

HEADQUARTERS
702ND TANK BATTALION
APO 403 US ARMY

SUBJECT: Battalion History.
Period from 1 April 1945 to 30 Apr 1945

CLASSIFICATION June 1945.
CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 21 Aug 46

1. Original Unit.

- a. 702d Tank Battalion (Medium).
- b. Organized 1 March 1943.
- c. Organized at Camp Campbell, Kentucky.
- d. Authority for Organization: 320.2/53 (AF) (R)-GNGCT (1-2-43), and paragraph 1, General Orders Number 14, Headquarters Armored Force, Fort Knox, Kentucky.
- e. Sources from which personnel was obtained: The Cadre for the Battalion came from the 8th Armored Division, Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and the Recruits came from the New Cumberland Reception Center, New Cumberland, Pennsylvania.

2. Principal changes in organization resulted from changes in Tables of Organization and the activation of a light tank company on 19 October 1943. The designation of the Unit was changed from "702nd Tank Battalion (Medium)" to 702d Tank Battalion.

3. Strength:

	Commissioned	Warrant	Enlisted
a. Strength: 1 April 1945:	42	3	638
b. Net increase to 30 April 1945:	0	0	38
c. Net decrease to 30 April 1945:	4	1	0
d. Strength: 30 April 1945:	38	2	696

4. Stations of Unit:

- a. 1 Apr 45 thru 3 Apr 45: Vicinity of Wabern, Germany, WH 1579. (Map of Germany)
- 4 Apr 45 thru 6 Apr 45: Vicinity of Altenritte, Germany, WH 1692. (Map of Germany)
- 7 Apr 45 thru 11 Apr 45: Vicinity of Eberstadt, Germany, WF 02716. (Map of Germany)
- 12 Apr 45 thru 13 Apr 45: Vicinity of Mobisburg, Germany, WF 2963. (Map of Germany)
- 14 Apr 45: Vicinity of Gera, Germany, WK 0662. (Map of Germany)
- 15 Apr 45: Vicinity of Glauchou, Germany, WK 3858. (Map of Germany)
- 16 Apr 45 thru 19 Apr 45: Vicinity of Kandler, Germany, WK 5582. (Map of Germany)
- 20 Apr 45: Vicinity of Doscherdorf, Germany, WO 3862. (Map of Germany)
- 21 Apr 45 thru 23 Apr 45: Vicinity of Kleukheim, Germany, WO 3464. (Map of Germany)
- 24 Apr 45 thru 26 Apr 45: Vicinity of Nurnberg, Germany, WO 4101. (Map of Germany)
- 27 Apr 45: Vicinity of Willenhofen, Germany, WT 9165. (Map of Germany)
- 28 Apr 45 thru 29 Apr 45: Vicinity of Ziegelisdorf, Germany, WU 1753. (Map of Germany)

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30 Apr 45: Vicinity of Bayerbach, Germany, WU 3521. (Map of Germany)

5. The purposes of all marches was to accomplish the tactical mission of the Battalion in connection with military operations against the enemy. Specific instances concerning marches given in the summary of operations by Battalion S-3 Report attached.
6. Throughout the month of April, enemy attempts at resistance were marked by their continued feebleness. At only two periods was there any show of strength, and by late in the month our assault had lost its character, and the only proper description for operations engaged in by the Battalion was "road march".

The cities of Kassel and Erfurt were the focal points of resistance, and in the defense of the former, tanks were used in limited numbers. Flak units were the manpower basis for this defense. But these fanatical sacrifice operations served to no value, for the miscellaneous grab-bag units crumbled before our organized assaults after only a token-plus resistance. The tanks which were used in the defense of Kassel were the first we had met in any number since leaving the area of Losheim. The unit involved was the Panzer NCO School, Eisenach, and originally had thirty-two tanks, divided into four companies of eight tanks each. Companies 1, 2, and 3 had Mk IV tanks, while 4 was equipped with Mk V's. At first Tiger II's were reported in the vicinity, but they were found to be dead tanks, having been destroyed by their own crews.

No new or unusual weapons were used in the Battalion sector during the month. Enemy military organization was in the last stages of degeneration. The basic defense units were CT's of company and battalion size, and KG's of regimental size. In the case of Erfurt, three of these KG's were combined into a provisional division, named Division Feller. Convalescents, men on furlough, school troops, rear echelon men, stragglers, and volksturm provided the personnel, although the last of these showed a marked tendency to head for home at the ping of the first shot. Flak units filled both the functions of artillery and anti-tank weapons. Infantry heavy weapons and regular field artillery were almost non-existent.

