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156

Field Arty Bn.



1658-1945

TO
THE MEN OF
THE
71ST INFANTRY REGIMENT
1945

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156TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

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156

Field Artillery Battalion

UNIT
HISTORY



For the Men of the Battalion

The generous efforts of these men have made this book possible.

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Edited by . . .

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*Route of 156 F. A. Br.
during 319 days of
travel in the E.T.O.*



Sgt. Arnold C. Black



Lieutenant Colonel
GEORGE R. PARKS

*Commanding Officer
156th Field Artillery
Battalion*

A Salute . .

By Cpls. C. W. MEHRING AND E. K. GULLEN



THIS is a salute to the basic unit of the Field Artillery Battalion—the section. As it would be impossible to mention and give credit to each officer and enlisted man in the Battalion, one can only endeavor to mention the sections in which they served. Unlike the basic units of the infantry, the artillery section varies in size from the three man crews of the Forward Observer sections to the twenty-six man crew of the Headquarters Battery Wire Section. Each is complete within itself, but all are intricately tied together to form the complete well-balanced Battalion.

Of course one of the primary concerns of an artillery unit is communication, for without an efficient means of communication, effective fire from the howitzers would be impossible. Wire is the primary means of communication, but radio also played its part. During combat the wire crews laid over twelve hundred miles of wire. Radio, too, was kept busy for there were times when the wire was out or impossible to lay. The latter was

especially true during the race across Southern Germany toward Austria.

The sections that comprise the nerve center of the battalion are the Headquarters section, survey section, fire direction, and liaison. The headquarters section duties range from the Battalion clerk who assisted the Sergeant Major and Battalion Executive Officer to the driver of the Command Post truck. Also included is the Operations Sergeant who assisted the S-2 in keeping the situation map up to date.

The survey section located the gun positions on the map in relation to the targets and turned the initial data over to fire-direction. Fire Direction Center working under the direction of the S-3, converted initial data and sensings given by observers into fire commands for the guns.

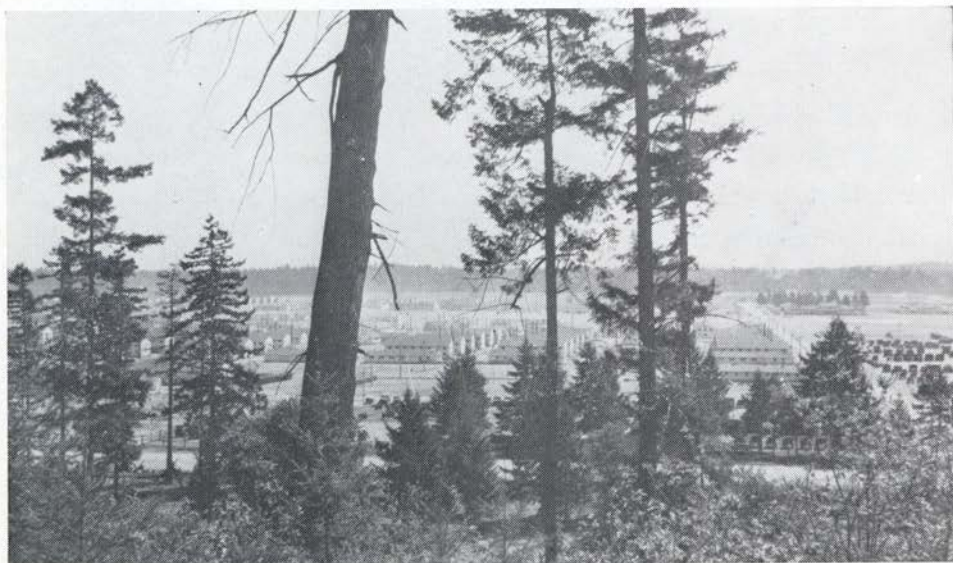
The Liaison Sections are of two kinds: those that maintain communication between the Fire Direction Center and the Infantry Command Posts, and the air Liaison. The ground Liaison sections used wire and radio nets, and when necessary, messengers to maintain continuous contact. The air Liaison flew hundreds of hours, adjusting fire on all types of objectives and targets. On improvised landing fields maintenance crews worked day and night to keep the planes in the air.

The section that had the most thankless task of all was the personnel section, but allotments went home on schedule and payday was never more than a day or so late.

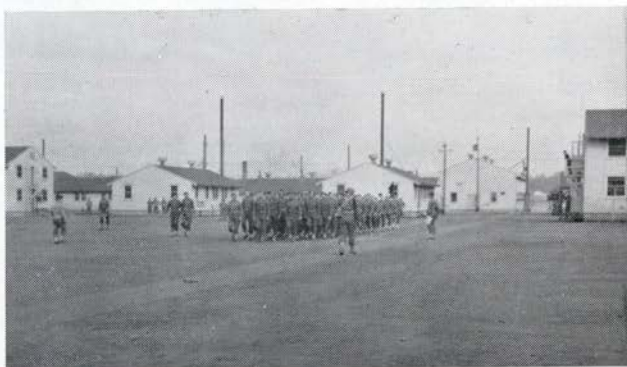
Motor maintenance, which includes the Battery and Battalion second echelons and the drivers themselves, had the tremendous task of keeping the ninety-odd trucks in the battalion in working condition. These men often secured parts by going ahead of the battalion and stripping knocked out vehicles.

The gun or howitzer batteries are just what their name implies. Each firing battery, of which there are three, has four howitzers. Each howitzer is served by a crew of seven men. In reality the entire Battalion serves each gun in one way or another, for, while it takes only one man to pull the lanyard to fire the piece, it requires the help of all to lay the gun, map its location, feed it ammunition and adjust the fire.

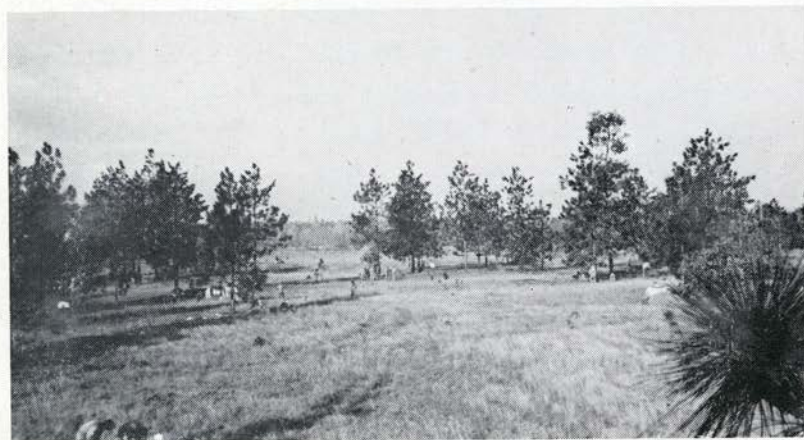
Included in the service to the guns are battery wire crews, radio operators,



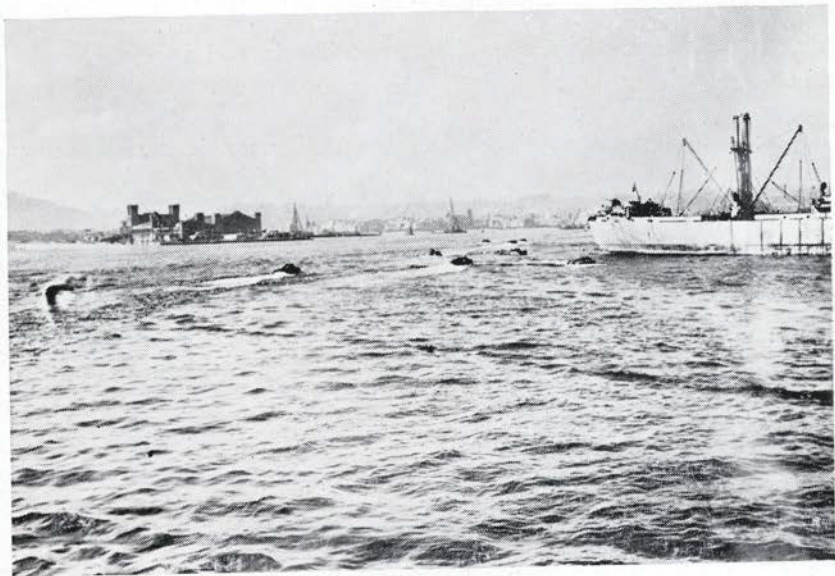
Fort Lewis, Washington,
Training Center for the
156th Field Artillery
Battalion



Dismounted Drill Com-
petition at Fort Lewis



First Bivouac
Area of
Louisiana
Maneuvers,
1944



Cherbourg
Harbor, France
Debarkation of
Battalion



"Sandy," Veteran of
Battery C



T/4 Harold G. Friddell at Gros
Rederching, France, with Silver Star
Cpl. Floyd R. Huskey was awarded the
Silver Star in France

and Forward Observer Sections. The forward observers were the men who advanced with the infantry and adjusted the howitzers' fire on the enemy.

The smallest, but none the less important, battery in the Battalion is Service Battery. To the sections comprising this Battery fell the seemingly endless task of transporting the vital supplies of war: ammunition, gasoline, food stuffs, and all the thousand and one things a combat battalion needs.

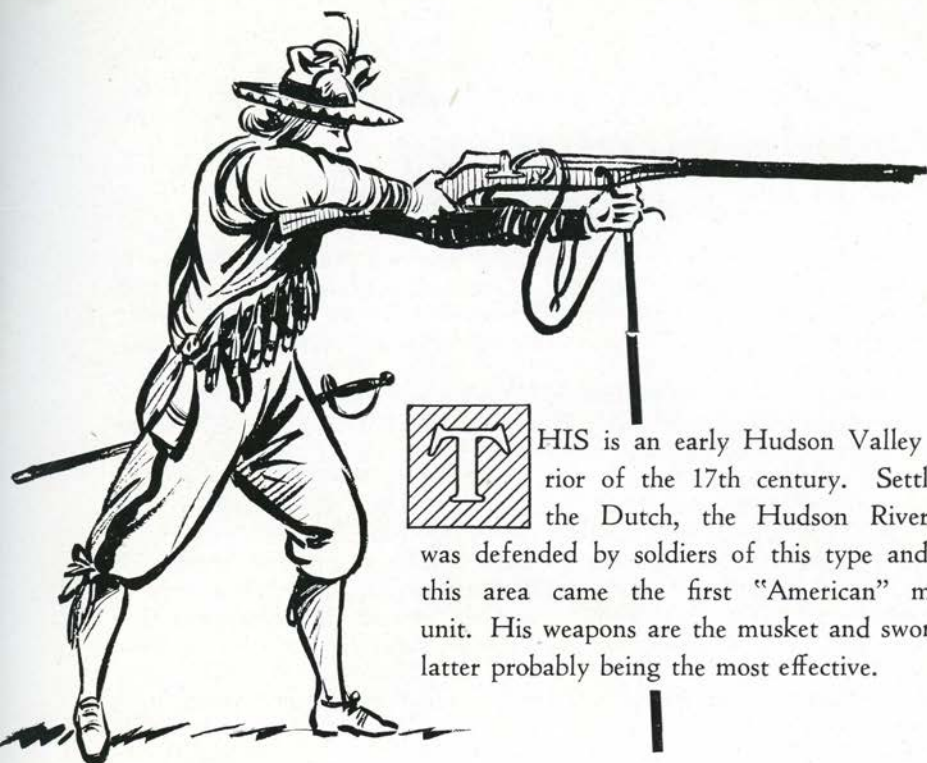
The ammunition train had one of the most important jobs of any section in the Battalion. It moved tons of ammunition from dumps in the rear to the guns in all types of weather, night and day, over shell torn roads. Another of vast importance was the gasoline and oil train. No matter how fast or how far the battalion moved in a day, the gasoline was always only a matter of minutes behind.

Probably the most welcome sight each day was the ration and mail truck. This truck, or trucks, increased the morale of the men more than any other single factor. The high moments were days when mountain bedrolls, shoe packs, or pile jackets arrived. Of course no one will ever forget the mail bags full of packages at Christmas time. Nor will they forget the dinners that were served on Thanksgiving and Christmas. The cooks really outdid themselves on those days, serving turkey and all the trimmings including cranberry sauce.

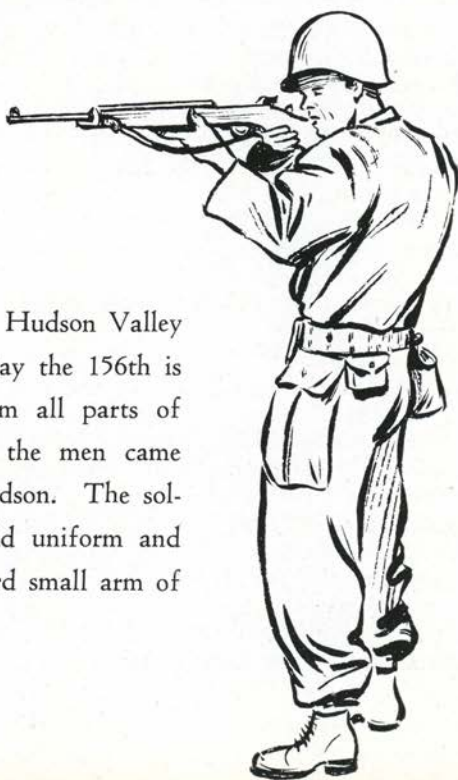
An integral part of each battery was the machine gunners. In most cases they did not function as a section, but were attached to the trucks of various sections. Most of the machine gunners saw the war through a ring-mount or from behind a fifty mounted on a weapons carrier. On several occasions they had opportunities to prove their skill, for Jerry came over often. At Lorch and Goppingen every round of fifty calibre in the Battalion was expended driving off the Messerschmitts.

The medical detachment had a man in each gun battery, but the main body of the section was in Headquarters Battery. Their work wasn't always of a military nature, for at Gros Rederching, France, they delivered a baby.

The men of each section lived, slept, and worked together. Each has its own memories of combat, and each did their part toward the victory which was won. To the sections and the men who composed them—A SALUTE.



HIS is an early Hudson Valley Warrior of the 17th century. Settled by the Dutch, the Hudson River area was defended by soldiers of this type and from this area came the first "American" military unit. His weapons are the musket and sword, the latter probably being the most effective.



HIS is the present day Hudson Valley soldier. Although today the 156th is made up of men from all parts of the Union, a large number of the men came from along the banks of the Hudson. The soldier is garbed in the typical field uniform and armed with a carbine, the standard small arm of a field artilleryman.

