

HEADQUARTERS 43D TANK BATTALION  
A.P.O. 262, U.S. ARMY

31 January 1945

MEMO:

TO : All Companies

1. Suggest that the following information be presented to your command as what might have happened if the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division had not contained the enemy in his DRUSENHIEM-GAMBSHIEM bridgehead.

2. On 16 January 1945, the enemy was expecting pressure in our lines at B, C, and D. This pressure was being generally contained by the VI Corps and the First French Army in their respective areas. The position of the VI Corps was the most precarious of the two in that the major portion of the Corps was in the HAGENAU bulge. The enemy bridgehead at A was in a location that presented an avenue of approach to the enemy through which he might cut off the VI Corps. The 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division was ordered to reduce this bridgehead.

3. The details of the action of the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division are known to you. The enemy introduced three (3) divisions into this area almost simultaneously with our attack. The result was a stalemate. The 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division did not reduce the bridgehead, but neither did the enemy break out of it. That he intended to break out of this area was evidenced by the introduction of fresh divisions into the area.

4. If this breakthrough had been successful for the enemy the VI Corps and First French Army would have been in a most difficult position.

a. At (1) an attack from B and A could have cut off the HAGENAU bulge.

b. At (2) STRASBOURG could have been cut off and (3) thrusts made to extend toward the attack from the COLMAR pockets at C.

c. Expansion of the breakthrough at (4) and (5) could have taken SAARBOURG and may have continued toward NANCY and METZ.

5. Your division helped stop this by gallant action against a numerically stronger enemy, causing more casualties in him than were suffered.

6. Our lines have since been straightened and strengthened and the enemy has been thrown back from his attempts to smash them along the MODER RIVER. At C the French First Army is making a successful drive toward COLMAR.

(This is not from official sources, it is my own estimate of what could have happened.)

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

12 Nov

Embarked at Weymouth, Eng. On 12 and 13 Nov. Part of the battalion landed at Le Havre on 13 Nov part at Reuen on 17 Nov, and the battalion was billeted in Cressy, near Auffay. Left Cressy 29 Nov and marched to Luneville, a distance of about 300 miles, arriving 1 Dec. Trip eventful only because of large number of bogey wheels blown.

Orders from CC-A set up two (2) SOP formation and all operations to date have been Conducted using one or another (or a variation) of them. These forces are as follows:

FORMATION BLACK

F-1	F-2	
<u>MAJOR NOVOSEL</u>	<u>LT COL WELLS</u>	<u>COMBAT COMMAND</u>
43 Tk Bn (-B,C,D)	66 AIB (-A, B)	Hq & Hq CC-A
A/66	B/43	1/B/92
B/66	*B/493	D/43
*493 (-B)	Det A/119	A/119 (-)
Det A/119	Det A/134	A/82
Det A/134	TD - Towed	A/134 (-)

FORMATION GREEN

F-1	F-2	F-3	
<u>MAJOR NOVOSEL</u>	<u>LT COL WELLS</u>	MAJ HALL & Officer	<u>COMBAT COMMAND</u>
43 Tk Bn (-B,C,D)	66 AIB (-A,B)	<u>FROM 66 AIB</u>	Hq & Hq CC-A
B/66	B/43	1/B/92	D/43
1/A/119	2/A/119	C/43	A/82
*A/493	*B/493	A/66	A/119 (-)
Det A/134	Det A/134	3/A/119	A/134 (-)
		*493 (-A,B)	
		Det A/134	

\* When road net permits support for all three forces the artillery will be concentrated in the center column.

5-8 Dec

On 5 Dec 1944, Force Nick, as part of CC-A, marched to bivouac area, vicinity 1 mile west of Baerendorf, France. On 7 Dec 1944, this force again moved to a new area approximately 1 mile northwest of Rahling, France. Task Force Scott was dissolved on 7 Dec 1944, but C/43 attached 17 AIB. That night, 7 Dec 1944, A/43 and 2 platoons B/66 relieved elements of 37 Tk Bn, taking position on ridge in vicinity of Mohrenhof Farm.

No action on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Dec 1944 except scattered artillery fires, which caused several casualties in B/66. CC B/66 injured while riding in a tank, and one other officer injured in diving into a foxhole when artillery fire came down.

9 Dec Just before daylight 9 Dec 1944, Task Force Nick moved forward in support of Force Doe in attack on Singling and Hill 367. About 0900, Force Nick bypassed Force Doe, Continued the attack north and east of Singling, engaging about 6 PzKw 5's. Enemy losses – 4 tanks. Our losses – 2 tanks – one destroyed by bazooka, and one damaged by tank fire. This day's fighting was through the Maginot Line. Pillboxes were undefended, but enemy tanks used them for cover, and the one bazooka man encountered was hiding in a pillbox. At the end of the day we held the high ground around Hill 379 about 1800 yards east of Singling.

10 Dec The next day no advance was made. Action was solely tank vs tank at ranges around 1900 yards. At this range our tank guns were ineffective against the front plate of enemy PzKw 5's, and we could not extend to either flank to get effective fire. C/43 relieved from attachment and reverted to Force Nick. CC C/43 had his tank knocked out by a mine returning from a company commanders meeting on the night of 10 Dec 1944.

11 Dec On 11 Dec 1944 Force Nick and Force Doe were ordered to attack and seize Guising. A patrol sent out the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> failed to return, and the attack was delayed until reconnaissance could be made for tank crossings over the railroad and for route through the reported dragons teeth of the Maginot Line. About 1100 the Forces moved out, no barriers encountered, 1 sniper killed, reached ridge east of Guising, encountered enemy tanks. Accurate enemy artillery fire caused casualties to our infantry, and this coupled with approaching darkness caused a withdrawal to position held that morning.

12-16 Dec A combined attack on 12 Dec 1944 at 0400 by Force Nick and Force Doe took Guising about 1100. There was no opposition in the town. A/43 supported the attack from the ridge south and southwest of the town, while B and C/43, with infantry from 66 AIB, moved into the town on a broad front. All civilians in town were collected in a central location until all buildings were searched. A dismounted patrol sent toward Bettviller erroneously reported an AT gun in position at edge of town. About 1300, 12 Dec 1944, C/43, with two infantrymen on each tank, moved on Bettviller. The 714<sup>th</sup> Tk Bn, reinforced by 1 company of 17 AIB, attacked from southeast. Marshy ground and a stream on edge of town prevented the tanks from entering town, but infantry occupied the town. The only opposition was accurate artillery fire and tank fired from a woods about 2500 yards north of town. C/66 stayed in Bettviller and the rest of Force Nick and Force Doe withdrew to Guising. This concluded the active part of the operation, but the battalion remained under intermittent artillery fire until it left Guising on 16 Dec 1944.

16-26 Dec The battalion was not again committed but made the following moved:

16 Dec 1944 ----- Postroff

20 Dec 1944 ----- Bombecherhoff Farm (E of Singling)

26 Dec 1944 ----- Guenestroff

D/43 (in CC-A reserve) furnished trains protection. 3/D/43 attached to 66 AIB on 9 Dec 1944 to evacuate casualties and prisoners. On 12 Dec 1944 this platoon also furnished flank protection to C/43 in the attack on Bettviller. 1/D/43 attached to 714 Tk Bn to evacuate prisoners and casualties. On 15 Dec 1944 the company was reassembled and on 16 Dec returned to battalion control. Our casualties for the period were three (3) killed and eleven (11) men wounded.

- 26 Dec After spending a pleasant Christmas Day at Bombecheroff Farm east of Singling, France, the 43d Tank Battalion, less A and B companies with B/66 AIB attached, marched under CC-A to bivouac area at Guenestroff, France (Q-241261), closed in area 261645A Dec 45, A Company having been attached to 103 Infantry Division at 260853A.
- 27 Dec The battalion remained in Guenestroff during this period and underwent an intensive period of maintenance and training. A new tactical doctrine was drawn up and several practice exercises were run.
- 6 Jan
- 7 Jan The battalion marched under CC-4 from bivouac at Guenestroff to assembly area vicinity of Barnolsheim – Wehlemheim (965175); cross IP 071843A, closed in new area 080225A.
- 8 Jan A/43 released from attachment to 103 Infantry Division, marched to join battalion and closed in assembly area Barnolsheim 081700A.
- 9 Jan The battalion remained in vicinity Barnolsheim and spent the time in training and maintenance. Plans were drawn up for the employment of the battalion according to contemplated operations.
- 12 Jan
- 13 Jan B/43, released from attachment to 66 AIB, rejoined battalion and B/66 released from attached this headquarters, rejoined 66 AIB.
- 14 Jan The battalion staff prepared plans for an attack on Offendorf according to plans drawn up by CC-A.
- 15 Jan According to CC-A Field Order #5 battalion was ordered to march to attack position vicinity Weyersheim (R-051126).
- 16 Jan Battalion crossed IP (east of Bernolsheim) 160400A and made an approach march to attack position at Weyersheim prepared to attack Offendorf on order. Battalion designated Force #1.
- 43d Tk Bn (- (D-1) )  
C/119 Engr  
1/B/92 Rcn
- D (-1) attached 17<sup>th</sup> AIB for operations.  
Force 1 ordered to execute Plan “Y,” crossed ID 161030A having moved from attack position via route south of Zorn River thru corridor between river and canal and attack to seize Offendorf (R-130124). By 161055A the battalion had advanced about 100 yards east from check point 6. Right flank was at check point 3 and left flank 500 yards east of check point 6 advancing slowly by 161126A. At 161221A the battalion was located 400

yards west of check point 7 on a front running north, held up by fire from unlocated anti-tank guns. Fog covered field and visibility was very poor. At 161350A battalion CC called for air bomb on corner of woods check point 7. Under sustained enemy anti-tank fire the battalion was forced to withdraw (tank casualties were mounting) to north of check point 1 to reorganize and await orders: bivouaced same area that night. Casualties during day's action were:

