

**HEADQUARTERS
702ND TANK BATTALION
APO 403 US ARMY**

26 April 1945.

SUBJECT: Battalion History.
Period from 1 March 45 to 31 March 45.

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:

- a. Strength: 1 March 1945:
- b. Net increase to 31 March 1945:
- c. Net decrease to 31 March 1945:
- d. Strength: 31 March 1945:

<u>Commissioned</u>	<u>Warrant</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
<u>42</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>621</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>42</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>622</u>

4. Stations of Unit:

- a. 1 Mar 45 thru 3 Mar 45: Vicinity of Porschweiler, Germany, LQ441. (Map of Northwest Germany)
- 4 Mar 45 thru 6 Mar 45: Vicinity of Meckel, Germany, I1244. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 7 Mar 45 thru 8 Mar 45: Vicinity of Priszt, Germany, L2247. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 9 Mar 45 thru 11 Mar 45: Vicinity of Niederkaill, Germany, I2856. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 12 Mar 45: Vicinity of Boas, Germany, F9807. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 13 Mar 45 thru 16 Mar 45: Vicinity of Eorrig, Germany, WL 1513. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 17 Mar 45: Vicinity of Fromersbach, Germany, WL 2511. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 18 Mar 45: Vicinity of Thailen, Germany, WL 3404. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 19 Mar 45 thru 23 Mar 45: Vicinity of Freinsheim, Germany, WL 0502. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 24 Mar 45 thru 26 Mar 45: Vicinity of Finkenbach, Germany, WL 0020. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 27 Mar 45 thru 28 Mar 45: Vicinity of Hechtshelm, Germany, WL 3953. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 29 Mar 45 thru 30 Mar 45: Vicinity of Wiesbaden, Germany, WL 3564. (Map of Northwest Germany).
- 31 Mar 45: Vicinity of Schrecksbach, Germany, WL 0950. (Map of Northwest Germany).

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Battalion History - 1 Mar 45 to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

5. The purpose 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. Battalion engaged principally in Third United States Army drive into Germany. During the month activities for the Battalion can be divided into two phases. From the 1st until the 13th of Mar 45, this organization operated attached to the 76th Infantry Division and worked as a unit in their sector. Resistance here was light, consisted mainly in extensive demolitions and heavy concentrations of light caliber artillery and nebelwerfers. Anti-tank weapons were reported but rarely met, and artillery and mines took the greatest toll of casualties. In one freak accident a medium tank attempting to by-pass a bridge, hit a mine of undetermined size and became a total wreck with all crew members killed by the concussion. The mine was believed to be an aerial bomb, considering the damage caused.

Unit contacted during this operation were disorganized and confused by the many forceful American drives, and had broken up into combat units with very little centralized control. Major units identified were the 276 VG Division, the 560 VG Division, and the 2d Pz Division, but they never organized any coordinated defensive sector.

During the second phase of operations, this unit was reattached to the 80th Infantry Division and moved to the vicinity of Saarburg. Here a much superior type of German soldier was encountered. They were trained mountain troops, members of the 2d and 6th SS Mountain Division. The power of the initial assault by the 80th Infantry Division broke up their defensive organization and robbed them of their will to fight. From 17 Mar 45 onward the enemy was no longer able to develop any defensive potential, and except for a few isolated incidents, retreated to other positions in disorder. Hastily formed combat groups were thrown into our path, only to be overwhelmed, surrounded, and captured. Initial terrain difficulties were eventually overcome and in many places the assault took on the role of a road march. At the Rhine River the enemy attempted to halt the advance, using anti-aircraft men drawn from the Frankfurt Defense Area. These were unable to accomplish their mission. All attempts by the enemy, throughout the month of March, to contain our advance, were futile and the end of the month saw this unit approaching the Germany city of Kassel, 250 miles from the starting point at Saarburg. Due to the conglomerate hodge-podge of troops encountered late in the month, positive identification of units engaged was impossible.

7. At the beginning of the Month, the Battalion was attached to the 76th Infantry Division. The Division was at this time engaged on the drive South to Trier and the Moselle River from the vicinity of Pörschweiler.

