

S-E-C-R-E-T

HEADQUARTERS 17TH TANK BATTALION

APO 257, U. S. Army
22 August 1944

PART 1

Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period from 11 August, 1944 to 20 August, 1944,

The 17th Tank Battalion under the control of Combat Command Reserve landed on the Utah beach in France on 11 August, 1944. From the beach the Battalion marched to La Haye Du Puits, arriving there at 1245 on the eleventh of August, 1944 and leaving at 2020 on the same date and marching to Lundean, arriving there at 0545 12 August, 1944.

The Battalion remained in Lundean until 1130 and then marched on to St. Suzanne arriving there at 0730 on 13 August, 1944.

The Battalion went into an assembly position at St. Suzanne, refueled and performed first echelon maintenance. The Battalion moved out of St. Suzanne at 1930 13 August, 1944 as an element of Combat Command Reserve.

The Battalion went into an assembly position at Cherreau just east of La Ferte Bernard at 0530, 14 August, 1944 and remained there until 1430 on the same date at which time we moved forward as an element of Combat Command Reserve. The Corps objective on this date was the Seine River Line. The 7th Armored Division was to attack in three columns with Combat Command Reserve in the center attacking along the route shown on overlay accompanying Division Field Order #2, 141000 August, 1944. The Battalion moved out at 1430 to the north east along Highway N 23 toward Mantes the Combat Command Reserve objective. Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion was the advance Guard for Combat Command Reserve on this operation, and it was preceded by elements of the 87th Reconnaissance whose mission was to screen the advance of the Division.

Up to this date the 17th Tank Battalion had not had any contact whatever with the enemy. However, about 1730 on 14 August, 1944, the Battalion was halted behind elements of the 87th Reconnaissance Battalion at a point on Highway N 23 just south of La Loupe. The Reconnaissance element reported a mine field on our route south of La Loupe, some enemy infantry, number undetermined, and an enemy tank in the vicinity of La Loupe. One platoon of Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion was called forward by the Reconnaissance to assist in clearing our route of advance. The tanks from Company "D" located the enemy tank and fired on it. The light tanks then called a platoon of Medium tanks forward to assist them. However, by the time the medium tanks reached their position, it was so dark that they could not observe the enemy tank.

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HEADQUARTERS 17TH TANK BATTALION
APO #257, U.S. ARMY

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COMBAT HISTORY OF THE 17TH TANK BATTALION FOR THE PERIOD
11 AUGUST 1944 THROUGH 31 AUGUST 1944

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Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period from 11 August, 1944 to 20 August, 1944 continued.

The Reconnaissance units and our advance guard held the position south of La Loupe for the remainder of the night. The other elements of the 17th Tank Battalion and Combat Command Reserve took up local security and halted in place along the route of advance for the night. During the night the forward elements of the 17th Tank Battalion were fired upon by a few snipers, number undetermined, but the Battalion did not suffer any casualties. During the early morning of 15 August, 1944 the Reconnaissance unit and a detachment of Engineers removed the mines, and by this time all enemy resistance had been removed. The Battalion resumed the move to the north east at 1000, 15 August, 1944, and passed through La Loupe at 1045 and continued moving north east on Highway N 828. At 1105 a medium tank platoon from Company "C" of the 17th Tank Battalion was ordered to move forward and take up the position of the point of the advance guard. The point reached the town of Belhomert at 1106 and continued mission. The tanks in the point sighted an enemy ammunition truck just short of Digny, fired on it and reported several direct hits. The truck was destroyed, and it is not known whether any personnel was killed as the truck was halted when fired upon. The column halted at Digny at 1215 and resumed march at 1535. Column passed through Chateaneuf at 2100 and bivouacked in assembly area in vicinity of Chene-Chenu.

The 17th Tank Battalion resumed the advance at 0645 16 August, 1944 and passed through Nogent at 1010. Six enemy aircraft strafed the column at 1030 at a point two miles north east of Coulombs, but no damage was reported. Combat Command Reserve went into an assembly position in the vicinity of Faverolles at 1100.

