

**Mission
Accomplished**



Germany

**501 Armored Field Artillery Battalion
14th Arm'd Div.**

16 October 1942

1 June 1945

Dedication

"Mission accomplished"
is humbly and sincerely dedicated to those,
our friends and fellow soldiers, who gave their lives in combat
while accomplishing their country's mission

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Forword

In a brief narrative such as this, it is not possible to include individual incidents warranting recognition. The mention of dates, places, and events, both in the United States and in Europe, will bring back different memories to each reader, the story of the Battalion serving as a background.

Joseph H. ...

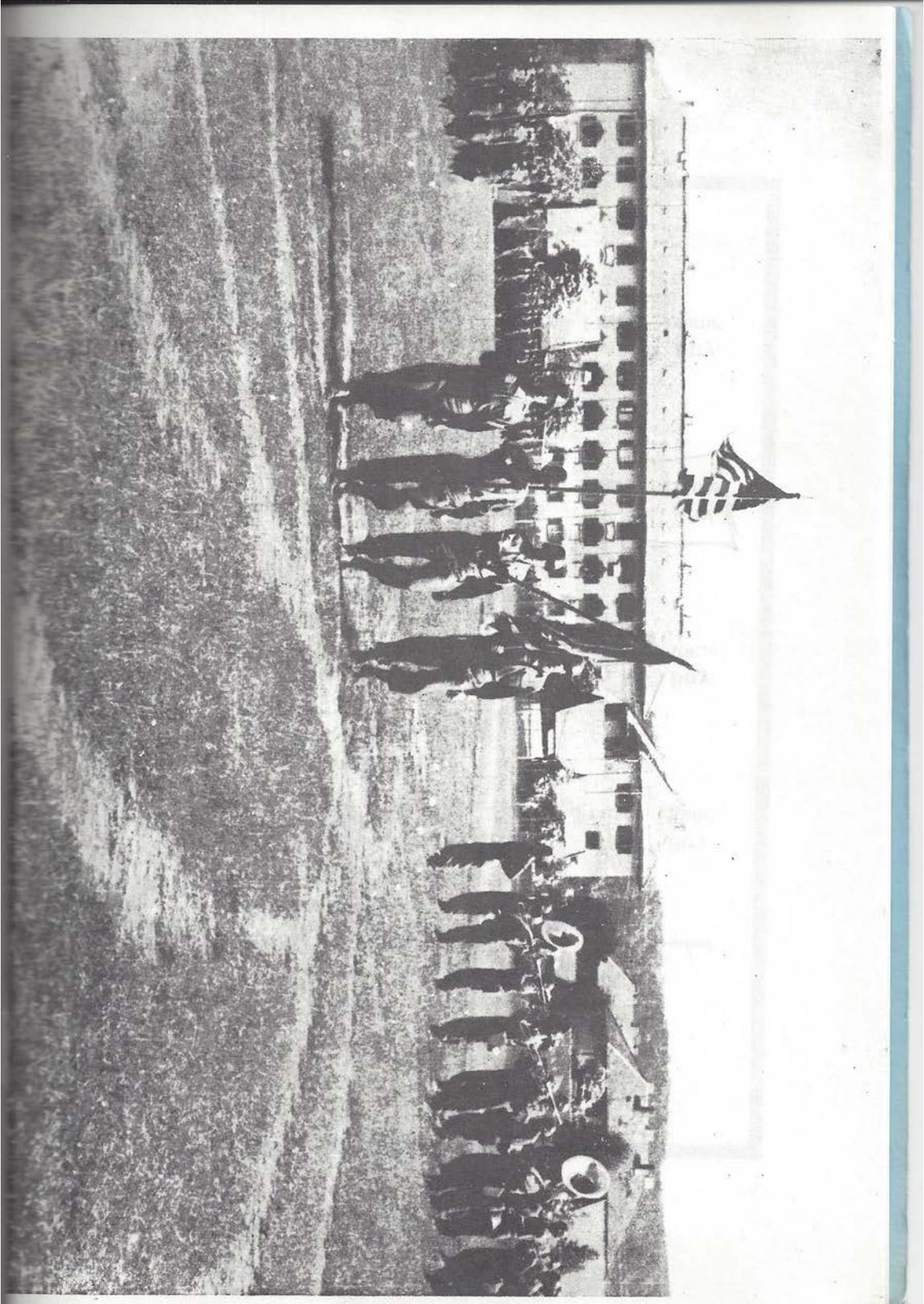
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Joseph H. Harrison

Lt. Col. JOSEPH HARRISON
Commanding



Forming the Battalion, Camp Chaffee, Arkansas

When the Japanese had struck at Pearl Harbor, they brought home the realization that the United States could no longer remain as a supply house but must now take an active part in the armed struggles of the world. With that realization came the knowledge that Japan could not be beaten until the European war had been brought to a smashing victory for the Allies. For such a victory, much armor must be brought into being, more than had ever been predicted before that time. Immediately there were drawn up on paper Armored Divisions which would contain every possible sort of combat forces. Once that had been done, there remained the enormous task of supplying the equipment, manning the equipment, and the instruction of the personnel.

