

While marching thru burning Weisenfeld, the four lead vehicles of the Battalion, 2 halftracks and 2 peeps of the Colonel's and Battalion Executive Officer's sections, received sniper fire from one of the few remaining houses. Making a dash for it, the four vehicles roared thru the town, but "A" Battery who was traveling directly behind, wheeled up, and with direct fire, smashed the house from which the fire was coming. The remainder of the march that day was accomplished without incident.

The 11th Armored Division's southward drive had swept thru the large industrial center of Coburg and captured the famous Wagnerian city of Bayreuth. Following the capitulation of Bayreuth, the division was ordered to continue on and take the huge German armor and artillery training center of Grafenwohr.

Resuming the march in CCB column on the 17th of April, the battalion marched 17 miles to defensive positions north of Harsdorf. Resting in place until the 19th, the drive gathered momentum and sprinted to the south of Berlin-Munich Reichauto-bahn thru Greussen to positions near Vorbach, where targets of opportunity were fired upon before another move was made to Stegenthumbach. The days march covered 31 miles. The Division objective of Grafenwohr was taken the same day by the combined operations of CCA & CCB. On the following day, the battalion moved into positions in the northwest area of the Grafenwohr Army Training Camp, a distance of 7 miles. Grafenwohr itself, was a total wreck. The once spick and span streets and barracks were now a mass of blackened bricks and twisted steel. The whole area was pock marked with bomb craters. Among the wreckage were many knocked out tanks, and large caliber artillery pieces. The giant scythe of armored might had mowed the once proud home of the German Military Machine to the ground.

Still pointed to the southeast, the CCB column moved out on the 22nd with the 492d in general support. Temporary positions were occupied at Mantel to fire on resistance encountered at the head of the column, and the 34 miles march to Lissenthau was resumed, where the battalion coiled for the night. Striking out again on the 23rd toward Cham, 32 miles were covered thru very light resistance to the vicinity of Wetterfeld.

During the march of the 23rd, forward elements of CCB liberated an infamous Concentration camp containing thousands of political and war prisoners. As the column moved forward, the liberated inmates came streaming along the road to the rear. When the battalion first encountered them, they were delirious with joy, crazed from freedom. Most of them were emaciated wrecks, scarcely able to shuffle along, but always ready with a wave or a shout for the advancing armor. As the column moved along, stark, gruesome evidences of the bestiality of the German SS troops were seen along the roadside. At a halt, a huge trench was discovered a few yards off the road, filled with the bodies of former prisoners, all machine gunned to pieces. In the dirches beside the road, lying one after the other were hundreds of bodies, each one with a neat hole in the head. The smiles on the faces of the troops in the armored vehicles changed to scowls of anger at this proof of German degeneration. Moving thru a small town along the route, the hunger crazed prisoners were looting every house. Some were seen to be eating raw chicken meat. When roadside positions were occupied, the human wrecks swarmed over it, and finally had to be expelled by force.

German prisoners marching along the road to the rear, were subjected to terrific beatings. Using their fists, sticks, rocks, bottles and the butts of broken German Mauser's, the prisoners meted out their own type of justice beating several Krauts to death in front of the eyes of the whole battalion. A German officer marching down the column, was shot thru the head five times before his attacker could be disarmed. Two immaculately dressed SS men were brought into the battalion area, and after interrogation, were sent packing to the rear. About an hour later, another contingent of prisoners were brought in, and with them were two bloody faced men who had been stripped of everything but their trousers. Upon questioning, it was found that these were the same two SS men who had been brought in before. It appeared that they had been attacked and stripped by the liberated prisoners, and were being subjected to a beating when picked up again with the other Krauts. If there had ever been any doubt in the minds of the men of the 492d about the atrocities attributed to the Germans, it had been erased by the experiences of this day. The 23rd of April remains one of the most vivid days of the war for everyone in the battalion.