to limp fourteen 3.5-inch guns, and four 19.7-inch torpedo tubes back to port with a freeboard list of 8 feet. Scuttled at Scapa Flow in 1919, she was raised and scrapped in 1928.



SPECIFICATIONS (as built)

ARMAMENT

22.4 knots Fourteen 12-inch guns, twenty 6-inch guns, ten 3-inch guns, and three 21-inch torpedo tubes 9-6-inch belt, 12-8-Inch turrets

Agincourt started her career as the Brazilian buttleship Rio de Janeiro. Halfway through her construction the bottom dropped out of the rubber market. Now financially strapped, Brazil sold the ship to Turkey which renamed her the Sultan Osman I. As war appeared eminent work on her slowed and the Royal Navy took her over in 1914. Agincourt mounted the greatest number of main caliber guns ever carried. Her secondary battery was also the most powerful affout. Agincourt (affectionately known as the Gin Palace) served the Royal Navy from September 1914 to war's end. She fought at Jutland. Placed in reserve in 1919, she was in the process of being converted to a depot ship when scrapped in 1922.



SPECIFICATIONS (as built)

DISPLACEMENT: 21,850 tons SPEED:

24 knots

4,000 nautical miles at 18kls RANGE:

ARMAMENT Nine 6-inch guns live 4-inch guns, four 3-pounders,

and twenty four aircraft

The Eagle was originally laid down as the Chilean battleship Almirante Cochrane during 1913. With the out break of World War I, work was suspended as the Board of Admiralty pondered her future. It was decided late in the war to convert her to an aircraft carrier, but when it became evident she was not going to be completed before war's end, construction proceeded at a leisurely pace until her commission on February 24, 1924.

Eagle's war service initially consisted of raider sweeps and escort duty in the Indian Ocean. In May 1940, she was transferred to the Atlantic and then the Mediterranean During Operation 'Pedestal' she was hit by four torpedoes fired by U-73 and sank within five minutes.



SPECIFICATIONS (as built)

ARMAMENT

Twelve 14-inch guns, twenty two 5-inch guns,

and two 21-inch torpedo tubes

Laid down in 1915, the Pennsylvania Class differed from the previous Nevada Class by mounting its twelve guns in four triple turrets. Pennsylvania and sister ship Arizona were rebuilt in 1928 and 1931. During these refits, the redundant secondary 5-inch guns were reduced to twelve and replaced by eight 5-inch antiaircraft guns. During 1940 another two secondary 5-inchers were removed and replaced by four 5-inch antiaircraft guns.

On December 7, 1941, Arizona took a modified serial bomb in her magazine. The resulting explosion was catastrophic, killing some 1,500 of her crew. The damaged was so great it was decided not to raise her. She remains to this day in Pearl Harbor as a war memorial.

SPEED:

31,400 tons DISPLACEMENT:

ARMOR:

21 knots 14 to 8-inch belt.

18 to 5-Inch turrets



Kasserine Mini-Campaign

The Battle of Kasserine Pass was actually a running engagement fought over the course of several days. As such Kasserine is perfect fodder for a Micro Armour® mini-campaign. The next several issues of Tac News will offer a series of scenarios and articles highlighting this controversial battle marking the US Army's first significant encounter with the Wehrmacht.

STRATEGIC SITUATION

The approaching spring of 1943 heralded certain Allied victory in North Africa. The Americans to the west and the British to the east were crushing the Axis armies between them. As the campaign entered its end game, however, the Allies became complacent. Upper echelon staffs, now utterly dependent on Ultra intercepts for intelligence, seldom pressed units for point-of-contact intelligence. As a consequence, field commanders grew lazy. Reconnaissance efforts became half-hearted at best. In hindsight this seems an obvious disaster in the making, but up to now Ultra served without fault. Unfortunately, the system was about to experience a glitch.

Early in February 1943, Ultra code breakers caught wind of an upcoming German offensive in Tunis. The appropriate alarm was issued, but data concerning Axis disposition and intent was subject to varied interpretations. The British thought the objective was Fondouk. Reconnaissance by the American II Corps indicated an enemy concentration to the south near Sidi Bou Zid, but since this intelligence was not confirmed by Ultra, it was discounted. Gen. Eisenhower was finally convinced by the British. Any effort towards the Sidi Bou Zid/Kasserine sector would be a diversion. The main German attack, should it come, would be "to the north."

AMERICAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Combat Command A (CCA) of the 1st Armored Division and the 168th Regimental Combat Team of the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division held the area in and about Sidi Bou Zid. Defending forces at the initial point of attack consisted of:

Reserve force CCA Lt. Col. Louis Hightower commanding:

- 1st Medium Tank Battalion (minus Company G)
- 2. Company A, 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus one platoon)
- To the east, in general support, was the 91st Armored Artillery Battalion (minus Battery B) & the 17th Field Artillery Battalion

Task Force Waters Lt. Col. "Bill" Waters commanding:

- 2nd Battalion, 168th Infantry (minus Company E, and the weapons platoon from Company H)
- 2. Company G, 1st Medium Tank Battallon
- 3. An Armored Reconnaissance Company
- 4. A platoon of Tank Destroyers from Company A, 701st TD Battalion
- A battery of self-propelled 105s from Company B, of the 91st Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- Task Force Waters Headquarters: consisting solely of Col. Waters, his personal halftrack, one jeep, and two drivers.

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE Operation Unternehmen Frühlingswind

The Germans committed the 10th and 21st Panzer Divisions, and the 164th Light Division. The combat elements of these units were formed into five kampfgruppen organized as follows:

Kampfgruppe Gerhardt

- 1. The 7th Panzer-Regiment
- 2. Panzer Grenadier Regiment 69 (motorized)
- One platoon from the 2nd company, 90th Panzerjäger Battalion (motorized)
- One platoon from the 3rd company, 90th Panzerjäger Battalion (motorized)
- 5. One platoon from 49th Engineer Battalion (motorized)
- One light Feldhaubitzen battery, 90th Artillery Regiment (motorized)

Kampfgruppe Reimann

- 1. One Heavy Panzer Company (equipped with Tigers)
- One battalion of the 86th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (motorized)
- One platoon from the 1st company, 90th Panzerjäger Battalion (motorized)
- 4. One platoon from 49th Engineer Battalion (motorized)
- One self-propelled battery from the 90th Artillery Regiment (motorized)
- 6. One AA platoon from the 90th Artillery Regiment (motorized)

Kampfgruppe Schuette

- 1. One battalion of the 5th Panzer Regiment
- Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (motorized)
- The 39th Panzerjäger Battalion (motorized)
- 4. The 1st and 3rd batteries of the 155th Artillery Regiment (motorized)
- 5. One Flakkamptruppe (one 88mm)

Kampfgruppe Stenkhoff

- 1. Headquarters 5th Panzer Regiment
- 2. One battalion of the 5th Panzer Regiment
- The 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (motorized) (minus Headquarters & Headquarters Company)
- Headquarters & Headquarters Battery, 155th Artillery Regiment (motorized)
- 5. The light Feldhaubitzen battery, 155th Artillery Regiment (motorized)
- 6. Two batteries of the 155th Artillery Regiment (motorized)
- 5. Two Flakkamptruppe (two 88mms)

Kampfgruppe Ziegler

- Two motorized panzer grenadier battalions of the 164th Light Division
- 2. One Italian artillery battery

Next issue, key unit organizations and battle maps!