

KESSELRING, Albert, 1887-1960

MS # P 060b

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY
Washington 25, D.C.

UA
712
U5
no.23

HIS

Jul 17, 1952

SUBJECT: Transmittal of MS # P-060b, Small Unit Tactics

TO : Commandant
The Infantry School
Fort Benning, Ga.

Inclosed on sixty (60) day loan is an English copy of MS # P-060b, a small unit actions project completed by a committee of former German officers. An evaluation of this study and recommendations as to its further reproduction and distribution are requested.

FOR THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY:

1 Incl
MS #P-060b

/s/ CHARLES F. KROEGER
CWC, USA
Administrative Officer

GNKEAD-M(t) 461 1st Ind
(17 Jul 52)

Headquarters The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia

TO: Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.

1. The Infantry School believes that the subject manuscript is an excellent study of German tactical doctrine and recommends it for distribution to all Service School libraries.

2. Forwarded herewith are revision notes which point out differences between German doctrine and U. S. doctrine.

FOR THE COMMANDANT:

2 Incls:
1. n/c
added 1 incl
2. Revision notes (dupe)

/s/ MARGARET J. WEHRLE
Major WAC
Acting Asst AG

199528
EVALUATION OF MS # P-060b BY THE INFANTRY SCHOOL

Revision Notes: MS # P-060b, "Small Unit Tactics"

Item No.	Page	Par.	Line	Recommended changes, additions, corrections. (with reasons - where applicable)
1	101	9	All	US armored doctrine differs as follows: The US reconnaissance company provides security, performs reconnaissance or light combat for units to which assigned or attached. The organization, equipment and training enable this unit to attack, to defend or to delay, and it will engage in whichever type of action its mission and the situation dictate. (Paragraph 2, FM 17-22.)
2	102	16	2-4	US armored doctrine differs as follows: Artillery battalions may be attached to, or placed in direct support of, "the armored task force." Centralized artillery command is maintained as long as this type of command can accomplish the massing of fires in support of <u>every</u> unit of the division. When this becomes impossible due to distance or difficulties of communication, one or more light battalions are attached to each "armored task force" which cannot be supported adequately. (The US counterpart of an "armored task force" is the combat command within the armored division and the above is the US doctrine. Paragraph 43e FM 17-100.)

3 103 17 5-7 US armored doctrine differs as follows:

US armored units do not have assault guns. If the enemy is superior in tanks, heavy tank units may be attached in whole or in part to the major commands. The heavy tank units are the best antitank units in the division and are employed when their fire power is needed to meet enemy tanks.

(Paragraph 102b, FM 17-100.)

4 104 19 1 This paragraph is not quite clear. Apparently there is a typographical error with tank company substituted for engineer company.

5 105 24 ALL US armored doctrine differs as follows:

There is no US unit comparable to a "motor-cycle squad" of a battalion. Motorcycles are not used in combat areas by US forces.

6 105 27 ALL US armored doctrine differs as follows:

"Wave" tactics as such are not consistent with US armored doctrine. The US tank battalion normally advances by fire and maneuver.

(Paragraph 37, FM 17-33.)

7 105 28 ALL US armored doctrine on employment of heavy tanks differs as follows:

When the enemy situation has been crystallized and enemy tank strength is known to be facing the assaulting troops, the heavy tank

7 (Cont'd)

units may lead the attack, otherwise they are held in reserve until a threat develops.

(Paragraph 250, FM 17-33.)

8 105 28 ALL

US armored doctrine differs as follows:

US doctrine does not use the "wave" concept; however, the initiative is retained by continuous application of force against those portions of the enemy defense least capable of withstanding attack. Retention of the initiative is furthered by a rapid succession of attacks against vulnerable points.

(Paragraph 39, FM 17-33.)

9 106 31 ALL

US doctrine differs as follows:

Artillery forward observers are attached to each reinforced company. (Paragraph 139, FM 17-33.)