While in the assembly area at Faverolles, Combat Command Reserve received orders to take the town of Epernon and secure all approaches to the town to insure safe passage of Combat Command "A" through the town. For this mission Combat Command Reserve had the 17th Tank Battalion and Company "A" of the 33d Engineers. The 17th Tank Battalion moved out of the assembly area on this mission at 1610. The march to Epernon along G. C. 80 and G. C. 107 was uneventful except for the fact that as the 17th Tank Battalion passed through the 489th Field Artillery Assembly Area, both units thought that the enemy was in the vicinity and a few shots were exchanged, however, no damage was incurred. In formulating the plan for accomplishing this mission the Battalion Commander gave each tank company a specific objective within the town. The plan was for the Battalion to enter the city and then for each company to fan out and secure the different approaches to the city. We entered Epernon at 1820, and the companies went to their assigned positions. We were confronted by scattered sniper fire upon entering the town, but our mission was accomplished with only one casualty. One sergeant from Company "D" was wounded in the knee by small arm fire, but after receiving medical aid, he remained in action. Six German soldiers surrendered almost immediately after our first element was in the town, and they were turned over to the Division Military Police. The mission was accomplished and Combat Command "A" moved through the town.

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Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period from 11 August, 1944 to 20 August, 1944 (Continued).

Combat Command Reserve was composed of the 17th Tank Battalion and Company "A" of the 33d Engineers. These two units of Combat Command Reserve continued to hold the town of Epernon throughout the day of 17 August, 1944. During this period Company "B" of the 17th Tank Battalion and a platoon of Company "A", 33d Engineers, drew some sniper fire at the position that they were holding which was the approach to Epernon at Hanches, Highways N 10 and I C 328. They were unable to determine the strength of the enemy opposing them. Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion, who established a block in the vicinity of La Louorerex, reported sniper fire and opposition of undetermined strength. A medium tank platoon from Company "A" was sent to Houx to investigate a reported enemy action at that point, but did not contact the enemy in strength, only drawing a few rounds of sniper fire.

Several unidentified enemy planes were over our trains area at 1730 on 17 August, 1944, but they did not fire on the area.

An investigation revealed that an abandoned building just on the north edge of the trains assembly area had a large number of unexploded enemy aerial bombs in it. Apparently the building had been used in manufacturing the bombs. This building is located between Highways I C 122 and G C 28.

At ~~1000~~ 18 August, 1944, Combat Command Reserve received an order from Combat Command "A" directing that a task force be taken to Rambouillet to determine the strength of the enemy there and if possible, the enemy holding that city. The Combat Command Reserve Commander took the 17th Tank Battalion minus Company "A" with other elements of his command and formed the task force to accomplish the mission. The plan was to attack the city with two forces, one force composed of Company "C" of the 17th Tank Battalion, one Reconnaissance Platoon from 814th Tank Destroyer and one Platoon of 814th Tank Destroyers and a Platoon of Engineers from Company "B" of the 33d Engineers, were to attack straight into town along Highway N 10, while a second force composed of Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion, one Reconnaissance Platoon from 814th Tank Destroyers, and one Platoon from Company "A" of the 33d Engineers, were to circle to the left or north around the Park and hit the town from the north. The attack was started as planned at ~~1100~~ and progressed satisfactorily until 1530 at which time Combat Command Reserve was ordered to abandon the attack and return to Epernon. During the operation at Rambouillet the force which was attacking along Highway N. 10 was fired on by anti tank guns and small arms. One gun was identified as an 88, but none of our tanks were hit. The tanks were withdrawn and the assault guns dropped 80 rounds of 105's on the gun positions. An observer from the Reconnaissance Unit stated that the target area was hit several times, but since we were directed to withdraw, we were unable to verify definitely that the guns were knocked out. This force also ran into a road block and some mines. It is known that Company "C" of the 17th Tank Battalion killed one German sniper, and it is thought that the 88 MM gun and crew were destroyed by the assault gun platoon. The elements of the 17th Tank Battalion in this force did not have any casualties in men or equipment.

