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SECRET

48TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

UNIT HISTORY

The 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, a unit of the 7th Armored Division, Major General Lindsey Mc D. Sylvester, commanding, moved out from Tidworth Barracks, Hants, England, at 0900 on the morning of Monday, 7 August 44, for the Southhampton Marshall- ing Area in preparation for embarking for France.

The Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Richard D. Chappuis, with Major Lynn M. Carlson as Executive Officer and Captain Sydney F. Frazier S-3. Captains Ben R. Freeman, Elmer F. Morgan and Walter A. Pennino were S-2, S-3 Air-Communication Officer, and S-4 respectively. Second Lieutenant Dean G. Ostrum was Adjutant and First Lieut- enant Joseph A. Reddy, Jr. was Liaison Officer.

Headquarters Company was led by Captain Darwin A. Brock, "A" Company by Captain Ronald E. Madden, "B" Company by Captain Philip F. Whitbeck, "C" Company by Captain Harrison S. Forrester and Service Company by Captain Arthur J. Decker. Captain Fred M. Davenport was Battalion Motor Officer and the Medical Detachment was composed of Captains Dante V. Durante, James E. Mazzacane and Fernand J. B. Hamel.

The move to Southhampton was made without incident and the unit closed into its area camps in the early afternoon of the 7th.

Shortly after midnight on the morning of Tuesday the 8th, the companies were alerted and moved to the Southhampton docks for loading. Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company and "A" Company loaded on the Liberty Ship "Thomas Wolfe" and "B" and "C" Companies loaded on the Liberty Ship "Josiah L. Parker." Other elements of the Division were ^{also on these} ~~on other~~ vessels. Loading of all vehicles was completed during the day and the men went aboard after supper. At that time both ships dropped down the Solent to an anchorage near the Isle of Wight where the convoy was to form.

Early the morning of 9 August the convoy sailed and arrived at its destination off Rhino Beach (one of the "D" day landings was made here and the beach then was code-designated as "Utah"), near the base of the Cherbourg Peninsula.

Unloading did not begin until the morning of the 10th. It continued until late in the day. As the elements landed, they moved, under the command of the Executive Officer, to a division assembly area some 30 miles inland beyond Ste. Mere Eglise, scene of one of the worst engagements in the early days of the Invasion.

The two Liberty Ships were finally emptied of 48th men and vehicles late in the evening of the 11th tho the major part of "B" and "C" Companies did not reach the assembly area until ~~late in~~ the evening of the 12th.

Lieutenant-Colonel Chappuis received orders on the 12th from the Division Com- mander to proceed to a forward assembly area near Landean. This movement began at 2320 on the 12th August, a half hour after our last elements had closed into the orig- inal area.

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CANCELLED SECRET
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
G.O. Meloy, CARRAGD
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE *S. App. 1/4*

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The distance covered in this Landean movement was 79 miles and the Battalion completed the move at 0915 on the 13th. A representative of the C. G. was waiting in Landean for Lieutenant-Colonel Chappuis and Lieutenant-Colonel James W. Newberry, Division Reserve Commander who was then traveling with our column, with orders for the 48th to proceed on to another assembly area near Ste. Suzanne, N.E. of Laval. As soon as we had gassed and performed necessary maintenance, the Battalion moved out (1200) and reached this second area at 1730 having marched a distance of 60 miles.

Almost without a halt we were again ordered to move- this time to La ~~Ferte~~^{erte} Bernard. This move began at 2300 and by the time we closed in at 0830 on the morning of the 14th, we had gone an additional 60 miles.

A major portion of the Battalion had had absolutely no rest or cessation of movement since debarking and had covered a distance of 228 miles in 36 hours.

Tho we had no knowledge of the "Big Picture" at that time (nor have we at any time since), it became apparent that the 7th was to participate in the wide encirclement which General Bradley was planning to trap the German forces around Caen and to liberate Paris, main German stronghold in the West.

Hardly had we occupied our position at La ~~Ferte~~^{erte} Bernard when we were reorganized within the Division and the 48th was released from CCR and assigned to CCA under the command of Colonel Dwight W. Rosebaum.