The attitude of the German soldier was one of complete abandonment to his fate. He found his fate lay only in two directions, death or the PW camp, and with a little physical persuasion, generally chose the latter. PW figures grew astronomically, and interrogation degenerated into a simple counting of those who passed through the tills of the IPW cage. The German people were completely confused and confusing. Many of them went out of their way to be hospitable to the conquering American, and overt acts by the civilians against our military forces were rare. Whether this servile attitude on the part of the German people will continue cannot be answered at the present time.

7. 1 April 1945 found the Battalion in the vicinity of Neukirchen (H1356) preparing to move to forward assembly area in the vicinity of Humberg (H1771). Company A was attached to CT 317. Co B was in Division

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Reserve in vicinity of Homberg. Company C was attached to CT 319. The Battalion (less A, B, and C Companies) was in Division Reserve in vicinity of Homberg.

The action during the month of April 1945 was characterized by a series of rapid advances, due to the disorganization of the enemy as a result of the rapid advances of the Armored Divisions in our sectors.

PERIOD 1 April to 5 April 1945

during this period the 80th Infantry Division engaged in the capture of Kassel (C2203).

Initially Company A was in reserve with CT 317. The Combat Team advanced on 4 April capturing the towns of Niedervellmar (C2107) and Ihringshausen (C2208) to block enemy escape routes from Kassel.

Company B with CT 318, attacked Kassel from the west, and cleared the city itself.

Company C with CT 319, moved around Kassel from the Southwest capturing Bettinhausen (C2402), Oshausen (H2699) and the high ground to Southeast of Kassel.

On the 4th of April Company B was relieved from attachment to CT 318, and one-half of the company attached to each A and B companies. Company D was attached to CT 318 in Company B's place, and assisted the Combat Team in maintaining law and order in Kassel.

PERIOD 6 April to 10 April 1945

The 80th Infantry Division prepared to resume the attack North and East from Kassel when orders were received to stand by for relief by the 69th Infantry Division.

Upon relief by the 69th Infantry Division the 80th Infantry Division moved to the vicinity of Gotha (J0885) and took up a defensive position around the town. During this period B and C Companies were attached to the respective Combat Teams, while Company D was attached to 80th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop with the mission of protecting the left flank of the division.

The Battalion CP was established in Gotha.

The Combat Teams with the attached tank companies prepared to move east from Gotha 8 April 1945 and capture Erfurt. CT 317 with Company A was to advance on the Northwest portion of the city. CT 318 with Company B was to advance at the same time and seize the Southwest and South part of the city with one battalion moving to east of city by-passing city from South.

CT 319 with Company C was also to by-pass Erfurt and be prepared to

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advance East on Jena (J6366) and Weimar (J5270).

PERIOD 11 April to 18 April 1945

All of the Rocket Launchers in the Battalion were assembled in Headquarters Company at Eberstadt, and placed under the command of LT. SHORE. The platoon was immediately moved into position vicinity of Mobisburg prepared to support the attack on Erfurt.

The attack on Erfurt progressed as planned, and the town was reported clear, 132300 April 1945.

In the meantime Weimar (J5270) had fallen to CT 319 without a fight.

CT 319 with Company C and Rocket Launcher Platoon then attacked Gera and cleared the town against only moderate resistance.

The Battalion CP moved from Gotha to Weimar, to Gera during this period.

The 80th Infantry Division with 702nd Tank Battalion continued to move east on Chemnitz from Gera, and was prepared to attack the town when on the 18th of April orders were received directing the Division to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Bamberg.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned orders the 702nd Tank Battalion moved to the assembly area 19 April 1945. While in this area the companies were located as follows: Battalion CP, Headquarters and Service Companies - Klenkheim (03464), A Company at Stubig (03965), B and C Companies at Lausdorf (03662), D Company at Doscherdorf (03861).

The Battalion moved from the Bamberg area to Nurnberg (03901) 24 April 1945, and continued maintenance and rehabilitation of equipment and personnel.

The Battalion moved out 24 April from Nurnberg with orders to proceed to Regensburg (U1855). After reaching Regensburg the companies were once more attached A company to 317th Infantry, B company to 318th Infantry and C company to 319th Infantry and moved southeast from Regensburg with the Combat Teams.

At the close of the period the Battalion CP was established in Ergolds-Bach (U2820), and the companies were advancing south towards the Isar River.

8. The Commanding Officer in all engagements of the Battalion has been Lieutenant Colonel RALPH TALBOT III, Infantry (Arm'd). The Battalion was part of forces commanded by Lieutenant General GEORGE S. PATTON, JR.