10 106 33 ALL

US doctrine differs as follows:

unit

The tank/ commander stations himself where he obtains the maximum observation and control of his unit at all times, either by advancing from one commanding terrain feature to another or by taking up a central position when his entire unit is moving. (Par. 39, FM 17-32.)

11 107 34 8-10

The newly developed T-18 type US armored infantry vehicle is completely enclosed in armor, thereby protecting the armored infantry from small arms and shell fragments includ-

- 11 (Cont'd) ing overhead artillery bursts.
(Paragraph 6, FM 7-17.)
- 12 107 35 6-7 US armored infantry battalions have a mortar platoon rather than a "heavy mortar company."
- 13 107 36 ALL US armored doctrine differs as follows:
Armored infantry advance mounted as far forward as possible in each situation. This conserves energy, speeds the advance, reduces casualties in crossing areas swept by small arms fires and shell fragments and uses the firepower of the armored infantry vehicles. After the armored infantry dismount, the vehicular machine guns are manned and fired to give close support to the attack to utilize fully the offensive capabilities of the armored infantry vehicle.
(Paragraph 92, FM 7-17.)
- 14 107 38 2 US armored infantry battalions have no "antitank gun platoon."
- 15 109 45 2 Assault gun battalions are not organic to the US infantry division T/O&E. However, there is one tank company organic to each infantry regiment.
- 16 111 52 1 US armored doctrine differs as follows:
US forces have no assault guns, but utilize

16 (Cont'd)

tanks in infantry units in a dual role. Tanks with infantry engage enemy armor and automatic weapons, and support the advance of friendly infantry. The infantry, in turn, employing infantry tactics of fire and maneuver, support the tanks by destroying dug-in anti-tank guns and tank hunters who cannot be engaged or observed by tank crews.

(Paragraph 95, FM 17-32.)

17 116 11 2

Reference is made in several places to an artillery reserve. Based on other published German documents it is believed that the authors are referring to a reserve of fire rather than to a reserve of artillery units. The policy of not holding artillery in reserve is common to all armies except the Soviet who have so much of it that they can seem to afford this uneconomical practice. Normally the reserve of the artillery is its ammunition.

18 122 35b All

US doctrine differs as follows:

It is desirable to send out a forward observer to each front line company or similar organization. Their primary mission is to adjust artillery fire on those hostile elements which interfere with the mission of the unit or units with which they are working.

19 130 1 All AA discussed includes the AA weapons of all units and not just AA units. Also it should be remembered that in the German Army the bulk of the AA units were Air Force units.

20 141 3a All This paragraph implies a preference for obstacles to be in front of, not to the rear of, the MLR. These same obstacles are desirable on the flanks, especially an exposed flank and would greatly enhance the strength of the defensive position, provided, of course, that the defense was tied into the obstacle.

21 142 3h 2 US doctrine is that at battalion and regimental level it is preferable to have local reserves occupy prepared positions. When used as a counterattacking force these reserves are reinforced with all available weapons to include tanks.

22 145 13 4-6 US doctrine differs as follows:
Unit commanders must coordinate the defense of boundaries to insure that no weak points exist in the defense of the boundary. Within a front line regiment, it is preferable, usually, to have reserve units occupy prepared positions in contrast to being held mobile.

S P-060b, "Small Unit Tactics"

23 146 17 ALL US doctrine differs as follows:

The support platoon of a front line company is rarely called upon to launch a counter-attack, and even then it is more of a small mop-up action than a counterattack. Reserve units are not in rear of the sector of the parent unit. Rather they are in the rear portion of the parent unit's sector.

24 147 22 4-6 US Doctrine differs as follows:

The fires of machine guns and mortars of the company are integrated into the battalion coordinated fire plan. Our differences in organization of a unit modify to a degree the location of responsibility for the employment of rifle company light machine guns. The rifle platoon leader and ultimately the rifle company commander are responsible to see that the light machine guns of the rifle platoons are employed to tie-in with the battalion coordinated fire plan.