So it was, that on October 16, 1942, there arrived in Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, a hand-picked group of officers and men from the 8th Armored Division, then at Fort Knox. This Division also supplied the Commanders of the various units; Lt. Col. C. P. Westpheling being assigned to the then non-existent 501 Armored Field Artillery Battalion. For two months the enlisted cadre from Knox planned and formed ideas on just what would be taught the men when they arrived. Finally, in December, 1942, the trainees began to arrive, all brand new to the Army without the slightest indications of ever having enjoyed the rather dubious pleasures of basic training. Immediately the cadre set to work, not only to instruct in the basic complexities of the Army, but to teach each man a job that he could do well under any conditions. Training went rapidly and smoothly, with the men putting out their utmost effort to learn, since the jobs were to be theirs for the duration and six.

Work went well and much midnight oil was burned by all caught in the spirit of rapid progress. Then came the happy days when we went out in the field as a battalion and showed off our newly acquired knowledge. We met many interesting problems in the field, conquering most of them. One, however, defied our most stringent methods — those chiggers can really get under one's skin after so long a time!! After hitting it off and

on with everything we had at our command, Potato Hill finally was completely demolished and overrun. The local inhabitants have since compared the victory of Potato Hill to the Roman destruction of Carthage. The only thing we didn't do was pour salt in the shell holes. Then there was good old Spreading Ridge which would be climbed occasionally, much too occasionally, by those wishing to enjoy the magnificent view afforded by that landmark. It was climbed by some who did not care for the view but felt something calling them forward — yes, we had discovered the First Sergeant. But there were always ways of getting out of sight by road testing a vehicle and having mechanical difficulties in the immediate vicinity of Engineers' Lake. If a road test failed to interest the casual goldbrick, the service clubs were open all day long and no questions asked. Seldom were these shrines of civilian memories invaded by the MPs. A popular favorite were the large back doors and windows which could be used in case of conflagration or "other emergencies".

Saturday afternoon and evening found the area all but deserted. Battalion roll call was taken each Saturday evening at Terry's where one met his friends, and it seemed that each one in the Battalion had two hundred friends at least. There we learned how to act if one happens to find himself suddenly enclosed in a sardine can. Sitting down after nine o'clock was unheard of, there weren't any chairs left with less than three people on them. We took turns sort of stooping over a friendly lap. Even the underside of some of the tables were crowded! Occasionally the Battalion would go formal and high hat, throwing a very genteel and subdued ball at The Goldman or the Ward . . . wine, champagne, Four Roses, and Drano flowed like water. A good time was had by all and the people at the bus station could always be depended upon to aid an "ill" celebrant. Those buses were really fast. Remember the time that one of the fellows stumbled as he got on and before he hit the floor, he was in camp? Such speed around an Army Camp was really something to write home about.

In September, 1943, the Division was streamlined and we lost a few men from the Battalion. Their jobs were incorporated into duties closely related and in this way a fighting efficiency was further developed. We began to feel that something was stirring and when we started three to six day problems in the field, we began to see what it might all add up to. During this time, a new and decidedly lower form of animal life made himself known unto us . . . the UMPIRE! What a time the imagination

had picturing the destruction and carnage when the umpire would utter a few terrible words in your direction, something like, "You've just been hit with heavy artillery and completely destroyed. You're all dead...". The game of playing dead or casualty was thought by many to be an interesting and practical new idea, until they found out that a "dead" or "injured" man could be helped along the road to complete recovery with a little kitchen therapy, massaging pots and pans.

Little did we dream that we were soon to meet the grandfather of these fiendish little exercises. Then, like a bolt of lightning out of a clear sky, it hit..... MANEUVERS!!!

"March Order"



Maneuvers

On November 22nd, 1943, the great "Tennessee Maneuvers" began. On paper, the whole thing was very simple and well defined; there were to be eight problems, one each week, involving two opposing forces. We were to be the "Blues" most of the time. By the time maneuvers were over most of us had turned blue more than once because of what the Army politely terms "inclimate weather". To us it was just darned cold.

So we started out, with gay young hearts, blissfully unaware of the tortures and agonies which we were to suffer at the hands of the Army and Mother Nature. Mother Nature had her turn first, greeting our puny efforts with a deluge the likes of which have not been seen since Noah found it necessary to get something more waterproof than an umbrella. There were times when we wished we had joined the Navy, and sometimes, when surveying our battlegrounds, we were convinced that we had. We quickly learned to recognise a dry creek bed that would fill up during the night. Despite this knowledge, there was a night when most of the Battalion was listed as missing in action, having been borne toward the Gulf of Mexico in the watery embrace of a flash flood. And WHO picked that area... it was our first acquaintance with a POE and we didn't even have to walk up a gangplank. The Army quickly solved this problem, however, by keeping us on the roads in our vehicles for days at a time. During these long road marches, many amazing and ingenious inventions saw the light of day—a small can filled with sand and gasoline made a marvelous mobile Westinghouse. It is said that one enthusiastic personality even tried out a mobile latrine in the half track but it came to no good — the paper bag wasn't strong enough.