1 Officer killed, 3 wounded

3 EM killed, 20 wounded

7 – 75mm tanks knocked out

5 – 76mm tanks knocked out

Approximately 80 PW's were taken

During evening of 16 Jan 45, Lt Col Novosel returned to Fw's CP of CC-A for orders. That night the Co Motor officers with fuel and ammunition trucks plus the tank recovery vehicles were sent forward to contact the line companies from a position west of check point 1. Guides were to be sent back to that point to lead the supplies to the bivouac area. At about 170100A Lt Riddel, Motor Officer, Co "C," met Lt Col Novosel on his way back from CC-A. The Colonel told Lt Riddel to remain where he was and that he would send back the guides from the companies. Later when no guides appeared, the Company Motor Officers went forward and searched over the previous day's battle ground for the tanks. They were unable to locate them and after waiting until 170300A they returned with their vehicles to the rear CP of the battalion. At about 170500A Lt Borger, Platoon Leader Co "D" 43 Tk Bn, then attached to Force 3, met Lt Mayer, Platoon Leader Co "C" 43 Tk Bn, in the corridor between Zorn River and the canal to the east, north of check point 2. Lt Meyer asked if he had seen anything of the 43d's supply or maintenance vehicles, that he had been looking for them all morning. Lt Borger told him that he had not seen them nor did he know where they were supposed to be as his Company was with another Force. Force 1's vehicles were not resupplied that night.

The orders for Force 1 for the 17<sup>th</sup> of Jan were to follow Force 3 (17 AIB) to their attack position, then move to take up own attack position east of Herrlisheim and attack to seize and hold Herrlisheim at 170700A. The attack was to be coordinated with Force 3 which was to attack Herrlisheim from the south. Contact by radio between Force 3 and 1 was established via radio of CC Co "D" 43 at approximately 170600A. Hasty plans of coordination were made. Major Logan told Lt Col Novosel to follow him up, that his assault companies were in position and would attack on time and that they would send up a signal flare when they wanted Force 1 to enter town from the east. Lt Col Novosel "Roger'd" and said that he was moving out right away to his attack position. Sometime after 170600A medium tanks were heard moving east from the left rear of Co "D" 43d which was then south of Herrlisheim. Shortly after daylight both Capt Shaw, CO Co "D" 43d and Lt Borger from position in southwest corner of Herrlisheim saw white medium tanks moving northeast on the east side of North and South road from check point 7 to Herrlisheim. At 170741A Lt Col Novosel radioed the rear CP that he was in position east of Herrlisheim. Sometime after 0700 Capt Shaw and Lt Borger both saw the prearranged signal sent up by Force 3. At 170849A the rear CP received another message that the battalion was now in town proceeding slowly under severe anti-tank and self-propelled fire. Between 170900A and 1000 Capt Shaw then in south edge of town saw at least two large oil or gasoline fires that appeared to be on the east side of

town. At approximately 171200A Major Hall, Ex O, talked with Lt Col Novosel over radio. The Colonel stated that things were plenty hot, that yesterday's action was a circus compared to what they were in today. The Ex O asked him what he needed, his reply was, "20,000 Infantry." The Ex O said that he would see what he could do at higher headquarters. Lt Hall, Platoon Leader, Co "A," enroute to bring up some Co "A" tanks, returned to action late morning of 17 Jan, talked over the radio to one of his tank commanders who was with Lt Col Novosel. He asked him where they were and how he could bring the tanks up to them. The reply from the Colonel thru the Sgt was that he should not try to join them as it was too hot there and that they'd probably never get in. The radio conversation between Lt Col Novosel and Major Hall was the last actual contact had with Force 1 by this headquarters. Capt Shaw who was with Force 3 CP in Herrlisheim all day until 171630A, reported that up to that time Major Logan (CO Force 3) had not seen or contacted Force 1 all day in Herrlisheim.

18 Jan The evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> Jan the Bn Ex O dispatched ammunition and fuel plus several tanks (returned to action) from Weyersheim to go to Herrlisheim to try to contact Lt Col Novosel's Force. They reached the town and the officers dismounted and went in to Major Logan's CP. Here Lt Hall talked with Force 3's S-3 and was told that the only thing they had seen or heard of Force 1 was that about a platoon of medium tanks came into the eastern section of town, did some firing then pulled out to a woods to the east. Under orders of the Bn Ex O the supply vehicles were returned to the rear Bn CP and the tanks joined the 23d Tk Bn who was just southwest of Herrlisheim. These tanks plus Co "D" 43d were attached to Force 2 (66 AIB). 180400A. They were released from attachment 181400A and rejoined Bn at Weyersheim 181500A.

43d Tk Bn was temporarily reorganized by Major Hall. By 181610A Bn was put on Red Alert by CC-A. At 181745A the Ex O dispatched three (3) man patrols from Ren Platoon to locate position of Force 1 which had consisted of three (3) letter companies, A, B, C; CO of Bn plus the S-3, a total of 29 medium tanks. Patrols returned 190100A after being unable to locate any of Force. Bn bivouaced at Weyersheim that night.

19 Jan Major Hall assumed command of 43d Tk Bn. At 190800A all the Bn medium tanks were ordered out along Zorn River to repel German armor that was coming across the Zorn. Enemy was engaged and driven off with a loss of 1 medium tank. Bn tanks were called in to Weyersheim at 190900A and were placed in position of defense on the southeast edge of town in general support of 66 AIB and 23d Tk Bn. At 191700A Bn CP was moved to northwest edge of Weyersheim. Bn was released from 12 AD control and ordered to support 232 Inf Regt, which was immediately relieved by the 3d Bn 143 Inf Regt. At 171800A the 43d Tk Bn was attached to the 36 Inf Div and placed in direct support of 3d Bn 143 Inf Regt for the defense of Weyersheim. The tanks of the 43d and 23d Tk Bns were consolidated under the 3d Bn 143 Inf Regt and immediately out-posted the town. The night of 19-20 Jan was uneventful, small enemy patrols were handled by the Inf.

20 Jan During the day the 3d Bn 143 Inf Regt engaged and repelled several enemy patrols. At 201800A the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plat D 43d was alerted to give direct support to 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn 143. At 202330A the Plat was moved out to give close support to L Co and remained in direct support

until 210500A during which time they engaged and broke an enemy assault of some 75 Inf which threatened the L Co line. The Plat killed and wounded about 20-30 men. They were relieved at 210600A. At 210800A this same Plat was called out to support the same company again. They moved out from town over open ground, engaged a strong enemy Inf attack of some 250 men, took 8 prisoners and drove the rest back to cover breaking up the attack. A medium platoon was to relieve the light tank platoon. While this shift was being made the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plat D 43<sup>rd</sup> was fired on by anti-tank, so the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plat D 43<sup>rd</sup> was sent out to cover the withdrawal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. One (1) tank of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plat was hit and one man was killed while two (2) were wounded. The two platoons were finally withdrawn without further loss and the original line of L Co was reestablished. The direction and leadership displayed by Lt IPPOLITO, Plat Ldr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Plat D 32<sup>rd</sup> was commendable throughout this action. At about 211430A one (1) Plat A 43<sup>rd</sup> with 2 platoons 23<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn made a successful attack on reported enemy armor east of Weyersheim. During this maneuver the Infantry was able to relieve the front line companies with fresher troops. At 212000A the 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn was relieved from attachment to 36<sup>th</sup> Inf Div by 753<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn. The Bn moved under VO CG CC-A from Weyersheim to Schoffhausen (873147), crossed IP 212225A arrived new area 220115A. D 43<sup>rd</sup> attached to 66 AIB to support counter reconnaissance screen vicinity Wasselone Pass by VO CG CC-A, marched to assembly area at Hohergroeft closed 220230A.

