

HISTORY OF THE MORTAR PLATOON

- OF THE -

60TH TANK BATTALION

- 8th Armored Division -

- 1945
- Feb 22 Left rear area at 1545 - two mile march to front line position (Linne) arrived at 1605 - at 1700 guns were re-registered in and first round "on the way" - completed firing at 1800
- Feb 23 First assigned mission in support of "C" Co. 58th Inf. - opened fire at 0830 - main target, large factory used as OP by enemy - completed firing at 1630 - mission a complete success - Capt. Malarkey complimented us by saying "Beautiful work"
- Feb 24 Laid guns on 3 main targets, factory, anti-tank ditch, main road to Roermond - fired 30 rds. of med. ammunition, majority of which proved to be defective - fired 13 rds of smoke on factory for harrassing effect.
- Feb 25 No firing by this platoon - awaiting further orders - occasional enemy artillery fire - Sgt Marsteller returns after 30 days absence.
- Feb 26 Attack in this sector started at 0600 - this platoon held in support of CCR and CCA - supporting artillery very heavy - not called upon for any action. Preparation begun at 1500 to displace forward - counter artillery fire heavy - Sgt Marsteller sent to rear area because of fever.
- Feb 27 Moved back to Manabrach at 1135 to rejoin our company - Alorted at 1300 for large scale movement - Taylor temporarily riding in Command track - DiNardo returned to second squad.
- Feb 28 Pulled out of Manabrach at 0430 - crossed German border at 0645 - Sgt Marsteller returned to platoon - crossed Roer River at 2130 - final destination changed twice as success of attack continued.
- Mar 1 Arrived in Luschenbroich at 0310 - Company moved into confiscated farmhouse at 1100 - occupants of farm included a few slave laborers from the Ukraine - area littered with abandoned enemy equipment, evidently Infantry had defended this area
- Mar 2 Left Luschenbroich at 0315 - destination, Delkrath - final objective changed to Grefrath, which was taken without a shot - however, was heavily mined and several prisoners taken. Weather changeable, with alternate sunshine, rain and snow. Arrived in Grefrath at 2130.
- Mar 3 Left Grefrath at 0615 - this battalion leading Combat Team No. 1, composed of "B" Co 80th., "A" Co 58th., C Tr. 88th., "C" Co 53rd., "E" Co 78th., 405th V. A. Objective Uffert, Germany, and railroad bridge across Rhine at that point - Northeast of St. Hubert, this division was withdrawn to Wall, Germany for rest - Relieved by 5th A. D.
- Mar 4-5 At Wall, Germany
- Mar 6 Moved into concentration area at Vinkrath
- Mar 24 Lost Walter Linthicum due to an attack of appendicitus.
- Mar 26 After approximately three weeks of so called rest with much guard duty at Vinkrath, - waiting for a bridgehead across the Rhine - we left this evening and crossed about one and a half miles north of Ossenberg at 0420, 27 March 1945. The crossing at this point was by means of a well constructed pontoon