This was just the beginning, however. In rapid succession followed misery on misery. The rain kept coming down but now it began to freeze—the Battalion followed suit!! "Small hidden fires" came into being, some not so small nor hidden and resembling the Biblical Pillar of Flame. Just as a fire started to burn, after much persuasion and labor, a passing gang would

drop in for a while and the persistent builder would start another fire somewhere else, away from traffic—it was easier than fighting the whole Battalion to get warm by one's own fire. If, by some oversight, one had no company warming themselves at his hearth, "MAARRCH ORDERR" was certain to pierce the still night air before the second stick had caught. The easily discouraged could always retire to their tent and curl around a candle flame. Some times one of the more brilliant GIs would try an indoor fire, and he succeeded too — it is not known exactly how much heat is given off by a burning shelter half, w/ tent ropes, poles, and stakes, but the calories are many. For those who were really cold, a bed roll was tossed on the merry little blaze, a hilarious time being had by the rest of the men who were not financially concerned by the holocaust.

Snow began to fall and some one, bless his heart, thought it the proper time to practice malaria control... out came the head nets and gloves. The headnets did keep the snowflakes out of the eyes but that didn't compensate wholly for the slightly ridiculous feeling we had when we tried to explain to some confused civilian that we were protecting ourselves against mosquitoes — oh yeah, in the dead of winter!

Then there was tactical chow—the last man in line might just have well walked the other two steps to Nashville and eaten in style. To keep from collapsing from hunger while freezing out the chow line, there was always a crushed bologna and cheese sandwich or an old K ration to be found in the hip pocket. For those who didn't crave such mundane fare, there were candy bars and beer, obtainable by the case. Then there were always those wonderful buddies who brought back delightful liquid refreshments from a week end in Nashville. Ah! remember those week ends? The mad rush to get into town and how nice the clerk at the hotel tried to act toward us despite our appearance — the hours in a hot tub while the ODs were out getting the mud chipped off them — the hours in a cosy little nook with a tall glass of amber liquid as one of our companions — and finally, to bed with ten others who arrived late and "just couldn't find a room anywhere". It was during those days that we learned the value of a friend with a hotel room and a sharing nature.

For two rugged months this agony continued, amid much waving of black flags, taking the wrong cow paths and ending up somewhere behind the enemy lines, cussing umpires, simulated fires and comforts, and waking in the mornings to find one's self part of the frozen terrain. It was rough, rougher than combat.

We had combat conditions without the heavier equipment issued for combat. Our collective misery drew us together and made the Battalion even more of a smoothly functioning team. Not only did we know our own jobs, but the experience gave us a sense of responsibility to the Battalion and a sense of "belonging", something that makes it very difficult for one not to put every effort in his job.

Then, one wonderful day, it came. On the evening of January 18, the Battalion was sitting on the road slowly freezing to death when a roar went up from the head of the column and slowly swept toward the rear. Maneuvers were over, finished, and completed. We settled down in the bivouac area that night secure in the knowledge that no more "MAARRCH ORDERR" would interrupt our beauty sleep. We were to move to an established camp with beds and the rest of the wonders of modern civilization. Many went to sleep that night wondering if he could remember how to shave with hot water in a white, clean, porcelain bowl... ah plumbing. Foo to maneuvers... foo to umpires... foo...

Donuts



Camp Campbell, Kentucky

It was a day to be remembered. The second of February brought the Battalion into garrison life at Camp Campbell, Kentucky. Those beds felt wonderful. One could walk about without getting mud on his ankles, there were warm quarters in which to lounge and about which to write home.

Porcelain plates and cups became the rage; not even the die-hards used mess gear at chow. Shower facilities were available; yes, maybe it was cold part of the time, but you got cleaned off, didn't you?

Something had to be done about this soft life. It was! The Battalion started going on three day problems. Weaver's Corners became as well known as the Orderly Room. Dust became almost unbearable; it was in your hair, on your clothes, and in your chow. When the problem was officially announced as "over", the mad scramble for the camp and the wash racks began. The officers re-fought the problem at the wash racks as hoses spouted icy water over the vehicles in the hurrying efforts of the crews to get everything cleaned up.

When the barracks was finally reached, the big question was "how did so-and-so get up here and get cleaned up already?" Upon finally edging one's way into the shower, and getting some of the dust off, a newcomer would cover you with his dust and the whole thing started over again . . . this could go on indefinitely.

March, brought the men in from ASTP to bring the Battalion up to strength.

Week problems started in May. What a life that was! The Medics conducted classes on Anny, the Malaria Mosquito, seemingly bound and determined that we were headed for the CBI.