- 22 Jan Period was spent reorganizing the Bn under Major HALL. Capt BUTLER was made Ex O, Capt SHAW, S-3, Lts WOOD, LIVINGSTON, RIDDEL, JOHNSTON assumed command of A, B, C, and D companies respectively. During period D 43<sup>rd</sup> rejoined Bn after being relieved of counter reconnaissance screen mission by VO CG CC-A.
- 25 Jan The 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn marched with CC-A from Schoffhausen to Oberschaeffolsheim, crossed IP 251510A and closed in new billet (V-935985) at 251752A.
- 26 Jan - Bn continued reorganization, maintenance and training during period. Lt JOHNSTON  
30 Jan was made Bn Motor O, Lt BURGER assumed command of B 43<sup>rd</sup>, Lt FITTENER assigned Bn Com O. On 28 Jan the provisional Company under Lt WOOD was attached to 66 AIB for a tactical march and battlefield reconnaissance in vicinity of La Wanzanau to support the French in that area. Remainder of Bn continued maintenance, training and reorganization.
- 1 Feb 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn remained in billeting area Oberschaeffolsheim (W-9398) in corps reserve under French First Army control. Operations of Tk Bn for the last week were continued, reorganization and intensive training of reinforcements. With replacement tanks and available remaining tanks, two (2) tank companies of three four-tank platoons were organized as A and B Co. C Co remained an administrative and training company. A Co had been alerted for attachment to Tank Force of B/66 AIB as of 31 Jan. Company moved and joined B/66 in assembly area La Wanzanua, France, on alert status to repel enemy counterattacks in that area.
- 2 Feb 0600 Battalion was alerted for possible movement to vicinity of Selestat. The Reconnaissance platoon was sent out as billeting party 0730. Reconnaissance platoon returned 2100. Received an order from CC-A to march with CC-A to assembly area vicinity Selestat, to move at 030240A.

- 3 Feb Head of Bn crossed IP (RJ Furdensheim) at 0245 enroute to Selestat. March characterized by poor traffic control of all units moving south, much delay and bunching of vehicles was encountered. By noon the destination had been changed to Houssen (V-7347) north of Colmar and march was continued past Selestat on to new assembly area.
- 4 Feb Bn closed in assembly area Houssen 040045A. Refueling and necessary maintenance was conducted immediately in preparation for possible commitment in the morning. At 1415 A Co was attached to 66 AIB for operations and joined Hq Force Doe in Colmar. C/66 was attached to 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn at the same time, constituting Force Scott. Force Scott was ordered to move to assembly area in southwest of Colmar at 1600. Force marched immediately and closed in new area 041700 prepared to move at once to follow Force Doe, who had been ordered to attack south along Colmar-Rouffach road. At 2300 Force Scott received an order from CC-A to move at once to assembly area vicinity Hattstatt, prepared to attack to seize Rouffach or by—pass Rouffach and affect a Juncture with elements of French coming north from Nulhausen. A/92 was to send patrols ahead into Gerbirschir, Pffoffheim and Rouffach. Force order issued 2330 and S-3 departed to contact Force Doe north of Hattstatt.
- 5 Feb Force Scott made an approach march from Colmar to Hattstatt. Left Colmar 0200, arrived in attack position north of Hattstatt 0345, where orders were received to pass through Doe in Hattstatt and advance rapidly to seize Rouffach and to make a juncture with the French, who were reported to be near the south edge of Rouffach. The advance guard composed of 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon D 43<sup>rd</sup> plus a rifle platoon from C 66<sup>th</sup> crossed ID (east west line on south edge of Hattstatt) at 0300 with main body one minute behind. Task Force advanced rapidly south on the north south road Hattstatt-Rouffach. East of Gerbirschir the point ran into a platoon of A/92. They followed this platoon until they were held up by SA fire near Pffaffenheim, at which time the advance guard, under the direction of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt CHARLES J. IPPOLITO, bypassed the reconnaissance platoon and continued on rapidly to the outskirts of Rouffach. (0345A) The advance guard was deployed, the edge of town reconnoitered by fire and dismounted patrols were sent into town. The patrols reported a road block, a tank in town and they brought back a civilian, who said he could lead them to the French unit. Major HALL sent the Inf company and one platoon of B/43 to block the escape route from town to the east, north and west. Sgt Moreau, D/43<sup>rd</sup>, volunteered to go with the French civilian to contact the French. This he did, by himself, protected only by his own personal arms. Sgt Moreau, who speaks fluent French, affected the juncture in the south edge of Rouffach at 0530A. While he was on this mission, medium tanks were brought up to the road block and beat it down. The infantry of C/66<sup>th</sup>, while moving around and into the flank of the town, were fired on by small arms from the town and the high ground to the west but had no difficulty with it, suffering no casualties. At about 0600A, when the block was removed, the light tanks and infantry rolled into town, cleared the town and set up hasty outpost positions. Some 18-20 prisoners were rounded up and turned in at CC-A PW cage. Force Scott was assigned the northeast sector of the town in the defensive organization of Rouffach, as set up by CC-A and the French Army troops. These defensive positions were established by 08700A, using C/66<sup>th</sup> and a medium tank platoon of B/43<sup>rd</sup>. Rest of Bn arranged billets in the town of

Rouffach. C/43<sup>rd</sup> plus the Bn trains joined the Bn at 1400A.

- 6 Feb Force continued maintenance of defensive positions of town and made reconnaissance to the east.
- 7-8 Feb 070700A A/43<sup>rd</sup> released from attachment from 66 AIB and joined 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn. D/43<sup>rd</sup> released from 43<sup>rd</sup> and joined 66 AIB, to rearrange the defensive organization of the town. The outposting of defensive sectors was continued on through 09 Feb. Reconnaissance parties went up to Herrlisheim (scene of previous operations) during 7 through 9 Feb to see what could be found of that part of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn, missing in action from that operation. Fourteen (14) knocked-out tanks were found in areas east of Herrlisheim along with the bodies of Major GREEN and Capt GREGORY and many enlisted men. This, more or less, confirmed the belief that the Force going into Herrlisheim from the east was surrounded and shot up, with the personnel all being killed or captured.
- 10-11 Feb A reconnaissance officer was sent out with party from CC-A to look over new assembly area for Bn in vicinity of St Avold. Bn ordered to march with CC-A to new bivouac area and crossed IP (V-670315) at 2135A and marched via Colmar-Wasselone-Saverne-Luneville-Chateau Salins to billeting area vicinity of Teting and occupied Teting Barracks, Teting, Lauderfang and Pontpierre. Closed in area 111515A.
- 12 Feb - 2 Mar The Bn spent this period in an intensive program of training, maintenance and recreation. Training in tank-infantry tactics, to include day and night problems in attack of a pill-box, town fighting, cross country attacks, crossing of tank obstacles, reduction of road blocks, exploitation tactics, river crossings and intelligence reporting. All weapons and crews were fired during two periods of range practice firing during this time. Since the division was on Corps reserve status, every third day CC-A was put on three (3) hours alert status for 24 hours. Plans were made and reconnaissance initiated for possible operations to repel counter attacks in the area.
- 1-2 Mar 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn was billeted in Teting Camp, France at beginning of month. During day 1 Mar, Bn S-3 made reconnaissance vicinity of Forbach in preparation to support 70<sup>th</sup> Inf Div in attack of Forbach and Shiring Wendel. Force 1, made up of 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk (-B), B/66 AIB, A/119 (-), C/572 (-) was ordered to march to assembly area vicinity Behren prepared to resist counter-attack from north and northeast of Shiring Wendel. Force march order #5 issued 022255A Mar 45.
- 3 Mar Force crossed IP, - (Les Trois Maisons) 030745A Mar 45 and marched to assembly area vicinity Behren closing in at 031145A Mar 45. CP's were established vicinity (3966) and route reconnaissance was initiated east of Forbach and vicinity Shiring Wendel. A defensive screen was set up to north and northeast and companies were alerted to repel possible counter-attacks.
- 4 Mar Force continued operations of CP's and reconnaissance. During day Plans A and B were drawn up for the occupation and defense of Shiring Wendel. Plans were submitted to CC-A. Plan A was approved and was to be executed on order.

