

DOCUMENTS RELATED to 714TH TANK BATTALION, 12TH ARMORED DIVISION, NOV 1944 – OCT 1945

Documents donated to the 12th Armored Division Memorial Museum from Earl Norris in October 2005.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS DURING PERIOD NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 1944

During the period 15 November 1944 to 28 November 1944, the Battalion assembled and reorganized in the vicinity of Auffay, France. Many companies had personnel on LSTs that arrived during this period. The Battalion completely closed in the vicinity of Auffay, France on the 22nd of Nov 1944. Normal duties and training were performed during this period. One death occurred due to accidental discharge of a .45 caliber submachine gun (noted in margin: C Company of the 714th).

At 1100 28 Nov 44, a warning order was received from Combat Command B for movement of the battalion to the vicinity of Lunneville, France. At 1300 28 Nov 44, the Battalion Commander issued the warning order to all officers of the 714th Tank Battalion for movement on 29 Nov 44. At 1800 28 Nov 44, 12th Armored Division Field Order Number 1 was received, ordering movement to the vicinity of Lunneville, France. At 2200 28 Nov 44, the Field Order was issued to all companies for movement by road.

The battalion left the vicinity of Auffay, France at 1415 29 Nov 44 for the vicinity of Lunneville, France, arriving at Soissons, France at 0130 30 Nov 44 for refueling and resting of troops, traveling a distance of 117 miles.

The battalion departed from Soissons, France for the vicinity of Lunneville, France at 1400 29 Nov, arriving in bivouac area in the vicinity of Lamont, France at 2330 30 Nov 44, traveling a distance of 89 miles. Departed vicinity of Lamont, France enroute of vicinity of Lunneville, France, 1600 1 Dec 44. Arrived at Baccarat, France at 0543 2 Dec 44. Distance traveled for the entire trip 315 miles. No unusual incidents occurred during the march.

During the period 2 Dec to 6 Dec 44 battalion made preparations to complete maintenance, ammunition loads and stowage of vehicles. Tentative plans were formulated for organization of Tank-Infantry Combat Teams. On 4 Dec 44, the battalion organized in to Force, Power, consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 714, B Company 56th AIB, and one platoon Company B 119th Engineer Battalion. At 1030 4 Dec 44, the Battalion Commander met with company commanders and separate platoon leaders to discuss plans for coordination, communications and available materiel.

At 0505 6 Dec 44, the Force left Baccarat, France enroute to Hirschland, France, arriving there at 0852 6 Dec 44.

At 0900 7 Dec 44, the Force was alerted for movement to the vicinity of Rehling, France. The Force departed from Hirschland, France at 1315, arriving at Dehlingen, France at 1730, traveling a total distance of 14 miles. No unusual incidents during the course of the march.

During the period 7 Dec to 11 Dec 44, daily reconnaissance was made of front line activities by the Battalion Commander and Staff and Company commanders.

At 1423 1 Dec 44 the Battalion crossed IP enroute to Lunneville, France. IP 3 miles east of Lunneville. At 2400 arrived at release point, Lunneville, France. Battalion march column reorganized and marched at 0310 2 Dec 44 to Baccarat Barracks under command of Capt Jenkins, leader of advance party. Arrived at Baccarat, France 0543, 2 Dec 44. Total distance traveled 29 Nov 44 to 2 Dec 44 was 315 miles. No unusual incidents during march.

During the period 2 Dec 44 to 6 Dec 44, the Battalion made preparation to complete maintenance, ammunition loads, and storage of vehicles. Tentative plans formulated for organization of Tank-Infantry Combat Teams. On 4 Dec 44 Battalion organized in to Force, Power, consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 714th, Company A 714th, Company B 56th AIB, and one platoon of Company B, 119th Engineer Battalion. At 1030 4 Dec 44 Battalion CO met with Company and separate platoon commanders. Plans for coordination, communications and materiel available discussed in detail. At 2030 4 Dec 44 Air Alert, no other incidents.