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The force which flanked to the left encountered heavy enemy opposition after they had circled to the north and started back into town. They ran into a position where large trees had been felled across each other and ditches approximately three feet wide and four feet deep had been dug behind them. One anti-tank gun position was located and fired on. The Tank Destroyers knocked out one enemy tank, believed to be a tank of French manufacture. During this operation two platoon leaders and the tank commanders from the two forward platoons of Company "D", 17th Tank Battalion, went forward on a dismounted Reconnaissance, and Lieutenant Fairweather, one of the platoon leaders, was killed by machine gun fire. Lieutenant Fairweather's body was not recovered because it could not be brought in without endangering the lives of several other men. The Reconnaissance element from the 814th Tank Destroyer and the officers in Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion report that they saw 25 or 30 Germans go into a building which they later placed heavy 37 and 75MM fire on. It is believed that many of the Germans were killed, but this was not verified because of our withdrawal. No vehicles of the 17th Tank Battalion were lost as a result of this action.

The Battalion reached the original assembly area south of Epernon at 1730 and reorganized and moved out to the west at 2005. The Battalion marched on Highway N 10 through Hanches to Maintenon, to GC 26 and Le Paige to vicinity of Chene-Chenois closing in bivouac at 2130. The Battalion did not encounter any enemy opposition on this march. The Battalion remained in this bivouac area until 0840, 19 August, 1944. At 0820, while still in the bivouac area, an enemy ME 109 flew low over the area and was shot down by 17th Tank Battalion antiaircraft fire. The plane fell only a short distance from the area. At 0840 the Battalion started moving to an assembly area on IC 308 just west of Le Boullay-Mivoie and closed in this area at 1045. This march was uneventful with no enemy activity. The Battalion remained in this area until 0700, 21 August, 1944.

Jack Howison
JACK HOWISON
Captain, Infantry
Unit Historian

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HEADQUARTERS 17TH TANK BATTALION
APO 257, U. S. ARMY

3 September 1944.

PART 2

Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period 20 August 1944 through 31 August 1944.

On the 20th of August 1944 the 17th Tank Battalion, still under CCR, was in an assembly area on IC 308 just west of Le Boullay-Mivoye. The Battalion was inactive throughout the day and night of 20-21 August, with the exception that Co "A" of the 17th was sent to the North East along IC 380 at 1130, 20 August 44 to join a force commanded by Lt Col King which was to investigate reported enemy activity in that vicinity. Company "A" remained under Lt Col Kings command until late that afternoon when it was released and returned to the Bn. Bivouac area at Le Boullay-Mivoye. Co "A" did not contact the enemy on this mission and did not have any vehicular or personnel casualties.

During the night of 20-21 August 1944, the 17th Tank Bn received an order from CCR to attach as an element of CCR in the direction of Melun with the mission of crossing the Seine River at Melun and establishing a bridgehead on the East side of the River at that point. For this mission CCR was composed of the 17th Tank Bn, 38th Inf (one company), the 440th Field Artillery, and elements of the 814th Tank Destroyer Bn, and one company from the 33d Engineer Bn. Major T. W. DAILEY, Ex Officer of the 17th was placed in command of the advance guard by the commanding officer of CCR. The advance guard was composed of one rcn platoon from the 814th T.D. Bn, Co C, 17th Tank Bn and one platoon of the 33d Engineer Bn, the 17th Tank Bn I & R platoon, Co "B" of the 38th Inf Bn, one battery of 440th FA Bn, and one Platoon from the 814th TD Bn.

The point of the advance Guard crossed the I.P. at 0715, 21 August 1944 and hit the town of Bougainval at 0745. CCR continued the advance along the route -- Maintenon, Hanches, Epernon, Gas, Gallardon, arriving at this town at 0950. At 1005 the bn received report from 87th Rcn unit that there were Germans of undetermined strength in Dourdan and at 1015 received report from French through Rcn element that there were mines and a road block in Ablis. A rcn of the town was made and a route or bypass around the town was located and the advance was continued. At 1155 the Bn received a report from the 87th Rcn who was in front of the CCR advance guard that there were about 40 Germans and an undetermined number of A.T. guns in Dourdan. At this time our column was halted on the road waiting for the Rcn elements in front to move on. The rcn also reported mine fields in edge of town covered by A.T. guns and we were warned to expect mines along shoulders of road. At 1350 the 87th Rcn reported that they were drawing small arms fire and that they were returning fire with small arms and 37mm's. At 1535 we received report that Rcn had taken some prisoners. By 1750 the resistance had been overcome by the Rcn and the advance was resumed. The 17th Tank Bn did not have any casualties as a result of the action at Dourdan. Our Rcn element ran into resistance of undetermined strength in the vicinity of Montfrix and the whole

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CCR pulled off the road into an assembly area at 2000 to take up defensive measures for the night. The 17th Tank Bn was closed in the assembly area at in vicinity of Montfrix at 2220.