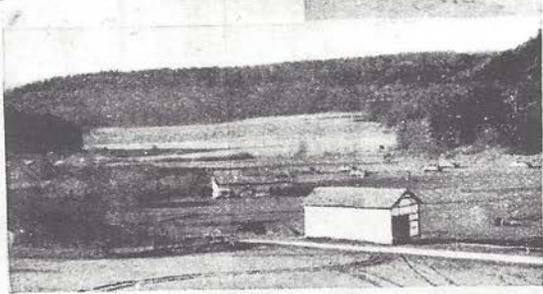
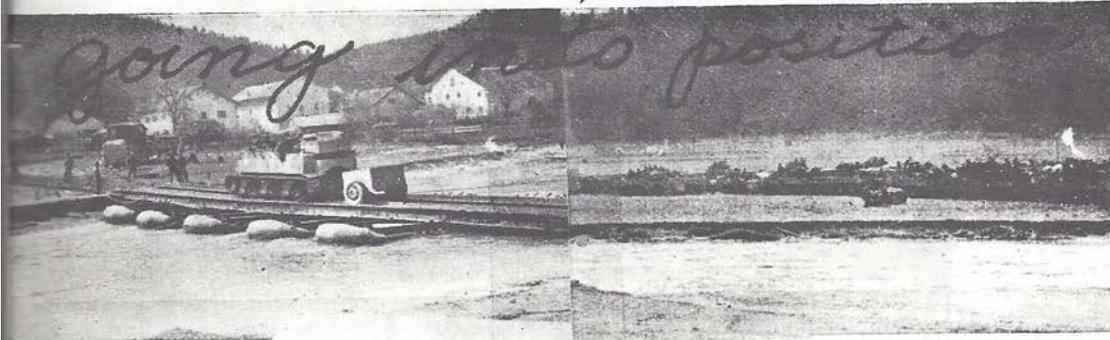
Pay day was always an event; the floors and tables were busy with those entertaining little games that soldiers play. Remember how an American quarter rings? The beer flowed freely at the PX. Some went to the movie at (hey you, get back in line — there's no stars on your shoulder!) Theatre III, while the more energetic catered to the first runs at Theatre V.

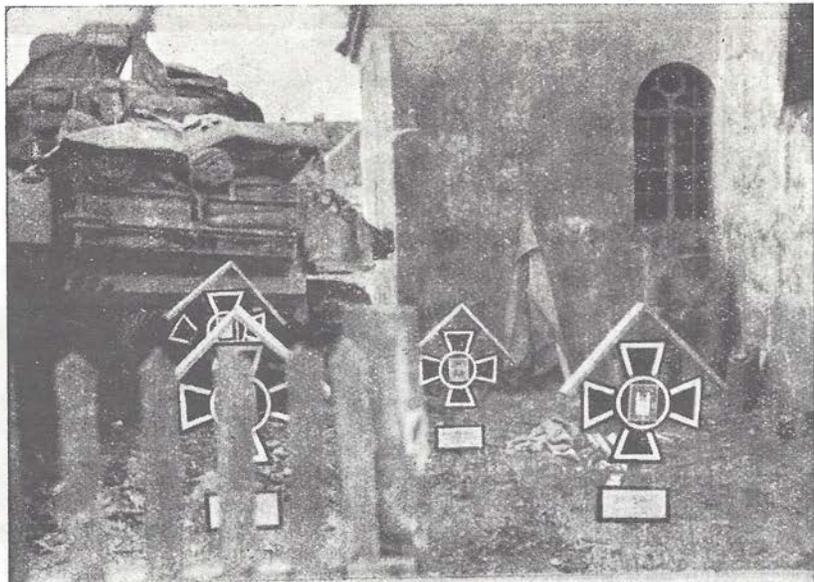
When time to hit the hay came along, there were always two or three guitars accompanied by weird vocalists ringing in the area. And in the morning it was "The Lone Cowboy" from WSN.

After breakfast, the Battalion went to work, that is, except for the mess sergeants, who read the paper at that time. On Sundays the familiar call of "Bring that paper up here, kid" aroused drowsy comment from those still in bed.

Guard! If it came on the eight day instead of the ninth, there was a rebellion somewhere... those days are gone forever. But, most of the bitterness of such a raw deal could be successfully drowned in the beer parties that kept cropping up on the social calender.

Then, one fine day, some large boxes began to appear at the motor park and our activities took on a new and more hurried appearance. Yes, the big day was rapidly approaching, we were going overseas. On October 6, after being firmly strapped to our equipment, all three tons of it, we began to suspect that we would not continue to enjoy the blessings of Camp Campbell much longer... we were to leave that evening, early the schedule said. But as those things happen, our train was late and we killed time by seeing a movie which was free to us through the courtesy of the Battalion Fund, or someone who had a friend at the box office. A rowdy time was had by all and many stinging insults were thrown toward the screen and those Hollywood soldiers. After all, we were practically fighting men now and knew all there was to know about combat..... Oh Yeah!!





Destruction



Goodby! USA - - Hello France!!!

After the show, we returned to the barracks, both of them, and waited for our Pullmans to ride over the horizon. And were we amazed... when the train finally arrived at 0330, it really was Pullman. We had breakfast in bed for the first time in the Army while we rolled through Nashville. The Battalion rolled through Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and into New York. Many saw Washington, the Capitol building gleaming in the bright sun, for the first time. Early on Sunday morning the Battalion arrived at Camp Shanks. No time was wasted; the inspections began immediately. The shortest "physical" on record will never be forgotten by those who attended that track meet.