- 5 Mar At 051000A Mar 45 Plan A was executed, B/66 and C/43 (Force Randy) plus forward CP closed in Stiring Wendel and occupied defensive positions. One (1) Platoon A/43 moved into position to sever approach to Shiring Wendel from northeast.
- 6 Mar Force Randy remained in defensive positions in Stiring Wendel. Remainder of A/43 moved to attack positions east of Stiring Wendel ready to repel possible enemy counter-attacks. 2/D/43 attached to Force Randy, closed in Stiring Wendel 062100A Mar 45. During day two (2) German CP's were destroyed by C/43. Elements of Force in Stiring Wendel received heavy artillery and mortar fire during day and night.
- 7 Mar Remainder of Force 1 moved 071530A Mar 45 from assembly area vicinity Behren into Forbach closing in at 071620A Mar 45 prepared to attack northwest. Force Randy was relieved of responsibility for defense of Stiring Wendel 071900A Mar 45 but remained in that location prepared to move to Forbach on order still subject to heavy mortar and artillery fire. Forward CP moved into Forback 071620A Mar 45.
- 8 Mar Remained in assembly area Forbach and Stiring Wendel receiving periodic artillery and mortar fire.
- 9 Mar Force 1 was ordered to march with CC-A to former billeting area vicinity Camp Teting, having been relieved of 70<sup>th</sup> Inf Div mission. Marched 091700A Mar 45 according to march order #6 closed in billeting area 091905A Mar 45. C/43 was attached to 63<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div for Tank-Infantry training.
- 10-16 Mar During this period maintenance, reorganization and training exercises were conducted. CC-A conducted a command inspection of all personnel, weapons, vehicles and equipment. 14 Mar 45 C/43 was relieved from attachment to 63<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div and joined battalion 141405A Mar 45. AG Platoon joined battalion from attachment to 493<sup>rd</sup> AFA closed 141115A Mar 45.
- 17 Mar Force 1 (43 Tk (-B), AG Platoon, Platoon D/43) and B/66, D/66, ordered to march with CC-A to assembly area vicinity Apach prepared to advance east in XX Corps Zone. Force crossed IP RJ (180604) at 1712224A Mar 45 and marched to assembly area vicinity Halstroff (Q-095883), closed in 171500A. Vehicles refueled and prepared to continue march north in XX Corps Zone.
- 18 Mar Force marched from assembly area vicinity Halstroff to assembly area vicinity Hert (3425) passed through Hert and assembled (L-3820) at 181655A Mar 45. March was resumed 182100A Mar 45 to assembly area vicinity Bulenburg prepared to attack east following generally behind CC-B and CC-R who were pursuing the enemy as he withdrew to the east of the Rhine River. The division had been given the objective of driving east to Worm and establishing a bridgehead across the Rhine River.
- 19 Mar Force closed Bulenburg (L-565172) at 101000A. Resumed march behind CC-B at 190745A to Baumholder. No enemy contact yet. Closed in assembly area Baumholder (L-17223121) at 191250A Mar 45. Received orders from CC-A to pass between CC-B and CC-R and attack to seize and establish a bridgehead at Mannheim.

Platoon Engineer A/119 attached 191300A Mar 45. Attack was held up temporarily before passing through CC-B and CC-R as orders from Corps were changed giving 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division a zone further south. Since elements of CC-B were too far north and had to cut back south, Force 1 was told to resume the attack until it met CC-B then to follow CC-B. If no contact was made with CC-B it was to continue on to objective. March was through night 19-20 with Platoon D/43, Ren Platoon, one (1) Platoon A/43, one (1) Platoon B/66 as advance guard. Enroute to Enkenbach light small arms resistance was encountered which was rapidly reduced and many prisoners (30-40) were sent back along column.

20 Mar About 0600A the advance guard entered Enkenbach (117987) through considerable small arms fire and 20mm AA fire. As the point emerged south of the town they were fired on by three (3) AT guns. One (1) light tank was knocked out and four crew members were MIA. CC-B arrived at the same time and endeavored to fight their way through the gun positions at the expense of four (4) medium tanks. Both elements were held up for several hours in Enkenbach until artillery was brought up and knocked out the pocket of resistance. Contact was established with the 10<sup>th</sup> Armored Division on the right flank at approximately 1300A. Force 1's route was changed to move north through Grenstadt then swing south to Mannheim. Force cleared IP Enkenbach 1400A using same march formation and moved rapidly east toward Grunstadt. Just west of Grunstadt Force swung south and got on the east-west Super Highway to the Rhine. Opposite town of Grunstadt the point encountered a blown bridge covered by small arms and AT guns. Column was stopped and turned off the highway. One (1) infantry half-track was knocked out and two (2) men were killed. Column then swung south and assembled and organized in town of Susenheim, where it was necessary to hold up until fuel and ammunitions could be brought up to continue the advance east. Fuel, ammunition and rations arrived during night 20-21 Mar 45.

21 Mar Force 1 resumed advance east at 1400A moved to vicinity (3005) where column was halted on order of CC-A. At this time a coordinated attack by CC-A was drawn up with three (3) Task Forces converging on the town of Ludwigshaffen to try to seize the bridge into Mannheim. Force 1 moved out again with TF 3 and TF 2 on left. Advance was rapid through several small towns that surrendered as Force swept through and ultimately arrived in Oggersheim (town just west of Ludwigshaffen). Here Force was held up by TF 2 who ran into strong AT fire as they tried to enter Ludwigshaffen. C/43 was detached and sent to join TF 3 who at that time were heavily engaged in Oppau. Force 1 remained this location through night 21-22 as the 376<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment moved into Oggersheim to take over the attack of Ludwigshaffen.

22 Mar Task Force 1 was ordered to support the attack of 2/376 after western edge of Ludwigshaffen had been cleared. One (1) Platoon A/43 was sent to Mandach to give direct support to 2/376 as they advanced on western edge of Ludwigshaffen. One (1) tank was lost by AT fire during the evening as platoon moved into Rheingonheim. Operations of the 376 stopped during evening as new attack was drawn up. New order assigned TF 1 to 3/376 to give direct support to infantry until western edge of town was cleared then with tanks and infantry move through the southeast section of Ludwigshaffen.

- 23 Mar Tank Force 1 was in position to support Infantry Battalion vicinity (4994) at 0700A. Considerable resistance was encountered from factory on right flank, this resistance was reduced by 1100A. At 1220A the attack jumped off according to plan and moved along rapidly. Attack and mopping up of Ludwigshaffen progressed slowly through latter part of day during which time three (3) A Company tanks were knocked out by AT fire at 1516A. Guns were cleared out by 1613A and 150 prisoners were captured. By midnight TF 1 had four (4) more blocks to clear in assigned zone. Mopping up continued as road block was encountered.
- 24 Mar Task Force 1's zone in Ludwigshaffen was cleared at 0700A and junction was made with other forces who had moved successfully through the town from the north and west. CC-A ordered all troops of TF 1 to immediately occupy north section of town and patrol eastern edge of sector along Rhine River. Remainder of Force departed from Oggersheim 1240A and closed (503994) at 1415A. B/66 immediately set up patrols covering the east edge of Force sector between 514988 and 507015 along the Rhine River. Mortar and AG platoons established CP's vicinity 508004. A/43 remained in mobile reserve prepared to move rapidly to repel counter-attacks. One (1) tank patrolled through the Force sector during the night.
- 25 Mar At 1200A Force 1 was ordered by CC-A to move to assembly area vicinity Deidesheim 25 Mar 45. TF crossed IP (497986) at 1420A, marched to town of Haardt. Maintenance and reorganization was begun immediately.
- 26 Mar At 1100A Force 1 was put on eight (8) hour alert status. At 1530A circulation check point was established by B/66 at (29178448). Ren platoon operated motor patrol through Force billeting area.
- 27 Mar Force continued operational maintenance. B/66 established another circulation check point at (30328535). Task Force 1 consisting of 43 Tk -(C, D (-2) plus two (2) platoons B/66, D/66, 2 and 3 platoons D/43 departed vicinity Haardt at 272010A and crossed the Rhine River at Worm at 1145A, and marched to assembly area vicinity of Lorsch. Closed in 280140A March 45.
- 28 Mar At 0908A Force crossed IP east edge of Lorsch and advanced rapidly east in XV Corps Zone against very light enemy resistance. By 1030A TF had reached 728154. Leading elements ahead met resistance at 7619 consisting of AT Gun and SA necessitated Force dismounting all its Infantry and making a coordinated attack. Major Durham, Ex O, organized the infantry of B/66 and D/66 and attacked the position. All resistance was overcome by 1800. Column resumed march east and held up temporarily by abattis Road blocks vicinity 8316 which the dozer tanks removed finally.
- 29 Mar After the abattis were removed, TF #1 resumed advance east toward Erbach with TF #2 following. During early hours of the morning an enemy freight train was observed moving to the right of flank of column. All guns immediately traversed on the train and it was completely destroyed. About 0400 point vehicle was hit by bazooka just south of Erbach and knocked out. Infantry was sent out and resistance was reduced. Column remained this location until daylight, at which time a coordinated attack was made on

the town of Erbach. After a severe artillery and mortar preparation, B/66 and D/66 plus B/43 attacked the town. A road block was encountered and the engineers came up and reduced it by 1020. The leading elements, with tanks, reached the middle of town by 1240 and the town was finally cleared by 1253. Column was reformed, with B/43 plus platoon of B/66 leading, followed by the main body, and moved through the town and cut east again. As it entered the woods east of the town it encountered road blocks, consisting of 500 lb. aerial bombs wired with Prima Cord. These blocks and these obstacles were cleared by the Engineers and column resumed advance at 1600A. Column was held up temporarily by CC-A at 1615 as change in orders was contemplated. A platoon of light tanks was sent to reconnoiter town of Eichelstadt, where a regiment of German Infantry had been reported. Patrol returned, reported that there were no Germans there but that a friendly Infantry Battalion was moving in. This situation thus cleared up, the Task Force resumed its natural axis of advance with the immediate objective of seizing Amorbach. Column moved through heavy woods, visibility was very poor due to heavy fog, hence the column was forced to move very slowly. At 1800A two (2) lead tanks were hit by bazooka fire and knocked out vicinity 960205. The column halted and the Infantry dismounted and moved forward to clear out the resistance. Resistance was cleared by 12900 and CC-A ordered force to continue through the night. Due to the very limited visibility and presence of enemy bazooka men, D/66 was dismounted and deployed ahead and to the flanks of the column as it moved slowly toward Amorbach. Leading element of force arrived outside of Amorbach at 300400A and encountered SA resistance and blown bridge.