There was some enemy activity in and around the assembly area at Montfrix throughout the night of 21-22 August 44. The 440th FA, one of the elements of CCR, captured some prisoners during the night and it was reported that the Germans laid a mine field across the road to our rear or between our assembly area and the town of Dourdan, however, this was not confirmed. The 17th Tank Bn did not have any casualties during this period.

At 0600, 22 Aug 44, the advance guard, still under command of Major Dailey, moved out of the assembly area to continue the mission to Melun. The advance continued rather slowly with our advance guard right behind the rcn element and being stopped continuously because the rcn element could not advance fast enough. At 0900 our unit was in Velleconin. At 0945 the rcn element reported that two A.T. guns were holding up the advance. Prior to this time Major Dailey had attached one platoon of medium tanks to the 87th Rcn Company who was in front of the advance guard to support the rcn company. This support platoon was from Company "A" of the 17th Tank Bn and was commanded by Lt Carpenter. By 1030 the main body had reached Chauffour-Les-Etrechy. At 1105 forward elements reported enemy tanks and Tank Destroyers were requested to come forward. At 1110 the Commanding General of the 7th Armd Div ordered CCR to push ahead vigorously and to use artillery if necessary. At 1125 the tanks who were supporting the rcn encountered some dismounted enemy infantry and fired on them. At 1125 the Commanding General ordered that the Command form multiple columns and push ahead. At 1135 Lt Carpenter's medium tank platoon reported that the dismounted resistance had been wiped out. From this point Lt Carpenter with his medium tank platoon preceded the 87th Rcn company in other words he continued the advance without any rcn in front of him. The main body passed through Villeneuve-sur-Auvers at 1210. At this time the point of the advance guard was past the town of Boissy-le-Cutte. Lt Carpenter's platoon, supported by one platoon from Company "C" of the 17th Tank Bn knocked out one A.T. gun in vicinity of La Ferte Alais. At 1235 the point composed of Lt Carpenter and the element from Company "C" knocked out one German car and at 1240 the point knocked out 3 A.T. guns, killing at least 15 Germans and also knocked out a truck. The advance through La Ferte Alais was continued rapidly and at Lt Carpenter reported that he took the wrong route in La Ferte Alais and while on the wrong route knocked out 5 A.T. guns and at least 40 Germans. Lt Carpenter was back on the correct route by 1315 and reported that in addition to the A.T. guns, two German automobiles had been knocked out. The main body was in Cerny at 1322 and Montmirault at 1325 and passed through La Ferte Alais at 1400. The main body received machine gun fire and rifle fire from dismounted troops along Highway GC 83 just out of La Ferte Alais, however, no one was hurt.

Lt Carpenter and Captain George, who commands Company "C" of the 17th Tank Bn, as well as all of the men in Lt Carpenter's platoon and Captain George's Company, did a brilliant job in pushing through the resistance at La Ferte Alais and their work was recognized and appreciated by everyone who had knowledge of it. During this encounter with the enemy the 17th Tank Bn did not have any casualties.

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The point drew some fire in Soisy but they sprayed the position with machine gun fire and continued on the mission. The Infantry also drew fire and returned it in Soisy and estimated the enemy strength at 40 men.

The point of the advance guard knocked out a German motorcycle at 1515 and reported several Germans along the road who wanted to surrender, however, did not stop to pick them up because of the desire to advance rapidly.

Main body passed through St Sauveur at 1540 and Orgenoy at 1555.

In entering the town of Melun, Capt George reported knocking out two German motorcycles and one German peep. Capt George was in the outskirts of the town of Melun at 1550 where he was ordered ~~to~~ by CCR Commander to stand by for further orders.

By 1630 we had learned from the French and by observation that the road into town was defended by mines, A.T. guns, small electrically controlled tanks, and small arms. We had established the fact that there was a strong point at an underpass about 500 yards to the front of Capt George's company, this point was defended by at least two A.T. guns, machine guns, at least two electrically controlled tanks or "beetle bombs", and mines. At 1710 Captain George took four prisoners.