The food was excellent and there were seconds if desired. Clothing and equipment were checked and re-checked. A ranking T/5 from QM made a ten second inspection of doubtful items... he usually ended by making a decision that would not have appealed to the taxpayers in the least. In the evening, there were shows, both stage and screen, for entertainment, and the PXs were well stocked with supplies, including ice cream and good beer... lots of it. We won't even mention here the passes to New York... they were practically non-existent.

Censorship began. The first things to go were those "cute" and secret remarks on the envelope flaps — "SWAK", "ILY, B" and the usual XXXXs which we didn't ever dream might contain military information.

Friday, October 13 arrived. The duffle bags left in trucks and the Battalion followed on foot. A band played gay tunes as we boarded the train and why shouldn't they—they weren't going anywhere!!! Bag lunches were in style for dinner and were consumed long before noon.

The ferry took us to the pier adjoining the berth of the renowned "Sea Robin", since known to the public as the "Blind Robin", "Bouncing Robin", and "Thet gol derved smelly, rocking tub". The ladies of the Red Cross were on the pier with

coffee and candy bars to help us over any faint feelings as we struggled up the gangplank... "First name and middle initial". October 14th. So long America...

Once at sea we became used to the cramped quarters and settled down for a luxurious crossing. Most had difficulties with their first meals at sea and were most generous in feeding the fish. Entertainment was limited, but there were movies and informal variety shows to occupy time... not to mention two gun inspections every day. Writing letters and reading GI publications helped, with amusing games in the so called shower rooms for those who had Monte Carlo instincts. Salt water baths were not practical. One felt as smooth and clean as a number 4 wood rasp after one of the little deals. Candy bars weren't plentiful on board, as we had heard, but there were always plenty of delicious lemon drops for the sweet tooth. Evacuation drills were a daily occurrence; the gun crews had regular practice, with an occasional "shoot" to liven things up for all concerned.

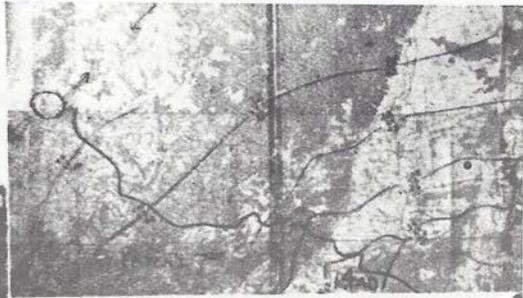
The strategically important invasion of the Philippines was announced while we were on the high seas. The radio service was good, including even foot ball games from West Point.

All hands were present on deck during the passing of The Rock... most remained on deck when the Mediterranean played with the convoy and tossed us about considerably. On the 29th of October, we dropped anchor just outside the harbor of Marseilles, France. It was a lovely, quiet evening, with the water black and smooth as satin. The lights of Marseilles were on and we all wondered just what lay ahead as we stared at the peaceful setting.

The next day, the Battalion staggered off the boat and began THAT eight mile road march. Muscles, soft from the overseas trip, protested, and dogs barked—both French and American. Many cases of "landsickness" were seen and again we all wished we had joined the Navy. "Bon Bon" and "cigarette pour papa" drove us all the way through Marseilles and on out into the country to our camping area near Septemes. Home seemed terribly far away for most of us till we acquired a few acquaintances in Marseilles—ah those sidewalk cafes. We were now a part of the European Theatre of Operations.



Dragon's Teeth -



Combat

Combat

The Battalion left Marseilles on 22 November 1944. Wheeled vehicles preceded the train by road. The route north was strewn with destroyed enemy guns and vehicles. The Battalion arrived at the Portieux area some four hundred miles from Marseilles on the 25th and detrained at Nomexy. Thanksgiving dinner was served and was a joyous relief from the journey's C-Rations. Rain and mud dominated the scene. "B" bags went into storage and sleeping bags were issued.

After seven days in the assembly area, the Battalion was ordered to move into Alsace, through the Vosges Mountains, on 1 December. It closed at Scherlenheim, and moved into firing position in the vicinity of Niefern at 1530, 2 December. "Bed Check Charlie" appeared for the first time. "A" Battery had not yet received its M-7s from Marseilles and remained at Portieux. The Battalion mission was reinforcement of the fires of the 160th Field Artillery Battalion of the 45th Infantry Division. Anti-aircraft protection was furnished by "D" Battery of the 398th AAA Battalion.

The Battalion was initiated to combat the following day when two enemy fighters strafed the gun positions. Though taken unaware, the 50 caliber machine guns of the 501st and the automatic weapons of the ack-ack drove them off.

On 3 December, "B" Battery fired the first Battalion round in action, to open a registration at 0930.

Officers and men began to accustom themselves to the adverse weather conditions. Rain and cold were a daily hindrance. M-7s were continually bogging down in the muck, necessitating frequent moves of each piece so that all could move out on a moment's notice. Nothing could be kept dry for any length of time.

On 4 December, the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Engwiller, where it undertook the reinforcement of the 171st Field Artillery Battalion of the 45th Infantry Division. The 45th Division was driving east and northeast of Metesheim; the support render-

ed by the 501st in this period of cold and rain was of a general nature. Winter's first snow fell.

The following day "C" Battery destroyed the first enemy vehicle credited to the Battalion when it knocked out a tank at 1100.