25 148 23 3 Machine guns of the front line platoons are normally employed along the main line of resistance and within the platoon areas.

26 148 24 ALL US doctrine differs as follows:

The normal employment of a rifle company in defense is to place two rifle platoons on line and the third rifle platoon in support. One

26 (Cont'd)

57-mm rifle of the weapons platoon is normally employed within each rifle platoon area and the mortars are employed by section in the vicinity of the support platoon. The support platoon is located within the company area where it can support the front line platoons by fire, protect the flanks and rear, add depth to the company position and, exceptionally, eject an enemy penetration.

27 148 25 All

US doctrine differs as follows:

A rifle platoon does not establish a command post as such. The platoon leader may have one or more observation posts but he is not tied down; he goes wherever his presence is needed. He assigns each squad a sector to be occupied and a sector of fire. The fire of squad sectors must overlap and each rifleman within the squad is also assigned a sector of fire which overlaps with riflemen on his flanks. The platoon leader also assigns a principal direction and sector of fire to the automatic rifleman. The rifle squad leader locates himself just in rear of his squad in a position where he can control each man of his squad. The decision to occupy one- or two-man foxholes varies within units.

26 149 27 All US doctrine differs as follows:

Antitank protection for the company position is provided by locating rocket launcher teams organic to platoons to cover likely armored approaches. Antitank rifle grenades are also employed for close-in antitank protection of squad areas. The employment of rocket launchers and antitank grenades is dependent upon and used in conjunction with the battalion antitank defense plan.

29 149 28 1-3 US doctrine differs as follows:

The company command post is not the fighting post for the company commander. It is not normal to combine a company command post and observation post.

30 150 31 All US doctrine prescribes that supplementary positions should also be constructed within each platoon area to provide for all-around defense.

31 151 37 All US doctrine differs as follows:

The battalion commander develops the battalion coordinated fire plan. He assigns the machine guns of the heavy weapons company final protective lines and fills in gaps in the final protective lines with barrages of the heavy weapons company mortars and supporting

31 (cont'd)

artillery. The defensive fires of the company supplement the battalion fires and fill in gaps in the battalion fire plan. The coordinated battalion fire plan is designed to engage the enemy as early as possible and with increasing intensity to keep him under fire as he approaches the battle position. Weapons of the heavy weapons company are not normally attached to the rifle companies but are retained under battalion control.

32 151 38 1 US doctrine differs as follows:

Artillery forward observers are not attached to rifle companies but normally accompany each rifle company to observe and adjust artillery fires needed to support the action of the company and the battalion.

33 151 39 All US doctrine differs as follows:

The battalion commander directs the employment of the battalion antitank weapons and develops the battalion coordinated antitank defense plan. The company employs its antitank weapons to fill gaps in the battalion plan. The integrated company and battalion plan becomes the antitank defense plan of the battalion.

34 152 40 All US doctrine differs as follows:

In defense, tanks attached to the battalion are employed laterally and in depth throughout the battle position. The tank is the most effective antitank weapon and should be located to cover the most dangerous armored approach. Tanks are not normally attached to rifle companies.

35 152 41 All US doctrine differs as follows:

Engineer activities such as laying AT minefields are normally controlled by the rifle battalion commander. Units having a need for flame throwers are given the weapon, but the receiving unit provides the crews.

36 155 53 1-2 US doctrine differs as follows:

The battalion commander assigns the defensive area to be occupied by the company to include the forward limit, the width, and depth of the position.

37 156 54 3-10 US doctrine differs as follows:

The missions and employment of the battalion weapons are directed by the battalion commander. Company fire plans are integrated into the battalion fire plan and not vice versa.

38 156 56 All US doctrine differs as follows:

Tanks attached to the battalion are distributed laterally and in depth throughout the battle position; tanks not engaged in their antitank role may be used in the counterattack. Tanks which are attached to the rifle battalion normally are not further attached to a subordinate unit.