At 1855 the Infantry was sent forward to try to clear out the resistance at the underpass but were pinned down by machine guns and rifle fire and the tanks were sent forward to help the Infantry get out.

Capt George reported one tank knocked out by enemy fire at 1915. Lt Shilkroot and two of the tank crew escaped but the tank caught fire and the gunner and radio operator did not get out of the tank, Cpl Fraelich and Pvt Hubbard. Lt Shilkroot was wounded but not critically.

Service Co of the 17th Tank Bn captured five prisoners, a maintenance vehicle and a passenger car late in the afternoon of the 22d of August.

Two German trucks approached our column on the left at 1700 just out of Melun and fired on us. The column was halted along the road in the outskirts of Melun and Company "A" was fired on by what was thought to be a German 88mm A.T. gun. Capt Pier, commanding Co "A", sent out a platoon to get the German gun but they failed to locate it.

The CCR Commander ordered that we would push on through the town even though darkness had come. He had artillery fire placed on the underpass and reorganized his assault force. The tanks were to advance with support of Inf. Company "B" of the 17th Tank Bn was to lead the assault. However the attack was stopped again at 2230 at the underpass.

The column remained in its position along the road during the remainder of the night.

During the night terrific explosions occurred through the town. These explosions, we learned later, were the Germans blowing the Highway bridges over the river at this point.

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Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period 20 August 1944 through 31 August 1944.

The OOR commanding officer called a unit commanders meeting at 0800, 23 August 1944 where it was decided to make a two pronged attack on the city. The plan was for Company "D" of the 17th Tank Bn to circle to the left and come back along the river. This company was to support Co "B" of the 38th Inf, there was also a platoon of Engineers and some T.D.'s in this force. The main attack was to be made along the main road into the town by Company "B" of the 17th supported by a company of Inf, some Engineers and Tank Destroyers.

This attack was started at 1500 and one tank from Company "B", 17th Tank Bn was knocked out by a mine about 500 yards this side of the underpass. Engineers went forward and cleared mines and Capt Pilot and his Company "B" passed under the underpass at 1630. There was lots of firing on the part of Co "B" of the 17th and the Inf before the underpass was cleared but the tank company didn't have any casualties except those lost when the tank was knocked out by the mine.

At 1615 Company A of the 17th which was still on the outskirts of the town was fired on by enemy artillery or 80mm's. He returned the fire and it ceased.

The movement of the force which went to the left was slow because the Inf was pinned down by machine gun and rifle fire from across the river. Capt Neil reported a possible A.T. gun location in a factory building on this side of the river. The Inf suffered some casualties in this operation but Company "D" of the 17th only had one man slightly wounded, this man was Tec 4 Pallant who got some shaprnel in his right arm. This force was under small arm fire and some A.T. gun fire continously and the light tanks fired on A.T. gun positions and at machine gun and sniper positions.

Company B reached the river at 1700 and found that the bridge was blown. The tanks were deployed along the river to support the Inf and Engrs while they crossed the river.

All of the 17th Tank Bn was ordered to withdraw from the town at 2000 and to go into an assembly position on the outskirts of the town. The withdrawal was ordered because the town had not been cleared and the tanks were so vulnerable to an attack in the town at night. All of the elements of the 17th withdrew to an assembly position just outside of the town and remained there for the night. There was a terrific rainstorm during the night so the men got very little rest.

During the afternoon of the 23rd of Aug. Co A of the 17th Tank Bn had three casualties: Sgt Pedersen, slightly wounded, Sgt Nixon, seriously wounded and later died, S/Sgt Seymour, slightly wounded. Company B had Sgt. Polavich evacuated, battle fatigue.

At 0800 on 24th Aug 1944 the 17th Tank Bn, less trains, moved back into the town of Melun with the mission of supporting the Inf and Engrs from the southwest side of town the river. ~~During-the-day~~ while they formed a bridge-head on the other side of the river. During the day the Battalion drew AT fire, machine gun fire, and mortar fire from the other side of the river, and the trains were fired on by mortars. In the afternoon a few rounds of artillery

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fell in the Battalion area. This was the first time that the Battalion had been under artillery fire so it was quite an experience. During the day and the following night tank companies held positions along the river line while the Light Tank Company patrolled the town on our side of the river. Considering the amount of fire that was placed on the Battalion during the day and night of the 24th and 25th of August, 1944, we were fortunate that we did not incur any more casualties than the following: "B" Company Sergeants Wuellner and Willoughby who were seriously wounded and evacuated.