It was hot for the men up front; the FOs were in Mertzwiller, where it was estimated that on 6 December, over six hundred rounds of enemy artillery fell in little over an hour.

While at Engwiller, "B" Battery received the first enemy artillery fire caught by the Battalion when three rounds of 88 mm landed in the gun position. Slit trenches were water filled, but after the first round, water flew from many steel helmets in attempts to take cover without being soaked in the interim.

"A" Battery joined the Battalion on 8 December. At Engwiller the Battalion saw the Luftwaffe frequently. On the afternoon of 10 December, three planes, thought to be ME 109s, flew over the area and all anti aircraft weapons opened fire. All three planes were believed hit. Two Flying Forts were also seen to fall through the clouds that same afternoon.

On the miserable, dark, rainy night of 11 December, the Battalion went into position at Mertzwiller. It was relieved from the 45th Division and now supported the fires of the 14th Armored. On the way through the village of Mertzwiller, two of "A" Battery's M-7s struck enemy glass mines and were temporarily lost to action.

12 December saw the Battalion moved to Hegeny, and the 13th to Surbourg, by way of Hagenau. The roads were crowded and traffic was congested, so the march, the first long black-out drive for the 501st, through the Hagenau Forest, was very slow. The night was bitterly cold. The Battalion arrived at Surbourg early in the morning, moved to the vicinity of Soultz for a four hour stay shortly thereafter. In the afternoon we advanced to Schoenenbourg. The enemy had left only a few hours before, and two 88s remained in town. Things were beginning to build up for a limited drive against prepared and strong enemy positions, as the Germans began their withdrawal to their Seigfreid Line defense.

On 16 December, we marched north to Riedseltz; there the 501st took its first prisoners. Forward observers and Reconnaissance Officers went into Schweighofen and Kapsweyer with their sections to seek and direct fire on targets within the Siegfried Line. Here, at last, the Battalion really began to see activity

in all categories. The first rounds of propaganda, twenty-five in number, were fired on December 16th.

"A" Battery was moved forward to put precision fire on the "Dragon's Teeth" and pill boxes of the West Wall.

18 December saw the first posit round fired in the Battalion. Many hoped that it would be received in the spirit in which it was sent...

20 December saw the Battalion in position near Altenstadt, just short of the German Border. The following day, we moved back to the original position at Reidseltz. Heavy firing continued throughout this period. On the 22nd of December, we scored four direct hits on enemy guns.

The enemy maintained an OP in a church steeple in the town of Steinfeld, Germany, from which murderous fire was directed on our advance elements. Light artillery could not destroy or dislodge the enemy, so a 155 M 12 gun, attached to "A" Battery, finished off the OP by direct fire.

On 24 December, the 501st withdrew to Ingolsheim, where it spent a quiet and uneventful Christmas. Four days later the Battalion marched through a freezing, bleak night to Weyer, arriving early the morning of the 29th. The original destination was Phalsburg. The 501st remained there over New Year's, being in 15th Corps reserve at the time. Snow filled the Alsatian winter skies; everyone took a well-deserved break. On the morning of 1 January 1945, the Battalion moved north to Butten in support off CC "A" of the 14th Armored. The roads were icy and tracked vehicles had difficulty holding their positions in the line of march.

The Germans were sending a sizable force through Bitche.

The next morning the Battalion moved, under CC "A", to Neuwiller, but left in the late afternoon and closed into position at Reidhiem. At 0345 on 3 January, the Battalion left Reidhiem and marched to Weinberg, where it reenforced the fires of the 171st Field Artillery of the 45th Infantry. The firing was done in the area around Wingen, Wimminau, Lichtenfeld, and Reipertswiller.

5 January saw us in position at Ingwiller, where we remained until 16 January, reenforcing the fires of the 45th. While at Engwiller, the 501st did its heaviest firing up to that time. It was in direct support, and the FOs and LOs were at Reipertswiller, Lichtenfeld, and Phillipsbourg. The "Grasshoppers" did a marvelous job of observing.

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The German drive into northern France and Belgium put a greater strain on the 7th Army. The strength of the Infantry companies in the vicinity of Reipertswiller was very light; artillery was made the main line of defense. The 313th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion of the 257th Infantry, and the 2nd Battalion of the 257th all called for artillery fire within fifty yards of their positions and the 501st put the fire where requested, with excellent effect.

At Reipertswiller, the Germans held 200 yards of ridge alongside the town. Nebelwerfer and mortar fire were intense. After an estimated force of three hundred enemy infantrymen went around and took Lichtenfeld, to the rear of Reipertswiller, both friendly and enemy artillery were using a small road junction behind Reipertswiller as a base point for adjustment. We noticed that our registrations were faster and more accurate... ahem!

Enemy artillery pounded the CP area at Ingwiller night after night, but no damage or casualties were suffered... we soon learned the schedule of the German firing and knew when to step into a doorway.

The furious, bloody battle of the "Little Bulge" at Hatten and Rittershoffen had begun.

On the 16th of January, the mission of the Battalion was changed and it was ordered into direct support of the 36th Engineer Regiment; we moved to Zinswiller, closing in the middle of the afternoon.

