

March 27, 1943

TRAINING MEMORANDUM
NUMBER..... 20:

ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT AND TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT OF THE DEMOLITION PLATOON

SECTION I

Organization and Equipment

1. Organization. The Parachute Demolition Platoon consists of the platoon headquarters, and three identical demolition sections. The platoon organization permits the platoon to be utilized as a single unit for the accomplishment of an important destructive or pioneer mission, or as three battalion sections attached to the battalions for the accomplishment of small missions for the battalions. All personnel are armed with the carbine except as otherwise noted.

a. Platoon Headquarters consists of 4 officers and 3 enlisted men, as follows:

(1) Regimental Demolition Officer (Capt.). This officer is a member of the Regimental Commander's special staff. He plans and is responsible for the proper execution of all Regimental Demolition Missions, he supervises the demolition training within the Regiment. He is used as a technical adviser to battalion commanders in the planning of battalion demolition missions, Although not listed as demolition platoon leader, he acts as such. He leads the Demolition Platoon whenever it goes on a mission as a unit.

(2) Three Battalion Demolition Officers, (lieuts.). Each of these officers leads a battalion demolition section. (The T/OO lists one of these officers as Demolition Platoon Leaders. The Regimental Demolition Officer will act as Demolition Platoon Leader in this Regiment). A Battalion Demolition- Officer is a member of the special staff of the battalion to which he is attached for an operation.

(3) Platoon Sergeant (Staff/Sgt), he assists the Platoon Leader, performs the normal functions of a platoon sergeant, as well as being a demolition specialist, he is armed with the M1903 rifle.

(4) Bridge Carpenter (T/5, Classification Serial No. 035). This man is an expert on wooden structures, he furnishes technical assistance in planning the demolition of wooden structures, he acts as special adviser to the platoon leader in the accomplishment of pioneer work involving the construction of wooden installations. In addition he is qualified to replace any demolition NCO of the platoon who becomes a casualty, he is armed with the submachine gun.

(5) General Mechanic (T/5, Classification Serial No, 121). This technician is, a utility repair man with mechanical ability along several lines; he is a "jack of all trades" capable of performing hasty field repairs on captured enemy vehicles and other material; he is also a qualified armorer-artificer. He will act as artificer for Regimental Headquarters Company.

(6) Five Privates. One of these men is listed in the T/O as a messenger, the other four are listed as basics, Actually all five of these men are demolition specialists capable of acting as such in one of the battalion sections. These men are used as utility men within the platoon headquarters, acting as messengers and constituting a team to accomplish part of the demolition mission of the platoon when it is acting as a unit. They may be attached to battalion sections to make them stronger than normal prior to attachment, or they may be used to replace casualties within the battalion sections,

b. Each Battalion Section consists of 12 enlisted men as follows:

(1) Section Leader (Sgt.) This NCO is actually the assistant section leader; the Battalion Demolition Officer is actually the Section Leader (see par. a., (2) above), he assists the Battalion Demolition Officer, replaces the latter if he becomes a casualty.

(2) Two Assistant Section Leaders (Cpls). Each of these NCO's is in direct command of a four man demolition team. The senior Corporal replaces the sergeant if the latter becomes a casualty. They are armed with a M1903 rifle.

(3) Carpenter, General (Private, classification Serial No. 050). This man has special knowledge of pioneer and demolition of wooden structures.

(4) Eight Demolition Men (Pvts or Pvt 1cl). Each of these men is a demolition expert. The eight men are divided into two 4 man teams, each of which is commanded by one of the corporals listed in (2), above. One man in each 4 man team is armed with the submachine gun.

2. EQUIPMENT. In addition to the standard arms and equipment each enlisted man in the Demolition Platoon carries a standard Infantry Demolition kit in combat. (Several different types of special kits are being tested. It is probable that the at Standard Infantry Kit will be replaced by a special type kit containing larger quantities of demolition material than the former. In addition, when the operation requires it, pioneer equipment will be dropped to the platoon as an initial drop or resupply item, Additional demolition material is dropped to the platoon as a resupply item (sometimes, though rarely, as an initial drop item) as the mission requires.

SECTION II

Tactical Employment

3. DISPOSITION, The Demolition Platoon may be retained intact as such and used to accomplish a platoon mission under the direct control of the Regimental Commander; it may be attached direct to one of the battalions to accompany that battalion and accomplish a special mission which is necessary to the accomplishment of the battalion mission; one section may be attached to each battalion; or two sections may be attached to one battalion. Which of the above dispositions is used depends entirely upon the tactical situation,

4. MISSIONS. The demolition platoon, or any element thereof attached to a unit, will be prepared to execute my destructive or pioneer mission which a unit of its size and equipment is capable of accomplishing, It will also be able to form the nucleus for a larger special group, the remainder of which is drawn from a rifle company, and which is constituted, for the purpose of accomplishing an important destructive or pioneer mission which the Demolition Platoon could not accomplish because of insufficient personnel. Missions for the Demolition Platoon are either "Premeditated" or "Hasty", Destructive r Pioneer. Typical missions under each of the above classifications are given below.

a. Premeditated Missions. A premeditated mission is planned in detail before the operation, and rehearsed as often as time permits. Special equipment is obtained as the mission requires. The operation normally consists of cross country foot movement to the site where the mission is to be performed, followed by the actual accomplishment of the special mission. The special tools, equipment and other material required in the performance of the task are normally dropped to the unit on panel or other signal as aerial resupply, after the unit has reached the locality where the task is to be performed. Typical premeditated missions are listed below.