The Battalion remained in the town during the night of the 24th and 25th of August, 1944, and departed at 1245 on the 25th of August, 1944 with the mission of relieving CCA at Tilly of holding the bridgehead at that point. The Battalion followed the route of ~~2~~ Vasves, Penthierry, and Tilly and crossed the Seine River on the pontoon bridge just east of Tilly. The Battalion established a CP in the vicinity of Bois de St Assize. Company "C" was sent to Nandy to establish a block at that point, Company "B" blocked the roads at Cesson ad Vert-St Denis, Company "D" established a block between Cesson and Savigny le Temple, and Company "A" blocked the approaches along the river to the South in the vicinity of Boissise-la-Bertrand. The Battalion did not contact the enemy during this operation. However, prior to leaving Melun on this date, Tec 5 grade De Carlo, a member of the Medical Detachment, was wounded in the leg and evacuated. The Battalion also received the following replacements on 25 August, 1944: Company "B" Pvts. Hogan, Warm, and Hardin; Company "D" 2d Lt Ganfield and Pvt. True.

In connection with the operations of the 17th Tank Battalion at Melun, we failed to mention the splendid work which was done by the Medical Detachment of the 17th Tank Battalion. Lt. Wheeler and his group of aid men did an excellent job in assisting in the evacuation of the wounded infantrymen at the bridge at Melun. This work was done under fire, and at this time Tec 5 grade De Carlo was wounded and Lt Wheeler received a slight wound of the hand.

During the night of the 25th and 26th of August, 1944, CCR under which the 17th Tank Battalion was operating, was ordered to go back across the Seine and proceed to Fontainebleau on the east side of the Seine River at that point. Lt. Colonel Wemple was commended very highly for the manner in which he moved his Battalion back across the Seine at Tilly. This crossing was very congested and Lt. Colonel Wemple showed excellent control and initiative in getting the Battalion back across the River. The Battalion started moving out of the area at Boise de St. Assize at 0715 on 26 August, 1944 moved into an assembly position at Villiers where the Battalion was reassigned reorganized. At 1625 the Battalion left the assembly area at Villiers where for the advance to Fontainebleau. The Battalion crossed the Seine River at Fontainebleau about 1700 and closed in an assembly area near the village of Samoreau at 1815. The Battalion did not contact the enemy during this operation and remained in the assembly area during the night of the 26th and 27th of August, 1944.

The Battalion departed from the assembly position at Samoreau at 0700, 27 August, 1944 and proceeded along the route of Vulaines, Hericy, Chartrettes, Melun, Chatillon, Chappelle, arriving in this vicinity at 1020 and going into an assembly position here.

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Subject: Combat History of the 17th Tank Battalion for the period of 20 August, 1944 through 31 August, 1944 (Continued).

At 1420, 27 August, 1944, CCR issued an order breaking the command into three forces, each of which was to proceed to Verdun along different routes. This order was in compliance with Division Field Order #8. One force was to follow Route A, one Route E, and one Route F. The 17th Tank Battalion was broken down for this operation in the following manner: Task force A which was commanded by Lt. Colonel Wemple, was composed of Company "A", 17th Tank Battalion, Company "A", 38th Armored Infantry, Battery "C" of the 440th Field Artillery, one platoon of Engineers from the 33d Engineers, one platoon of 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 17th Tank Battalion. This force A was to follow route A. Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion was assigned to Task Force E which was commanded by Major Rankin, Company "C" of the 17th Tank Battalion was assigned to Task Force F which was commanded by Lt. Colonel Keeler. The 17th Tank Battalion, Service Company, was broken up equally between the Task Forces. Company "D" of the 17th Tank Battalion reverted to CCR control and was to follow CCR along Route E. The Battalion Headquarters was retained with Task Force A commanded by Lt. Colonel Wemple. We were not in contact with the other Forces during the operation so that at this time we only have the history of Task Force A. The mission of ~~Task Force A~~ Task Force A was to follow a Task Force from CCB along Route A and to be ready to give them assistance if needed. Task Force A or Task Force Wemple left the assembly area in vicinity of Chappelle-Gauthier at 1835, 27 August, 1944 and proceeded along the route Fountainelles, Nangis, Moison-Rouge, Vulaines, Marolles, Maptery, going into an assembly position near St. Genest at 0100, 28 August, 1944. The town of Provins was by passed because of strong enemy forces there.