Early History and Preparation for World War II

By CAPTAIN MALCOLM P. MCNAIR, JR.

Few military organizations in the United States can trace their history as far back as Pre-Revolutionary War days. One such organization is the 156th Field Artillery Battalion whose Battery A many believe to be the oldest military unit in the United States. A Kingston outfit of the New York National Guard, it dates back to 1658.

Called "Rondout" by the early Dutch, Kingston still cherishes traditions and relics of the past. Once, in the early history of New York, Kingston was the capital of the State, and the old Senate House still stands there today. In early colonial days, the militia unit was controlled by the Dutch since New York was then New Amsterdam, a Netherlands colony. Organized in 1658 to fight the insurrective Indian tribesmen wreaking havoc and mayhem in the Upper State region, the men of the Rondout Militia fought two wars with the wild Esopus Indians. A savage massacre was staged by these redmen at Wiltwycke during the bitter fighting, and the present Battery A was thus first named the "Trainband of Wiltwycke." In the early accounts of these campaigns, distance was measured picturesquely in "Musket Shots" though how accurately the Dutch Burghers could shoot was not very clearly revealed.

In those first years, all fighting was predominantly infantry, and it was as infantry that the Kingston Militia was organized and fought through all our wars until the present.

In 1775 what is now Battery C was formed in Poughkeepsie, New York. Capt. Jacobus Frear led the "Poughkeepsie Invincibles" in the New York campaigns of the American Revolution. The early Dutch Trainband had been reorganized in 1776 into Captain Henry Schoonmaker's Company of Col Johannes Snyder's Regiment No. 1, of the New York State Militia, and fought in the northeastern sectors until 1782.

By 1842, the Poughkeepsie Invincibles had become the "Guards," participating six years later in the Mexican war, campaigning at that time with the 21st Regiment. In 1863 the Poughkeepsie Unit served with the Union Army in Maryland.

Meanwhile Captain Schoonmaker's old company, now in Jacob Stuyt's Ulster County Regiment, joined with the 131st Regiment to fight in the war of 1812. In 1861, this outfit was mustered into Federal Service as Company B of the 80th Infantry Regiment, and fought in every campaign of the Army of the Potomac, from the disastrous battle of Manassas in 1862 through the northern victories at Gettysburg and the Wilderness, to the final capitulation scene at Appomattox Court House in April, 1865. In this war the outfit won 12 battle honors which are carried today on the guidon staff of Battery A.

Both these companies had a share in the Spanish American War, serving overseas for the first time in their history as part of the First New York Regiment in the Hawaiian Islands in 1898.

In 1905 these outfits became Companies M and K, 10th Infantry, serving with the 51st Pioneer Infantry. In July, 1918, they sailed for France and the Western Front aboard the troopship "S. S. Kroonland." The Regiment trained briefly in France and in August, 1918, moved up to the front, participating in the nine-day battle for St. Mihiel. In July, 1919, this Regi-

ment returned to the United States, and shortly thereafter was redesignated the 132nd Ammunition Train.

With the organizing of the 44th Division in 1924, the companies became a part of the First Battalion of the 156th Field Artillery Regiment, organized in the Hudson Valley from the towns of Kingston, Newburgh, Middletown, Poughkeepsie, Mount Vernon and Peekskill.

The Headquarters of the new Regiment which was commanded by Col. Otto Theide, was at Newburgh, home of many present members of the Battalion Headquarters and Medical detachments. There on 12 June 1937, Brig. Gen. W. F. Schohl presented Regimental Colors to the outfit in a colorful ceremony.

The distinctive crest emblazoned on the colors and on the badges worn by members of the Regiment (now Battalion) is truly a graphical history of the origins and developments of the organization. Across the center of the shield is a wavy white band to represent the Hudson River, from whose banks the Battalion comes. The blue half of the shield indicates the years of infantry service, the taro leaf denoting Spanish-American War service, and the fleur-de-lis, World War I action in France. The other half of the shield is red for artillery, but as yet no symbol has been chosen to represent combat in World War II. The red cross of St. George and the blue saltire cross in the upper left corner indicates the Revolutionary War and the Civil War services of the earlier component units.

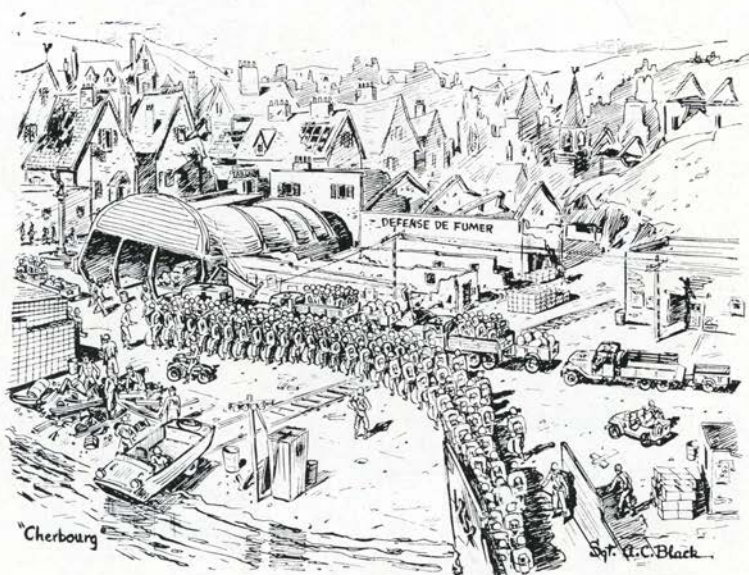
On September 16, 1940, the 44th Infantry Division was inducted into Federal Service and began its training for World War II at Fort Dix, N. J. The Regiment was in bivouac on the battlefield of Gettysburg returning from the Carolina maneuvers of 1941 when the shock of Pearl Harbor brought the realization that this tour of active service was to be long and exacting. In January, 1942, the Regiment, commanded by Col. George Clarke, made a long motor march under very difficult conditions to Camp Claibourne, Louisiana. There in February the Division was triangularized and the First Battalion of the Regiment, which included the Kingston and Poughkeepsie units, became the present 156th Field Artillery Battalion. Shortly afterwards the "Streamlined" 44th was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, as the principal component of the Northwestern Defense Command where it remained doing Coast Defense Duty until December 1942. The Division was again reorganized in February,



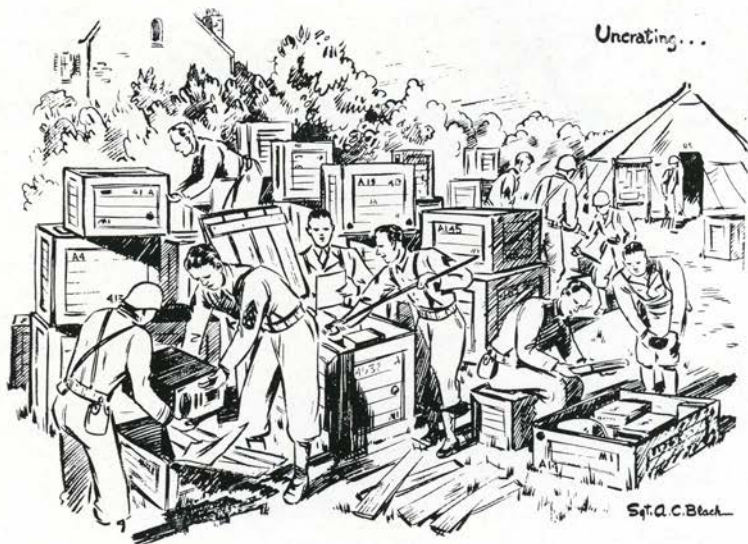


1943, and was brought up to strength to begin intensive training for combat.

The 156th Field Artillery Battalion sent out a cadre to form the 220th Field Artillery Battalion and filled its ranks with selectees. Under the command of Lt. Col Harold V. Clayton who had risen from cannoneer in Kingston's Battery A to become Battalion Commander, the Battalion underwent training test after training test through the summer and fall of 1943. During a freezing cold November and December, the 44th took its Division Tests and prepared to go to the Louisiana Maneuver Area for the biggest training test of all. Lt. Col. Clayton left to take command of the sister Battalion, the 220th, and Lt. Col. (then Major) George R. Parks of Columbia, Missouri, led the Battalion through the maneuvers and the final training phase at Camp Phillips, Kansas, in the summer of 1944.



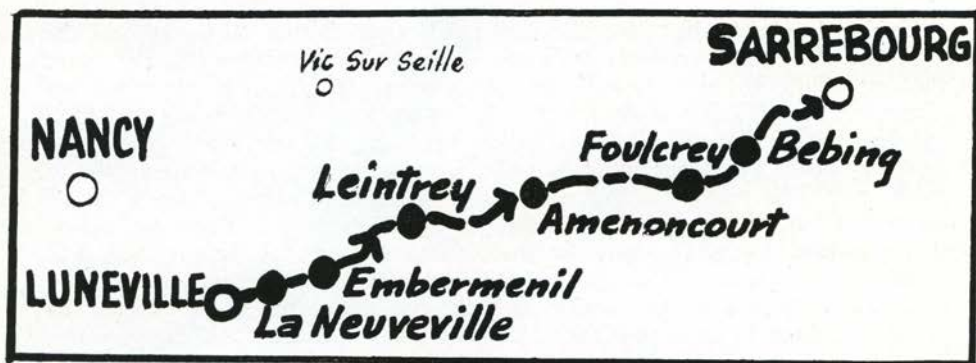
On September 5, 1944, the Battalion sailed from Boston, Mass., aboard the U. S. S. Monticello, formerly the Italian Luxury Liner "Conte Grande," with the rest of the Division, in the first convoy to go directly to France from the United States. Going ashore at the battle-torn port of Cherbourg in LCI's on the 15th of September, the Battalion went into bivouac near Montebourg part way down the Normandy peninsula, to wait for equipment and supplies to catch up. The rumor market was going full blast. General Patton's Third Army was driving against the borders of Germany itself. Each day zebra-striped Allied bombers roared overhead, going south to batter the Nazi-held channel port of Brest. The debris of the summer battles lay everywhere around and "Minen" signs warned stragglers back onto the beaten track. Other Divisions in the area converted their Artillery into "Red Ball" truck companies



supplying Patton. No one knew what the Division was to do. Was the war nearly over?

Battery Mail Censors tried to decide whether or not descriptions of hedge-rows and apple orchards could go through. "Tropical Chocolate" and the B.B.C. began to get monotonous. New mine detecting equipment was unpacked and a detachment went across the peninsula to Barneville and Carteret to sweep minefields and prepare another bivouac area. What was the mission of the Battalion to be?

Then the orders came and all uncertainty vanished. The Division was ordered across France on a combat mission. New trucks were hurriedly serviced, a basic load of Ammunition was distributed and the Battalion hit the first I. P. The route was south to Le Mans and then east, passing just south of Paris, to Nancy and finally Luneville, Command Post of the 79th Division which the 44th Division was to relieve. The 156th Field Artillery Battalion went into a wet and dismal bivouac on the edge of the Parroy Forest, October 16, just west of Luneville, and dug its first foxholes in the combat zone. The next day the Battalion C.O. took the reconnaissance parties forward to LaNeuveville to prepare position in support of the 79th Division. The 156th was in the war.



First Days of Combat

By CAPTAIN JOHN B. BRICKHOUSE

MORNING REPORT ending 2400 16 Oct. 1944

Organization 156th Field Artillery Battalion

LOCATION VO88998—Vicinity of Luneville, France

RECORD OF EVENTS

Left old area 0715 by motor convoy, arrived vicinity of Luneville, France 1200; distance traveled 70 miles; took up defensive positions in range of enemy fire. Morale very good.

The morning report showed that the 156th Field Artillery Battalion had ceased its training and entered on its real job of supporting the Infantrymen with its twelve 105 Howitzers. The Battalion had just completed a three day march across France that had been almost a Cook's tour, and ended on a wooded hill overlooking Luneville, France. Getting to the top of the hill and into bivouac had been one of its hardest jobs, for truck after truck bogged down and only by skillful driving plus a lot of manpower behind the wheels, did the Battalion safely close. The howitzers were emplaced and the first fox-holes of our combat career were dug. It was raining, the sky overcast and everyone was wet to the skin, but spirits were high, for in the distance could be heard the rumble of the 79th Division Artillery and Corps Artillery pounding away at the Krauts.

That afternoon the Battery Commanders, Reconnaissance Officers and the Execs with the Reconnaissance parties went forward on their first combat reconnaissance. One would think that the Recon party expected to end the war right there, for everyone had at least two types of small arms plus trench knives and brass knuckles. They might not know what to expect but at least

they weren't under-armed. Down through Luneville past the town square, then to the right across the river, past Prince Stanislaus's Castle then to the left and out along the road to LaNeuveville. The rain had stopped and it was cold with a biting wind; but the parties stopped long enough to take down all the tops on the vehicles for no one knew what observation "Jerry" had. The road to LaNeuveville showed the results of the hard fight the 79th had had. Shell holes, dead cattle and horses marked the countryside. It began to look like the real thing.

After some delay, they stopped outside LaNeuveville and the parties reconnoitered their positions located in general by Lieutenant Colonel Parks, the Commanding Officer and spotted specifically by Captain Kiser, BC of Able Battery, Captain Crow of Baker Battery, Captain Daily of Charlie Battery, and Captain Naylor of Headquarters Battery. Battery A went into position behind Parroy woods with Battery B about 400 yards to the rear down on the flat. Battery C went in in front of the woods just to the left of the town and Headquarters and the Command Post were located in the town itself. Battery B had a fine defiladed position but it was to pay for its choice spot about a week later.

The reconnaissance parties returned to the bivouac area just in time to get in the tail end of the chow line. Guards were posted, machine guns put out and the Battalion settled down to an uneasy sleep.

Ammunition had been issued and the guards cautioned to be on the alert. Everyone was on edge with a ready trigger finger. The night's sleep was interrupted by shots at every noise in the dark. With the night target practice, wet blankets, and leaky shelter halves, few managed to sleep.

Chow the next morning was early, and the Battalion started to roll at 0600. It was pitch black and trucks bogged down, but after much straining and cursing, the Battalion hit the road on time, in the order, B, Hqrs, A, C. It was eerie and quiet as the trucks rolled through Luneville and everyone kept careful watch of second story windows.