The new breakdown within the Division was roughly as follows:

<u>CCA</u>	<u>CCB</u>	<u>CCR</u>
48 AIB	23 AIB	38 AIB
40 AB	31 AB	17 AB
489 AFAB	434 AFAB	440 AFAB
Co A 33 E	B 33	C 33
Co A 77 Med	B 77	C 77
Co A 814 TD	B 814	C 814
A 129 Ord	B 129	C 129

Some difficulty, however, was experienced in assembling CCR because not all of its parts had as yet debarked, or had not been able to get as far as La Ferte Bernard in time to move out with the main body.

Six hours after reaching La Ferte Bernard, CCA moved out once again (1430) and proceeded north and East via Preval, St. Germain, ~~Reinland~~^{REINLAND}, and Moultes towards Sononches. On this trip on the 14th we encountered our first resistance - it was of a character that paved the way for our future actions throughout the month. Just outside Sononches, at 2000 on the evening of the 14th, we were held up by heavy enemy fire and Second Lieutenant James E. Newberry of Company "A" was killed instantly when struck by fragments of an 88MM shell which exploded nearby.

Early on the morning of the 15th, CCA, with the 48th, reinforced, as the advance guard, moved and, crushing the resistance remaining in Sononches, ~~and~~^{ed} capturing the town which contained considerable quantities of German equipment.

For the remainder of the month we continued, advancing rapidly on most days, fighting our way through innumerable small towns in most of which the Germans had skillfully arranged their forces for a delaying action.

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Tho at no time did we meet any really strong resistance, we did suffer casualties constantly and several times were sent on missions - as to plug a possible weak spot through which the encircled Germans might plunge - which could have cost us dearly. These enemy delaying actions were most artfully conceived and executed and only the outstanding tactical skill and clever displacement of ~~four~~ forces by Colonels Rosebaum, Chappuis and McConnell (of the 40th) and the excellent support rendered by Lt.-Col. Milnor with his 489 AFAB prevented several of these strongpoints from becoming a minor Cassino. Tho all the elements were often under orders for employment, it never became necessary to actually commit the entire Combat Command in any one particular engagement.

After capturing Sononches on the morning of the 15th, we moved forward thru La Villenouvains to Chateauneuf where some resistance was met and cleaned up. Even as we passed thru the town, German vehicles, unaware that it had fallen to us, arrived from various points outside and were captured. Late in the afternoon we approached Tremblay and were engaged sharply there for a matter of some four hours. The town ~~was~~ swarmed with snipers and tho the 48th passed thru it once, it became necessary to go back and destroy those enemy who had remained in hiding during the passage of the advance guard.

That evening, thru some confusion in higher headquarters, the 79th Infantry Division came abreast of us, assigned the same routes as those on which we had been given priority. We captured their objective Nogent le Roi and moved some 10 miles beyond to bivouac for the night.

At ~~0800~~ on the morning of 16 August, CCA was attached while the troops were preparing to move out. Considerable mortar fire and a few rounds of 88 landed in the bivouac, rendering ~~one~~ of our assault guns useless and destroying a 33 Engineer's half-trac and causing a few casualties among personnel. A rapid combined action of the tanks and infantry, with some support from the artillery, quickly ended the attack by destroying the town and steeple which was being used as OP's.

CCR passed thru us in the early afternoon and took the town of Epernon. Here we again passed thru them and went on to Ecroques where we remained in place for two days. During this time we carried out vigorous patrolling in all directions - to Ablis on the S.E., Rambouillet on the N.E. and toward Chartres on the S.W. Ablis and Rambouillet were both enemy strongpoints and neither could actually be entered by our forces.

CCB meantime was assaulting Chartres from the West and was having ^{difficult} difficult times. From our position N.E. of the city we were able to round up the Germans who tried to flee from it and our "bag" of prisoners was considerable.