At 0700 on 28 August, 1944, Task Force Wemple left from assembly position near St. Genest and traveled on Route Bouchy-le-Repos, les-Essarts, Barbonne, Saudoy, Sezanne, Allemant, Broussy-le-Grd, Bonnes, Aulizeux, and Caligny. At this point we ran into light enemy resistance and captured some prisoners, the exact number of which is unknown because most of them were taken by the Infantry and were sent back before a record was made. This action occurred at 1215 on 28 August, 1944. Task Force Wemple advanced on to Vertus and went into an assembly position at Le Mesnil.

The Task Force from CCB which we were following pushed on to the Marne River and found that the bridge on Highway GCA at Mareuil was out. This force pushed their infantry on across the river as ordered and established a bridgehead. Company "A" of the 38th Armored Infantry which was under Lt. Colonel Wemple's command was sent up to assist in this operation. The two infantry ~~companies~~ companies pushed across the river, took the town and established the bridgehead. This was accomplished by 2200, on 28 August, 1944. The Wemple Force less Company A of the 38th Armored Infantry remained in the assembly area near Le Mesnil during the night of the 28th and 29th of August, 1944 and until 1245 on 29 August, 1944.

Task Force Wemple under orders from higher Headquarters pulled the Infantry back across the Marne River and at 1245 on 29 August, 1944, followed behind the Task Force from CCB to Epernay along highway GC 38 and 36 through Moussy, Pierry to Epernay. Then we continued to Ramponneau, La Chausser, Damery, Fleury, Nanteuil, -le-F, Sermiers, Rilly, Mailly-Chaupagne, Verzy, Thuisy, to Pont-Faverger. Task Force Wemple reached this point at 2130 and the Force halted for re-fueling. Since the force that preceded us was practically out of fuel, we gave part of our fuel to them.

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During the halt for fuel a German column of a few trucks ran into our column and the 38th Inf. killed several Germans and took some prisoners. At 0130, 30 Aug. 44 the march was resumed.

At 0830, 30 Aug. 44 Task Force Wemple reached Perthes. One mile west of Tagnon on road to Avancon at 0900 our leading elements encountered one enemy tank and some dismounted troops. The tank was fired on and hit but it did not stop. Two German Officers and 63 men were taken prisoners at this point. The men fired on our units but did not put up much of a fight. The prisoners all belonged to a German Police unit. An enemy column was fired on by our tanks near the town of Tagnon and several vehicles were knocked out the number was not verified for we had to keep moving.

The Task Force went into an assembly area in the vicinity of Avancon at 1100 on 30 Aug. 44. At this point the two task forces were ordered to pull v back to an assembly area in the vicinity of Epaye and this move was started at 1715 by the route of Newflize, Alincourt, Juniville, La Newville, Pont-Faverger, Epaye and closed in assembly at 2030. During the preceding night the two Bn. Hq. tanks had dropped out of column and we feared that the crews had been captured but they were picked up and returned to the assembly area at Epay. However one of the tanks was fired on and hit by an enemy tank and destroyed the gun on our tank. The crew escaped un-injured.

The Task Force remained in the assembly area at Epaye until 1415 on 31 Aug. 44 at which time the force moved out on the route - Epaye, Beine, Nauroy, Moronvilliers, St. Martin, St. Souplet, St. Marie - with the mission of going through Verdun and establishing bridgehead on other side of town. The Division was to advance on or attack in three forces along three routes, CGB along Z route on north, CGA along X route on south route, and CCR along Y or middle route.

Task Force Rankin was to precede Task Force Wemple along route indicated ~~along~~ above and that is exactly how the march was made. After reaching St. Marie the Force continued on to Souain, Massiges, Ville Sur Tourbe, Thierville, and Verdun. Reached Verdun at 0800 after an all night move and went on to an assembly area at Etain closing there at 1000, 1 Sept. 44.

Jack Howison
JACK HOWISON
Captain, Infantry
Unit Historian

S-E-C-R-E-T