30 Mar At daybreak the Infantry of B/66 attacked the town followed by D/66, who mopped up. Considerable sniper fire was encountered and enemy had to be dug out. Engineers were brought forward and made a crossing where the bridge had been blown. By noon the town was cleared and the bridge was in. The Task Force now resumed its advance with A/43 and a platoon of D/66, as advance guard. At 1203 leading elements were at (075175), at 1515A had reached 087182. By 1607 the point was entering town of Shippack, when three (3) AT Guns were spotted on the high ground to the left. These were promptly knocked out by the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon of A/43. At that point the doughs of D/66 were sent ahead to investigate Shippack. They cleared the town of a few enemy stragglers and the head of the column again moved out. At 1858A the next objective of the Force was changed from Wurtzburg to Wertheim; this necessitated a swing to the north, through Neunkirchen and Nassig. The change was rapidly made and the advance guard moved rapidly through Nounkirchen to the outskirts of Nassig. At this point (2020) the point was again fired on by enemy bazookas. No tanks were lost but the column halted and the Infantry was brought forward to move into Nassig and clear the town. D/66 moved out to attack the town but it was driven back by severe enemy small arms crossfire. The attack was called back and patrols were sent back during the remainder of the night to determine the strength of the enemy. The reports were that enemy was present, dug in all around the town in considerable strength.

31 Mar At 0900A the tanks of 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon D/43 and A/43 moved in on the town. They reached the end of the town and were successful in pinning down the dug-in enemy around the town; they were held up by a road block and a prevalence of Panzerfaust. One (1) light tank was knocked out and three (3) men were killed. At 1300A coordinated attack was launched with a heavy artillery and mortar preparation.

B/43 with 2 platoons B/66 and 2 platoons D/66 attacked the town as A/43 supported them with direct fire. One (1) platoon B/43 secured the high ground west of town, A/43 the high ground on the east, with two (2) platoons of B/66 with a platoon of B/43, all under Lt Hume of B/66, moved into town from the south, the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon of D/66 followed Lt Hume's forces to mop up. The attack was quick and successful and the town was cleared by 1500A. 150 prisoners were taken, some 100 Germans were killed and wounded. The town of Nassig was immediately organized and defense of the town was set up. At 1700 orders were received to join CC-A column advancing toward Wurzburg. Force departed Nassig 1730, marched to assembly area vicinity (N4830), closed in position at 2300A.

1 Apr Force 1, consisting of A and B/43, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon D/43, B and D/66, was in assembly area vicinity (N-4830) south of Waldbrunn at opening of this period. During the night 31 Mar, Force received an order from CC-A to move to arrive at attack position at 010630A, to be prepared to support TF 2 on order, in their attack to seize a bridgehead over the Main River at Wurzburg. The Task Force moved to attack position arriving in assigned area at 010630A, A/43 with 2 platoons D/66 on the left and B/43 and B/66 (2 platoons) with 2 platoons D/66 on the right. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of D/43 had secured the attack position and reconnoitered the woods to southeast. Flank security elements of the Ren Platoon and D/43 reported enemy in woods to southeast and northwest of attack position, and that the town of Waldbuttelbrunn was occupied and defended by the enemy. As Waldbuttelbrunn was Force 1's first objective, artillery was placed on the rear edge of town throughout the morning. At noon the Force received an order to attack to seize the first objective. A/43 secured the high ground to the northeast to support B/43 and B/66 who were to attack astride the main road into Waldbuttelbrunn. The attack jumped off at 011615A and made good progress until forward elements reached a point 400 yards short of the town. Here the Infantry had to cross a long stretch of open terrain which effectively covered enemy AW and SA fire from dug-in positions. They were pinned down and the direct fire of the tanks was unable to neutralize the enemy positions. The attack was held up at this point and more artillery was poured into the town. Due to the rapidly approaching darkness and the heavy fire from the town, the Force was ordered to discontinue the attack at this point and withdrew to attack positions and established a line there to allow the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment to assemble and take over the attack to seize the bridgehead over the river. Two (2) men were killed and four (4) were wounded in the day's operation. The defensive line was established and the troops remained in the occupation of line during the night.

2 Apr A line of CPs was established along the high ground overlooking Waldbuttelbrunn by the Ren Platoon. Three (3) dismounted patrols were sent towards the Main River during the afternoon and returned with reports that enemy were still in position and they could not reach the river. At 1902B Ren CP reported that a white flag was flying over Waldbuttelbrunn. At 2000B TF 1 received an order from CC-A that the attack to seize the bridgehead was to continue on 3 April and that TF 1 was to remain in combat reserve prepared to support the two (2) other Task Forces who were making the main effort to secure the bridge. The order reduced the TF 1 to include the following troops: 43 Tk (-B, C, D) 1 Platoon B/66, D/66, and 1 Platoon D/43.

- 3 Apr The Force was ordered to move from its present location to an assembly area vicinity east edge of Waldbuttelbrunn. CPs were drawn in and the TF closed in assigned assembly area at 08230B. The Ren Platoon reconnoitered routes to river and operated on CP overlooking Wurzburg.
- 4 Apr The Task Forces remained in assembly area during the day. Orders and plans were drawn up for crossing the river and continuing on the 12<sup>th</sup> AD's mission. B/43 was returned to Force control at 041600B; D/66 was attached to TF 2, and C/66 was attached to TF 1.
- 5 Apr A/43 was attached to the 242<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment to assist in clearing the city of Wurtzburg so that CC-A could pass through the town. A/43 lost one (1) medium tank and had three (3) men wounded by bazooka fire in the town. A path was finally cleared through the south edge of Wurzburg by 1400B so TF 1 assembled and the remainder of the force crossed Main River at 1640B to continue along the Combat Command's assigned and route to the new objective, which was Schweinfurt. TF 1 as leading element of CC-A moved out of southeast edge of Wurzburg and out-flanked the remaining enemy resistance in the city by going east for some 10 kilometers then north to pick up the main road Wurtzburg-Schweinfurt. Some AS resistance was encountered along the route all of which was reduced and many PWs were taken. Rain and poor visibility made the progress slow and it was daylight before the leading elements reached the highway.
- 6 Apr The Force reached Estenfeld at 060700B and stopped there to refuel and reorganize the column. Fifty-one PWs were captured in the town and sent back to CC-A, then resumed march again at 0800B. At 1030B the point ran into enemy resistance at the south edge of Unter Fleichfeld which consisted of dug-in infantry, mortar fire and one (1) artillery piece. The tanks were placed in firing positions and began firing on the town. The Infantry and one (1) platoon of tanks attacked the town supported by the other tanks, artillery and the mortars. By 1430B the town was cleared and one bridge across the Pleichbach River was captured intact. Here the Force resupplied and continued the advance toward Schweinfurt. In moving from Unter Pleichfeld toward Bergtheim the column received direct fire from 88s and considerable mortar fire. The leading elements fought their way against rapidly increasing resistance to the south edge of Bergtheim as darkness drew on. The rear of the column received a heavy shelling and B/66 suffered ten (10) casualties. C/66 supported by a platoon of A/43 fought their way into town and held the first block. At this point it was decided to hold for the night and continue the attack at dawn. The ammunition was low and the supply vehicles were back at the dumps resupplying. C/66 held their position in the edge of town until 070700B.
- 7 Apr The attack was resumed at 0700B and the town was cleared by 0845B. Four (4) 120mm mortars and two (2) 88s were knocked out by the operations at Bergtheim. Force then regrouped and moved out again towards Schweinfurt. The advance guard ran through light resistance in the towns of Opferbaum and Essleben. Light shelling by artillery and mortar was encountered. As the point emerged from Essleben towards Werneck, the second vehicle (a light tank) was knocked out by a bazooka from the woods east of the road. The column also received heavy periodic

shelling from 88s. A coordinated attack was then launched to clear the woods between Essleben and Werneck. The doughs of B and C/66 finally cleared the woods at 1700B and A/43 moved up into their position to support the Infantry in setting up, for the night, a defensive line running east and west, generally along grid line 68. One (1) 88 and one (1) German tank were knocked out and seven (7) PWs were taken during the day's operations.