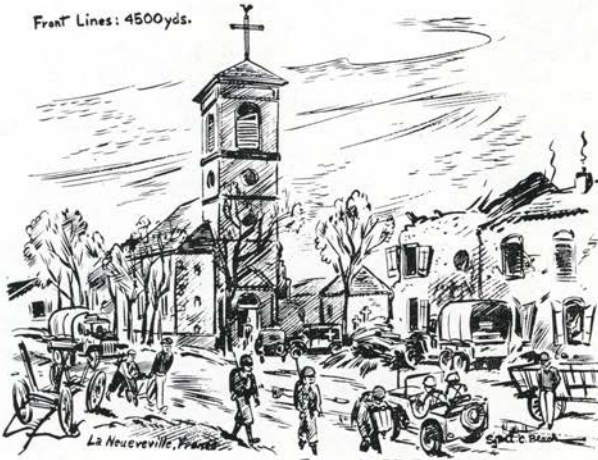
That afternoon, Battery C registered for the Battalion and strangely enough, the deflection was BDR 156. It was Pvt. Felton Stanley of the Second Section led by S/Sgt. Charles Dykas (later 1/Sgt.) who had the honor of firing the first of over 63,000 rounds into enemy territory. It was coincidental that the first round fired into enemy territory was at a shift that was the same as the Battalion designation.

Batteries B and A fired proving rounds and the battalion was all set to lend its support to the 79th doughboys.

Then began three weeks of firing, improvement of position, of work and rain and mud.

On the second day, work was progressing when there was a strange whir, then "quap" "quap" "quap." Twelve rounds straddled the road just short of the town. Everyone dove for the nearest cover. "Quap" "Quap" "Quap." Twelve more rounds landing, but this time Jerry had shifted to the right and one round landed 50 yards from Battery B. One of these landed about 10 yards from Battery A's flank, spraying dirt and steel over the emplacements. The shelling stopped. No hits, but everyone had had his baptism of shelling and many were the stories. First Sergeant Ulrich of Battery B had spent hours

Front Lines: 4500yds.



digging his slit trench which was form fitting. When the first shell came over, he dove for it, landing smack on top of Pfc. Hudson, the Battery Aid man, who had beat him to the hole. It would have been all right but the hole was designed for Sgt. Ulrich, and since Hudson was built bigger in the rear, only his head and feet managed to get in.

The Krauts were either aiming at the road or firing at the "Long Toms" emplaced about 500 yards behind Battery B along the road. Whatever he was trying to hit, he missed but still provided the firing batteries with their first introduction to artillery fire. With that introduction their training was complete, . . . they had become real combat troops.

The liaison and forward observer sections got their first real shelling on October 24 when they went up to the Infantry Battalion Command Posts of the 79th Division at Embermenil Station to take over from the 79th veterans. The Station was marked "concentration 150" on the enemy firing charts and was their favorite target. No sooner had the sections turned down the road from Embermenil towards the group of houses around the Station, than the rounds started to come in. Cursing the broken tire chains that drowned out the whir of the incoming rounds, they scrambled into the ditches, each man wondering why the others weren't as scared as he was. "z-z-z-whack." Cordite fumes drifted in the damp air, while mud and fragments plopped down everywhere. None of the Artillerymen were hit but a platoon of doughs down the road caught it bad.

By leaps and bounds, the sections got up to their Command posts and checked in. The three Liaison Officers, Captain Baker, Captain Babbitt, and Captain Rankin put their F. O. Sections up on the line and tried to settle down on "conc. 150" for two weeks. Until the Krauts were driven back in the middle of November, the Station continued to be the worst place in the sector. Most of the Observation Posts were along the Remabois woods, an area covered with pillboxes of the first world war. There Lt. Orval Rollins of



Battery B captured the first prisoner of war taken by the 156th Field Artillery, and the first prisoner of war to be captured by a member of the Division Artillery.

As the days progressed, the mud grew deeper and many expedients were used to keep dry. Fiber cases were used as walks. Branches, logs, and ammunition boxes were floorings for the pits and slowly but surely the men of the battalion got the knack of living in the field under adverse conditions. Each gun pit had its own dug-out logged over and sodded to keep out the rain and Kraut shells. Sgt. Shoemaker, third section in Battery A, had the most luxurious hut with room for half the section at a time. Pvts. Downey and Redmond of Battery A had private apartments dug into the side of the hill, while Pvts. Shammerloh and Dolphin constructed an elaborate dugout alongside their machine gun emplacement and decorated it with pin-ups. But ambition got the better of them, for with the weight of all the dirt on top, the rain seeped in weakening the walls, and their castle quietly caved in on them. Everyone was constructive minded. Each man had a private hole where he was out of the rain and under cover. The designs varied so that by the end of the week, the gun positions looked like a squatter's paradise.

The Battery messes were set up in the woods, and was a long walk to them three times a day. None of the men will forget those meals—squatting on a log with a mess kit balanced on their knees, they huddled over trying to keep the rain from draining off their helmets into the gravy and turning the stew into soup.

The rain continued making the ground grow softer and muddier. Bugged down trucks were everywhere, and motor sections kept busy, keeping the trucks out of the mud holes, and in shape. In October, the 895th AAA was attached to the battalion. They had come up the long road from Italy and were really battlewise. The platoon attached to Battery A received credit for a kill that first week, when two ME 109's circled a little too low. Before the men were well aware what was happening, the 40-mm. opened up. Soon one of the Kraut planes crashed behind the trees. Bringing the platoon total to 12 planes.

Every night about 10 o'clock, "Bedcheck Charlie" was heard over the positions, looking for a stray light. He apparently never found a thing for he invariably circled once and took off.

One morning about 0400 Battery A howitzer sections were rudely awakened by machine gun fire. Upon investigation it proved to be Pvt. Drapkin, a machine gunner who had been on guard in the left flank machine gun pit when the walls weakened by the rain caved in and buried him to his arm pits. He yelled but without response, so he did the next best thing, just reached up and let go a couple of rounds of fifty caliber. It got results but scared hell out of everybody.

About a week after they hit their positions, Battery B was so bogged down in the mud, it was impossible to work. After much winching of trucks and guns, they pulled out and went into position in front of the woods alongside Battery C. Their new position was a good one except that the road to it from town was marked by a dead horse, whose stench was terrible, but even that was better than the mud.

The Battalion suffered its first casualty on 7 November when Lt. Craik of Battery C was hit by a fragment from a mortar tree-burst as he was adjusting fire from an observation post. Within two weeks, Lt. Craik was back in action, this time as an Air Observer, but was hit again on 28 November by a random rifle shot, and was once more evacuated to the rear.

Just about the time everybody thought the battalion had acquired a permanent home, the order came to displace. Reconnaissance parties reconnoitered positions along the corduroy road near Chenois Farm. This time with Baker Battery behind some woods and A and C in back behind the hill. On this move there were no mistakes. The men had learned from their first position just what they wanted in the way of shelter and hut, and the positions were soon fixed to their liking. The rain still continued and the mud was as deep as ever, but familiarity with conditions made them easier to bear and overcome.

One of the things that really helped morale was the issuance of Shoe Pacs. The men had been in mud and water almost continuously, and the problem of keeping feet, shoes, and socks dry was a big one. Some of the men had such sore feet that a trip to the chow line was an ordeal, struggling 500 to 600 yards. The Shoe Pacs really turned the trick and morale went up a hundred per cent.

On 12 November 1944, the batteries started firing at 1800 and fired continuously until 0700 the following morning. It was the preparation for the Seventh Army offensive that was to end with the capture of Strasbourg. All night long, 18 Battalions of Field Artillery from 105-mm. to 8-inch howitzers roared away . . . and three days later the battalion displaced forward, moving out at 0300 on a cold, crisp morning with ice on the ground and snow in the air.

The first month of combat had been the hardest, with men combatting the mud and cold continuously. But the men had matured, had learned not only how to combat the elements, but how to successfully accomplish their mission.

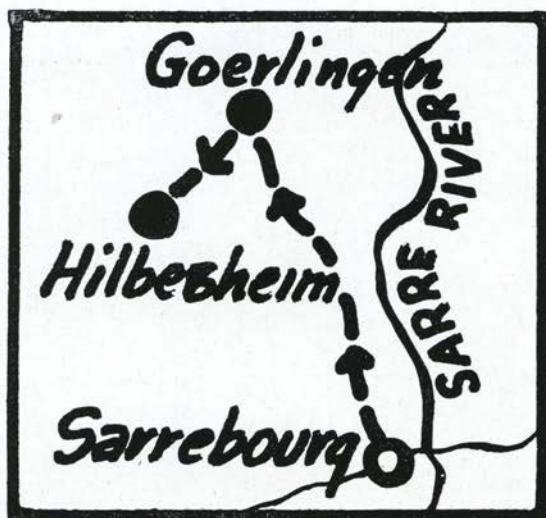


STAFF AND B C's—
 right to left: Major
 Pollitt, Executive; Ma-
 jor Marshall, S-3; Lieu-
 tenant Rollins, Liaison
 Officer 3; Captain Buck,
 Liaison Officer 2; Cap-
 tain Brickhouse, Bat-
 tery B; Captain Daily,
 Battery C; Lieutenant
 Colonel Parks, Battal-
 ion Commanding Offi-
 cer; Captain Naylor,
 Headquarters Battery;
 Lieutenant Soons, As-
 sistant S-2; Captain
 Dews, Service Battery;
 Captain Balken, Sur-
 geon; Captain Kiser,
 Battery A; Captain
 Beyer, Assistant S-3.



**Main Street at LaNeuve-
 ville, France**

**Pfc. Richard E. Baron
 on guard at C. P.,
 LaNeuveville, France**



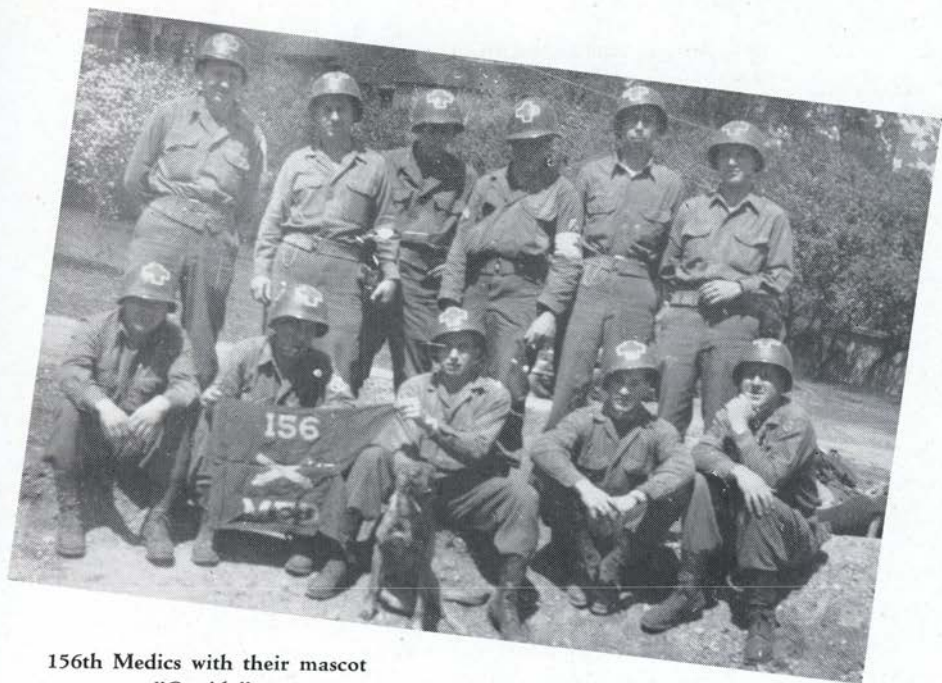
The Drive to Sarrebourog and The Defense of Rauwiller

By CAPTAIN MALCOLM P. MCNAIR, JR.

S-2 Periodic Report, Hq. 156 F. A. Bn.
2200 hrs. 21 Nov. 1944

The 71st Infantry holds Sarrebourog, the Division objective . . . while the Second French Armored Division drives ahead to the Saverne Gap and Strasbourg. No contact with organized resistance at end of the period.

On 13 November, the Seventh Army went on the offensive with the objective of clearing the remainder of Alsace-Lorraine of the enemy and driving him beyond the Rhine. In the sector of the XV Corps, the 44th Division was given the mission of breaking through the strong enemy defenses along a line Remoncourt, Leintrey, and Veho, and capturing Sarrebourog 25 kilometers away. The 79th Division was to attack on the right flank and the Second French Armored Division would pass through when the breakthrough was achieved to seize the passes of the Vosges, and drive to Strasbourg on the Rhine. The 71st Combat team was assigned the center of the Division zone. Ahead lay Leintrey and the Amienbois Woods, a strongly held section of the Kraut defensive position. Since the 71st Combat Team had the spearhead assignment, three medium and two



156th Medics with their mascot
"Cassidy"



S/Sgt. Dykas with No. 2
Howitzer, Battery C



Major Marshall, Colonel Parks,
and Captain Beyer

light battalions of artillery were added to the Parks Group to support the attack initially. The Command posts of the 71st Infantry Regiment and the 156th Field Artillery Battalion were together in Le Chenois Farm near Embermenil Station almost within sight of the line of departure.

At 0700 the attack jumped off. The doughs climbed out of their comparatively comfortable holes and started plodding across the open ground past Leintrey towards the woods on the heights beyond. Driving rain and sleet and occasional snow squalls cast a haze over everything.

Battery A observers moved with the First Battalion on the right of the railroad. Battery B observers went with the Second Battalion on slightly higher ground to the left of the railroad. Battery C observers moved with the Third Battalion which swung to the right of the First Battalion taking Leintrey soon after the jump off. The regiment moved about 2,000 meters against the Kraut fire but could go no further and was forced down into the sleet-covered mud. For two days the enemy held his ground though all the Artillery in the Corps massed their fire again and again on the Amienbois Woods. Even the climactical "Coney Island" shoot which flattened a lane 400 by 1200 yards through the woods did not turn the trick. Casualties from exposure and enemy fire mounted steadily. Captain Rankin, Ln. Officer 3, was wounded on the second day by an 88-mm. shell burst. His crew, S/Sgt. Larsen, Cpl. Duren, and Pfc. Maxeiner won Bronze Stars carrying him to safety.

