

HEADQUARTERS
702ND TANK BATTALION
APO 403, C/O POSTMASTER NEW YORK, NEW YORK

10 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Battalion History.
Period from 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944.

1. Original Unit.
 - a. 702nd Tank Battalion (Medium).
 - b. Organized 1 March 1943.
 - c. Organized at Camp Campbell, Kentucky.
 - d. Authority for Organization: 320.2/53 (AF) (R)-GIGCT (1-2-43), and par 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 "702nd Tank Battalion".

3. Strength:	<u>Commissioned</u>	<u>Warrant</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
a. Strength: 1 December 1944:	<u>39</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>697</u>
b. Net increase to 31 December 1944:	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
c. Net decrease to 31 December 1944:	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>15</u>
d. Strength: 31 December 1944:	<u>41</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>682</u>

4. Stations of Unit:
 - a. 1 Dec 44 thru 16 Dec 44: Vicinity of Valmont, France, Q2454. (Map of Germany, Sheet No. 6807).
 - 17 Dec 44 thru 19 Dec 44: Vicinity of Bining, France, Q1549. (Map of Germany, Sheet No. 6307).
 - 20 Dec 44 thru 21 Dec 44: Vicinity of Leudelage, Luxembourg, P7908. (Map of Luxembourg, Sheet No. 4).
 - 22 Dec 44 thru 31 Dec 44: Idintgen, Luxembourg, P8426. (Map of Luxembourg, Sheet No. 4).

5. There were two tactical marches during this period, the first was from Valmont France, Q2454, to Bining, France, Q1549, and consumed four hours. The purpose of this march was to breach the Siegfried Line and create a workable breakthrough. The second tactical march was from Bining, France, Q1549, to Leudelage, Luxembourg, P7908, a period of ten hours. The purpose of this march was the German attack through Luxembourg and Belgium had gained such weight and intensity, that it was necessary to relieve the pressure and defend the City of Luxembourg.

6. Battalion engaged principally in Third United States Army drive towards Germany, and in holding the southern flank of the German salient into Belgium and Luxembourg. The most important mission accomplished by the Battalion during this period was the breaching of one of the important supply routes which the enemy had to the forward elements of their westward thrust. Another important item during this period was the accomplishment of the non-stop road march from Saar Union to its position in Luxembourg under the most hazardous road conditions. This road march took but ten (10) hours.

- 1 - FEB 7 1947

27086
Master

AR 87-702-0.2

Battalion History - 1 Jan 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

7. December opened with the three companies each attached to their respective combat team of the 80th Division, and with the Battalion CP at St. Avold. Headquarters and Service establishments were operating at Valmont. This situation existed until 4 December.

On the 4th, the 318th Inf, reinforced with "A" and "B" Companies, had the mission of resuming the division attack and capturing the limited objectives of Farbersviller, Machern, Thedingen, and the high ground to their immediate northeast. In the ensuing engagement Company "B" assaulted on the left (northwest) with the First Bn., 318. Limited objectives for this assault were Farbersviller and Kochern. "A" Company with the Second Battalion attacked on the right (south to north east) with Thedingen and the high ground to its north to be taken.

This ground was held by elements of the 17 SS Pz. Gren. Division, which had shown a recent return to life in stopping the onward surge of the 80th Division at Farbersviller on November 30. This division had just received 1,000 replacements from Prague.

The infantry pushed off at 0700, but the tanks needed bridges across the creek at Farbersviller before they could be used effectively. Lt. NELSON'S 3rd Platoon in "B" Company did participate in the capture of Farbersviller, and had taken the town by 0900. Both companies had crossed the river at 1020 and immediately embarked on their supporting roles. At 1100 "A" Company was reported in Thedingen, whereas "B" Company tanks reached Kochern at 1430. While on a reconnaissance for a supporting position for "A" Company tanks on the hill above Thedingen, Captain KEDERMOTT was wounded seriously by mortar fire and Lt. GIFFORD assumed command of the company. On taking all assigned objectives, the companies took up a defensive position; "A" at Thedingen and "B" at Kochern. During the action, 135 prisoners were taken and 3 AT guns were destroyed. One Mark V tank was driven off. None of our tanks were damaged or knocked out. During the night, "B" Company had tanks deployed as road blocks, since the situation was very unstable in their areas.

"B" Company moved to Thedingen the next day and "A" Company returned to Machern.

On the seventh the 80th Division went into Corps Reserve, and our Battalion was assembled to carry out some much needed maintenance and training. The Battalion CP group joined Headquarters Company at Valmont, "B" and "C" Companies assembled at Altviller, and "A" and "D" assembled in Lachambre. This period lasted until the sixteenth of December.