39 162 79 All US armored doctrine on the employment of armored divisions in defense differs as follows:

An armored division is designed primarily for offensive action; however, because of its capabilities and versatility, it occasionally may be used in a defensive role. An armored division, because of its inherent characteristics of mobility and firepower, may be used to perform delaying action in front of the main battle position, or may be used as a corps reserve with a counterattacking mission, and on occasion may be used to occupy a sector of the main battle position. (Paragraph 161, FM 17-100.)

40 164 87 All US armored doctrine, realizing the importance of close cooperation and coordination between commanders with counterattack missions and commanders in front line positions, emphasizes alerting

40 (Cont'd) counterattack forces early so they know as soon as possible the principal direction of attack and can make their plans accordingly.

41 164 89 1-3 US doctrine differs as follows:

The US front line battalion commander is wholly responsible for antitank defense of his battalion area. He has tanks attached to his battalion from the regimental tank company, but the tank commander serves as an advisor to the battalion commander. (Paragraph 312, FM 7-20.)

42 165 90 All German tactics of towed and self-propelled anti-tank guns are not utilized by the US Army.

Regimental tank company platoons in the US Army have a dual role but in defense are the principal antitank weapons available to the regimental and battalion commanders. If tanks are made available to the front line or reserve battalions, it is desirable that at least a portion of these tanks occupy firing positions from which they can give antitank protection to the battle position.

43 165 92 All The use of antitank and assault guns is in conflict with US doctrine which utilizes tanks in the role in which the Germans used antitank guns and assault guns.

- 44 181 140 All Present US doctrine states that the smallest engineer unit to be assigned a mission is normally the platoon.
- 45 182 142(c) All US doctrine differs as follows:
Flame throwers and improvisation of same are handled by the infantry, not engineers.
- 46 182 143 All US doctrine does not make flame throwers an engineer item. US doctrine attaches engineers to infantry units for combat to use infantry supporting weapons.
- 47 198- 1-10 All US instruction in night and daylight withdrawals
202 of smaller units is much clearer and in more detail. The Infantry School believes that the information given in the manuscript is directed at a level of command higher than that of the regiment, and that it deals in too many generalities. The fundamentals, however, are basically the same.
- 48 210- 1-15 All The German doctrine of the delaying action as
214 described here is at variance with US doctrine. The German doctrine states that the delaying action is a combat tactic for motorized troops, while US doctrine does not limit the force to that of a completely mobile unit. In discussing

48 (Cont'd)

the German delaying action, there is little mention of defensive action. It seems as though the underlying theme is that of a "hit and run" technique. US doctrine of the delaying action states that the tactics employed are basically those of the defense, although the underlying principle of a delaying action is to gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.

49 217- 1-12 All
220

The retreat in German retrograde movements corresponds to the US retirement movement. The two actions have basically the same objectives. It is obvious that the word "retirement" is more desirable psychologically than the word "retreat."

50 223 25 All

US doctrine differs as follows:

The tactical commander should give only the mission to the engineer commander, not dictate what uses of troops will be made. This should be done by the engineer commander who better understands the capabilities of his subordinate units.

51 227- All All
255

The German tactics in the defense of towns, woods, and river lines are basically the same as US tactics. There is a discussion of the principles of defense against coastal landings which is not considered applicable at the level the manuscript deals with.

51

(Cont'd)

The discussion of defense against an airborne landing is considered to be too general and directed at a higher level than desired. US instruction in defense against an airborne landing is more detailed and thorough.

15 September 1952

The Infantry School
Fort Benning, Ga.

MS # P-060 b
Albert Kesselring
Generalfeldmarschall

SMALL UNIT TACTICS

MANUAL FOR COMMAND AND COMBAT

EMPLOYMENT OF SMALLER UNITS

Translator: G. WEBER/ W. LIETZKENDORF
Editor: G. C. VANDERSTADT
Reviewer: Major F. D. CRONIN

HISTORICAL DIVISION
EUROPEAN COMMAND