

714TH TANK BATTALION – NARRATIVE OF ACTIONS – MARCH 1945

The period 1 March to 16 March 1945 was spent in resting of troops, drawing personnel reinforcements, and vehicle replacements. Training in night patrols and gunnery and platoon problems were also stressed during this period.

17 Mar 1945: At 0745 the battalion moved from Cites de Charbonnages after having been alerted two days prior, placing the battalion on six (6) hour alert. Route of march: Cites de Charbonnages, Faulquemont, Metz, Theonville, Grebenmacher, Baumholder.

18 Mar 1945: The battalion closed in assembly area in Baumholder, Germany, for refueling and to await plans for advance. The battalion commander arriving from CC-B brought with him the overlay of the battalion advance to be coordinated with company C/56th AIB. When the force moves out, radio silence will be maintained, cerise panels will be displayed on all combat vehicles, one to every general purpose vehicle. In addition to the cerise panels, the yellow panel will also be displayed by this unit, until the 20th of March, and from the 20th March to 25th March the cerise panel, only, will be displayed. At 0600 Force Field left the assembly area heading east with route of march Stadtbredimus – route 10 to Wormeldinger – route 1 to Grevenmacher – N49 to Tier, to Ruwer. The order of march was Hqs, Company A, Company C, Company D, Company C/56, and Service Company. Force Field's advance will be on the right of CC-B with CC-B located on the right of the division advance with the objective Worms. All non-combat vehicles remained with the service elements of the force. The move from Baumholder, Germany was very slow due to units other than 12th Armored using the same route of march. On 18 March 1945 at 1100 the battalion had advanced passed the town of Patersbach, with over 250 prisoners counted by first unit of the main body and many others collected along the column. At 1830 the battalion arrived and immediately departed from Horschbach heading southeast. At 1900 on the same date, Company C sent back 50 PWs who were turned over to the mortar platoon, for transportation to the rear. On this same date, additional PWs were taken after Company C, the lead company, had encountered some small arms fire, moving in on the enemy and quickly causing them to surrender.

19 Mar 1945: From 1150 to 1255 Major Field discussed the situation and planned a further movement at coordinates 099989 with the combat commander of CC-B. The battalion closed in at coordinates 099989 – 1400. At 1600 a company commanders meeting was called awaiting instructions from the S-3 of CC-B. At 1650, the battalion moved from this area arriving at Ramsen at 1745 and moving to Imsweiler and arriving there at 2030. Message received from the combat commander ordered that Force Field will remain in Imsweiler. At 2145 Major Field held a meeting with the combat commander, the objective was changed and at this time the battalion from Imsweiler. At 2400 elements of Force Field and additional units in the vicinity received artillery fire slowing the force advance, suffering one vehicle casualty and one personnel casualty in Company C/56th AIB.

20 Mar 1945: At 0830 the battalion closed in an area to the north of Gersheim for refueling and servicing of vehicles and was subjected to some small arms fire in the area. The battalion moves on in the direction of Kittsabald and cautioned, as many enemy were seen to be entering the town. At 1045 the battalion assembled east of Enkenbach, Germany, being subjected to enemy aircraft attacks. A

report from Task Force Norton stated that four tanks of B/714 had been knocked out by enemy AA and AT fire. Prior to this assembly, the battalion had moved to Neukirchen, assembling east of town making reconnaissance to the south and to the west, with orders to avoid any action that might deter the force from its mission. A message at 1140 from CO CC-B to Major Field ordering him to report to his command halftrack, that General Ennis was in that vicinity, Eisenberg. At 1835 the force was ordered to move to the town of Freinsheim in support of elements of Force Norton. At 2000 the force moved out and by 2100 the area in the vicinity of Freinsheim had been cleared but by-passing the town. It was reported to the force at 2215 from an element of a reconnaissance troop that it had encountered much bazooka fire on leaving the town of Freinsheim. The force commander, Major Field, with Major Comfort, Executive Officer, went forward to contact CO 92d Reconnaissance Troop at 2233 for information as to the situation east of Freinsheim, due to impassible roads out of Freinsheim the reported enemy resistance was by-passed, the force moved to Kerchwin, Germany, closing in at 0800 on 21 Mar 1945.