On the seventeenth the Battalion was ordered to an assembly area at Binning in preparation for an assault on the Siegfried line to the north. The Battalion crossed the Division LP east of St. Avold at 1300, and was routed through Saarlébe and Sear Union to Binning. The Battalion closed into the assembly area at 1700. Within the

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

next twenty-four hours, the whole division had concentrated in this area in preparation for the assault to breach the line and create a workable breakthrough.

By the nineteenth, the German attack through Luxembourg and Belgium had gained such weight and intensity that it was necessary to shift the 80th Division and its attached units north to help relieve the pressure. On the nineteenth, our Battalion received orders to march to a Division concentration point in the vicinity of Eschwege, Luxembourg. The Battalion crossed the IP at Saar Union at 1805 on the nineteenth, and followed the route--Saarlouis, St. Avold, Metz, Uckange, Bryange, and crossed the French-Luxembourg border on the road to Esch. Throughout this march the roads were very congested and rapid road marching was impossible. A halt of approximately forty-five minutes duration for vehicle servicing and eating was made just east of St. Avold.

At 2358 the head of the column arrived at Esch, Luxembourg, and met Lt. Col. RALPH TALBOT, III, who had gone ahead to prepare for billeting. He reported that plans had been changed and that we were to continue marching as soon as possible. The Battalion refused and obtained a little rest in Esch, then pushed on at 0730 in the morning to a deployed position protecting the city of Luxembourg.

The initial phase of this new campaign, the defense of the City of Luxembourg, commenced on the morning of the twentieth. "A" Company, attached to CP 317, went into a reserve position at Gonderange. "B" Company, with the 318th and the same mission, was at Roeschette, and "C" Company with the 319th at Bereldange. The Battalion's CP was set up at Pommeldange, and the Service establishments at Leudelange.

A counter-attack to the north, planned to drive in the south flank of the German salient was ordered for the twenty-second by the Third Army. In preparation for this attack, each Company moved into a forward assembly area, "A" Company to Heggau, "B" Company to Lorentzweiler, and "C" Company to Hollenfels. Each Company was attached to its respective combat team, and "A" Company, with the 317th, reverted to division reserve.

At the commencement of the operation, the 80th, in a "reported" surprise attack, caught the German 352nd Volk Grenadier Division on the left flank as this division assaulted in a southwesternly direction. The 352nd was split in two at its center, and its leading elements were pulverized by the American Infantry-Bank team. The German 918th Infantry Regiment was cut off and destroyed. To fill in the gap, the German High Command rushed the 79th Volk Grenadier into our sector. By the 30th they had spent their offensive strength in fruitless counter-attacks against our positions and assumed a strictly defensive position. During the period, the weather was generally excellent and the unit was straddled for the first time by enemy air, hitting the CP.

At 0600 on the twenty-second, Company "B" jumped off on the Division right flank (east) with the First Battalion, 318th Inf. Their

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

objective was to push forward as far as possible along the Luxembourg--Ettelbruck road. The unit moved very rapidly and reached the outskirts of Ettelbruck at 1020. All attempts to assault the town frontally failed. One tank, an M-4, A-3, E-2, was knocked out in this action. On the twenty-third, Lt. RIVES did enter the town by moving very rapidly without infantry support, but his position became untenable and he was ordered to withdraw. On the succeeding days attempts were made to flank the city and attack from the west. The terrain in this area was found to be impossible for tanks, and the city was taken on the 26th by infantry troops. For the rest of the month the Company was in a defensive position in Greutzigen in conjunction with the Third Battalion, 318th Infantry.

Snow fell lightly in the early morning as "C" Company left Hollenfels on the twenty-second. The first and third platoons were supporting the First Battalion, 319th Infantry. They met their first enemy resistance, consisting of enemy bazooka patrols, at Michaelbach. They then assaulted and took the towns of Oberfeulen and Neiderfeulen. In this fracas they put to rest 12 horse-drawn supply vehicles and 7 artillery pieces. The tanks spent the night at Oberfeulen. Our second platoon, supporting the Third Battalion, assaulted and took Merzig. They spent the night at Vitchen.

During the night of 22-23, two tanks of the first platoon under Lt. PRESTRIDGE, took part in a successful night attack with the Second Battalion, and extended the 319th's penetration almost to Heidersheid. On the 23rd the first platoon again supported the First Battalion. Their objective was Kehman. They met no enemy resistance until the "jump off" from the hill south of Kehman. Prior to this, though, our tanks shot at a column of men, killing 100. During the action, 15 enemy tanks were sighted on the left and ten on the right. The platoon accounted for two and drove the others off. In repelling counter-attacks, the third platoon knocked out 4 trucks and 3 tanks. The second platoon went back to Merzig to mop up and bagged 100 prisoners who had infiltrated our lines the night before. They supported the Third Battalion in a night attack on Tadler. In later actions around Ringel, starting the 24th and continuing until the end of the month, the Germans counter-attacked constantly. One platoon stayed on constant alert at Ringel while the rest of the Company was assembled at Heidersheid. During the month three tanks were knocked out and one was bogged down. One tank was strafed at Tadler with two men killed.