At ~~1600~~ on the 18th of August we were ordered to partially retrace our steps and proceed to Dreux, slightly S. E. of Paris in an effort to bottleneck any attempt by the Germans to escape from the Normandy front via this route. The CC proceeded to Dreux via Epernon, Maintenon and Chateau~~neuf~~^{neuf} and arrived at Dreux at ~~0130~~ on the 19th. Here we took up a defensive position near the stream junction about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles N. E. of town. Infantry elements of the 5th Armored had been there before us and pulled out ~~on~~ our arrival.

We spent the 19th and 20th there in Dreux in constant, tho minor, contact with the enemy. "B" Company was forced to send out a night patrol which was heavily attacked and resulted in proportionately heavy losses including the death of a medic. Several times our position came under mortar fire but our tremendous superiority in artillery quickly silenced the enemy batteries.

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On August 21st we moved out at ~~0600~~ via Nogent, Epernon and Orphin. The movement continued on thru Ollinville. All along the route we met increasingly stiffening resistance. That night we bivouaced just West of ~~Arpajon~~ ^{Arpajon}, a large city in which there were reported to be considerable ^{enemy} concentrations. Indeed, ^{much} considerable fire fell throughout the afternoon on the site we selected for the bivouac. CCR was moving forward rapidly on our right ^{west} (S) flank, tho a short distance to our rear, and the enemy whom they were flushing ~~west~~ ^{west} streaming into ~~Arpajon~~ ^{Arpajon} in their haste to reach safety before we cut them off. It seemed more than likely that ~~Arpajon~~ ^{Arpajon} might develop into a second Chartres.

Early on the morning of the 22nd, and concealed in a dense fog which reduced visibility ~~to~~ ^{to} a matter of feet, not yards, the advance elements moved on the town. Fortunately the major portion of the garrison had ~~left~~ ^{left} during the night. The push continued throughout the day and evening and almost midnight, after a sharp skirmish which resulted in the loss to the Germans of a fuel convoy, the unit bivouaced 5 miles East of ~~Portierry~~ ^{Portierry} on the Seine.

The morning of the 23rd was spent on reconnaissance of possible sites for the crossing and the bridge which the 944th Engineer Battalion was to erect.

At 1400 on the 23rd, Companies "A" and "C" led the assault on the Seine's North bank, Company "B" followed in the wake of Company "C". We were extremely fortunate and suffered almost no casualties despite the great risks involved in this type of operation. The crossing was aided by concentrations from our own and Corps (155) artillery and by Air Corps strafing and bombing of the North bank. The three assault companies, plus elements of our Headquarters Company, reached their objective at 1800 that evening and dug in to hold the 1000 yard beach which they had established. "A" Company had crossed at Tilly and the others some 600 yards down stream. The entire crossing was magnificently handled - on the far shore by Lieutenant-Colonel Chappuis who personally crossed with the forward elements and on the near bank by Colonel Rosebaum himself with the assistance of Colonels McConnell and Milnor who, as individuals, directed the fire of their respective tanks and artillery.

(The bridge at Tilly was somewhat delayed in construction by constant shelling with 88's and mortars and also by a torrential rain and thunderstorm.) Finally it was completed early on the morning of the 24th and the battalion's vehicles completed the crossing. The remainder of that day and most of the next was spent in consolidating and extending the bridgehead which ultimately proved to be the main source of access across the river not only for the 7th but for many portions of the 3rd Army.

Rather late on the evening of the 25th, CCA moved out with the 40th and "A" and "B"/48th in the advance guard. The column made good progress but was halted for the night at Rubelles due to heavy enemy fire.

Just after the advance guard halted for the night, and while he was getting his anti-tanks guns in position, Lt. Michael Conti, who had joined us 36 hours before as a replacement for Lt. Newberry, was instantly killed when his quarter-ton struck a mine buried in the road.

The following morning we moved forward again and spent the day pursuing German columns and destroyed some 50 supply vehicles, most loaded with ammunition. We also made our first contact with German Panzer units in any strength. The enemy had a number of well placed anti-tank guns and they gave us considerable trouble. We bivouaced the night of 26th just East of Pecy.