The third day the 114th Infantry Regiment drove through the woods from the south flank opening the way through the Kraut main line of resistance. On 16 Nov. the Third Battalion 71st Regiment was able to get rolling and the breakthrough was accomplished. The 71st continued to spearhead the drive capturing Amenoncourt and Igney on the 17th. Foulcrey, Ibigney, St. Georges, Landange, and Neufmoulins brought the Regiment to the Rhine-Marne Canal at Xouxange within striking distance of Sarrebourg on 19 Nov.

The 156th followed closely behind the advance of the Infantry, reconnaissance parties entering new positions on the heels of the doughs. Target areas became position areas and new targets were reported as the drive rolled through one town after another.

After a month of position warfare, this blitz war was new and exciting. For the first time the tremendous complexity of a modern army on the offensive was apparent to the men of the 156th. The few roads were packed for miles behind the front with vehicles of every description, jammed bumper to bumper. Groups of by-passed enemy, bewildered by the suddenness of the breakthrough, were everywhere in the woods off the road. A young German officer just out of training school who had lost his company in the confusion stumbled into a 156th radio relay truck and became the first officer PW to be taken by the Division Artillery. The next night at Bebing while going into position the three firing batteries rounded up 182 PWs. As the drive approached Sarrebourg and the breakthrough was proven complete, the Second French Armored Division came up and prepared to exploit the success of the 44th Division. Word was

passed to give road priority to the Armor. French tank Officers in red Spahi caps and leather crash helmets came into the Command Post to get the latest S-2 information.

The leading Battalion of the 71st came within sight of the city on 20 Nov. and ran into strong resistance on the outskirts. As the Regiment moved to the north of the city and started to mop up, the French Armor circled around the resistance, seized the crossings of the Rhine-Marne Canal and raced for the Saverne Gap.

Within the city were thousands of Yugoslavian prisoners of war and slave laborers of all nationalities celebrating their deliverance. Buckets of wine and bottles of Cognac were passed up to the Yanks on tanks and in trucks as the mop-up went on.

The 156th went into position near the railroad on the north edge of the city, 21 Nov., to await orders. Sarrebourg, the first Division objective, had been taken. The Battalion had expended about 6,500 rounds of ammunition and captured 183 PWs in a few brief days.

Combat Team 71 moved on 22 Nov. to Goerlingen, northeast of Sarrebourg to set up a defensive screen to cover the north flank of the advancing Corps. The 156th went into position in the fields just south of town. Two infantry battalions occupied the town while the other battalion outposted the entire sector. The 106th Cavalry Group was operating to the north with the mission of scouting and ultimately occupying Sarre-Union.

The supporting Artillery Battalions were detached and the Battalion settled down to enjoy a quiet Thanksgiving day. Strasbourg had fallen to the French Armor on 23 Nov. and a patrol of the 324th Infantry Regiment, 44th Division, crossed the Rhine that day to become the first American unit to cross the Rhine in the second World War.

The 71st Combat Team had a very wide hole to plug as the XV Corps swept ahead of the Third Army which had been slowed in the north by the fortress city of Metz. It wasn't possible to maintain a solid front so platoons and squads of the Second Battalion moved out alone to outpost a score of villages, patrolling the roads between. Beyond them the Armored scout cars of the 106th Cavalry moved swiftly from town to town, looking for signs of trouble, radioing frequent reports to combat team and artillery Command Posts. The First and Third Battalions stayed with the 156th in Goerlingen, ready to move to any threatened point.

Thanksgiving day was rainy and quiet. The fighting had shifted far to the west and the new silence seemed almost oppressive. Inaction was irksome after the excitement of the past week. By afternoon plans were being made to move the combat team west through the Vosges to join the rest of the Division, and a long reconnaissance to check the route was made through the Petersbach Pass to the Rhine plain in the early evening. But even before the Reconnaissance Officer had returned, events had shifted to put the combat team on the hot spot.

Late in the afternoon the Cavalry picked up a prisoner, a route marker, who told of a Panzer Division moving down from the north three hours behind him. All through the evening, scattered reports built up the picture. The crack

130th Panzer Lehr Division was moving across the front of the Third Army to cut off the extended XV Corps and recapture Sarrebourg. At midnight, the Cavalry Liaison Officer reported his screen retreating before the oncoming Panzers leaving hasty mine fields to delay the Kraut. The howitzer crews caught fitful catnaps waiting for the enemy to come within range while the FDC plotted interdiction fires on the main approaches. By three in the morning. The cavalry, outgunned and outnumbered, had been forced back almost within range and the point of attack became clear.

The Third Battalion moved to Rauwiller astride the enemy's main route of advance and took up a defensive position with the First Battalion along the ridge road to their left towards Helling. Now the Mark V "Panthers" and tracked personnel carriers were only 11,000 meters away and the howitzers began to boom an answer to the challenge.

The fifth sections and ammunition train labored to haul ammunition to the howitzers. Kitchens were moved to the rear and the batteries stripped of all but essential personnel. Displacement positions were located and prepared near Hilbesheim 1200 meters behind Goerlingen. The twelve howitzers fired unceasingly on the roads and fields north of Rauwiller while doughboy Bazooka and Anti-Tank gun teams crouched in the dark shadows of the town waiting for the Panzers. Division Artillery called to say that reinforcing artillery was coming back from the Vosges but it would be several hours before it could help. The FO and artillery liaison radios in Rauwiller checked constantly with FDC. A little before 0600 hours the Kraut armor began shooting into the town and at about six, the attack was launched.

The impact was terrific. Bazooka and machine gun posts were crushed and Nazi armored infantrymen moved up to the edge of the town. Lt. Chapman's FO radio car was destroyed by a direct hit. Lt. Duncan, the Liaison Officer, adjusted fire on the enemy tanks by radio from his attic vantage point until he was surrounded. Though the enemy was everywhere in the town and the Mark V's were firing pointblank into his building, he was continuing to relay information and calls for help when a Nazi trooper found his radio and pulled loose the remote control. Rather than take his chance of escape, Lt. Duncan then went down to lead his men and the remnants of the Infantry Battalion CP group in a last stand. Nothing more was heard from Rauwiller.

As the dawn came at Goerlingen, only 1500 meters away the fight became plainly visible. From the howitzer positions the flashes of the Kraut tank cannon were picked up in the edge of Rauwiller and the batteries laid directly on the town. Time fire was adjusted over the streets of Rauwiller from a hastily established observation post on the roof of the Battalion command post in an effort to drive back the enemy supporting infantry.

The 130th Panzers were too strong. Their self-propelled 88s pushed out on the flanks and fired into Battery B's position wounding Capt. Crow, Sgt. Bowers, Cpl. Crowder, and Pfc. Capizzi, and demolishing a howitzer. Direct hits on the Battalion Command Post knocked out all wire communications. Division Artillery radioed "hold to the last" and the FDC radios continued to relay fire commands to the howitzers.

The Second Battalion took advantage of the lull to gather its outpost platoons and counterattack. Lt. Prescott, Battery A forward observer, was hit as his company moved out to attack. Another F. O. went up to the jump off line to smoke Rauwiller when the counterattack jumped off. The Second Battalion was able to get into the south edge of Rauwiller but could go no further. The battle had reached a stalemate. Neither force could move and the night

"Rear F.O."



passed in a fierce hunt from cellar to cellar. Hay barns burned down to coals, casting an eerie glow over the stricken town.

The deadlock continued into 25 Nov. but help had at last come. Reinforcing artillery, a light and two medium battalions, was firing steadily to cut the enemy force off from its supplies and keep its panzers in defilade out of firing position. The First Battalion 157th Infantry Regiment of the veteran 45th Division drove many miles straight to the line of departure, detrucked and moved out across the fields and orchards towards Rauwiller to attack again. They too fought their way into the edge of town and early on the morning of 26 Nov. mopped up and completed the job, finding the Kraut Armor gone in the night.

The 130th Panzer Division was in full retreat to the north with the U. S. Fourth Armored Division striking hard at their flank, and the 71st Combat Team, momentarily attached to the Fourth Armored Division pushing them in the rear. The threat against Sarrebourg and the XV Corps had been erased.

This first defensive action of the Battalion was a costly one: two officers and their complete FO and Ln. crews missing, another FO wounded, and a Battery Commander and a howitzer section wounded. Though other elements of the Division had come back to help and had been viciously attacked at Schalsbach, the 71st Combat Team had borne the brunt of the initial attack alone and proved that it could defend as well as attack.

For heroism that day, Lt. Duncan and Lt. Daniels, and Cpl. Huskey were awarded the Silver Star by Brig. Gen. Biederlinden, the Division Artillery Commander, and Lt. Chapman and the FO and Ln. crews were awarded Bronze Stars. Since no trace of the FO and Ln. parties had been found in Rauwiller after the fight, it was hoped that they had been taken prisoners, and German PWs from the 130th Panzer Division later confirmed this hope.



Simserhoff Forts and New Year Attack

By T/SGT. EDWARD W. STEELE, JR.



AFTER the savage German counter-attack at Rauwiller had been turned back and the enemy thrown off the offensive, orders were received to proceed north on 27 Nov. 1944. The battalion moved under cover of darkness to the vicinity of Baerendorf, with the task of supporting Command B of the Fourth Armored Division, operating in the Sarre-Union area. Stubborn resistance was being encountered, principally in towns and villages, with the enemy relying on mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire. His apparent purpose was to cover the withdrawal of his forces through the Tieffenbach Pass of the Vosges Mountains.

With the first Battalion of the 71st attacking, Eywiller was seized early in the afternoon of 28 Nov. A few hours later, the 156th displaced to the town. At 0500, 29 Nov., orders for the continued attack were rescinded, and the 71st Combat Team was released from its attachment to the Fourth Armored Division. On the last day of November our Liaison set out to establish contact with the 101st Infantry Regiment of the 26th Division, fast moving in on the left flank. Thus, as another month drew to an end, the entire north sector of the Seventh Army was driving slowly and steadily ahead.

As December opened, the 26th was on the left, preceded by the Fourth Armored. To the right of the 44th, the 100th, 45th, and 79th Divisions, respectively, were moving abreast and covering a front that extended to the Rhine.

On 2 Dec. the 71st Infantry again jumped off toward Mackwiller. The 156th fired continuously all day: a total of 21 missions and 936 rounds. By 0830 the following morning, Mackwiller was taken, and as the doughs pushed on to seize Lorentzen and Diemeringen, the Battalion displaced to Rexingen.



As the advance continued, the resistance increased. The fields were liberally sprinkled with mines—each house, each defile became a possible strong point. There was always rain, then mud. The air grew cooler, the wind more biting. Overhead, the grey skies let fall occasional flakes of snow. The days were growing much shorter now, and evening chow was moved up an hour.

As the drive approached Siersthal, these units were identified as furnishing the greatest opposition: 25th Panzer Grenadier Division, the 401st Volksturm Artillery Corps, and the 361st Artillery Regiment. The two artillery units were operating in the vicinity of Bitche, which at that time, was approximately 8000 meters northeast of the front lines. The ground became rougher, and the caliber of enemy troops improved the farther north the advance progressed. After taking the bitterly contested towns of Butten, Montbronn, Enchenburg, and Siersthal, the Division was on the threshold of the famed Maginot Line.

The next mission called for the cracking of the Simserhoff Forts. The Siegfried fortifications and Germany lay only 12,000 meters away.

The Infantry began to develop the outer defenses of the Simserhoff Forts on 13 Dec. and by the 14th, had been stopped in the edge of the woods, just 200 meters south of the heavily defended Forts. It was decided to reduce Simserhoff by concentrated artillery fire. The Battalion was in position around Enchenberg.

The Simserhoff Forts were part of the Maginot Line defense utilized by the Germans and manned from Bitche west to Simserhoff. The enemy felt they had a good chance for success since the Wehrmacht had failed to capture these same Forts from the French in 1940, although they laid siege to them for five weeks. 88-mm. guns were used at a range of 300 meters but the forts fell only when the rest of the French Army surrendered. The major elements of the fort went down eleven floors and were inter-connected by tunnels in which narrow gauge railways carried men and supplies from one element to another. Air conditioned and supplied with enough food to last until 1 Jan., the forts presented a formidable picture from the attackers' point of view. The forts were mutually supporting and fields of fire covered every approach. The casements were only partially visible from the outside and had walls three to six feet thick while the diesel operated turrets mounted 75- or 135-mm. guns. Secondary turrets mounted rapid firing 45-mm. guns and machine guns. To the rear of the forts enemy artillery, 88's, 155's, and nebelwerfers were in support.

The battalion and its supporting battalions, known as the Parks Group, consisted of three light and two medium battalions and were augmented by fire of a heavy artillery group made up of 8-inch guns and 240-mm. howitzers. During the period the 15th to 18th of December, the forts were subjected to artillery fire of all calibers. Light and medium artillery were ineffective against the walls of the fort and even shells of the "heavies" sometimes bounced off. Most of the observing had to be done within 300 to 500 meters of the target from small, exposed observation posts. Sensings were at times limited to "10 right, repeat range," and "5 left, 10 short" as observers sought to drop shells in the ports and ventilators.

From captured PW's it was learned that the defenders had been exhorted to hold on a little longer as the German Army was ready to go on the offensive all along the line.

By the 19th of December the defending Krauts, after being subjected for five days to an intense artillery barrage, consisting of all types of weapons, from the 3-inch gun of a Tank Destroyer to the 240-mm. howitzer, were forced to withdraw. The walls of the forts were penetrated in many places and the ventilating shafts and gun ports were damaged so that further defense was hopeless. It had been a victory of artillery.

Members of the Battalion received Distinguished Unit Citation ribbons with Company I, 71st Infantry Regiment, for the successful capture and defense of Freudenberg Farm against intense fire, and frequent counter-attacks. Lt.



General Dean confers
with his Staff, during
the New Year's Attack



"B" gun positions on
Wittring-Weiswiller
Road

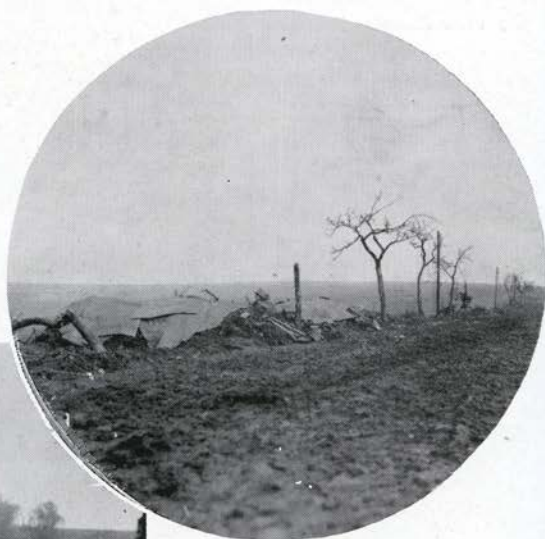


German 75-mm. TD
knocked out near
Brandelfingerhoff
Farm



Doughs take over Simershoff Forts

Front Lines near
Obergailbach



Burned Buildings in France

Maginot Fort
used as O.P.
near Gos
Rederching,
France



Rocket Launcher, first tested in
combat by the 156th F. A. Bn.