(1) Destructive.

(a) Destruction of an important bridge, a small dam, a power plant, a telephone exchange, or other important utility installation by demolition and (or) other sabotage measures.

(2) Pioneer.

(a) Laying of Minefields.

(b) Construction of antitank obstacles and roadblocks.

(c) Construction of emplacements for the Regimental C.P. and Regimental Aid Station (Construction of same for battalion c.p. and aid station in the case of a battalion section attached to a battalion).

b. Hasty Missions. These are missions which were not foreseen prior to the operation. Naturally it will not be possible to accomplish as large or as difficult a mission in this manner as it would if the mission could have been foreseen and planned in advance. Hasty missions include all types of destructive and pioneer missions for which the necessary equipment is on hand, can be improvised or can be obtained from the enemy. Certain possible improvise area listed

below, although these are by no means all the ones that can be used.

- (1) Destruction of wooden structures by burning with confiscated gasoline.
- (2) Disabling enemy artillery by placing TNT in partially opened breech or using thermite grenades in the bore.
- (3) Short-circuiting of power lines by throwing wire or cable over the lines.
- (4) Delaying actions through the use of booby traps, mines, etc.

6. DEMOLITION TEAM The half-section commanded by a corporal will normally act as a five man team to perform a certain task or tasks in connection with the destructive or pioneer mission to be accomplished. The mission will be accomplished by the various teams working on their respective tasks simultaneously. For a small job it may be necessary to send only one such team. The half-section will normally be the smallest unit sent to accomplish a mission. The section leaders, platoon sergeant, and Demolition Officers will supervise and coordinate the work of the various teams.

7. REHEARSAL. Prior to the operation, a premeditated mission will normally be rehearsed until its faultless and rapid execution is assured. The unit to accomplish the mission should be made to assemble after a simulated jump, march to an installation similar to the one to be destroyed, or to a vicinity similar to the one where the pioneer work is to be effected, and the work should actually be accomplished (except for the actual destruction in the case of a destructive mission). A demolition should be simulated by placing packages of wooden blocks simulating charges and completing the operation using live fuse and caps. If the material for accomplishment of the mission is to be obtained from aerial resupply it should be packaged and dropped from the airplanes by the same pilot and crew which will do the actual dropping for the operation, if possible, Each Demolition Team should be given a certain definite task or tasks to accomplish. After several rehearsals, the unit should be capable of accomplishing the mission with utmost rapidity. The materials and equipment to be dropped as resupply for the operation should be packaged and marked so that it will be possible for each team to obtain its proper portion and go to work without confusion. For instance, the various explosive charges for the members of a structure to be blown up should be packaged and numbered, and the members of the structure correspondingly numbered, a Demolition Team having the task of placing and priming one or more charges. (The size and location of the various charges must be computed from information as to the installation gained by S-2 from aerial photos, captured statistics, etc, A reasonable overcharge must be used to offset possible errors in the information so obtained.)

8. CONDUCT OF THE OPERATION. The Demolition Platoon or Section moves by the most rapid route consistent with safety; it seeks to avoid combat and fights only in self defense, or when it is absolute necessary to do so to accomplish its mission. It moves in the formation best suited to the ground, maintaining all round security at all times. After reaching the site of the task it posts the necessary security elements to guard the working parties against surprise. Sometimes a rifle squad, or even a platoon is attached to the demolition platoon or section to protect it during the movement and while it is accomplishing its mission; whether or not this is done depends upon the availability of such an accompanying force and the likelihood of resistance being encountered enroute to or at the site of the task. After arriving at the site, and after the enemy resistance (if any) is driven off, a predetermined signal is used to obtain materials (if any) to be furnished by aerial resupply. The working parties then go about their respective tasks, accomplish the mission. The platoon or section and accompanying rifle element withdraw and return to the unit as soon as the mission is accomplished.

9. THE DEMOLITION PLATOON AND SECTION AS SECURITY ELEMENTS. When the Demolition platoon is intact, is operating directly under the Regimental Command, and is not otherwise engaged, it will be used to furnish local security for the Regimental Command Group when the latter is moving, and to outpost the Regimental C.P. and O.P. when they are set up. Without command and unless otherwise ordered, the Regimental Demolition Officer will establish the necessary forward, flank, and rear patrols or outposts from his platoon, maintaining the remainder of the platoon centrally located, in reserve. When resistance is encountered, the platoon leader will reinforce the security element which an-

Par. 9, TM #20, (3-27-43) Contd.

countered resistance and report the situation to the Regimental Commander or his representative without delay. When battalion sections are attached to the battalions, they will perform the same function for the battalion command groups when not otherwise engaged.

By order of Lieut. Colonel LINDQUIST

MELVIN V. PETERSON
1st Lt., 508th Prcht. Inf.
Adjutant.

DISTTRIBUTIOH:

A + B + 1 each Officer +
1 All Demolition Personnel