At 0730 5 Dec 44, warning order received from CC-B for march 0500 6 Dec 44 to assembly area vicinity of Helling, France. At 1800 5 Dec 44 Field Order Number 2, Hq CC-B received for march to the vicinity of Helling, France. At 1830 Battalion Commander issued order for movement of Power Force. At 0515 6 Dec 44 left Baccarat, France enroute to Hirschland. At 0556 crossed IP at Donnievre, France, at 0852 6 Dec 44 arrived at Hirschland, France. CP established in abandoned tavern (Emil Schmidts'). Force tactically disposed to north and east of Hirschland, France.

At 0900 7 Dec 44 Battalion alerted for movement to vicinity of Rehling, France. Field Order Number 4 and route of march issued for movement 1000 7 Dec 44. At 1630 S-2 made detailed map reconnaissance of Division's probable zone of action. At 1730 assembled staff and company commanders given map study of probably Division front by S-2.

Battalion alerted to move at 1100 8 Dec 44, order received 1045. Verbal order and overlay issued by Battalion Commander to assemble company and separate platoon commanders, Power Force at 1045, 8 Dec 44. Force, Power left Hirschland 1315, arrived Delingen, France 1730, distance traveled was 14 miles. Troops tactically disposed to east of Delingen.

On 9 Dec 44, periodic checks of camouflage and tactical disposition by Battalion staff. Battalion staff officers reconnoiter front line.

On 11 Dec 44, Division Field Order #3 was received from Combat Command B alerting the Force for movement to the vicinity of Singling, France 0840. The consolidation of Power and Striker Task Forces took place on this date. Company B, 56th AIB was exchanged for Company C, 56th AIB per verbal order of the Commanding Officer, Combat Command B.

At 1113 11 Dec 44, Colonel Bromley, commanding officer, Combat Command B, arrived at Force CP with verbal orders on plan maneuver. At 1326 Lt Col Phelan gave his order for movement of the Force to assembly area east of Singling, France. A meeting of Force Company Commanders and separate platoon leaders was held at this time. Field Order #6 was given verbally by Lt Col Phelan. The Force went under control of Combat Command A at 1400, prior to the attack. At 1400, the Force moved out to assembly area in the vicinity of Guising, France. The Force was in position at 1530. The Force commander returned to the CP at 1830 to meet with the Commanding General of Combat Command A in Rehling, France. At 0100 12 Dec 44, Lt Col Phelan returned from meeting with orders for the attack.

At 0530 12 Dec 44, an attack was launched for high ground east of Guising, France. At 1100, Force was on objective. At this time, reorganization of the Force took place and plans were discussed for continuing the attack. The second attack was launched on Bettviller, France at 1330. At 1530, Bettviller, France was occupied. At 1600, two minor casualties due to artillery and mortar fire.

At 0800 13 Dec 44, the Force consolidated positions in Bettviller, France. The Force Commander left the assembly area in Bettviller at 1200 for meeting with the Commanding General, Combat Command A at Rorhbach, France, returning to the CP in Singling at 1600. The Force CP moved to Bettviller, France at 2030 and was under mortar and artillery fire throughout the night.

At 2100 15 Dec 44, the Assault Gun Platoon, firing indirect fire, destroyed one Mark VI German tank.

At 1700 16 Dec 44 the Task Force reverted to Combat Command B control. Ten civilians turned in at approximately 2400 as deserters from the German Army, but it was later found that they were forced labor deserters and they were returned to civilian status.

The Task Force commander left the CP at 1130 17 Dec 44 to contact General McBride of the 80th Infantry Division, returning at 1339. During the day, periodic reports were received on observation of enemy positions. Three prisoners of war were captured on this date.

The Task Force moved from Bettviller, France at 1230 18 Dec 44 for bivouac area in the vicinity of Montbronn, France and closed in at 1530. At 1800 the Liaison Officer arrived at the CP with orders for the Force to be prepared to move. At 1100 19 Dec 44 the Force moved out for the vicinity of Urbach, France. Closed in bivouac at Mehlingerhoff Farm in the vicinity of Urbach, France.

On 20 Dec 44 the Commanding Officer of Combat Command B, Col Bromley, arrived at the CP to discuss the situation with the Force Commander. At 0620 20 Dec 44 the Force moved in to firing positions. Left Mehlingerhoff Farm at that time. At 0950 the Force made first penetration into Germany, south of Utweiler. At 1600 there were a total of 38 prisoners of war captured.