Since the 318th was halted at Ettelbruck, the 317th was committed on the night of December 24th at Neiderfeulen. "A" Company was attached to the Second Battalion, 317th Infantry, and was told they were to attack and try to take the town of Scheidel. The Third platoon with 4 tanks attacked at 0400 through the woods. All 4 tanks were lost when the terrain became impossible for tanks to continue. One tank was knocked out by bazooka fire. On the 25th the company was attached to the Third Battalion and was to attack the town of Kehman. The town was not taken when the American Infantry couldn't advance under the heavy German fire. After this action the company went into a defensive position with

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

the infantry on the hill above Kehman. The attack was resumed in the morning, with no further success. Two tanks made the edge of town, but ran out of ammunition. The Company returned to their defensive position, and remained there, except for two days, for the rest of the month. They were relieved by "B" Company on those days and performed some much needed maintenance.

The Tank Battalion CP moved to Reckange-les-Mersch on the 22nd with the Division Headquarters. Headquarters Company and Service Company set up their establishments at Lintgen. Company "D" had one platoon attached to each Company throughout the month.

Due to the heavy combat and the long road marches taken during the month the Battalion had only 25 medium tanks operative on December 25th. By the end of the month, this number had been built up to 30. As a note of interest, the following are the complete battle casualties for the Battalion for 1944: KIA 31, WIA 166, MIA 6.

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

9. Losses in Actions

OFFICERS:
None

KILLED

ENLISTED MEN:

Lucas, Joseph E, T/S, 33621431
Dineen, Joseph P, Pfc, 33002287
Espikas, Paul P, Sgt, 33436039
Kirkley, Fred J, Pvt, 34931000
Tanner, William E, Cpl, 33757156

WOUNDED AND MISSING

OFFICERS:

McDermott, F. L, Capt, 01018749
Grey, Jack R, 2d Lt, 0543229
Shore, Wm, E, 1st Lt, 01018941

ENLISTED MEN:

Manzi, Frank J, Pvt 31462634
Hill, Willard R, Pvt, 38530038
Westmoreland, Sidney W, Pvt, 33985
013
Kirtley, R. L, Pfc, 36595299
Johnson, Harold W, Cpl, 37281142
Zepp, Howard C, Pvt, 33902776
Keels, Jr, Wm E, S/Sgt, 34121053
Ferry, John F, Pfc, 33596531
Bumgardner, Lee R, Pvt, 39313184
Middle, Jr, Samuel O, Sgt, 33621506
Fergie, Lawrence L, Pvt, 37624041
Smolos, John W, Pfc, 33757152
Danielenko, Casimir A, Pvt, 33591529
Fonccca, Arthur H, Pvt, 39531651
Michael, Robert J, Cpl, 33821428
Catalano, Felix J, Sgt, 35757030
Thorne, Chester F, Pfc, 14050128
Hibbs, Herbert A, S/Sgt, 33311359

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

WOUNDED AND INJURED (CONT'D)

Leszczynski, Chester A, Cpl, 33596710
 LaCross, George L, Pvt, 31350191
 Zigman, Vincent E, Cpl, 33596572
 Mastrobattisto, S. L., Pfc, 32847714
 Welch, Jr, Harry K, Pvt, 38693581
 Addis, James P, Tec 5, 33669516,
 Crain, Robert D, Sgt, 29170956
 Dragosits, Martin G, Pfc, 33621543
 Keegan, John J, Sgt, 33598311
 Hillig, Roland F, Tec 5, 33596647
 Patnaude, William N, Tec 5, 311403463
 Frey, Elmer, Tec 5, 33621704
 Ballat, Joseph J, Cpl, 33621647
 Martin, Frank E, Pvt, 38472997

MISSING IN ACTION

OFFICERS:
 None

ENLISTED MEN:

Karmazin, George J, Pfc, 33621501
 McConnell, Christopher, L, Tec 4, 13146115
 Hale, Andrew J, Pvt, 38322942

