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HEADQUARTERS

494TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

APO 262, U. S. ARMY

DECLASSIFIED

735077

By 7 NARS, Date 8/16/79

NARRATIVE UNIT HISTORY

At the beginning of this period the battalion was in direct support of the 159th French Infantry Regiment and the Alsace-Lorraine Brigade, with the Battalion Command Post at Strasbourg (V9869).

On the night of 31 January 1945 a warning order was received from Division Artillery that the battalion is to be relieved from its present assignment between 2-3 January to rejoin the Division. Upon receipt of confirmed orders, billeting parties will be sent to Molsheim (V8293) to meet representative from G-3 and proceed to Division assembly area in vicinity of Selestat (V7862). While awaiting orders to displace the battalion continued to fire harrassing missions and on targets of opportunity reported by our observers. During the entire period 25 January to 4 February the enemy front lines remained the same in this sector with very little air and ground activity.

At 1000, 3 February battalion was relieved from its assignment. Departed 1300 from Strasbourg toward Rosenkrantz (7347) to meet billeting parties. After arriving at destination, battalion was placed in general support of the 12th Armored Division, under direct control of Division Artillery, and instructed to proceed to Colmar. Battalion cautioned against excessive land mines and booby traps in this sector.

Captain Albert M. Chandler and Private First Class Richard O. Moser hit a land mine on 4 February while returning from Division Artillery with S-2 information. Captain Chandler was seriously wounded and Pfc Moser was slightly injured. It was later learned that the Captain lost both legs.

1st Lt Roger G. Bissmeyer (then 2d Lt) on the 3d of February, on a mission as forward observer with the 23d Tank Battalion, was forced to withdraw because of intense anti-tank and bazooka fire. Three tanks that preceded Lt Bissmeyer had been knocked out. Though the tank he was riding was hit by bazooka fire, it did little damage. Upon reaching the downward slope of a hill the tank over-ran enemy bazooka positions. Fifteen enemy surrendered to Lt Bissmeyer and his crew, who, in turn turned them over to the members of the knocked out tanks.

The Battalion Command Post moved to Hattstatt (V6734) on 6 January. The same day a platoon of tanks from Troop "F", 92d Cav Ren Sqn was attached for operations.

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612-FA (494) - 03 A/A Report  
494th FA  
12th Armored Div

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A radio message was intercepted at 0900, 4 February that the 4th Moroccan Division had previously met the elements of the 12th Armored Division in Rouffach (V6829) at 0530 thereby splitting the Colmar Pocket. The front line of organized enemy resistance was the east bank of the Ill River, but numerous groups of stragglers remained in the Vosges Mountains. At approximately 1100 this battalion moved to Rouffach with the mission of general support of the 28th Infantry Division. The progress of the French 5th Armored Division was so rapid the battalion was forbidden to fire between the Rhine Rhone Canal and the Rhine River. Air observer later reported that Neuf Brisach had been cleared of enemy and was occupied by French forces.

Operations order was received on 9 February ordering this battalion to rejoin the 12th Armored Division and prepare for operations in vicinity of Hundling (Q4556). Enroute to destination Battalion halted in Dieuze (Q2524) to spend the night. At 0800 the following morning the battalion continued the journey to occupy firing positions at Hundling with the mission of general support of 70th Infantry Division reinforcing fires of the 883d Field Artillery Battalion. Due to poor visibility the Corps Artillery Flash and Sound Base was used to register our Charlie Battery on a check point at Q508614.

During the period 14-16 February, this battalion was attached to the 44th Infantry Division, reinforcing fires of the 220th Field Artillery Battalion which was to support an attack to gain more favorable ground and also to straighten front lines. By morning of 16 February the enemy has been driven out and our lines restored to run generally east along the following coordinates: Q642560 - Q649563 - Q658560 - Q681570. After this mission was accomplished this battalion returned to the 70th Infantry Division in general support, reinforcing the fires of the 882d Field Artillery Battalion. New Command Post was established at Tenteling (Q4158).

On the 17th of February, after a rather quiet night, Battalion, participated in the firing of artillery preparations for an attack at H-20, time 0630-0650. Throughout the day this battalion fired unobserved missions on enemy infantry, battery of artillery, tanks and bridges. During the hours of darkness we continued with harrassing missions. The total number of rounds expended for the day was 1200.

The following day the battalion continued to support the attack of the 70th Infantry Division by firing prepared missions between 0645 and 0845. A counter attack by enemy tanks, and infantry was repulsed.

Battalion displaced to Bousbach (Q4261). Same date six 105mm assault guns from the 714th Tank Battalion were attached for operations.

Confirmed report received on 23 February that attached AAAW Platoon, from Battery "D", 572d AAAW, shot down one jet propelled German aircraft, ME 262 on 23 January 1945.

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Between 2230 and 2250 on 24 February, 25 rounds of 170mm artillery fell in "B" Battery's position. No casualties were suffered, Enemy battery silenced by Corps Artillery.

From 24 February to the end of the month the mission was unchanged. The Battalion continued to fire on hostile forces, including infantry in the open, bridges, buildings, suspected OPs and artillery installations. Also neutralization and destructive missions against elements of the enemy which had made penetrations along the 70th Infantry Division's sector.

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