

24 January 1945

Subject: Battalion History for the Period 1 July 1944 to 31 July 1944.

To : The Adjutant General
Washington 25, D. C.
(ATTENTION: Historical Section)

The following history of this organization is hereby submitted pursuant to provisions of par 10 (c) (5), AR 345-105.

- a. Unit - no change.
- b. Changes in organization - no change.
- c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted:

(1) At beginning of period, 1 July 1944:

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Officers | 36 |
| Warrant Officer | 1 |
| Enlisted men | 633 |

(2) Net Increase For Month:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Officers | 0 |
| Warrant Officer | 0 |
| Enlisted men | 0 |

(3) Net Decrease For Month:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Officers | 1 |
| Warrant Officer | 0 |
| Enlisted Men | 18 |

(4) At End of Period:

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Officers | 35 |
| Warrant Officer | 1 |
| Enlisted men | 615 |

d. Stations of Unit or Parts Thereof:

Station: UNKLEHOFF, ENGLAND

At beginning of period.
Date of departure: 5 July 1944.

UTAH BEACH - HARVILLE LA PLAQUE, FRANCE

Date of arrival: 11 July 1944.
Date of departure: 15 July 1944.

LA MAYE D'OUTRE (vicinity) FRANCE

Date of arrival: 15 July 1944.
Date of departure: 28 July 1944.

VALLEY, FRANCE

Date of arrival: 28 July 1944.
Date of departure: 30 31 July 1944.

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BOUREY, FRANCE

Date of arrival: 31 July 1944.

Date of departure: to end of period.

e. Marches.

- (1) Purpose: To move the battalion to overseas station.
- (2) Length of Daily March: Not applicable.
- (3) Points between which marched, with dates:
battalion left HUNGERFORD, ENGLAND on 5 July 1944 for embarkation at SOUTH HAMPTON, ENGLAND, left SOUTH HAMPTON and arrived at UTAH BEACH, FRANCE 11 July 1944 and proceeded to ST SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE, FRANCE, a distance of 24 miles. Left ST SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE 12 July 1944 and proceeded to ST SAUVEUR DE PIERRE PONT, a distance of 4 miles, on 13 July 1944. Left ST SAUVEUR DE PIERRE PONT 13 July 1944 arrived at ST NICHOLAS DE PIERRE PONT, FRANCE. Left ST NICHOLAS DE PIERRE PONT, arrived in bivouac approximately 3 miles south of LA HAYE DU HUIITS, a total distance of approximately 128 miles. On 28 July 1944, left LA HAYE DU HUIITS, FRANCE proceeded via motor convoy south, by-passing LESSAY, to PERLETS ST SAUVEUR-LENDELIN. Thence to COUTANCES then to VESLLEY, FRANCE. On July 31 the unit proceeded to BOUREY, FRANCE, a distance of approximately 73 miles. This marked the end of the period.

f. Campaigns: NORTHERN FRANCE

g. Battles: THE NORMANDY BREAKTHROUGH

(1) Narrative account of action

(a) The enemy

1. The G-2 estimated the opposing force between the VIER river and the ocean to consist of approximately 30,000 enemy troops. These forces were prepared to defend the area south of the AY river. Enemy defenses consisted of well entrenched positions manned by automatic weapons and sufficient artillery of both anti-tank and long ranged weapons. No special weapons were used and enemy morale was reported to be poor.
2. Enemy defenses were well manned with maximum use being made of natural obstacles, terrain, mines, demolitions, and automatic weapons.
3. Disposition of enemy units between the VIER river and the ocean were as follows: 91st, 243rd, 77th, 353rd, 265th Infantry divisions and 275th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd, 17th, and 30th Panzer divisions and the 5th Parachute Division and 6th Parachute Regiment. Enemy defended stubbornly and used only local counter-attacks against friendly troops who succeeded in penetrating beyond the AY river. Armor in the self-propelled guns and light artillery was used in some strength. enemy air was negligible.
4. No Prisoners of War.

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(b) elements affecting action.

1. Enemy reconnaissance consisted of strong patrols that crossed the river to obtain information and some aerial reconnaissance, the majority of which was used at night.
2. Attitude of civilian population was excellent and a large portion of intelligence and help was secured from civilian sources including the R.F.I.
3. Nature of terrain consisted of rolling hills and areas subdivided into fields bordered by thick hedgerows. Terrain in the vicinity of the AY river was low, flat, and marshy gradually broadening into a plain beyond.

(c)

1. MISSION

Unit assigned First U S Army for assignment as needed.

Further attached by companies as follows:

Co A - 121st Infantry Regiment

Co B - 15th Infantry Regiment

Co C - 8th Div Arty

Supporting units - none.

Battalion Forward CP with company elements not directly attached to division units moved to the following successive positions in the Normandy Peninsula:

| <u>PLACE</u> | <u>COORDINATES</u> | <u>DATES</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ST SAUVUR DE PIERRE PONT | 137 - 894 | 12-13 July 44 |
| ST NICOLAS DE PIERRE PONT | 155 - 875 | 13-15 July 44 |
| LES HUITZ RUALFS | 221 - 780 | 15-28 July 44 |
| 259738 | | 28-29 July 44 |
| LA RONDEMAIYE | 248 - 656 | 29-31 July 44 |
| COINTRIERES | 246 - 502 | 31 July 01 August |

For Battalion Rear CP see par d (stations)

2. Mission: To operate in close support of infantry, using direct fire to destroy enemy strong points, pillboxes etc. in the path of the advance.