Just after evening chow, enemy artillery began to pound the Battery positions and the village itself. It was "big stuff". The ground was frozen, forcing personnel to take cover in ditches and behind natural banks. One round of 170 mm hit just behind "B" Battery's No. 6 gun, causing four casualties — two wounded and two killed. These were the first of the Battalion to be killed as a result of enemy action. The CP area was shelled early in the morning causing no casualties.

The excessive enemy counter battery fire received in the Zinswiller area prompted the movement of the Battalion to Offwiller on the 17th of January. Enemy artillery in Zinswiller killed two more men that night; they were in the Liaison and Maintenance parties which remained in Zinswiller when the Battalion went to Offwiller.

On 20 January, the Battalion returned to 14th Armored control and withdrew to Ettendorf to reinforce the fires of the 103rd Infantry Division Artillery. The Germans also withdrew

to a new main line of resistance. The Battalion march was made in the face of a driving blizzard and in bitter cold. All vehicles had difficulty holding onto the icy roads. While at Ettendorf, innumerable missions were fired in blinding snow.

The morning of the 23rd of January, the Battalion took up a new position at Weitbruch, where it relieved the 12th Armored Artillery. The mission was to reinforce the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery which was supporting the 142nd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Infantry Division. Jet propelled enemy aircraft bombed the Battalion while on the move, but no damage or casualties were suffered. A lone Jet scored a near miss on a "B" Battery M-7 which had preceded the Battalion into position as adjusting gun.

On 2 February, the Battalion marched to Bischwiller and went into firing position in direct support of CC "A" which was attached to the 36th Infantry. Service Battery remained in position at Brumath. The Battalion gave active support to the attack on Oberhoffen, where fighting was fierce. The FOs even had an insane asylum with which to contend.

Battalion Fire Direction established an A-S Flash Base on two water towers in Bischwiller. Through this Flash Base, the Battalion and Corps fired on innumerable gun positions, discovered at night. Heavy harrassing fire was maintained on the road running north from the Souflenheim Woods.

The morning of 5 February, the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Kurtzenhausen to support the 117th Cavalry Regiment, which was attached to CC "B". The Battalion supported the right sector of the 7th Army front, and also established liaison with the 63rd Royal African Artillery of the 2nd French Army, stationed at that time in Strassburg.

Firing what was believed to be a captured American self-propelled gun, the enemy threw a dozen rounds into the firing battery positions just out of Kurtzenhausen. Fortunately, no damage or casualties were suffered. A tall chimney in Oberhoffen, thought to be an enemy OP that was directing this fire, was knocked down by direct tank fire — the enemy artillery fire ceased.

The night of the 10th of February, the Battalion put 437 rounds of HE into Drusenheim. The following day, Drusenheim was marked with red smoke shells, enabling the TAF to blast targets in that town.

Activity along the front began to slacken after the first week in February; the lines were stationary. The Battalion mission became continual harrassing fire. Limited training was resumed and a Battalion Rest Center was established at Brumath in the Service Battery Area. The officers had a party in the city hall in Kurtzenhausen with part of the French Army in attendance. High school and college French was dusted off and a loud and interesting evening, complete with a great waving of hands and other expressive motions, was had by all.

The Rest Area saw action on the night of 14 February, when "Alsace Alice", an enemy 380 mm railroad gun, worked over the city with fifteen devastating rounds... fine rest! All M-7s in the Battalion were brought back to Brumath, alternately, for 3rd Echelon Maintenance, and each gun crew had a two day rest there.

On 15 February, the Battalion knocked out three enemy tanks at extreme range. Two were hit by "C" Battery and the other by "B" Battery.

The Battalion moved to Ettendorf on 17 February — the CP being located in the school where it had been three weeks previous. The firing Batteries went into the area around Grassendorf, with Service Battery going from Brumath to Scherlenheim. The Battalion was in direct support of CC "B" of the 14th Armored.

Action was almost at a standstill along the front, but the Battalion established an A-S Flash Base with observers in Ringeldorf and on the crest before Grassendorf, firing on numerous enemy personnel and vehicles. The passive action of the last half of February lasted two weeks into March. The Battalion's activity remained defensive in character, and many harrassing missions were fired. The towns of Engwiller, Bitchoffen, Mertzwiller, Metesheim, Kindwiller, and the Hagenau Forest received regular TOT missions. This was old and known territory to us. We fired at enemy guns located in almost the same postions that we had occupied during our first days in combat.

On the 14th of March, we moved to Niederaltdorf to be in general support of CC "A" of the 14th Armored. At this time, the Division and Corps were preparing for the attack that was soon to come. Suddenly, the 36th Infantry relieved the 14th Armored front. We stayed on the line. Niederaltdorf was crowded with marching troops that night.

The Battalion marched to a new position at Niedermodern on the 15th, supporting the 36th Infantry. On the 17th of March,

we drove ahead to Forestheim. The drive east gathered momentum, and on the night of the 18th of March, the Battalion closed at Oberseebach, then in direct support of Task Force Watson. The drive on the "impregnable West Wall" — the Seigfried line — had begun.