Troops of the 71st Infantry capture
Rimiling, France, 15 February



Pelletier pulled his wounded driver to safety from under heavy shell fire to win a Bronze Star. Lt. Randall on his first tour as a combat FO also won the Bronze Star at Freudenberg Farm. Lt. Colson won a second Bronze Star adjusting fire on section of the Fortress from a pillbox observation post 300 yards in front of the infantry, while his section chief, T/4 Friddel, kept the Kraut-heads down with an M1 rifle to assist the attacking infantry forward and win a Silver Star.

News had been received of the great German offensive in the Ardennes to the north. This necessitated the Southern Armies' going on the defensive and meant a widening of division sectors. On the 21st of December the battalion moved laterally to Neaufrange in the vicinity of Sarregumines where "Baker" Battery fired the first rounds for the battalion onto German soil just across the Blies River. Here word came that the enemy had reoccupied the battered Simserhoff Forts. The following afternoon the battalion displaced laterally to vicinity of Witttring, there to take up defensive positions in anticipation of a German thrust at our lines.

Certain of the attack, the 156th made preparations for defense. Howitzer



positions were dug in and fortified with logs while alternate positions were surveyed and mapped, should the original ones become untenable. In the command post defense plans were made to conform with the infantry's. Despite this threat men looked forward to the coming Christmas season, and it was celebrated quietly and reverently.

At 2355, 31 December 1944, the Germans struck. Employing a complete Panzer Grenadier Division and elements of two Infantry Divisions, the Germans made the initial thrust along the railroad leading south to Bliesbrücken—bounced off the First Battalion positions there, driving south encircling two platoons of Company B of the 71st—and continued southeast into the woods, which was apparently the first objective. This was reached at 0200. Lt. Randall and Lt. Frazier won bronze stars for their courageous actions, staying forward

of the infantry to adjust fire on the enemy. Lt. Colson was later awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government for this same action.

The main, concentrated effort developed against the Second Battalion of the 71st at 0300. Southeast of Obergailbach and Erchingen probing attacks were launched with white-coated Infantry, while armor massed in the woods outside Obergailbach. Two regiments of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division drove against Company F, driving a wedge at one point. With heavy artillery fire, and tank destroyers supporting, the attack was beaten off, as the doughs regained 1000 yards, restoring their original positions at 0600. The last effort, made in mid-morning shoved Company F back 300 yards. There the enemy dug in, as his armor withdrew to regroup. The Second Battalion including 156th Ln. and FO personnel, later received a Distinguished Unit citation for this courageous stand against great odds.

During the ten-hour period, the 156th delivered over 2500 rounds of artillery fire. This nearly continuous barrage inflicted numerous casualties, pinned down the survivors of the assault and enabled the Third Battalion of the 71st to contain the force, swing around on the flank and drive the enemy back toward Bliesbrücken.

New Year's Eve had been quiet until the moment of the attack. A sober nostalgic mood hung over the entire sector. But with the launching of the attack, the battalion awoke to action.

Fire direction was a scene of feverish activity during this period. Phones rang constantly and were busy all the time, with fire missions or messages concerning activity on the front line. Computers worked day and night, and radio operators handled three and four missions at a time. S-2 information was vitally important at this time, and the situation map with its locations of the front lines and the enemy installations was the center of constant attention.

The fire was continuous and deadly. Later PW reports indicated quite conclusively that one Regiment of the 17th Panzers had been virtually wiped out with artillery fire near the Bliesbrücken woods where an estimated 800 were killed and 400 wounded. By morning all wire communication was smashed, and the radio of the FO party destroyed. The first thrust had been repulsed but only the steady artillery pounding held down the further penetrations as the weakened flanks were circled. Most of the artillery fire was directed on the railroad tracks, catching the infiltrating Krauts.

It was in the Obergailbach-Erchingen area that Jerry made his greatest attack. Wave after wave of the whitecoated Krauts plowed steadily into the heavy machine gun and small arms fire. The majority of the Battalion barrages were designed to drop behind the advancing Krauts, catching them between two curtains of fire. This plan worked very effectively. Though advances were made by the SS Troopers, the losses inflicted in the assaults proved too heavy to maintain maximum momentum.

The hours between midnight and 0800 1 January will remain unforgettable to all battalion personnel. Service Battery began hauling ammunition in the

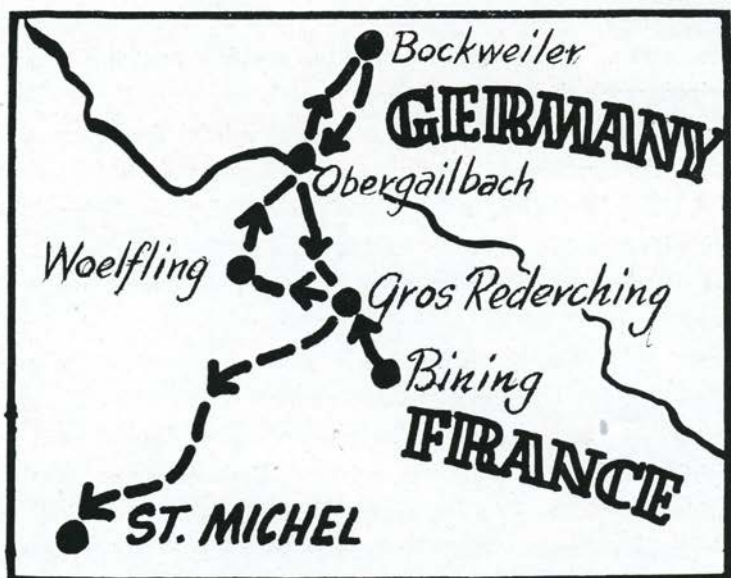
early hours of that morning, and continued supplying the gun sections by steady driving for 48 hours thereafter. The howitzer crews fired barrage after barrage, almost too busy and too deaf to hear any but their own gun firing. The 105s worked like machine guns and the tubes soon showed the evidence. Along toward morning, men poured water and snow down the barrels. Watching the steam rise in the air. Then, a quick swabbing with the oil, and firing resumed. Soon, the pits resembled a Dali painting. Crate and shell casings and fiber cases littered the area. Yet, with all the hell and fury, daylight found a gradual quiet . . . a temporary lull in the storm settling over the front. There was hot chow and laughter, and a sense of pride in a job well done.

But, there was more work to be done. As the debris was cleared, new ammunition was counted, powder bags were checked, the rounds prepared as the men awaited the next blow. Firing continued during the day, but, in comparison with the morning's output, the total number of shells expended was much smaller. Jerry continued to send out "feelers" probing the lines, looking for the weak spots. As darkness came, 1 Jan., the full weight of the attack was felt again. Finally, by driving a wedge between our Division and the 100th Division on the right, a sizeable penetration was made, and the Second Battalion was forced to withdraw approximately 4000 yards. By now, the battery positions were becoming untenable and B displaced to a rear position across the Saar River, behind Witttring the night of 1-2 Jan. Counter-battery fire on "Able" caused a displacement the same night. One howitzer was hit, but no injuries were sustained. The following evening, "Able" again moved to cover the Achen sector, as several German tanks broke through to the town in rear of the Battalion Command Post. Elements of the Second French Armored Division drove this threat back and restored the line.

By 4 Jan., the attack was completely broken; the thrust had been stopped with extremely heavy casualties to the enemy, and plans were now made to restore the line. The division was ready to strike back.



Fire Direction: Witttring



Winter Warfare

By S/SGT. RUSSELL P. HALL



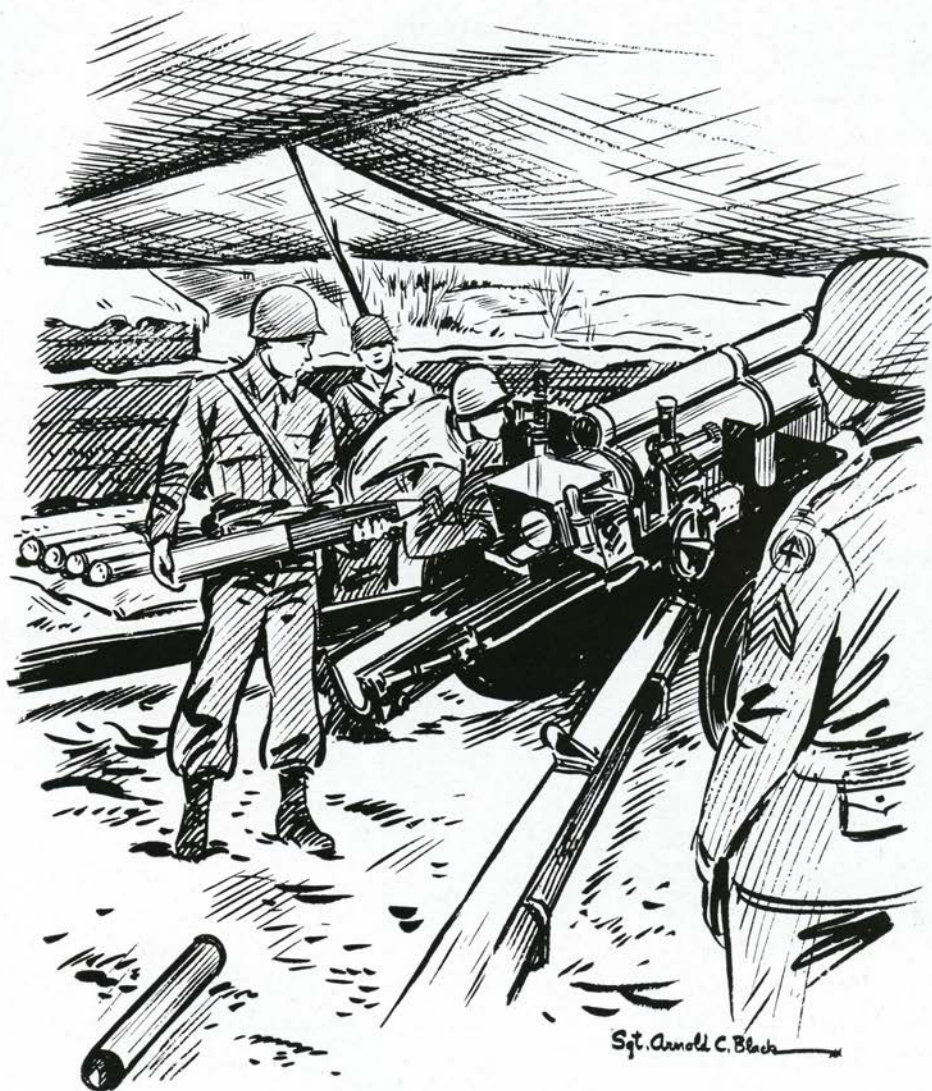
WHEN the German attack on the left flank of the Seventh Army, was broken in January it marked the enemy's last serious thrust at our lines. Then came a period of watchful waiting in which snow blanketed all of Alsace-Lorraine and froze the ground. Foxholes and gun emplacements had to be blasted from the hard ground. To many this was a relief from the muck and mire of warmer days and men of the battalion settled down to the job of making their quarters more comfortable. Wherever their individual duties permitted, men made use of houses or hay barns, any place where it was convenient to have a stove or fire. Cannoneers, who had to be near their howitzers all the time, built themselves huts utilizing scrap lumber, shell casings, and canvas. Liaison and forward observers, who worked and lived with the infantry, shared with them what was available, sometimes a house and sometimes a cold and uncomfortable foxhole. On the brighter side of the picture trucks operated to the rear daily, carrying tired men to movies and showers.

Both armies now settled down to defensive warfare and operations were

confined to preparation and consolidation of positions and routine security and intelligence patrols. The battalion was still in positions around Witting where it had helped repel the savage German attack on New Year's Day. The battalion at this time usually had attached for additional fire power one or two battalions of light artillery. One of these was the 1/3 RAC, a 105-mm. Armored Artillery Battalion, of the famed Second French Armored Division. Lieut. Boinvilliers and crew were assigned as liaison. Usually, when such a group was attached, arrangements were made for food and quarters. The French needed no such service, as they ably took care of that themselves. They simply went to the most prosperous looking house in the town and announced to the owners that they had guests.

On the 19th of January, the battalion was ordered to displace from Witting to the vicinity of Bining. This was a lateral displacement and constituted a further widening of the Division sector. The Division front lines now ran roughly from Sarragumines, east along the Blies River to Bliesbrücken, Wieswiler, a little south of Bellevue and Brandelfingerhoff Farms, east to Guising with the right anchor at Bettviller. As usual the battalion was in support of the 71st Infantry whose zone was the area around Guising. Opposing us at this time were elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division who had participated in the New Year's battle. Identified also at this time were the so-called "Stomach Battalions" made up of men who had participated in similar stomach disorders, grouped together so that a common diet could be administered. Eventually they were consolidated into Battle Group Klein. It was quite evident that the Germans were even now scraping the bottom of the manpower barrel. The weather continued cold and the ground frozen until about the tenth of February.