21 Mar 1945: At 0700 a company commanders meeting was called by Force Field with instructions for Company D to send a patrol of light tanks to Frankenthal. At 1000 this patrol reported to the Force that all towns between their present position and Frankenthal were clear. At 1030 the force prepared to move out to Frankenthal by way of West Mannerheim and hold this area until relieved by an infantry division. C/56 and D/714 moved directly to Frankenthal. At 1100 the force received orders that their objective had been changed, ordering the force to move south to Speyer, Germany. At 1145 the force moved out from Frankenthal using south and east roads or any available route leading in that direction, per order received from CO CC-B. During this march the force encountered small enemy resistance from woods along route and once being strafed in vicinity of Kraspots by three enemy ME 109s. Enemy air activity still continues to harass the force until 1400. The route of advance is congested by combat team of the 80th Infantry Division in addition to many PWs moving to the rear. At 1530 the force was approaching the town of Ruskeim with the plan of attack being given to elements of the force. Company "A" to attack the town from the left, Company "C" to make a frontal assault, the mortar platoon placed smoke in front of the town with the assault gun platoon screening the right flank of the force. The assault gun platoon leader reported an enemy tank going into position in front of the town of Ruskeim. At 1630 the force had entered the town of Ruskeim and proceeded south to Mutterstadt. The 80th Infantry and mortar laid preparations of 15 minutes fire I the town of Mutterstadt after receiving artillery and mortar fire, Company C of 56th AIB attached to Force Field, and working with Company A/714 as the point of the force, entered Mutterstadt encountering a roadblock and dismantling it.

22 Mar 1945: At 0600- the force entered Mutterstadt with immediate orders to attack south toward objective – Speyer. The 92d Recon supported by one platoon of tanks from Company A, led the advance of the force toward the objective. At 0710 six enemy tanks were reported to the force in vicinity south of Speyer in vicinity of the railroad running east and west. With the advance elements moving toward the objective, the force remained in Mutterstadt with Company C being detached to CC-B control.

23 Mar 1945: At 0600 a company commanders meeting was called, the order of march given to the force that remained in Mutterstadt as Company C/714 plus Company D/56, Company A (minus) plus one platoon of Company D/56, Headquarters Company plus Company D/714. At 0830 the column from Mutterstadt moving south with no enemy resistance reported as of 0918. The force location was reported to CO CC-B at 0918 with advance elements located 520852. At 0930 air reports that all bridges leading to Speyer are intact, by 0935 the force was located five kilometers south of Speyer. The tanks of the force will follow the infantry. At 0945 the point reported that anti-tank fire was being received from the edge of town. The 56th Infantry dismounted and sent ahead of the force with orders to deploy north in vicinity of Speyer for the attack on Speyer. At 0945 barrage balloons were up on Speyer. At 1000 it was reported that a bridge on the outskirts of Speyer had been blown and that the infantry deployed in this sector had received small arms fire. The commanding officer of Company C reported at 1300 that fire from enemy 88 AT guns was coming down the street with heavy small arms fire. Company A reported at 1320 that its elements were being held up by the same guns reported by Company "C". By 1330 the progress of the force was very slow due to heavy enemy anti-tank and small arms sniper fire. At 1336 Company C/56 and Company C/714 reported casualties in their organizations and requested that medical personnel be sent forward for evacuation. From the beginning of action of Speyer an undetermined number of PWs were captured in the vicinity. The reconnaissance platoon leader was ordered by Major Field to gather up all PWs and place them in an enclosure. At 1400 a message from Force Norton to Force Field reported that the 56th AIB were entering the town of Hanhoffen. At 1410 CO of Company C called for artillery fire on AT guns emplaced on the edge of Speyer. The force progress was slow at this time due to heavy enemy small arms which held up the infantry and anti-tank guns which were delaying the tanks. At 1524 Lt Kresge, platoon leader of Company A, entered Speyer with his platoon firing at all enemy installations resulting in the capture of many prisoners. At 1505 a message from Major Field to his force ordered that elements of the remaining tank companies are to attack the open field and seize the north end of town. Company A/714 over-ran large caliber guns on reaching the edge of Speyer. Company B/56 AIB having moved to this sector now occupied a portion of town to the right of the force advance. At 1545 Company A with 11 tanks had crossed the railroad tracks at the edge of town. At 1630 the force less Headquarters Company moved into Speyer with a meeting of company commanders for the purpose of regrouping. The force moved on through town encountering a roadblock, suffering some casualties.

24 Mar 1945: At 0500 on this date elements of the infantry reported that the roadblock was out and the force proceeded into town.

(no further narrative entries for March in the source document from F. P. Field)

Signed

F. P. FIELD, Major, Cavalry, Commanding