General Silvester came up on the morning of the 27th to bring us instructions regarding a new formation to be employed. Heretofore we had been fighting (a whole combat command) on ~~about~~ a 100 yard front (50 yards on each side of the road). From now on the command was to be broken down further and follow three parallel routes thus consid-

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erably extending the front. The composition of the columns was as follows:

<u>Route F</u>	<u>Route E</u>	<u>Route D</u>
Lt.-Col. McConnell Comdg. (C.O., 40th)	Maj. Brown Comdg. (Ex. O., 40th)	Lt.-Col. Chappuis Comdg. (C.O., 48th)
40 (-)	489 (-)	48 (-)
A 48	B 48	B 40
C 489	C 40	A 489
3rd Plat. A 814	1st Plat. A 814	2nd Plat. A 814
3rd Plat. A 33	1st Plat. A 33	2nd Plat. A 33
	CCA Hdqts. Trains	

The objective was an encirclement of Reims and the establishment of a bridgehead across the Visle and Aisne Rivers. Initially the bridgehead was only to be across the ~~Porter~~ but because the opposition was so light as to permit it, Col. Rosebaum pushed part across the latter to hold both rivers. The specific routes were as follows:

<u>F Column</u>	<u>E Column</u>	<u>D Column</u>
St. Simeon	Beton-Bazoches	Courtacen
Sablonnierres	Viels Maison	La Chappelle Veronge
Ferte	Conde en Brie	Montmirail
Chazy	Dormans	Corrodert
Nesles	Verneuil	Verdon
Courmont	Tramery	Igny
Coulanges	Rosnay	Chaumuzy
Esme		Ormes
Chateau Thierry		
Fisme		

CCB was to support the attack with similar columns A, B, and C on the East to encircle the city from that side.

Col. McConnell's attack was successful and, after capturing Chateau Thierry, he spent the night of the 27th there and pushed on to the Aisne River the following day.

Major Brown's column spent the night at ~~Conde~~ ^{Brie} in Brie and advanced to and captured Dormans. However the bridges across the Marne were blown there and the column was forced to back march and go West to Chateau Thierry where it crossed and then proceeded in the wake of Col. McConnell's column thru Fisme to a bivouac near Convoix on the Aisne. Here a B/48 outpost captured a German Brigadier General who was seeking to escape.

Lieutenant-Colonel Chappuis' column moved to Montmirail and captured the city and there spent the night. The morning of the 28th it moved on to Verdon and there discovered the ~~Marne~~ ^{MARNE} bridge was blown. Lieutenant-Colonel Leydecker, CCA Ex. O. on receipt of this information ordered them to proceed to Chateau Thierry, cross, and then proceed up D route. Hardly had the column turned around in compliance with these orders than Lt. Col. Monte, Division G-3, ordered them to turn back once more, cross as directed and proceed on D route. CCA never knew of this change. The 48th returned to the river, fought for and

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established a bridgehead and the morning of the 29th crossed and moved to the CCA assembly area, bivouacing about 1700 that day at Bouffigereux on the Aisne. On this move this column captured 125 prisoners, destroyed 4 Mark 4 Tanks and 25 general purpose vehicles as well as quantities of German supplies.

At noon on the 30th, CCA was ordered to move to an assembly area near Beine, N.E. of Reims. We arrived there at 1610 and learned that at 1600 we were to execute a field order which had not yet arrived. When it came, the next move, an attack in two columns on Verdun, was begun, at 1830 the 30th.

Lieutenant-Colonel Chappuis, with his original force plus the 695 Armored Field Artillery Battalion, less his battery of the 489th, was to take the exposed southern route. Lt.-Col. McConnell, with Major Brown's column in support, was to take the northern route directly against Verdun.

The south column moved East and bivouaced in the vicinity of Aure. The following morning, the 31st, it pushed on and made its bridgehead across the Marne, as directed, at Ambly. Here it trapped an enemy motorized column on the heights above Genicourt and with artillery, tank destroyers, and machine gun fire, completely destroyed it.