On 22 Dec 44, Capt Rocky, S-4, was a casualty from a booby trap. One reconnaissance NCO and one infantry platoon leader were casualties from artillery fire.

At 0630 23 Dec 44, Capt Rocky, S-43, died as a result of wounds received from booby traps on 22 Dec 44. At 0915 eight men were wounded from enemy artillery fire. At 0930 four men were killed, four men wounded, and one man killed by burst of enemy 88mm.

On 24 Dec 44, at 1030, Colonel Bromley, Commanding Officer, CC-B, visited the CP to discuss the situation.

During the morning of 25 Dec 44, enemy artillery was active in the vicinity of Bettviller, France and at 1230, one officer and three enlisted men were wounded and one enlisted man killed. One prisoner was taken at 1400.

The Force moved from the vicinity of Urbach, France and assembled in the vicinity of Bettviller, France for moved to Hirschland, France after being relieved by the 100th Infantry Division. Move from Bettviller, France at approximately 0145 enroute to Hirschland, France, arriving there at 0510 26 Dec 44.

On 26 Dec 44, Christmas dinner was served to the Force.

At 1340 27 Dec 44, bombs were dropped in the vicinity of Hirschland, France but it was believed that they were from friendly planes.

On 28 Dec 44, memorial services were held by Chaplain Hopkinson, Combat Command B for men of the Force that were killed in action.

At 0730 29 Dec 44, the Force left Hirschland, France enroute to the vicinity of Mulcey, France, arriving there at 1400.

The period 29 through 31 Dec 44 was spent in resting of troops and maintenance of vehicles and weapons.

(signed)

FREDERICK P. FIELD
Major, Cavalry
Commanding

CONSOLIDATED CASUALTY REPORT FROM 1 DECEMBER 44 – 31 DECEMBER 1944

BATTLE CASUALTIES	50
RETURNED TO DUTY	7
NON-BATTLE CASUALTIES	16
RETURNED TO DUTY	5
KILLED IN ACTION	8
DIED AS RESULT OF WOUNDS	2

ROSTER OF OFFICERS

Lt Col William J Phelan – Commanding
Major Frederick P Field – Executive Officer
Captain Herbert E Magruder – S-2
Captain James M Boone – S-3
Captain John K Shipe – S-4
Captain John E Steurwald – S-5
Captain Morris Schwartz – Comm. Officer
1st Lt Joe C Carlson – S-1
1st Lt George H Hoyt – SSO GRO
1st Lt Arnold C Heath – Liaison Officer
Captain Charles E Jenkins – Unassigned – Now Div GRO

Hq Co

Captain George Harding – Commanding
1st Lt William G Manders – Assault Gun Platoon Leader
2nd Lt Cleo C Taylor – Reconnaissance Platoon Leader
2nd Lt Othal T Parsons – Mortar Platoon Leader
2nd Lt Harold A Sleeman – Maintenance Officer

A Co

Captain Robert W Harrington – Commanding
1st Lt Vernon R Foster – Tank Platoon Leader
1st Lt Charles J McLaughlin – Maintenance Officer
2nd Lt Robert V Kresge – Tank Platoon Leader
2nd Lt Raymond H Schmidt – Tank Platoon Leader

ROSTER OF OFFICERS (Continued)

B Co	1 st Lt James W Leehman – Commanding 1 st Lt Wilman E Goad – Maintenance Officer 1 st Lt Arthur D Slote – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt Roy C Daniels – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt Charles M Hisiger – Tank Platoon Leader	
C Co	Capt Charles C Clayton - Commanding 1 st Lt Ronald S Landau – Maintenance Officer 1 st Damon A Dolce – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt Richard P La France – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt William W Turley – Tank Platoon Leader	(note: first 7 letters of this section of the document are very faint; Co title & ranks may not be correct)
D Co	Capt William H Harridge – Commanding 1 st Lt Louis I Dethloff – Maintenance Officer 1 st Lt John G Cook – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt Ace H Traktman – Tank Platoon Leader 2 nd Lt William J Venama – Tank Platoon Leader	(note: first 7 letters of this section of the document are very faint; Co title & ranks may not be correct)
Service Co	1 st Lt Robert S Kelly – Commanding 2 nd Lt Christopher T Garvey – Transportation Officer 2 nd Lt Casimir F Grachewakin – Maintenance Officer CWO Joseph T Collins – Personnel Officer WOJG Charles D Frazier – Asst Battalion Motor Officer WOJG Harold M Frost – Asst Battalion Supply Officer	