On the 15th of February, on orders of Seventh Army, the division made a limited attack in an effort to straighten out its lines and gain high ground in preparation for a general spring offensive. The jumpoff time was 0550 and the attack was supported by tanks and artillery. Despite fierce resistance in the form of machine gun fire, mortars, and nebelwerfers, the attack was successful and by nightfall, all objectives were reached. Among the critical points taken in the attack were Schlossberg Ridge, Moronviller Farm, and Rimling. The three great farms Brandelfingerhoff, Bellevue, and Moronviller, which had changed hands three times in the last two months, had been reduced to rubble by the constant pounding of artillery and bombs. Casualties were light; only two men killed in the 71st Combat Team which bore the brunt of the attack. Following these gains the battalion displaced forward to the vicinity of Gros



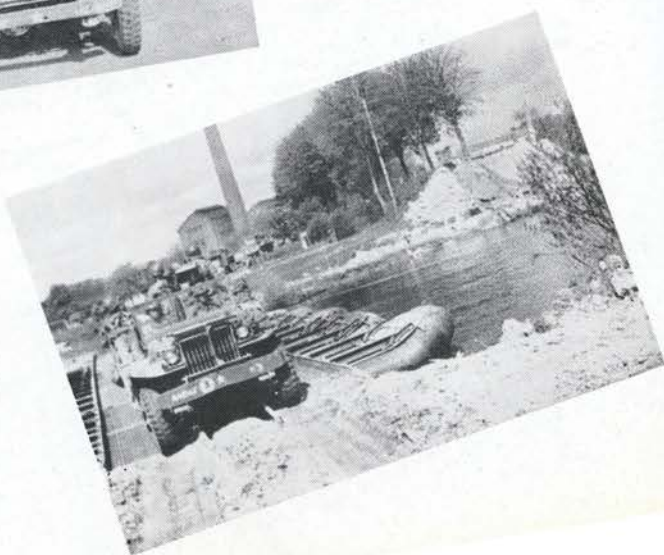
The Howitzer crews fired barrage after barrage.



Crossing the Rhine
River, Germany



Artillery Recon and
Infantry move up to
Mannheim



156th Crossing the
Danube River, Germany

Main Street in
Mannheim after
final surrender



Oil Tanks burn at
Mannheim after terrific
shelling



The Battalion uses one of
Hitler's Autobahns

Rederching on the 17th of February. The rains had started now and the roads were deep with mud. The battalion settled down to the job of fighting the enemy and making itself comfortable. Groups of men still went to the rear for showers and an occasional movie in Sarralbe.

From G-2 reports, it was suspected Jerry's lines were only thinly manned by reconnaissance units and battle groups. The latter typified the enemy organization in our sector, being made up of heavily armed infantry and strongly supported by machine guns. But despite his apparent lack of men the German still fought back viciously whenever a patrol probed his lines. His ever present 88-mm. guns continued to shell our positions and the roads under his observation. On the road to Guising, the battalion had its first man killed: T/5 Alfred Clark, wire truck driver of Hq. Battery, who was restoring communications under fire. Forward observers and Battalion observation personnel, from the hills around Rimling, were afforded observation up to 15,000 yards into Germany.

On the 15th of March, the spring offensive everyone had been waiting for jumped off. For over a week, reinforcements in the form of tanks and infantry had been moving up in preparation for the final plunge into the Reich. The Third and 45th Infantry Divisions went through our lines, relieving the 44th Infantry, while the division artillery would go with the 45th. By the 16th, we were in Obergailbach and at 1000 hours on the 17th the battalion crossed the old German border. On the 18th, the battalion was reinforcing the fires of the 158th Field Artillery Battalion from positions around Bockweiler and here Pfc. Stanley Szeliga of Battery A was fatally wounded when his gun section was subjected to direct fire from a German self-propelled gun. The infantry and tanks were assaulting the Siegfried Line, and the Wehrmacht, pride of the Reich, was crumbling. As yet no German civilians were found, the military having cleared all from the area in front of the Siegfried Line. On the 20th of March reconnaissance elements passed through the Dragons' Teeth and went to the town of Wattweiler. There the mission of the battalion was changed and on 21 March the unit moved back into France near St. Michel for a needed rest. The 156th had been in combat in continuous support of the infantry 156 days. The weather now was warming and the ground drying . . . spring was just around the corner, and hopes were high that the war would soon be over.



Final Drive

By T/SGT. EDWARD W. STEELE, JR.



FOLLOWING the long ride from Bockweiler to St. Michel, where remainder of the division had assembled for a rest, life took on a brighter tone. Tents were pitched, clothes washed; and guns cleaned, oiled and painted. All the musty accumulated odds and ends, bits of souvenirs, and trash, were discarded. Personal correspondence increased and long overdue letters were answered. For entertainment, there were movies and USO shows, Marlene Dietrich offering the main attraction on one occasion. The greatest satisfaction, however, was the thought of being able to spend the

evenings in peace and quiet, smoking and talking, reminiscing about the long winter months just passed. Groups of men exchanged their stories, some humorous, some grim. Ones dealing with the humorous side found the most favor. No roar of a howitzer or the angry chatter of a machine gun marred the evening's stillness. This was the Com. Zone, behind the front lines, where the only danger might be from a visit of the now dwindling Luftwaffe.

Service Battery installed their shower unit down by the canal, and men kept the path to it well worn. A German motor salvaged from the rubble of some fallen village served as the power unit for drivers washing their trucks.

A light conditioning schedule was inaugurated the second day of the stay, consisting mainly of care of material and athletics. Old acquaintances were renewed as friends went calling on buddies in other units of the division. A little military life with a touch of "old home week" was a welcome change from the poundings of life up front.

The interlude was short-lived, for at 0330 24 March, the battalion was alerted to move from the rest area by 0630. Most of the battalion was asleep and unaware of this new order, and thus the early morning cry of "C S M O!" came as a distinct surprise. The unit was ordered to march to the vicinity of Wattenheim, Germany, there to go into a rendezvous area and await further orders. The long ride on that warm day was conclusive evidence that the drive to eliminate the last of the European Axis was well under way. As the battalion rolled across the German border and up the paved roads of the Reich, one could see the results of American might. On every side were the gutted ruins of small, bitterly contested villages, blown bridges, tank traps, and discarded enemy equipment. A few towns had escaped the destruction while others, like Homberg and Kaiserslautern, were mere ghostly skeletons, the streets filled with the odor of dead animals. The Siegfried Line had not held and now the Seventh Army was facing the Rhine. White flags fluttered from all buildings left standing.

The autobahns, superhighways of whose construction Hitler had boasted, began to appear and were a welcome relief from the narrow, muddy roads of France. After closing in the appointed area, the battalion commander and party went forward on reconnaissance and survey for positions near Worms along the Rhine River. On the 25th of March, the battalion closed in positions around Wiensheim with tubes pointing across the river. From here could be seen the great and historic city of Worms with its famous cathedral, evidence of earlier German culture. Now for the first time contact was made with the civilian members of the super-race who had manned the home front while the Wehrmacht had fought in other lands. Although they appeared ready to co-operate, there was still a look of sullen arrogance in their faces.

The mission of the 156th was to support the Third Division's crossing of the Rhine. (One unit of the 44th had been the first American unit to reach the Rhine during the November drive. A patrol of the 324th Infantry crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg on 23 Nov. 1944.) The crossing was successful and at 0030 27 March the battalion crossed on a treadway bridge erected by engineers. After crossing, the infantry, turning south, drove quickly through crumbling resistance toward the industrial city of Mannheim. Late that day the 71st was committed and was given the mission of taking Mannheim with the 156th in close support. Good roads enabled the advance to move smoothly and on the 28th, the battalion went into positions around Feudenheim in range of burning Mannheim. By now the civilians had lost their initial fear of the Americans and watched in stunned bewilderment as the motorized columns swept by.

Inside the beleaguered city, the burgomeister, who had earlier tried to surrender but had been overruled by Wehrmacht officers, telephoned the 44th Division Artillery in a last effort. At 1530 the 29th, the German military having withdrawn, the battered city was surrendered to the 44th.

With the completion of this brief mission, the 44th Division relieved the 63rd. The alert was again sounded for the battalion, however, just a few hours after the unit reached a rest area at Langwaden. This time the mission called for support of the 45th Division, held up at Aschaffenburg, by SS and Hitler Youth. Although the batteries did not fire here, they were afforded a grandstand view of the P-47s diving through the black splotches of Ack-Ack as they released their 500 pound bombs and rockets on the resisting fanatics.

Moving across the Main river the 156th continued to act as a flank guard for the fast moving columns that were driving deeper into the heart of Hitler's Reich. The battalion was now in support of the 324th Infantry, moving into position at Kahl-a-Main on April 1. There we were "visited" by a German jet-propelled plane, in one of the few appearances of the Luftwaffe during this last stage of the war. Most of the fighting was being done by small teams of infantry and tanks, and artillery fire was not needed as much as before.

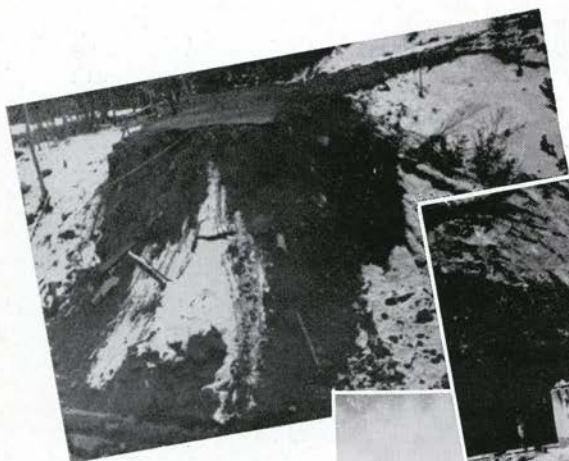
Followed now a series of moves, displacing two and three times a day while the front moved farther away. On April 7, the 44th went into Seventh Army reserve, the battalion moving to Hochhausen after a long motor march south from Gelnhausen. The battalion settled down comfortably in houses of the village after moving the inhabitants out. A short training program was held, and outside of the fire in Battery B's kitchen, life was quiet. The cider and local vintages were frequently and pleasantly sampled, but failed to come up to the standards of the champagnes and cognac of Worms and Mannheim. On the 16th of April the unit moved to the woods near the main river to practise for a future crossing of the Danube. This training was never started, for on the 17th the division was ordered to move south and join the VI Corps now driving for the Fils river. After a 40-mile blackout march, the battalion went into position around Waldenbach, the 71st went into the line, the 156th in support.

The 10th Armored Division was spearheading with the 44th doughboys riding the tanks and mopping up. On to Hausen, Welsheim, and Goppingen sped the columns, the 10th Armored verbally commending us for being the first infantry division to keep up with them. This was due in large extent to the artillery carrying the doughs as the infantry battalions leapfrogged each other. Enemy planes were active around Lorch and Goppingen and small units of Krauts still fought back.

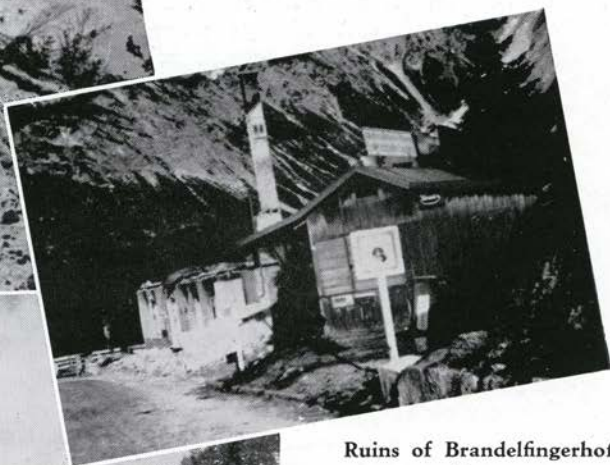
April 23 the battalion moved to Ehingen, on the banks of the "blue" Danube, and stood by to support the crossing of the river by tanks and infantry. Just as the first wave went across and were wondering where the opposition was, armor of the First French Army approached from the other side. It was hard to tell just where the Kraut main line of resistance was at this stage. On the 24th the unit crossed the Danube on an engineer constructed bridge, being very much disappointed at the size and color.

The drive lost no momentum as we followed closely on the heels of the tanks and infantry. The flat plains of Germany were behind now as we climbed into the Bavarian foothills. The weather was cool and men yearned for their winter clothing as the cold rain and sleet whipped across the wooded hills.

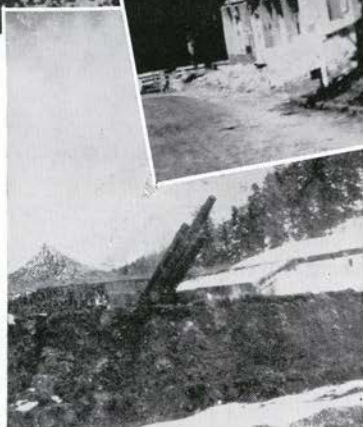
One of the amusing incidents of the war occurred when the battalion was in position around Dietenheim at the Iller River south of Ulm. A German motor



The retreating Germans blew out a road at Fern Pass, Austria



Ruins of Brandelfingerhoff Farm



Howitzer in position for Hi-Angle fire at Biberweir

Below, Fern Pass, Austria





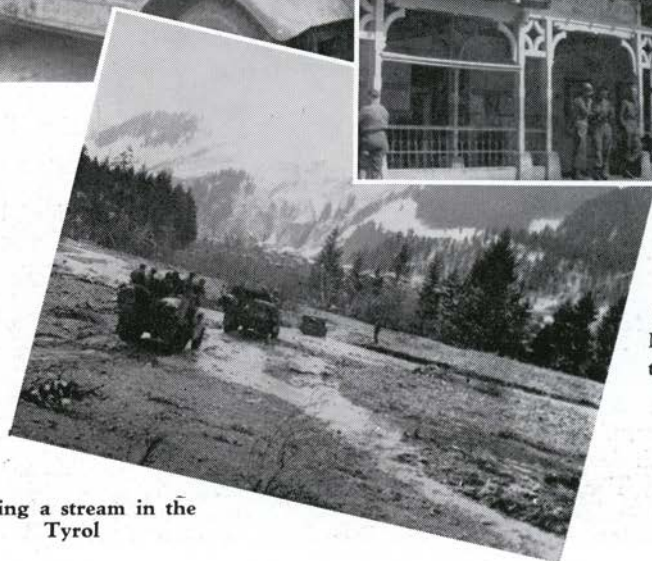
Elements of captured German 19th Army in bivouac outside Imst, Austria



Cpl. George Cooper, Cpl. John Kelly, Cpl. Willard Hanni in captured volkswagon



C.P. at Ober-Meining, Austria, on the day of surrender



Fording a stream in the Tyrol



column, lost and trying to make its way back to its own lines, came into the town at night, put out a route marker, and was almost through when the Battalion Command Post guards became suspicious. The column was made up of vehicles of all descriptions including American, and they thought at first that it was French. The guards opened fire wounding several Krauts and capturing the route marker. Warning was flashed and the column destroyed a few miles farther on. At Erkheim on the 26th the battalion picked up a number of liberated American PWs, former members of the 45th Division captured in Italy who had been working on German farms. Needless to say they were very happy.