- Mar 26 (Cont'd) Bridge about 400 yds long, and took about five minutes to cross. There was slight enemy air activity but to no avail because of our heavy ack-ack protection. Went into bivouac area just after daylight in woods at Bruckhaus. Few long range artillery shells came in, but as were well down and fire was obviously unobserved.
- Mar 28 Moved out with mission of cutting autobahn between Hamm and Soest. Crossed line of departure at 0600. The next few days were a nightmare of little sleep, "O" and "K" rations and fast moves, plus such artillery and mortar fire.
- Mar 29 The first day we were under continuous artillery and mortar fire, but each day it dropped off, except for short periods. Some of the towns we took were: Kirchhelen, Schoblen and Langenbachen. Just outside of Ricklinghausen, our mission being completed by other units, we were given the mission of going south to prevent 17 divisions of Germans, who were bottled up in the Ruhr Valley, from breaking out. Our objective was Herahberg in the Arnsberger Wald (forest).
- Apr 4 Sandy reports of German Panzers at various times as well as A. T. and Infantry Platoon was called upon and delivered effective fire near Ebbinghausen, in which several Panthers and Tigers were knocked out as well as chasing an unknown number of Jerries back. Went into billet at Ebbinghausen after wintering in on Horn.
- Apr 5 Advanced as far as Scherlecke without difficulty though there were various reports of counter-attacks. Relieved by CCB in afternoon and withdrew to Westernholten in reserve.
- Apr 6 Billeted in Westernholten.
- Apr 7 After days of rain and artillery fire, our own and theirs, this day cleared beautifully. Still in reserve, we were moved for tactical purposes to Soest which had been cleaned out except for snipers. Established in the best billets we have had yet.
- Apr 8 Prepared for any emergency, but still in reserve, the day dawned cold and foggy. At 1300 we moved out for Obernse. Cleared beautifully in afternoon, but column was held up by some artillery on entering town.
- Apr 9 Moved out of Obernse with mission slightly changed to that of clearing all opposition out of the Ruhr Valley north of the Ruhr river, therefore whittling down the pocket considerably. Met little opposition until we hit the village of Walsinger, only a few hundred yds from the River. We were held up there and ordered to support Co "B"'s advance toward City of Wickede which was strongly defended. Laid in from old sand pit and took column of enemy vehicles under fire and drove Infantry back. Remainder of battalion was exposed to fire from across the river and all hell broke loose. They seroed in on us with mortar artillery fire and almost got us all. Sgt Glenn F. Marsteller, 1st Squad, was hit by shrapnel and died on the way to evacuation hospital. Platoon was pinned down until dusk and then made the break for town. Spent restless night with no flank protection. Sgt Robert Dixon was evacuated for heart attack early in evening.
- 10 Wickede evacuated by enemy, therefore, we proceeded west meeting stiff resistance all the way. Panzers of all sizes were encountered all the way as well as last ditch Nazis with rifles, burp-guns and panzerfausts! They do not always quit easily! Artillery and mortar fire was murderous. At least four Tigers knocked off this day. Reached Warzen, but was withdrawn to protect Bn. CP at Am Strull.

- Apr 11 Pulled out after daylight and headed west. Dirty fighting all the way, except at Fronenberg which gave up without a shot although half a division of SS Troopers had left the day before. From there on, it was a hell of high velocity, big stuff and other artillery and mortar fire from across the river as well as stuff on this side. Pfc M. Popovich was wounded by shrapnel hitting carbine and setting of shell which penetrated his left hand. Sgt Grant Merritt broke his ankle while jumping to avoid incoming shells - therefore we have lost all squad leaders. Advanced to Strickhordicke at dusk where the Jerries seroed in on us with everything they had. Platoon pulled back again to Auf den Spat to protect Ba CP.
- Apr 12 After the first good night's sleep in 16 days, the platoon worked on maintenance and relaxed somewhat. Co "C" continued mopping up last 2300 yds to objective. Occasional artillery fire dropped not far off, for we are in sight of south bank of the Ruhr and the enemy has excellent observation.
- Apr 13 Lost Pfc Victor Dinardo due to recurrence of hernia suffered about a year ago. Tec 4 Russell A. Carr assigned to the platoon as a driver in 1st squad. Stayed at Auf den Spat until early evening when CCR was concentrated at Bausenbogen. Both towns are only a few hundred yards behind lines, but for lack of ammunition gas or morale the Jerries have slackened off in their resistance. The Ruhr pocket is getting smaller and they are surrendering by the thousands.
- Apr 15 After a 24 hour road march in which we travelled 200 miles, we arrived and were billeted in the small town of Lamm which is 4 Km west of Braunschweig. Set up outpost to guard nearby airfield.
- Apr 16 Performed maintenance and general clean-up. Lt. Morrison plus several members of platoon screened civilian dwellings in this area.
- Apr 20 Left Lamm at 0500 and proceeded to Braunschweig where this platoon was ordered to guard optical and camera factory on the outskirts of town. Was relieved by unit of 2nd Armored Division at 1300. We rejoined company and almost immediately pulled out on a 30 mile road march to the town of Strobeck just a few Km northwest of Halberstadt. Arrived at 1915.
- Apr 21 Left Strobeck at 1700 and proceeded to the town of Goslar in the Harz Mts, about 30 miles away. Arrived at 2030 and was billeted in the best quarters we have seen yet.
- Apr 22 Platoon occupied in screening town.
- May 1 Still in Goslar, Germany occupying and administering the government of civilians. People are cooperative in town, but some of our men have been shot at and abatis dropped across roads in the Harz Mts. Slave laborers are being returned to their respective countries. Weather cool and rainy, health excellent, morale very satisfactory. Just waiting for V. E. day and what may follow.
- May 8 This is it - Victory in Europe Day!! Suffice to say it was aptly celebrated. Although, we realize only too well, that there is another war to be won!