During the above mentioned operation the Companies were attached to the three Regiments of the Division as follows: Company "A" to the 385th Infantry; Company "B" to the 304th Infantry, and Company "C" to the 417th Infantry Regiment.

The Company continued on this mission until the 76th Infantry Division reached the Moselle and contacted troops of the 10th Armored Division on 3 March 45 at which time the Battalion was assembled in the vicinity of Kechal and attached

Battalion History - 1 Mar 4, to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

to the 17th Armored Group to form a Task Force to be known as Task Force Onaway.

Task Force Onaway was composed of the following troops:

- Headquarters 17th Armored Group
- 702d Tank Battalion
- 76th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop
- 2 Battalions of Infantry
- 1 Company of Engineers
- 1 Company supported Tank Destroyers
- 1 Platoon of Military Police
- 1 Battalion of Light Artillery

The 76th Division was to advance East in accordance with FO #6, Headquarters XII Corps: "XII Corps advances H Hour 4 March 1945, seize west bank of Rhine River between Andernach and Koblenz on two routes with the 4th Armored Division on the left followed by the 5th and 80th Infantry Divisions and the 76th Infantry Division on the right. The 702d Tank Battalion attached to the 17th Armored Group. The 17th Armored Group Headquarters attached to the 76th Infantry Division."

The plan of attack for the 76th Infantry Division was as follows: The 304th Infantry Regiment to attack the night of 3 March 1945, establish and secure bridgehead across the Kyll River, vicinity of Kyll. Engineers to build bridge, to be completed 0600 4 March 1945 at which time tanks will cross in support of expanding bridgehead and continue advance to the East.

Due to heavy mortar and artillery fire on the bridgesite and difficult approaches to the bridgesite itself, the bridge was not completed until late the 5th of March at which time the Task Force crossed and assembled in the vicinity of Priest.

Using a regular march formation with tanks leading, the Task Force started to advance 1200 6 Mar 45 north to Speicher and then East. The column advanced against moderate artillery fire to a position west of the town of Herforst where a crater in the road halted the column.

Due to numerous road blocks and craters, making the advance by the tanks very difficult, the Infantry was pushed ahead the night of 6 March 45 with the mission of taking Herforst and continuing the attack by fire from positions east of Herforst until the route was cleared, at which time they were to move with the Infantry.

The attack progressed as planned and Binsfield had been cleared by sundown 7 March 1945.

Two columns composed of an Infantry Battalion and one Tank Company were used in continuing the attack East from Binsfield the night of 7 March 1945. One column advanced along the route to Binsfield, Niederkail and Landcheid while the second column moved over the route Binsfield to Bruck. The northern column by late afternoon had succeeded in reaching and clearing Landcheid while the

Battalion History - 1 Mar 45 to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

second column moved over the route Binsfeld to Bruck. The northern column by late afternoon had succeeded in reaching and clearing Landcheid while the southern column was still having difficulty in reaching Bruck. In view of this situation it was decided to abandon the effort to break through on the South and made an effort to seize Burg and the bridge over the Sala River located in Burg.

The 702d Tank Battalion plus one Company of Infantry attacked Burg at 1820 8 March 1945 in compliance with this decision and succeeded in capturing the town in 20 minutes, however, the bridge was blown as the advancing troops entered the town.

After the completion of the capture of Burg, Task Force Onaway was dissolved and the three Medium Tank Companies attached one to each Infantry Regiment. The Companies thus supported the advance of the 76th Infantry Division East to Wittlick which was entered on 12 March 1945.

On 11 March 1945, the Battalion was detached from the 76th Infantry Division and attached to the 60th Infantry Division which was assembling in the vicinity of Renich, Luxembourg, in preparation for a movement East across the Sauer River. The Battalion assembled in this area late 12 March 1945 and the three medium Tank Companies were immediately attached to Combat Teams with "A" Company to CT 317; "B" Company to CT 318 and "C" Company to CT 319. "A" and "B" Companies moved without delay to forward assembly areas vicinity of Irsch, while "C" Company remained in Rellingen pending the movement forward of the 319th Infantry Regiment.

The Battalion CP moved to Beurig the night of the 12th of March 1945.