8 Apr During the night 7-8 the Force Commander sent out reconnaissance patrols from C/66 to determine the enemy strength and the condition of roads in vicinity of Zeuzleben and Waigelshausen. A road block was reported between Essleben and Werneck. Roads to the other two towns were passable and the enemy outposts were encountered. The Force jumped off at 1300 to attack town of Werneck and only slight resistance was met going into town as the enemy had withdrawn to the high ground between Werneck and Essleben. Some 20-30 PWs were rounded up in the town. Dug-in positions were located outside of town and heavy artillery concentrations were brought down on them. Shortly afterwards, the enemy in those positions came out and were taken prisoners by the reconnaissance platoon. There were some 75 enemy doughs in the group. The town of Werneck was immediately organized defensively as it was then late in the day. At 1730B the Force was ordered to send a Force into Etleben to seize it. After a very heavy artillery preparation Lt Wobpert took his company of tanks and raced across open grounds that was covered by 20mm and 88 direct fire, into town. Two (2) medium tanks were hit in town but the town was occupied by 2130B. A/43 with C/66 and B/66 followed B/43 into town and organized the area for the night. The Infantry had trouble getting across the open ground into town as they were pinned down repeatedly. Lt Hall A/43 exhibited fine leadership when he lead the Infantry into town, exposing himself without regard to his own safety and personally leading by way of his example, to join the tanks who were in need of dismounted security. The Force in Etleben was harassed several times during the night by small enemy counter-attacks; no serious damage was done, however.

9 Apr Shortly after dawn the Force received an order from CC-A to move to an assembly area vicinity Escherndorf and departed 1045B and made an uneventful march to Escherndorf arriving at 1245B. I/242 Infantry Regiment was attached to Force 1. The Force again moved out at 1445B, crossed the Main River below Escherndorf and started an advance north again to come in on Schweinfurt from the rear. The column passed through Volkach on to Zelitzheim where the advance guard encountered SA and mortar fire. The town of Zelitzheim was taken and orders were received to assemble at Herlheim for the night. Two (2) enemy planes were destroyed on the ground while enroute to Herlheim. Patrols were dispatched during the night to determine enemy strength in Ober Speisheim and Alitzheim. Enemy outposts were encountered.

10 Apr At 0700B B/43 and I/242 attacked Ober Speisheim against light small arms and mortar resistance and cleared the town by 0900B. A flank guard element consisting of a platoon of C/66, a section of light tanks and a section of TD's moved up on the west flank to Unter Speisheim and met some resistance. The remainder of C/66 was sent in on the town from the east and fought their way in and had the town cleared by 1140B though still receiving mortar and artillery fire from the north. At this point the

Force was regrouped and resupplied in order to continue to the north. CP's and reconnaissance had located a definite enemy gun position and an enemy defensive line running east-west south of Schwebheim. The advance was continued at 1400B but the point ran into direct fire as it passed by the east side of woods north of Unter Speisheim; one (1) light tank was knocked out and others were forced to take cover. The infantry of I/242 and C/66 were then sent to clear the large woods before moving by to Schwebheim. These woods were cleared by 2000B and a defensive line was set up along north edge of woods facing Schwebheim. The medium tanks were put into position with the infantry and held this line during the remainder of the night. The position was shelled repeatedly and several casualties were received. Tankers from B/43 adjusted artillery fire during the afternoon and night and were successful in knocking out six (6) enemy gun positions and beat off one enemy counter-attack. Most of the observing was done by Sgt Weisse and he received commendations from the Artillery Commander for an excellent job. B/66 was detached during the night and assigned to TF 2. Patrols from I/242 and C/66 were sent out toward Schwebheim during the night. Both patrols ran into enemy dug-in positions and returned before daylight.

- 11 Apr At 0600B I/242 jumped off from the north edge of woods supported by tank fire of B/43 to attack to seize the woods vicinity (8158). They advanced 100 yards; there they were caught in enemy crossfire and artillery barrage. Heavy casualties were suffered and they were forced to withdraw to their attack positions. Another attempt was made to break through the line at 0900B but the results were the same. It was then decided to hold the present line and heavy artillery concentrations were laid down on the enemy positions throughout the day. Ten (10) AT gun positions were knocked out and considerable personnel casualties were inflicted on the enemy. The reconnaissance platoon with a section of TDs was sent out to reconnoiter town of Grettstadt. They found the town occupied and the roads to it bad through the swamp area. During the night C/66 with a platoon of B/43 was moved to attack position vicinity woods (8456) to attack Grettstadt at 2230B. In the plans for the morning they were to pass through C/66 when it had taken Grettstadt and continue north to reinforce TF 2 who was just south of Weyer on the high ground. The remainder of B/43 was to demonstrate by fire on woods north of Schwebheim.
- 12 Apr C/66 jumped off at 0600B to seize Grettstadt. By 0630B the town was seized and occupied having offered very little resistance. C/43 passed through and joined TF 2 immediately. Troops of Force 1 then remained in present location until an order was received from CC-A to assemble the Force at Alitzheim. Force closed in that assembly area at 1340B. D/66 was attached and joined at that time. I/242 was detached and returned to its parent battalion. At 1340B the Task Force again moved out with orders to seize and occupy Donnersdorf. By 1600B the town was occupied and friendly troops were met. At 1900B TF 1 departed Donnersdorf enroute to assembly area vicinity Gres Lansheim. Column reached Alitzheim at which point orders were received to go into assembly area at Berlheim. This was accomplished by 2300B.
- 13-15 Apr After a short respite at Berlheim, Force again was ordered to move, this time the destination was to an assembly area in vicinity of Rudenhausen. A/43 rejoined the Task Force after being attached to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division during operations in

Schweinfurt. The Force closed in assembly area at 1630B. Task Force 1 now consisted of 43 Tk (-C, A), C/66, D/66, and A/493 AFA. A/43 was now attached to 101 Cav Group. At 2100B Force was ordered to move to an assembly area vicinity Ober Shenfeld (9426) and closed in that area at 2200B after taking 5 PWs enroute. At 0600 Force returned over same route to original assembly area vicinity Rudenhausen. Task Force was immediately alerted to a new mission, i.e., to rejoin the 12<sup>th</sup> AD and follow CC-B in their route of advance. The Force marched at 1130B and closed in Langenfeld at 1700B after having made contact with CC-B headquarters. Force went into an assembly area there, where it remained until the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. Maintenance of personnel, weapons and vehicles was accomplished during this period.

- 16 Apr The Task Force resumed its combat mission at 0530B when it jumped off on a support mission for the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, i.e., to take up firing positions on high ground south and east of Neustadt and fire on the town under control of the Infantry. Force moved into Schweinbach where the Ren Platoon ran into a barnfull of German soldiers and three (3) German tanks. They surprised the enemy and took 70 PWs. This town was cleared by 0700B and the tanks went into firing positions overlooking Neustadt. Civilians reported that Neustadt was ready to surrender so TF 1 received permission from the Infantry to capture the town. This was accomplished by 1100B and more PWs were rounded up. Force then reorganized and continued the advance through Emskirchen towards Nurnburg but was stopped by stiffening resistance near Langenzen. When the woods were cleared a coordinated attack was launched on Langenzen. The doughs of D/66 and C/66 supported by the tanks of B/43 fought their way through SA and AT fire into town and after a short struggle, partially cleared the town by dark. Town was outposted though not thoroughly cleared. B/66 joined TF 1 to aid in the defense of Langenzen. Troops in Langenzen were shelled and strafed during the night.
- 17 Apr At 0700B the Task Force moved out again towards Nurnburg. Ren elements were stopped just west of Suekendorf and an alternate route was reconnoitered towards Gonnertsdorf, the other through Grasmersdorf. A coordinated attack was then launched on Cadelsburg and after being held up by some very effective AT fire, the Task Force moved into town in two columns, joined, and proceeded to clear the town, finishing up the job by 1730B. The Task Force assembled in Gadelsburg and resupplied during the night.
- 18 Apr At 181330B the Task Force departed from Gadolsburg to move to assembly area vicinity of Heilsbronn with orders to set up a screen south of Ansbach. Move was not completed and Force 1 went into an assembly area vicinity (2188) until roads were cleared of friendly vehicles ahead. The Force again moved on toward Ansbach but again assembled, this time for the night, at Gleizendorf.
- 19 Apr At 0200B Task Force 1 moved out again with a new mission of blocking an enemy escape route through Schwabach. March was marked by poor visibility and bad roads and progress was slow. Enemy resistance was met and reduced at Bertheldorf at 1015B. The column moved rapidly north through Berthelmesaurach and Kammerstein overrunning light small arms resistance and taking a few PWs. At Hoag

leading elements were met by a civilian who said that Schwabach wished to surrender and that he would take a party in to negotiate the terms. He was mounted on a light tank commanded by Pfc William Leegard and they road into Schwabach flying a white flag, the remainder of the command following behind. The city capitulated and was occupied and outposted by 1430B. A screen was set up between Schwabach and Leutzdorf (3187) to pick up enemy stragglers trying to get out of Nurnburg. Some 211 PWs were picked up during the day.