By the 28th of April the distant snow peaked ranges of the Austrian Tyrol were visible. The weather was still cold and very uncomfortable and displacements were often made in driving rain and sleet storms. Roads were muddy and clogged with traffic: prisoners still marched to the rear. At dusk of the 28th the unit reached Fussen, last stop in Germany before entering Austria. On the 29th the 156th entered Vils, Austria, on a surprisingly sunshiny day. Opposition was stiffening now as the narrow mountain passes made the ground more easily defensible. By the 30th of April, Bieberwier was reached and here Batteries B and C fired their last combat rounds. The German eagle made its last clawing gesture of resistance in Fern Pass. Resistance was mostly by die-hard SS men. The Wehrmacht deserted at every opportunity. SP guns and bazooka fire, interspersed with machine gun and small arms fire covered the approaches in that sector.

This last ditch stand was erased by a column of infantry guided by a former member of the Austrian underground and artillery fire. On 3 May the Battalion, less Battery A, moved to Ober Mieming, last combat position of the European War. Battery A had been in position at Nasserith, firing their last combat rounds there and later joining the rest of the Battalion at Ober Mieming. On 2 May word had been received of the surrender of all German forces in Italy and of the linkup of the Fifth and Seventh Armies in the Brenner Pass. There was no resistance in our sector as German troops came down out of the hills to surrender. On 5 May the German Army Group G surrendered to the Allied Sixth Army Group, two days before the Official capitulation of the High Command. The war in Europe, for us, was over.



Pig-a-back advance



Who walked a mile for a camel found at Fussen, Germany? (Pfc. Diehl)

German PW taken at Aschaffenburg, Germany



Route markers capture a town with the Second Battalion and load up with PW's



CAPTURED GERMAN 19TH ARMY PASSING THRU IMST

Sgt. Arnold C. Black



Air View of Imst, Austria, on V-E Day

Homeward Bound

By CAPTAIN MENTER BAKER, JR.



By the sixth day of May, it was increasingly evident that the war was about over. Leaving Ober Mieming, we moved west and south through beautiful mountain valleys to Imst, Austria, surrounded by green fields and the snow-capped peaks of the Alps, where V-E Day found us on May 12. As a continuation of our military mission, road blocks were set up to check on the steady flow of returning German soldiers and displaced persons, all trying to get back to their native lands and homes, and teams were organized to investigate the numerous factories in the town and vicinity to determine their part in the war just finished.

At Imst were many fine supplements to the regular Army routine . . . a swimming pool, for those who could "take" the icy water . . . a dark-room for the camera fiends . . . a theater which operated nightly, showing the latest releases from the States . . . football, baseball, and volleyball . . . engagements by the Division Dance Band . . . and periodic visits by the Red Cross team, whose coffee and doughnuts took second place to the chance to look at and talk to some American girls.

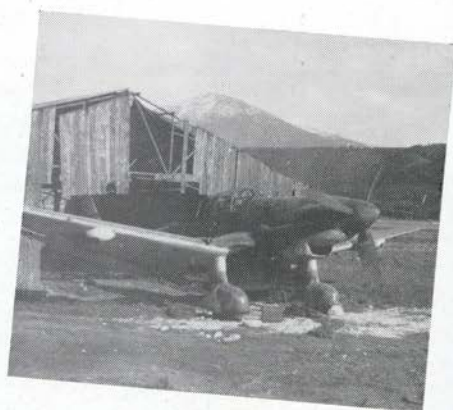
Several interesting sight-seeing trips were arranged while at Imst. Munich—the political seat of the Nazis in Bavaria . . . Innsbruck, at the northern end of the Brenner Pass, which included a trip to the top of the Nordkette by cog-tram and cable car; where skiing and snowballing were a far cry from the heat



Austro-Swiss border,
visited by the Battalion



Inter-Battery games
played daily at Imst,
Austria



Messerschmitt Jet Plane
and Stuka Dive Bomber
found at field near
Innsbruck, Austria





Memorial Day Services at
Imst, Austria

Men bow their heads in
prayer for those who did
not return

44th Division Band at
Battalion Review,
Imst, Austria

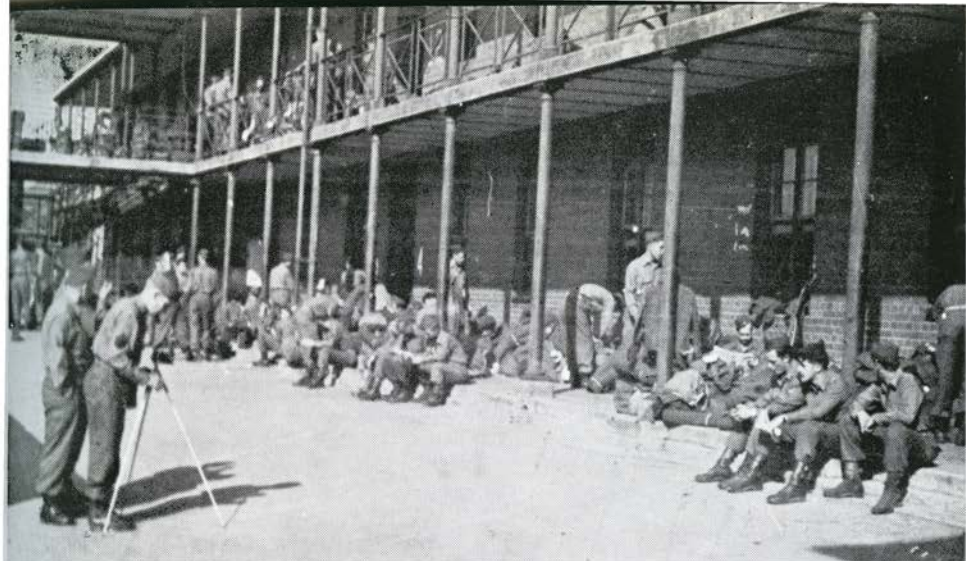


of the city 7,200 feet below. Toward the south, the trips went as far as the Resia Pass which marks the border of Italy and Switzerland; in Switzerland the beer came the closest to tasting like that you could get in Newburgh, Boston, or Oklahoma City. From Imst, some of the war-weary soldiers got rest leaves to the luxury resorts of Lyons and the Riviera. Those who went nowhere at all could still enjoy the sight of luscious, sunbathing Frauleins basking in the warm sun of the grassy valleys. At times, binoculars were at a premium. The more enterprising men even improved the situation by surveying the scene from the liaison planes.

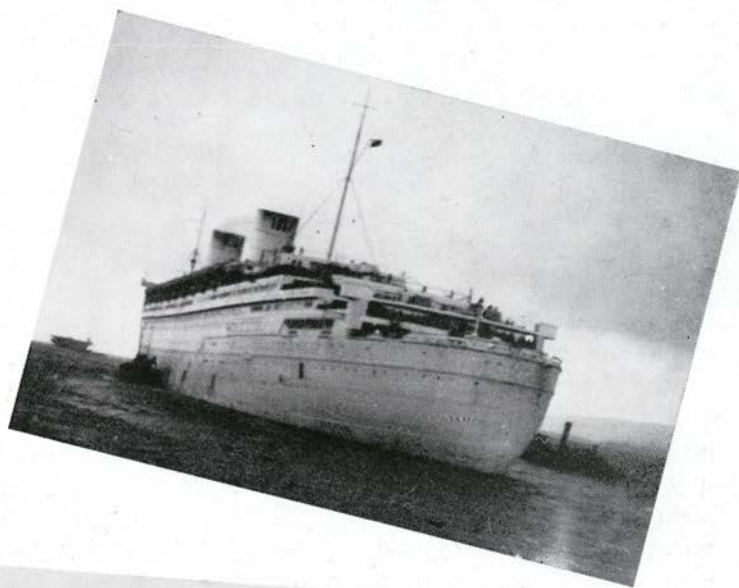
For us, such a beautiful spot was not to last forever. Early in June the rumors started that something in the way of a change was about to take place. On the 8th, after a two-day motor march, we made camp near the town of Bodigheim, Germany. After the comfortable quarters of Imst, the rows of pup tents were a decided change. The few days there were devoted to turning in equipment, packing and crating, and, we knew now, getting ready for a trip overseas. Here, too, a few sightseeing trips were made. Heidelberg, scene of the famous European University and ancient castle where the only evidence of war was the blown out bridges, was the best.

On June 17, another long road march took us back into France, over the route traveled in the Spring Offensive, to the city of Metz, which the 95th Division had fought for so hard in November. After an overnight stop, the Battalion was on the road again headed for Camp Pittsburgh, just outside Rheims, in the area of the famous battlefields of the First World War. Here we turned in the rest of our equipment, including the vehicles which had served us so well through many months of combat. Here too all the remaining details of preparation for an overseas movement were completed. An Army Signal Corps Cameraman recorded these scenes for a Film Bulletin. As part of this preparation, several sets of inventories were made up, only to be destroyed and done over when orders were changed regarding the "loot" which we had picked up. Almost daily trips were made to Rheims and Paris, where a taste of metropolitan life more than made up for the headaches of POM. Before we shipped out of Camp Pittsburgh, the 85 pointers were transferred from the Division to go their separate ways back to the U. S. A. and a discharge.

From Camp Pittsburgh, travel was by train. Our next stop was at another in the chain of Redeployment Camps, Tareyton, near Le Havre, where we stayed only long enough to get a few hours sleep and then down to the harbor at Le Havre and aboard the *Exchequer*, the British Channel Steamer which was to take us across to Southampton. The English Channel was still menaced by floating mines and the crew furnished a bit of excitement by firing at these as we went by. Again by train from Southampton northeastward to Tidworth where large brick barracks and beds were a welcome sight for tired men after the past few weeks of being "rugged." An enjoyable time was had at Tidworth; Bob Hope played a show there; there was activity at the Service Club nightly; and the nearby towns put out the welcome mats for us. Lovely



English barracks at
Tidworth



The Queen Elizabeth
loading at Gourrock,
Scotland



The Queen Elizabeth
sails for home



**The 44th arrives at New York City
amidst a gala celebration**

Salisbury, about 30 minutes away, drew many sightseers; and before we sailed, there were passes to London and Bournemouth.

On July 13, we started the final lap on the long journey back to the States. By train overnight to Gourock, Scotland, and then aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* in the gray dawn of the 14th. Cramped, but not too uncomfortable, quarters were gladly put up with, since we knew for sure now that in a few more days we'd be home again. A truly magnificent voyage brought us into New York harbor on the morning of the sixth day. Passing ships saluted, banners and streamers were flying, and we were escorted up the West River by ships and boats of all sizes and descriptions. Overhead flew welcoming planes of the Navy and a blimp hovered nearby broadcasting dance music and taking news reel pictures.

Lt. Duncan, prisoner of war since Rauwiller many months before, was first aboard the *Queen* to tell us that all the men with him had been released by the Fourth Armored Division during the spring offensive. On the flag decked pier, WACs, WAVES, Red Cross girls and Marlene Dietrich shouted enthusiastically as the bands played. We were home!



APPENDIX





HONOR ROLL

DECEASED MEMBERS PRIOR TO ENTRANCE INTO COMBAT IN WORLD WAR II

(Since September 16, 1940)

MAJ. VINCENT J. COFFEE
1ST LT. RICHARD E. CRAFT
T/SGT. GORDON V. RICHARDS
PFC. JOHN J. CAPARASO
PFC. JOHN CONNELLY
PFC. JOSEPH APOPOPIUS
PFC. ROBERT SCISM
PVT. JOHN MOSHER
PVT. JAMES CONNERS



KILLED IN ACTION OR DIED OF WOUNDS

European Theater of Operations—World War II

T/5 ALFRED E. CLARK, JR., Headquarters Battery Driver, killed in action 23 February 1945, in the vicinity of Gros Rederching, France, buried in the United States Military Cemetery at Epinal, France. PFC. STANLEY A. SZELIGA, Battery A Cannoneer, died of wounds 19 March 1945, incurred on 18 March 1945, in the vicinity of Bockweiler, Germany, buried in a United States Cemetery in the Province of Lorraine, France.

Awarded Purple Heart



CAPT. GERALD L. CROW, Goerlingen,
France, 24 Nov. 1944

CAPT. HARRY D. RANKIN, Embermenil,
France, 15 Nov. 1944

1ST. WILLARD C. CRAIK, Embermenil,
France, 8 Nov. 1944

1ST LT. WILLARD C. CLARK, Eywiller,
France, 24 Nov. 1944

1ST LT. ROGER H. PELLETIER, Enchen-
berg, France, 18 Dec. 1944

1ST LT. HERBERT H. PRESCOTT, Goer-
lingen, Germany, 24 Nov. 1944

1ST LT. ARTHUR H. RUSSELL, Bining,
France., 16 Feb. 1945

1ST LT. VIRGIL A. SCHWARTZ, Ober-
gallbach France, 16 Mar. 1945

1ST LT. VIRGIL A. SCHWARTZ, Block-
tach, Germany, 27 Apr. 1945.

2ND LT. BENEDIKTOS J. MATAKAS,
Reutte, Germany, 29 Apr. 1945.

HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

WILBUR BROWN, Sarrebouurg, France, 22
Nov. 1944

RICHARD B. QUINN, Hilbesheim, France,
22 Nov. 1944

JOHN D. NOYCE, Eywiller, France, 29
Nov. 1944

WAYNE NULF, Eywiller, France, 29 Nov.
1944

WILLIAM T. SCHERTZER, Bieberweir,
Austria, 2 May 1945

GLENN C. EDQUIST, Woelfling, France,
4 Mar. 1945

BATTERY A

ALEXANDER GUZIK, Bockweiler, Ger-
many, 18 Mar. 1945

PHIL J. KAVANAUGH, Bieberweir, Aus-
tria, 3 May 1945

CHARLES J. MITCHELL, JR., Enchenberg,
France, 14 Dec. 1944

BATTERY B

JACK W. YOUNG, Embermenil, France,
24 Oct. 1944

GAIL L. BOWERS, Hilbesheim, France,
24 Nov. 1944

BURNS R. CROWDER, Hilbesheim, France,
24 Nov. 1944

ANTONIO CAPIZZI, Hilbesheim, France, 24
Nov. 1944

MINOR R. HARRIS, Baerondorf, France,
28 Nov. 1944

EDWIN J. STARZEC, Eywiller, France,
28 Nov. 1944

MALCOLM D. GRAHAM, Waldorf, Ger-
many, 28 Mar. 1945

BATTERY C

AUGUST J. SABATINE, Hilbesheim,
France, 25 Nov. 1944

ELBIE L. HIVELEY, Enchenberg, France,
16 Dec. 1944

For Outstanding Achievement



AWARDED SILVER STAR

1ST LT. HARRY V. DUNCAN, 21 Jan. 1945
T/4 HAROLD G. FRIDDELL, 21 Jan. 1945
CPL. FLOYD R. HUSKEY, 21 Feb. 1945

1ST LT. CECIL H. DANIEL, 1 Mar. 1945
1ST LT. JOHN PALYOK, JR., 1 May 1945
PFC. FREDERICK W. PHINNEY, 26 Feb. 1945



AWARDED AIR MEDALS

1ST LT. HENRY W. SMITH, JR., 28 Nov. 1944 (3 Oak Leaf Clusters)
1ST LT. WILBUR A. BROWN, 28 Nov. 1944 (3 Oak Leaf Clusters)

1ST LT. PITTS B. DICKENS, 1 Jan. 1945 (1 Oak Leaf Cluster)
1ST LT. VIRGIL A. SCHWARZ, 1 Jan. 1945 (1 Oak Leaf Cluster)
T/4 HAROLD G. FRIDDELL, 15 May 1945



AWARDED BRONZE STAR

LT. WILLARD C. CRAIK, 10 Nov. 1944
S/SGT. BERNARD F. LARSEN, 23 Nov. 1944
CPL. JAMES D. DUREN, JR., 23 Nov. 1944
T/5 ROBERT G. MAXEINER, 23 Nov. 1944
CPL. RICHARD BRANT, 23 Nov. 1944
LT. GLENN D. CHAPMAN, 23 Nov. 1944
LT. CLAYTON S. PEELER, 23 Nov. 1944
PFC. IRVEN D. MYERS, 24 Jan. 1945
T/5 THOMAS F. PHILBEN, 24 Jan. 1945 (Cluster, 13 Mar.)

LT. RALPH B. COLSON, 3 Feb. 1945
LT. JOHN F. FRAZIER, 3 Feb. 1945
LT. ROBERT B. RANDALL, 3 Feb. 1945
SGT. GLEN C. EDQUIST, 18 Feb. 1945
PFC. DONALD G. LARSEN, 18 Feb. 1945
MAJ. FREDERIC D. MARSHALL, 18 Feb. 1945
LT. COL. GEORGE R. PARKS, 18 Feb. 1945 (Cluster)
T/4 EDWARD T. SYLVESTER, 18 Feb. 1945
SGT. VIRGIL J. WAGAR, 18 Feb. 1945

PFC. ROBERT C. JACOBS, 20 Feb. 1945
 MAJ. JACK V. POLLITT, 20 Feb. 1945
 LT. ROGER H. PELLETIER, 21 Feb. 1945
 CPL. KENNETH E. BARNHART, 26 Feb. 1945
 T/5 ROBERT J. GAMBRELL, 26 Feb. 1945
 SGT. LLOYD MAHONEY, 26 Feb. 1945
 LT. ORVAL W. ROLLINS, 1 Mar. 1945
 LT. ROBERT B. RANDALL, 5 Mar. 1945
 LT. RALPH B. COLSON, 7 Mar. 1945
 T/Sgt., JOHN J. DONAHUE, 11 Mar. 1945
 LT. EDWARD L. GROFF, 11 Mar. 1945
 S/SGT. JOHN J. NACLERIO, 11 Mar. 1945
 S/SGT. ALEX SENETEEN, 11 Mar. 1945
 CAPT. MENTER G. BAKER, JR., 15 Mar. 1945
 LT. JOHN PALYOK, JR., 15 Mar. 1945
 T/5 EDWARD J. PHILPOTT, 13 Mar. 1945
 CAPT. MALCOLM P. McNAIR, JR., 17 Apr. 1945
 CPL. ANTHONY J. BUCCITTO, 1 May 1945
 CAPT. JAMES J. KISER, 1 May 1945
 CAPT. FRANK E. NAYLOR, 1 May 1945
 CAPT. JOHN B. BRICKHOUSE, 5 May 1945
 CAPT. EDWARD H. DEWS, 5 May 1945
 CAPT. RAYMOND E. DAILY, 5 May 1945
 S/SGT. LEE J. VENDITTI, 17 May 1945
 CAPT. KENNETH F. BEYER, 8 June 1945
 1ST SGT. HOWARD J. FORSYTHE, 8 June 1945
 M/SGT. BURTON F. GILES, 8 June 1945
 1ST SGT. THOMAS R. LLOYD, 8 June 1945
 PFC. ANTHONY L. PERRY, 9 June 1945
 S/SGT. FRANK SCOTLAND, 9 June 1945

1ST SGT. BERNIS M. HAVARD, 13 June 1945
 CAPT. JAMES T. BABBITT, 26 Apr. 1945 (Cluster)
 LT. BENEDICTOS MATAKAS, 26 Sept. 1945
 LT. PITTS B. DICKENS, 26 Sept. 1945
 CPL. ROBERT F. VERNON, 28 Sept. 1945
 M/SGT. ROBERT E. WALKER, 28 Sept. 1945
 LT. DONALD S. WOBBEROCK, 25 Sept. 1945
 SGT. MELVIN W. BARTHOLOMEW, 28 Sept. 1945
 T/4 ROBERT L. HOLT, 25 Sept. 1945
 S/SGT. MILTON A. MAISCH, 28 Sept. 1945
 CPL. JOHN D. NOYCE, 28 Sept. 1945
 LT. HERBERT H. PRESCOTT, 25 Sept. 1945
 LT. WILLIAM R. SOONS, 25 Sept. 1945
 T/5 JULIUS A. TITAK, 28 Sept. 1945
 1ST SGT. RICHARD C. ULRICH, 25 Sept. 1945
 PFC. ALISON L. BURGESS, 28 Sept. 1945
 T/5 WILLIAM R. BEHRE, 28 Sept. 1945
 S/SGT. CORADO COLOMBO, 29 Sept. 1945
 M/SGT. PAUL CIPOLONE, 28 Sept. 1945
 CPL. CARMINE J. CAMBERATO, 28 Sept. 1945
 S/SGT. FRANCIS E. RODLAND, 28 Sept. 1945
 S/SGT. KARL F. TIEDEMANN, 28 Sept. 1945
 CWO PETER F. MARTIN, 28 Sept. 1945
 SGT. CHARLES J. HAAS, 29 Sept. 1945
 T/4 ROYAL D. McCUNE, 29 Sept. 1945
 S/SGT. MARC R. FRISCH, 29 Sept. 1945
 LT. VIRGIL A. SCHWARZ, 29



AWARDED DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

CAPT. JAMES T. BABBITT
 1ST LT. RALPH B. COLSON
 2ND LT. JOHN FRAZIER
 T/4 HAROLD G. FRIDDELL
 CPL. SAMUEL H. GRAY
 PFC. ALISON L. BURGESS
 SGT. VIRGIL J. WAGAR
 CPL. RALPH L. JACOBS
 PFC. HAROLD L. COX
 PFC. ALFRED J. MISAK
 S/SGT. CARL F. TIEDEMANN (Cluster)

PFC. FRANK A. BILLMEYER
 PFC. WILLIAM P. CARROLL
 S/SGT. MARC FRISCH
 1ST LT. ROGER H. PELLETIER
 2ND LT. ROBERT RANDALL
 S/SGT. FRANK SCOTLAND
 T/4 ROYAL D. McCUNE
 PFC. ELBIE L. HIVELEY
 S/SGT. CARL F. TIEDEMANN
 PFC. WILLIAM P. CARROLL

156th Unit Citation

HEADQUARTERS 44TH INFANTRY DIVISION

General Orders

Number 15

APO 44, U. S. Army

5 February 1945

The 156th Field Artillery Battalion is commended for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy in eastern France from 18 October 1944 to 31 December 1944. During this period, despite difficult traffic and communications conditions and strong enemy resistance, the 156th Field Artillery Battalion has rendered continuous effective support to the 71st Infantry. On the advance from Embermenil to Sarrebourg, in the attack on Fort Simserhoff at the Maginot Line, as well as in the defense against the crack 130th Panzer Lehr Division at Rauwiller, the 156th Field Artillery Battalion inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy, aided substantially in reducing enemy fortifications and continually enabled the infantry to take their objective with a minimum of casualties. In the defense of the Gros Rederching area, the 156th Field Artillery Battalion coordinated the fires of attached battalions, operating continuously day and night for over an entire week, inflicting tremendous enemy casualties. The combined skill, courage, and high devotion to duty of the members of the 156th Field Artillery Battalion are deserving of the highest praise.

WILLIAM F. DEAN

Brigadier General, United States Army
Commanding

Seventh Army Citation

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP

APO 23, U. S. ARMY

ORDER OF THE DAY

NUMBER 3

10 February 1945

TO: The Officers and Men of the Seventh Army.

On 16 December 1944, the Germany Army hurled its forces against the Allied Armies in the west. It struck this blow in the Ardennes Forest. It was designed to split our forces and inflict a major defeat upon us. His attack was stopped. He was driven back. He then began a search for a likely spot to offset this defeat by a political, psychological and military victory elsewhere. He selected Alsace, recently wrested from him by the hard driving Seventh Army.

The German offensive in the Ardennes had necessitated changes in Allied plans. The Seventh Army was forced to occupy a greatly widened front in order to free elements of the Third Army to attack the Ardennes bulge. In short, the Seventh Army, for the first time in its brilliant history, was forced to take the defensive.

On 21 December you were ordered to stop your attack and organize your positions for defense. The enemy correctly appreciated your situation, and on New Year's Eve, he launched an attack spearheaded by the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division supported by two Infantry Divisions. Though time had not permitted you to complete your defensive organization, your Divisions, with valor and determination, stopped that attack and forced the enemy to again look elsewhere for weak spots.

His next attempt was at Gambsheim, where on 6 January, he established a bridgehead across the Rhine and threatened your right flank and rear. Although he reinforced this bridgehead and continued maximum pressure in the Bitche area, both attacks were contained and you subsequently withdrew your forces intact to a new prepared position of your own selection.

While defending in this position, you gave invaluable aid to the First French Army which was engaged in the difficult operation of clearing the Colmar pocket. You successfully contained enemy units which might have been used to reinforce this area or threaten the flanks of the First French Army. You were responsible for supplying all of the American units with the First French Army, and you cheerfully sent both personnel and equipment to assist them in attaining their victory.

You achieved these results by sound and superior leadership, the thorough application of well learned lessons, and the determination that the enemy should not retake your hard won gains. Your stand was a tremendous blow to him. He learned for the first time, and at a great cost both in men and materiel, that you could defend as well as you could attack.

I wish to commend every officer and man in the Seventh Army, its Divisions, corps, and service and supporting troops. You have done a magnificent job. You have every right to be proud of it as I am proud of you. I consider it a signal honor to have the Seventh Army as a part of my command. I am confident that the offensive power of the enemy is broken, and that together with our brothers in arms we will achieve the victory we seek.

JACOB L. DEVERS,
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.
Commanding.

Order of the Day

HEADQUARTERS FORTY-FOURTH INFANTRY DIVISION Imst, Austrian Tyrol

9 May 1945

ORDER OF THE DAY

SOLDIERS OF THE 44TH INFANTRY DIVISION

That the close of the European phase of the greatest war of all time finds you as the conquerors in these mountains in the heart of Europe is ample proof of your abilities as fighting men. It is appropriate, as we pause in the square of this Tyrolean town, briefly to review your accomplishments, which have brought you here.

On 15 September 1944, you landed at Cherbourg, France.

On 24 October 1944, your Division as a whole was committed east of Luneville, France, where you received your first baptism of fire.

You jumped off on 13 November 1944, at Embermenil, France. You spearheaded the breakthrough of the XV Corps to the Rhine River, fighting in midwinter through the Vosges Mountains. A unit of your Division comprised the first United States troops to reach the Rhine.

Beginning the night of 23-24 November 1944, you halted the savage attack of the crack 130th Panzer Lehr Division, which threatened the flank of the XV Corps.

Advancing steadily to the North, despite the enemy's obstinate resistance, you breached the Maginot Line and reduced the never-before-reduced Fortress of Simserhoff in the Ensemble de Bitche. Poised there on the threshold of Germany, you were called to relieve two Divisions in the vicinity of Sarreguemines, that they might be employed in the counteroffensive in the Forest of Ardennes.

From 1-10 January 1945, you successfully held your sector against the all-out attack of three German Divisions including the elite 17SS Panzer Grenadier Division. Had that attack attained its objective, it would have cut off the United States forces and those of our French Allies in the Vosges and Hardt Mountains, and on the plain of Alsace. This sector you continued to hold until 15 March 1945, when other divisions of XV Corps passed through you to the final assault upon Germany. You then passed into a brief but well-earned rest in Seventh Army Reserve, after 144 days of continuous commitment.

On 27 March 1945 you crossed the Rhine River and, after two days' fighting, on 29 March 1945, captured the important German city of Mannheim, and opened the way for the subsequent surrender of Heidelberg.

In the sweep of the United States Armies through the forests and mountains of Germany, you drove fast and hard, giving the enemy never an opportunity to recover his ballance. Reaching the Danube River, with the 10th Armored Division, you captured the ancient city of Ulm on 25 April 1945. Driving on, up and across the highlands of Bavaria, destroying the enemy before you, you swept into the Alps of the Austrian Tyrol.

In your 203 days of combat, you have captured alone more than 44,000 prisoners of war, roughly equal to a force three times the size of your Division. How many additional enemy you have destroyed, you will never know.

Victory in Europe finds you here, among these mountains. The war is not yet won, nor is the peace. You now stand poised in these mountains victorious soldiers, awaiting the next call of duty to your country.

Soldiers of the 44th Infantry Division, I congratulate you.

WILLIAM F. DEAN

Major General, United States Army
Commanding

Service Battery Meritorious Plaque

HEADQUARTERS 44TH INFANTRY DIVISION

GENERAL ORDERS

NUMBER 47

APO 44, U. S. Army

16 March 1945

Under the provisions of Section 1, Circular 345, War Department, 23 August 1944, as amended, the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded for superior performance of duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks, and for the achievement and maintenance of a high standard of discipline during the period indicated, to:

SERVICE BATTERY, 156TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION,
from 15 September 1944 to 1 February 1945, in France.

By command of Brigadier General Dean:

GEORGE E. MARTIN

Colonel, G. S. C.

Chief of Staff

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