Company "A" advancing from Irsch with the 317th Infantry Regiment 13 March 1945 assisted the Regiment in clearing the towns of Greimerach and Gersdorf and by the morning of the 15th of March 1945 was attacking Scheiden with the 3rd Battalion. Both Scheiden and the neighboring town of Waldholzbach were captured on 16 March 1945 as the 10th Armored Division passed through the Regiment to continue the attack East.

After the 10th Armored Division had passed through, the 317th Infantry Regiment was ordered to advance behind them and clear out remaining pockets of resistance. Company "A" moved East with them normally carrying one Company of Infantry of the leading elements on it's tanks during the rapid advance. Upon reaching the vicinity of Eddersheim 22 March 1945, the Company was placed under Battalion control and assembled in Freinsheim.

Company "B" assembled in Zarf with the 318th Infantry Regiment 13 March 1945 and one Platoon was sub-attached to each Battalion initially.

The 1st Platoon sub-attached to the 2d Battalion advanced to Weiskirchen on 14 March 1945 and were cut off that night by German troops that had been by-passed during the advance. The remainder of the Company with the 3rd Battalion 318th Infantry at once moved on the town from the Northwest and succeeded in reaching it late 15 March 1945. The Company was released from attachment to the 318th Infantry Regiment 16 March 1945, and for the exception of one platoon attached to Company "C", saw no action between the time and 22 March 1945.

Battalion History - 1 Mar 45 to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

During this period one Platoon of the Company was attached to each "B" and "C" Companies and operated as an additional Platoon with these companies. The 2d Platoon of the Company was attached to the 80th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop and operated with that Unit screening the flanks of the 80th Infantry Division during its rapid move into Germany.

The Battalion moved from its assembly area in Freinsheim on 24 March 1945 to the new area of the 80th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Rockenhausen. The entire unit conducted rehabilitation of equipment and personnel in this area until 27 March 1945.

On 27 March 1945 the Battalion less Company "C" assembled just East of Mainz preparation for a crossing of the Rhine River.

The 80th Infantry Division planned to force a crossing of the Rhine River at Mainz with the 317th and 318th Infantry Regiments, while at the same time the 319th Infantry Regiment was to move over the Rhine River through the bridgehead of the 5th Infantry Division and establish a bridgehead over the Mainz River at Hieshofheim.

Company "C" was to support by fire the crossing of the 319th Infantry Regiment over the Mainz River. Companies "A" and "B" were to support the crossing over the Rhine River of the 317th Infantry Regiment with Company "B" reverting to the 318th Infantry Regiment after the 318th Infantry Regiment had secured a foothold on the East Bank.

The attack jumped off at 0100 28 March 1945 and progressed according to plan against moderate resistance.

Company "B" crossed the Rhine River 291300 March 1945 and assisted the 318th Infantry Regiment in capturing the towns of Basselock, Niederhausen and Kerkbach.

Company "C" crossed the Main River with the 319th Infantry Regiment clearing the towns of Wicker and Dalkenheira.

Company "A" did not cross the Rhine River until 291945 March 1945 at which time it assembled in Wiesbaden with the 317th Infantry Regiment in Division reserve.

The battalion moved North with the 80th Infantry Division 31 March 1945 and at month's end was located as follows:

Battalion CP	- Henkirchen
"A" Company - attached to 317th Infantry Regiment	- Niedergresbach
"B" Company - Battalion Control	- Holsheimen
"C" Company - attached to 319th Infantry Regiment	- Remsfeld
"D" Company - Battalion Control	- Schrecksbach

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 Colonel GEORGE S. PATTON, JR.