- 20 Apr Task Force 1 resumed the pursuit of the German armies again at 1200B to assembly area vicinity Ansbach but continued on to Feuchtwangen where it stopped momentarily and then continued on south to an assembly area vicinity Dickersbronn. The night was spent here awaiting completion of a bridge at Dinkelsbuhl.
- 21 Apr At 0530B Force 1 jumped off from Dickersbronn with the mission of cutting the east-west road through Lauchheim. After pushing through Dinkelsbuhl resistance was encountered at Segringen. Here one (1) SP was knocked out and some enemy infantry were killed or taken prisoner. After clearing this pocket, the column took off rapidly and advanced through Wolfertsbronn, Wort, Stodtlen, Zobingen, and Rothingen and cut the road at Aufhausen. This operation was perhaps the most spectacular in which TF 1 had been engaged in. It was one where the leading elements caught hundreds of German troops on the run and the whole Task Force ran down the roads firing all guns in every direction at retreating Jerries. The advance was so rapid that many of the enemy escaped to the woods and hills. In addition to the large numbers killed, some 300 PWs were taken. One (1) AT gun was knocked out and 20 vehicles were destroyed. Task Force 1 was on the objective at 1200B and immediately refueled and resupplied. Shortly after reaching this objective, orders were received to continue south and head for the Danube River to secure a crossing of same. The column again moved out at 1700B and was halted temporarily when one tank was knocked out by a panzerfaust and two road blocks through the mountain pass south of Auffhausen were encountered. Here it was necessary to dismount the Infantry and clear the town. After clearing the town, the Task Force billeted there for the night.
- 22 Apr At 0600B the Task Force resumed the march to the Danube River. Again for the second straight day the column was able to get into high gear and roll hastily through a retreating enemy. The route of advance was through the towns of Dorfinerhingen, Dossingen, Neresheim, Dishengen, Ballmershoen, Burghagel, Haunsheim, and Unter Reidhausen into Lauingen. As the Task Force entered Lauingen the bridge over the Danube was blown. Troops of C/66 were about 100 yards from the bridge when it went up. Some 300 PWs were rounded up in Lauingen. Soon after clearing Leuingen the Task Force moved to Dillingen where TF 2 had secured a bridge over the Danube. Immediately TF 1 was ordered to cross the river and endeavor to seize the road center at Wertingen. Soon after crossing, the leading elements began running into resistance. 150 PWs were taken at Nordfelderhof. Fristingen was cleared after a short battle by B/43 and C/66. The remainder of the Task Force assembled here and a Task Force consisting of B/43 and C/66 was sent into Kicklingen to seize that town. They succeeded in securing the south half of town at dark and set up outpost in that area. During the night they were counter-attacked by SS troops and sustained heavy casualties in staving off the enemy. A total of 400 PWs were taken during the day by Force 1.

- 23 Apr The morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> was spent in reorganizing the force in Kicklingen as they had lost several key men in the counter-attack the night before. At 1400B a combat patrol from D/66 was sent into the woods southeast of Kicklingen to clear those woods. Their mission was accomplished by 1630B at which time the remainder of Force 1 moved into Kicklingen where outposts were set up. C/66 sent a patrol down the main road towards Binswangen and got within 200 yards of the town before drawing fire. CP's were operated in the woods south of Kicklingen during the night.
- 24 Apr Force 1 jumped off at 0600B to attack to seize Binswangen. The leading elements entered the town at 0645B and were pinned down by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. The remainder of the Force was immediately committed and fought their way through the town against sustained sniper fire and finally cleared the town by 1215B. The area was then outposted and preparations were made for continuing the attack on Wertingen. TF 1 was relieved of Wertingen mission at 1300B. This mission was then assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 15<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt. One (1) medium tank platoon from B/43 was attached to the Inf Bn. One (1) platoon D/66 was given the mission of clearing the woods between Binswangen and Reitenhof. This platoon encountered heavy automatic weapons fire and was caught in a mortar barrage suffering eight (8) casualties. Lt Husig, company commander of D/66, personally went out to them, reorganized and got them started again on their mission which they finally completed at 2000B. At 1600B Force established CP on the high ground overlooking Roggden. A motor patrol operated during the hours of darkness between Binswangen and 132980, making contact with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn 15<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt every hour.
- 25 Apr On order from CC-A the Force moved to assembly area vicinity Holzheim, departing at 1800B and closing in new area at 1925B. D/66 was detached from Force 1 at 1800B. Patrols were operated during darkness between Holzheim and Weisingen and Holzheim and coordinates 132980. The Force outposted town of Holzheim and established a communication road block at the main road junction in Holzheim.
- 26 Apr The command moved at 1200B to a new assembly area vicinity Ob Waldbach, closing there at 1425B, and awaited further orders. D/66 rejoined the Force effective 1200B. At 2130B Task Force resumed march south behind Force 2 to Thannhausen closing there at 2322B.
- 27 Apr The Task Force resumed march at 0015B this time to Aletshofen arriving there at 0705B. Here the Force tanks took up firing positions to support TF 2's bridgehead. Task Force Johnston was formed, consisting of one (1) Infantry platoon and one (1) tank platoon attached to D/43, and given the mission of relieving pressure on patrol from TF 2 in Ettringen. They jumped off at 0925B and moved into Seibnach where they forced 600 German soldiers to surrender, destroyed an enemy column of light vehicles, and secured the town. One (1) platoon of D/66 was dispatched to mop up behind TF Johnston in Seibnach. They captured 200 more Germans and destroyed fifty more vehicles and much equipment. The platoon of D/66 relieved Johnston in Seibnach and his force continued on into ETTRINGEN where they relieved pressure on patrol already there and assisted in the control and handling of 2800 allied war prisoners and some 1500 German soldiers. D/66 was relieved of occupation of SEIBNACH and rejoined the Force. At 1400B TF 1 moved from assembly area in A IERSHOFERN to

assembly area vicinity (Y-3742). The column was shelled enroute and five (5) casualties were suffered. The tanks and artillery returned fire and knocked out four (4) 20mm AA guns and two (2) 88 positions. The column finally closed in assembly area at 1645B. At 1800B C/66 was given the mission of securing the RR bridge across the LECH RIVER AT KAUFERING. One platoon crossed the RR bridge shortly before darkness in a driving rain under harassing artillery, mortar and 20mm fire. The east side of the river was gained by 1830B at which time the remainder of C/66 crossed and secured the bridgehead by seizing the high ground to the east. Several enemy artillery positions were neutralized by artillery fire on the east side of the high ground and C/66 organized the ground defensively to protect the bridgehead before darkness set in. A/66 was attached to Force and was sent across the bridge to reinforce C/66's bridgehead. The town of KAUFERING was cleared before midnight and the bridgehead was held while A/ 119 Engineers repaired and reinforced the damaged RR bridge.

- 28 Apr At 0900B D/66 crossed bridge to reinforce Force already there. At 1200B C/66 was relieved and reassembled with Task Force 1 on west side of river, D/66 remained in position and A/66 was detached and reassigned to TF 2. Remainder of Force 1 remained in assembly area prepared to cross river on order.
- 29 Apr Force 1 finally crossed RR bridge over LECH RIVER AT KAUFERING at 0845B and resumed march behind TF 2 to WEILHEIM. The column paused there temporarily while road jams were cleared, then continued on south to MURNAU arriving there at 2030B. B/43 and C/66 were sent out to occupy the town of OLDSTADT. They had occupied the town by 2200B and captured 34 PWs including a Major General who was personally taken by Lt. WOLPERT while the general was still in bed.
- 30 Apr Task Force 1 was ordered to move via new route through KOCHEL on to INNSBRUCK, providing no friendly troops had already reached KOCHEL. The leading elements moved out from OLDSTADT at 1300B and moved through SCHWAINGANGER without opposition; a road block was encountered in the woods east of town and a few minutes were lost in reducing it. TF 1's mission was then cancelled and it returned to occupy the towns of ESCHENLOHE and OLDSTADT, closing in at 1445B. Force was in these locations at close of monthly period awaiting new orders.
- 1 May Task Force 1 consisting of B/43, C/66, D/66, D/43 and A/493 was in an assembly area south of MURNAU during the night of 30 Apr-1 May. B-43, C/66 and D/43 occupied OLDSTADT, A/493 was in position 1000 yards south of MURNAU and remainder of the Force was in ESCHENLOHE. During that night an order was received from CC-A to follow CC-B and move to block the BRENNER PASS. Since all direct routes from MURNAU to the Pass were occupied by friendly troops, it was necessary to withdraw from MURNAU and use a route through WEILHEIM, STARNBERG, HOLZKIRCHEN, and INNSBRUCK. The Task Force moved out at 010730B at which time A/43 reverted to control of TF 1 and so joined. A rapid march was made to STARNBERG at which point orders were received to halt and await further orders. The unit halted there at 1245B. During the three (3) hours spent in STARNBERG approximately 75 German soldiers surrendered and were turned over to the A. M. G. At 1745B the Force departed from STARNBERG on order of CC-A to continue on original route.