Battalion participated in all phases of action up to and including 26 July 1944 in which time all elements participated in operation "COBRA". All units pushed forward in the advance of the division in pursuit of enemy forces which retreated south of LES AY, FORTING line beyond COINTRIERES to end of report period. On 31 July 1944 Battalion was assigned mission of meeting any enemy thrust in the division sector. Company "B" returned to Battalion control.

Narrative of Action:

The Unit arrived in Normandy, France, in four groups, on 11, 12 and 13 July 1944, a portion of Reconnaissance Company, headquarters company, and Company "C" in one group, Company "A" in another, Company "B" and Battalion headquarters in a third, and the balance of Reconnaissance Company in the fourth, each on a separate LST. Landing was made on "UTAH" beach, near VARSVILLE SUR MER. The Unit (less elements of Reconnaissance Company) assembled and moved on 12 July 1944 to a point in vicinity of ST SAUVUR LE VICOMTE where they were joined by the balance of Reconnaissance Company. The Battalion was placed in VIII Corps reserve under First Army. On 13 July 1944 Battalion travelled to a bivouac near ST SAUVUR DE PIERRE PONT. All officers except Lt LASKI observed operations of 803 TD BN (attached to 8th Inf Div) on 14 July 1944 and morning of 15 July. The Unit was ordered into action upon attachment to 8th Inf Div., replacing 803 TD BN, on 15 July and moved

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into positions on a line about three miles south of LA HAYE DU RUIS. Company "A" was attached to 121st Regiment, company "B" to 13th and company "C" was held under battalion control to deliver indirect fire through Division Artillery. Later company "C" was attached to 20th Regiment and these attachments continued intermittently throughout the period with one company under battalion control on artillery missions and two in infantry close support and anti-tank roles under Regimental control. Elements of Reconnaissance Company operated both as a company unit and with a platoon attached to each close support company. No contact except by patrols and through delivery of artillery fire was made by battalion until 26 July, and all elements were subjected, until that date, to sporadic fire from 88mm guns and mortars. Personnel losses are shown on attached report. All elements participated in operation "COBRA" on and following 260530 July 1944, with company "B" firing prearranged missions for Division Artillery and companies "A" and "C" in close support. All units pushed forward in the advance of the Division in pursuit of enemy forces which continued south of LESNOY, PERLERS line beyond OULFAUCES to end of the report period. Casualty report indicate personnel losses in the engagement. Major materiel losses are listed on S-4 report. Running account of battalion activity appears in copy of Journal (from which inconsequential entries have been deleted).

3. Special weapons used: None
Communications: Normal FM radio communication plus special telephone lines to the individual companies were used.
4. Assistance from supporting artillery and engineers: Artillery supplied supporting preparation fire prior to attack and engineers cleared roads to objectives.
5. Use of bayonets, grenades, flame throwers, etc.: No comment.
6. Supply and evacuation: Excellent.
- h. Commanding officers in important engagements:
Commanding officer, 644th TD Bn, Lt Colonel SPRAIN F. SARAH, JR
Commanding officer, Company Headquarters, Capt JAMES M. CARPENTER
Commanding officer, Company "A", Capt HENRY A. CARTON, JR
Commanding officer, Company "B", Capt CARL H. HIGGEBORN
Commanding officer, Company "C", Capt ELMER S. BEFORUS
Commanding officer, Company Hcn, Capt WELDON W. WOLKE, JR
- i. Losses in action: See attached casualty list.
- j. Members distinguishing themselves in action: See attached list.
- k.

Vincent C. Brantley

Tenth of July 1944

i. **WOUNDED IN ACTION - OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN**

1. Engagement.

The Normandy Breakthrough

Names.

Sgt Alfred W Sienkiewicz, 32183506 (WIA)
Sgt William V Brady, 32183522 (WIA)
Sgt Kenneth W Gehrke, 35085037 (WIA)
Tec 4 Robert I Hanley, 32063513 (WIA)
Tec 4 Frank B Gage, 39685173 (WIA)
Cpl Alexander Opalinski, 39117575 (WIA)
Cpl Allan J Croshaw, 32066527 (WIA)
Pfc Marvin F Cockrell, 34153463 (WIA)
Pfc Raymond P Cotter, 32005538 (WIA)
Pfc George A Daniels, 32693909 (WIA)
Pvt James R Summers, 34049191 (WIA)
Pvt Jack W Holt, 39859306 (WIA)
Pvt Charles T Staszewski, 20333733 (WIA)

3. Killed in action.

Two (2) Enlisted Men

4. Wounded in action.

Eleven (11) Enlisted Men.

5. Missing in action.

None

6. Taken prisoner.

None

j. **WOUNDED AND PRESENT, OFFICERS WHO HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN ACTION**

1. Engagement: The Normandy Breakthrough

2. Dates:

None

3. Act:

None

4. Award:

None