10. Former and present members who have distinguished themselves in action.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Kinnare, Harry	S/Sgt	During period 10 Sept 44 to 27 Nov 44, S/Sgt Kinnare distinguished himself in performing his duties as a Tank Platoon Sergeant and in the absence of an officer served in the capacity of a Tank Platoon leader. While in charge of six (6) assault tanks in an attack, S/Sgt Kinnare encountered a heavily mined road, commanding the situation he used a map and compass, by-passed the obstacle and guided the platoon of tanks cross country to another usable road to successfully complete the assigned mission. In enemy counter-attacks, under direct heavy fire from howitzers, 88mm guns, anti-tank guns, bazookas, and snipers, with total disregard for two 88mm guns, anti-tank guns, bazookas, and snipers, and with total disregard for his personal safety, he assisted in repelling these attacks, accounting for two 88mm guns, three machine gun nests, two command cars, and one horse drawn artillery piece.	Bronze Star
MC CONNICO, JARRETT C.	1st Lt	On 4 December 1944, Lt McCandoo platoon leader, during the course	Bronze Star O.L.C.

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Wardle, Ralph R.	Tec 4	<p>of an attack learned that the Company Commander of a supporting company had been wounded by mortar fire. The medics were unable to reach the injured man due to the intensive enemy fire. The enemy upon seeing Lt McConnico's tank coming into view, opened up with an assortment of weapons, in an attempt to destroy it. Ignoring the shells and small arms fire, he continued on until he had reached the wounded officer, carrying and placing him in the tank. The enemy continued firing throughout, but unhesitatingly and daringly Lt McConnico returned to carry a wounded infantryman back to the tank, safely evacuating both men.</p> <p>On 4 December 1944, Tec 4 Wardle, a tank driver, during the course of an attack learned that the Company Commander of a supporting company had been wounded by mortar fire. The medics were unable to reach the injured man due to the intense enemy fire. The enemy upon seeing the tank, driven by Tec 4 Wardle, come into view, directed fire upon it with an assortment of weapons. Ignoring the shells and small arms fire, he reached the wounded officer and placed him in the tank. The enemy continued firing throughout, but without hesitation he daringly returned to carry another wounded soldier to the tank, safely evacuating both men.</p>	Bronze Star

b. Purple Hearts Awarded:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>WASH</u>	<u>DATE OF WOUNDS</u>
McDermott, Francis L.	Capt	01015749	4 December 1944
Westmoreland, Sidney W.	Pvt	33605013	8 December 1944
Hill, Willard R.	Pvt	38530088	4 December 1944
Manzi, Frank J.	Pvt	31462424	1 December 1944
Thorne, Chester F.	Pfc	14050125	24 December 1944
Catalano, Felix J.	Sgt	33757030	24 December 1944
Michael, Robert J.	Cpl	33621428	24 December 1944
Zigman, Vincent E.	Cpl	33596572	24 December 1944
Fonceca, Arthur H.	Pvt	39581651	24 December 1944

Battalion History - 1 Dec 44 to 31 Dec 44 Cont'd.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>DATE OF RECORDS</u>
Danielenko, Casimir A.	Pvt	33591529	24 December 1944
Forgie, Lawrence L.	Pvt	37694541	24 December 1944
Addis, James F.	Tec 5	33669516	24 December 1944
Liddle, Jr, Samuel O.	Sgt	33621506	24 December 1944
Bumgardener, Lee R.	Pvt	39343184	24 December 1944
Leszczynski, Chester A.	Cpl	33596710	23 December 1944
Johnson, Harold W.	Cpl	37231142	22 December 1944
Hibbs, Herbert A.	S/Sgt	33311359	25 December 1944
Yenger, Jr, Carl E.	Pfc	35072235	22 December 1944
Ballat, Joseph J.	Cpl	33621647	28 December 1944
Zepp, Howard C.	Pvt	33902776	23 December 1944
Ferry, John F.	Pfc	33596531	23 December 1944
LaFortune, Donald U.	Sgt	35469765	22 December 1944
Patnaude, William N.	Tec 5	31403463	22 December 1944
Hillig, Roland F.	Pvt	33596647	24 December 1944
Frey, Elmer	Tec 5	33621704	24 December 1944
Coina, Henry L.	Tec 4	33602267	24 December 1944
Grey, Jack R.	2d Lt	0543227	25 December 1944
Nalley, Ted L.	Pvt	39918660	27 December 1944
Welden, Charles F.	Cpl	31441130	24 December 1944
Shore, William E.	1st Lt	01018941	27 December 1944
Martin, Frank E.	Pvt	38472997	29 December 1944
Wein, Charles T.	Pvt	15338890	23 December 1944

11. Photographs of personnel, important scenes of events not available up to 31 December 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

William B. Jacobs
 WILLIAM B. JACOBS,
 Capt, 702d Tank Battalion,
 Battalion Historian.