- 2 May Task Force 1 closed at HOLZKIRCHEN at 020330B. The route from STARNBERG TO HOLZKIRCHEN was over secondary roads and considerable difficulty was encountered negotiating same because of severe sleet and snow. Many vehicles were held up until daylight. At 021000A, D/43 plus the Ren Platoon was given the mission to reconnoiter roads northeast from HOLZKIRCHEN to the Autobahn and investigate towns along route. After passing through FOCHING, FELLACH, GRUB, and FEIDKIRCHEN the mission was cancelled 1330B. At 0930B a report was received that a Major General and his staff was ready to surrender at HARTPENNING. A light tank and a jeep were dispatched and brought the General and his staff in without any resistance. At 011200B the original mission of blocking the BRENNER PASS was cancelled and Task Force 1 was given the mission of establishing a PW cage to handle CC-R and CC-A prisoners. Approximately 2500 PWs were handled during the day.
- 3 May The Task Force remained in assembly area HOLZKIRCHEN carrying out mission of guarding PWs and conducting maintenance of personnel equipment, weapons and vehicles. At 1830B a combat patrol of one (1) platoon of Infantry and one (1) of medium tanks was sent to TERGENSEE to investigate a patrol from CC-A which had run into trouble and had lost one (1) tank at that location. The knocked-out tank was found but the missing persons from the crew were not found.
- 4 May Task Force continued maintenance of vehicles and weapons and guarded the PWs. At 0900B one (1) platoon of Infantry, two (2) light tanks and a tank recovery vehicle were dispatched to recover CC-A's knocked-out tank. The mission was accomplished. At 1100B Task Force was relieved of PW cage mission. During the night an order was received to move at 050700B to an assembly area vicinity DINKELSBUHL by route through MUNICH, AUGSBURG, WERTINGEN, DILLINGEN, DONAUWORTH, NORDLINGEN, DINKELSBUHL. Force closed in assembly area at 2011B.
- 6-7 May Task Force 1 conducted maintenance of vehicles of weapons and made preparations for taking over security post in an assigned area.

8-10 May

The Force relieved the 44<sup>th</sup> AAA Brigade of the following security posts:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO. OF POSTS</u>	<u>No. OF MTZ PATROLS</u>	<u>NO. OF MEN</u>	<u>LOCATION OF INSTALLATIONS</u>
C/66	2		11	German Air Corps and Engr Equipment. MAIHINGEN (T-024401)
D/66	2		12	Library, valuable documents. WALLERSTEIN (T-004357)
C/66	2		11	Clothing Supply and Library. MAIHINGEN (T-023402)
C/66		1	11	Jeep Patrol. MAIHINGEN (T-0240)
C/66	4	2	35	Class III Dump, HEUBERG (T-0540)
A/43	1		7	German Bomb Dump, NEUSES (S-908597)
Hq D/43	2		13	German PW Hospital, WIEDENBACK
D/43			8	Bridge, WILBURGSTETTEN (S-937513)
D/43			8	Nazi Hq Clothing and AA equipment WASSERTRUDINGER (T-0959)
D/66			12	Wallerstein Palace WALLERSTEIN (T-005357)
D/66	1		7	Castle (S-891370)
Ren/43		1	4	Area Patrol (CRAILSHEIM-ELEWAGEN-DINKELSBUHL)
B/43	2		6	Road Block (S-872550)
C/66	1		7	Hospital, 216 PWs. OTTINGEN

Detailed surveys were begun to determine conditions of roads and bridges in area, location and number and nationality of displaced persons in area, location of supply and ammunition dumps, and progress of Military Government coverage of all small towns in area. A progress of mass and competitive athletics was drawn up into operations.

- 10 May At close of period Task Force 1 was fulfilling security missions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Security Command with troops located vicinity of DINKELSBUHL, OTTINGEN, and WALLERSTEIN.
- 11-14 May On 11 May 1945 Task Force 1 Headquarters was located in Dinkelsbuhl. Companies A, D, and Sv were also billeted in the same town. B Company was at Unter Deufstettin, D/66 at WALLERSTEIN and C/66 at OTTINGEN. Each company was carrying out security missions in their respective areas. At the same time maintenance, rehabilitation and an embryo athletic program were in progress.
- 15 May The operations of the assigned security posts were continued until 151400B at which time elements of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division relieved Force #1 of its security targets #6, 7, 8, 9, 13 and 210.
- 16 May On the 16<sup>th</sup> May C/43 was relieved from attachment to the 66<sup>th</sup> AIB and C/66 and D/66 were detached from the 43<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion. For the first time in over two (2) months the 43<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion was constituted according T/O. Since 43<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion was assigned a new zone of responsibility, the CP and Hq Co moved from Dinkelsbuhl to Schwabsberg (S-764397) closing there at 162035B. Serv Co moved from Dinkelsbuhl to Ellenberg, D Co moved from Dinkelsbuhl to Kirchheim, A Co moved from Dinkelsbuhl to Westhausen. B Co remained in their present location and C Co joined the Battalion from their present location at Ellwangen.
- 17 May On the 17<sup>th</sup> the Battalion CP and Hq Co moved again from Schwabsberg to Ellwangen and Hq Co relieved D/66 of guard post at (S-754359) at 1800B. New billets were arranged and permanent battalion headquarters was set up.
- 18 May On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May a new set of security targets were assigned the battalion and they were manned according to Deployment Statement #1 as follows:

Post #	Location Coord	No of Posts	Total No of Men	Installations and Locations
212	S-754359	2	7	Box Cars. Valuable Equipment. (S-754359) 1 post at N end of cars. 1 post at S end.
26	S-764397	2	10	Bridge, Schwabsberg (S764397) Man at each end of bridge.
22	S-768443	1	3	Road block, Schonenberg (S-768443).
24	S-734500	1	8	Bridge, Schweighausen (S-734500).
28	S-729506	1	8	Bridge, Jagstzell (S-729506)
15	S-895399	1	8	Electrical Equipment, Zobingen (S-895399).
11	S-888372	1	7	Castle, Baldern (S-888372). Guard at entrance.

During the day a reconnaissance for firing ranges in the area was made. None were discovered.

19-31 May

From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> May, the battalion spent time in maintenance, rehabilitation and athletics. Sv Co moved from Ellenberg to Ellwangen on the 20<sup>th</sup> May. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> two (2) new Road Blocks were assigned the battalion at (S-718522) and (S-840518). These posts were set up immediately. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May the battalion received an additional responsibility area that which had formerly been occupied by the 495<sup>th</sup> AFA. All posts and patrols of the 495<sup>th</sup> in the new area were taken over by troops of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Tk Bn by 291800B according to Deployment Statement #2, as follows:

Target Number	Location Coord	No of Posts	No of Mtzd Patrols	No of Men	Installations
212	S-754359	2		33	Box Cars and Equip, 1 post at N end, 1 post at S end.
26	S-764397	2		13	Bridge, Schieghausen.
58	S-788329	1		8	Ammo Assy Plant (S-788329).
17	S-734500	1		8	Bridge, Schwieghausen.
16	S-729506	1		8	Bridge, Jagstzell
52	S-840518	1		8	Road Block.
198	S-923318	1		8	Road Block, Bopfingen.
200	S-916323	1		8	Road Block, Bopfingen.
197	S-913201	1		8	Road Block, Neresheim.
11	S-888372	1		8	Castle, Baldern.
285	S-984315	1		8	Road Block, Pflaunloch.
354	S-894322	1		8	Road Block, Aufhausen.
22	S-768443	1		8	Road Block, Schonenberg.
353	Route "A"		1	21	Security Patrol, Ren Patrol 2 ½ ton Truck.
356	Route "B"		1	25	Security Patrol, Mort Platoon, H-Tracks.

C Co moved from Ellwangen to Bopfingen in order to better cover the new area. This disposition remained in effect up to the close of period 11 May to 31 May. The whole period was generally a period of readjustment and rehabilitation after the cessation of hostilities and included occupation of the Seventh Army Security Command responsibility, aggressive maintenance, inauguration of an organized athletic program, and increased participation in recreational and education activities.