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9. Losses in Action:

<p>OFFICERS: Larkin, Marx M, 2d Lt, 02000077</p>	<p><u>KILLED</u> <u>ENLISTED MEN:</u> Mitchell, Tom B., Pfc, 37398899</p>
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<p>OFFICERS: Shearing, Eldon G, 1st Lt, 01018415</p>	<p><u>DIED OF WOUNDS</u> <u>ENLISTED MEN:</u> None</p>
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<p>OFFICERS: Prestridge, John W, 1st Lt, 01017681 Schroeder, Charles E, 1st Lt, 01016079</p>	<p><u>WOUNDED AND INJURED</u> <u>ENLISTED MEN:</u> Kahler, Grant W, Pfc, 33621546 O'Brien, James W, Pfc, 33196130 Reid, Gerald W, Pfc, 36961754 Beck, William C, Sgt, 33598708 Beard, William W, S/Sgt, 38132934 Berquist, Blair A, Sgt, 33435849 Haski, Edward, Cpl, 36860372 Sajewicz, Felix, T/4, 35287822 Simmons, Harold B, S/Sgt, 33757161 Deemer, Alva H., Pvt, 35845312</p>
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<p>OFFICERS: None</p>	<p><u>MISSING IN ACTION</u> <u>ENLISTED MEN:</u> None</p>
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10. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Turkoff, Lazarus L.	S/Sgt	On 10 April 1945, during an attack against Gispersleben, Germany, the tank which S/Sgt Turkoff commanded was hit by an enemy shell which froze the turret in position preventing the gun from being traversed. Undaunted by this handicap, S/Sgt Turkoff maneuvered his tank so as to align his gun on an approaching enemy tank, quickly destroyed it, and routed the supporting enemy infantry. S/Sgt Turkoff's courage, initiative, and resourceful devotion to duty aided in the destruction of a large enemy force and is commensurate with the highest ideals of the armed forces of the United States.	Silver Star

Millstone, Lester	T/4	As commander of a tank recovery vehicle, retrieved disabled tanks through the campaign in France, Luxembourg, and Germany, during the period 6 August 1944, to 1 April 1945. On numerous occasions, T/4 Millstone has voluntarily advanced into the direct enemy fire to recover damaged vehicles. During severe mortar and	Bronze Star
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<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
		artillery fire he has often left the protection of his vehicle to attach tow lines to mired vehicles and pull them to safety. Tec 4 Millstone's courage and loyal devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.	
Hickman, Marshall	O.Cpl	On 10 April 1945, the tank in which Cpl Hickman served as a tank gunner was disabled by a direct hit from an enemy tank during the assault into Gispersleben, Germany. Despite the combined artillery, sniper, and direct tank fire aimed at his immobilized tank Cpl Hickman remained at his gun and aided in destroying an enemy tank and repelling a counter-attack. Cpl Hickman's courage, bravery, and devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.	Bronze Star
Whitehead, Jr, William F.		Cpl On 10 April 1945, in Gispersleben, Germany, the tank in which Cpl Whitehead served as a cannon loader was hit by enemy tank fire. Cpl Whitehead courageously remained in the disabled tank, continuing to load the gun despite heavy sniper, artillery, and direct tank fire from the enemy, placed accurately due to the excellent observation afforded them. His bravery and devotion to duty, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, resulted in the destruction of an enemy tank and aided in the repelling of an enemy counterattack of tanks and infantry, and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.	Bronze Star
Penzak, George		Cpl On 10 April 1945, the tank in which Cpl Penzak served as a tank gunner was disabled by a direct hit from an enemy tank during the assault into Gispersleben, Germany. Despite the combined artillery, sniper, and direct tank fire aimed at his immobilized tank, Cpl Penzak remained at his gun and aided in destroying an enemy tank and repelling a counter-attack. Cpl Penzak's courage, bravery, and devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.	Bronze Star

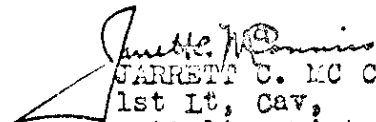
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b. Purple Hearts Awarded:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>DATE OF WOUNDS</u>
Kahler, Grant W.	Pfc	33621546	3 Apr 45
Prestridge, John W.	1st Lt	01017681	3 Apr 45
Shearing, Eldon G.	1st Lt	01018415	5 Apr 45
Reid, Gerald W.	Pfc	36961754	10 Apr 45
Beck, William C.	Sgt	33596708	10 Apr 45
Haski, Edward	Cpl	36860372	10 Apr 45
Simmons, Harold B.	S/Sgt	33757161	13 Apr 45
Schroeder, Charles E.	1st Lt	01016079	12 Apr 45
Deemer, Sr, Alva H.	Pvt	35845312	15 Apr 45
Berquist, Blair A.	Sgt	33435849	18 Apr 45
Beard, William W.	S/Sgt	38132934	16 Apr 45
Sajewicz, Felix	T/4	35287822	30 Apr 45

11. Photographs of personnel, important scenes of events not available up to 30 April 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:


GARRETT C. MC CONNICO,
1st Lt, Cav,
Battalion Historian.