HEADQUARTERS
714TH TANK BATTALION
Tennessee Maneuver Area

16 November 1943

GENERAL ORDER)
:
NUMBER 2)

1. The following appointments to the staff of this Headquarters are announced:

Executive. Major AMEL F. KISZONAK (0291582).

Adjutant. (S-1) 2nd Lt DAN M. BECKETT (01015415).

Intelligence Officer. (S-2) Capt WILLIAM F. WRIGHT (0303557).

Plans and Training Officer. (S-3) Major ORIN W. HERTZ (0242421).

Supply Officer. (S-4) Capt MICHAEL ROCKY (0481012)

(signed)

JAMES W. SNEE
Lt Colonel, Cavalry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
714TH TANK BATTALION
Tennessee Maneuver Area

18 November 1943

GENERAL ORDERS)

:
NUMBER 3)

MOVEMENT OF 714TH TANK BATTALION TO FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

1. The 714th Tank Battalion is relieved from permanent station Camp Campbell, Ky and Temporary Station Tennessee Maneuver Area and is assigned to permanent Station Fort Jackson, SC.

2. This movement will be made in accordance with provisions of Letter, Hq Second Army, file A G 370.5-16 (GNMBF) dated 22 Sept 1943, Subject: "Instructions Governing Domestic Troop Movements" and Par 6, SO No. 211 Maneuver Director Hq Second Army, dated 18 November 1943.

a. WP o/a 18 Nov 1943.

b. Movement will be by motor supplemented by necessary rail T.

c. Entraining point for elements moving by rail: Carthage Junction, Tenn.

d. Personnel not required to accompany troops are authorized TPA under provisions of Par 1j, AR 35-4820, 19 Sept 1942.

e. Movement will be made with all equipment on hand as authorized by appropriate T/E, less equipment loaned for use while in Tenn Maneuver Area.

f. Upon arrival at new Station, Battalion is relieved for assignment XX Corps and from control Maneuver Director Hq Second Army and is assigned to XII Corps.

3. TDN 1-5200 P 431, 433-02, 03, 04, 05, 07, 08 A 212/40425.

By order of Lt Col SNEE:

DAN M. BECKETT
2nd Lt Inf.
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

(signed)
DAN M. BECKETT
2nd Lt Inf.
Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS
714TH TANK BATTALION
Fort Jackson, S.C.

19 November 1943

GENERAL ORDERS)

:
NUMBER 4)

REORGANIZATION AND REDESIGNATION, 714TH TANK BATTALION

1. This Battalion was Reorganized and Redesignated effective 11 November 1943. The old and new designations are as shown below. (Auth: Ltr, Hq AGF, File 320.2/32 (Armd Divs) (C) Subject: "Reorganization of Armed Divisions," dated 15 Sept 1943 and G.O. No. 36 Hq 12th Armed Division, dated 11 Nov 1943.

OLD DESIGN ATION

Hq 3rd Bn, 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Hq Co 3rd Bn, 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Co "G" 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Co "H" 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Co "I" 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Hq & Hq Co 1st Bn 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div
Med Det 44th Armd Regt, 12th Armd Div

NEW DESIGNATION

Hq 714th Tk Bn
Hq Co 714th Tk Bn
Co "A" 714th Tk Bn
Co "B" 714th Tk Bn
Co "C" 714th Tk Bn
Co "D" 714th Tk Bn
Med Det 714th Tk Bn

By order of Lt Colonel SNEE

DAN M. BECKETT
2nd Lt Inf.
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

(signed)
DAN M. BECKETT
2nd Lt Inf.
Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS
714TH TANK BATTALION
FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

22 December 1943 JWS/1a

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 6)

1. Under provisions of AR 600-20, the undersigned hereby reassumes command.

JAMES W. SNEE
Lt Col, Cav.