Battalion History - 1 Mar 45 to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

9. Losses in Action:

OFFICERS:

Friel, Maurice E, 2d Lt, 01018884

OFFICERS:

Cass, Arthur J, 2d Lt, 02006569

KILLED

ENLISTED MEN:

Sanders, Henry A., T/4, 13038240
 Kocyan, Joseph S, Sgt, 33621594
 Hamilton, Ray C, Cpl, 13176532
 Tarconish, George, T/5, 33621664
 Kupetz, Edward J, Pfc, 33621596
 Martin, Albert C, Pfc, 35870686
 Steffey, Wayne W, Pfc, 33757173
 Brisson, Raymond J, Pfc, 31387055
 Crompton, Warren J, Pfc, 33596766
 Prahar, Michael P, Cpl, 33621631
 Ossanna, Albert L, Cpl, 33621634
 Camblin, Wayne L, Pfc, 35901953

WOUNDED AND INJURED

ENLISTED MEN:

Foulca, Thomas S, Pfc, 31463165
 Koritko, Jr, Mike, 3244420
 Dibeau, John J, Pvt, 36470053
 Szep, Emerich E, T/5, 33621572
 D'Aurora, James J, T/5, 32435644
 Uchida, Robert P, Pfc, 37738953
 Kelly, Robert L, Cpl, 22602114
 Buford, Eugene, Pfc, 38501126
 Yarg, James S, T/4, 33602274
 Diez, Paul E, Pvt, 35946923
 Wola, Albert J, Pfc, 36786999
 Martin, Frank W, T/4, 38994493
 Armentano, Benjamin T, T/5, 32976931
 Pfelegor, William B, Pfc, 33602254
 McCoy, Jim M, T/5, 38119023
 Paul, Jr, Albert S, Sgt, 33596593
 Ballat, Joseph J, Cpl, 33621447
 Camerini, Francis J, T/4, 33621703
 Murray, Frank J, Pfc, 32276175
 Mooney, John W, Cpl, 33602129
 Duberstein, Harold R, Pvt, 42135788
 Zamba, Andrew B, S/Sgt, 33593923
 Abraham, Joseph A, Pfc, 33621589

MISSING IN ACTION

ENLISTED MEN:

None

OFFICERS:

None

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

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Ripley, James H.	Tec 5	On 6 March 45 during a heavy enemy artillery concentration upon their position in a forest in Germany, two members of a tank crew were seriously injured by shell fragments.	Bronze Star

Battalion History - 1 Mar 45 to 31 Mar 45 Cont'd.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ACT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
		Pfc Ripley and an assistant drove a litter equipped truck to the side of the disabled tank without regard to the intense barrage and evacuated the wounded men to an aid station. Pfc Ripley's courage, disregard for personal safety, and sincere devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.	

B. Purple Hearts Awarded:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>DATE OF WOUNDS</u>
Sajewicz, Felix	Tec 4	35287822	8 Mar 45
Nicolodi, Jr, Lawrence	Tec 4	33621668	8 Mar 45
Gaynor, Philip E/	Tec 4	35232336	8 Mar 45
Pauley, Harris P.	Pvt	36993006	8 Mar 45
Beard, William W.	Sgt	38132934	8 Mar 45
Martin, Frank W.	Tec 4	39394493	9 Mar 45
Ellis, George J.	Tec 5	33601553	9 Mar 45
Lutke, Jay	Cpl	36975393	9 Mar 45
Gleizes, Edwin A.	Sgt	32786390	9 Mar 45
Pfleeger, William B.	Pfc	33602254	15 Mar 45
McCoy, Jim M.	Pfc	38119023	15 Mar 45
Paul, Jr, Albert S.	Sgt	33595593	15 Mar 45
Armentano, Benjamin T.	Tec 5	32996331	15 Mar 45
Duberstein, Harold E.	Pvt	42135788	15 Mar 45
Cass, Arthur L.	2d Lt	02006569	15 Mar 45
Murray, Frank J.	Pfc	32276175	15 Mar 45
Camerini, Francis J.	Tec 4	33621708	15 Mar 45
Denham, Raymond A.	Pvt	6657814	16 Mar 45
Abraham, Joseph A.	Pfc	33621589	17 Mar 45
Ballat, Joseph J.	Cpl	33621647	15 Mar 45
Mooney, John W.	Cpl	33602129	15 Mar 45
Larkin, Marx M.	2d Lt	02006077	15 Mar 45
McAllister, James H.	2d Lt	0518437	17 Mar 45
Zamba, Andrew B.	S/Sgt	33593928	16 Mar 45

11. Photographs of personnel, important scenes of events not available up to 31 March 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:

Jarrett C. McConnico
 JARRETT C. MC CONNICO,
 1st Lt, Cav,
 Battalion Historian.