On the following day, the Battalion moved to Gietershof, and when the attack turned east toward Kapsweyer and Steinfeld, the Battalion marched to Altenstadt, going into position for the first time on German soil. The artillery firing increased sharply. We fired 1,354 rounds on 21 March; 1,119 rounds on the following day; and 1,635 rounds on the 23rd, continually throwing out rounds in attack preparations, against counterattacks, upon withdrawing enemy infantry, and at enemy rocket positions. The spirit of the attack was catching, and both officers and men worked with renewed vigor. All FOs were with Task Force Watson. The Air Observers flew early and late patrols, to keep the enemy down and inactive, and locate the Nebelwerfer, in addition to their daily scouting for possible targets.

Near Steinfeld, Germany, during the breaking of the Seigfried Line, the half track of the FO of the 499th AFA was knocked out by enemy artillery, and the 501st took over direct support of the drive.

The Battalion went into position at Kapsweyer, Germany, on the 23rd of March, and that afternoon, "B" Battery moved forward through the "Dragon's Teeth" and pill boxes of the West Wall to a position in front of Steinfeld. This area had not been cleared by the infantry, who had driven through pressing the attack. Soon after the Battery was in position, it was discovered that there were enemy personnel and an 88mm gun in a draw about two hundred yards from the Battery. With the help of a passing gun of the 499th, the Battery knocked out the gun and captured the personnel.

By the 24th of March, the last Germans west of the Rhine had been eliminated and the Battalion went into Corps Reserve with the Division, closing at Vollmersweiller, Germany. Wine was plentiful there. The Battalion left this position on the last day of the month, and, after a long night march, crossed the Rhine River north of the Historic city of Worms and went into positions at Georgenhausen, Germany, at 1000 on Easter Sunday, 1 April, 1945, passing through the flattened city of Darmstadt and getting our first real look at the complete destruction wrought by our bombers.

Now the methods of fighting changed noticeably. Instead of occupying a position for days or a week, the Battalion was to embark on a rampage through Germany, occupying 22 different CPs during the month of April. The cautious offensive action and limited objectives were gone; defensive action was out of the question. Air Observers began reporting enemy activity on a large scale and contributed marvelously to the attack by locating and helping to break up enemy units holding up our advance elements.

While at Georgenhausen, the Battalion learned that the Division had been relieved from attachment to the VI Corps and attached to the XV Corps. The next objective was the city of Neustadt, which was approximately ninety miles to the northeast. The 501 was placed in direct support of CC "R", which was to follow CC "B" to Lohr and then receive a specific mission of its own.

The attack was started on the 2nd of April, and the head of the column ran into considerable opposition at Lohr. The Battalion went into bivouac area off the road in the heavily-wooded German National Forest, about eight miles southwest of Lohr.

We left the wooded area late in the morning of April 4th. Determined enemy resistance again held up the column and the Battalion went into position in the vicinity of Neutenbach, where it rendered direct support for the attack on Gemunden. On the 6th of April, Gemunden having been cleared, the Battalion proceeded to Aschfeld. CC "R" was now on the right flank of the Division, driving due east.

The Battalion marched to Wulfershausen on April 7th, and it was then learned that CC "A" had taken the objective, Neustadt. We were ordered to remain at Wulfershausen and await further orders.

On 9 April, the Battalion moved to Oberstreu by way of Neustadt, where the Division was to be regrouped, prior to further attack. The attack to cross the Main River and cut the Autobahn south of Bayreuth began the morning of 11 April. CC "R" was now on the left flank of the Division, bordering elements of the Third Army. The Battalion reach Roth the night of April 11th and continued east to Birkack early in the morning of the following day. The drive was temporarily held up at the Main River.

Lichtenfels, Germany was taken, and on the 13th of April, the Battalion closed into position at Ruendorf, crossing the Main

River just west of Lichtenfels. That afternoon Oberlingheim and Krogelstein were reached and we stayed overnight at the latter town.

Everything was going well the morning of the 14th of April when over the trees fronting the Battalion came two ME-109s and three FW-190s. They strafed the Battalion, causing one casualty and damaging two vehicles in Service Battery. Considerable kitchen equipment was destroyed. Hot lead was flying from all available weapons; the 398th AAA claimed to have shot down three of the five attackers.

Now the important objective was the old city of Nurnberg. The Division was to flank it on the east while other Seventh Army units attacked the city from the west.

We left our position at Leups, where we had moved on the 15th of April, and marched south on the super-high way to Sindlbach on 18 April. The following day, the Battalion marched to Reichelshofen and then back to Sindlbach. Nurnberg was taken, but there was more ahead. The Danube, a major barrier, had to be crossed. The enemy was weakening fast, but the attack had to be pushed.

On the 20th of April, the Battalion went into direct support of CC "R" which was to drive south along, and west of, the Autobahn, to Allersberg. It reached Feusch and supported the attack south. Part of the road was under heavy enemy artillery fire, but the Battalion crossed safely and openly continued on toward Allersberg. That night the head of the column met fanatical resistance near Allersberg, so the Battalion went into position along the Autobahn north of Altenfelden.

The morning of April 21st, the 25th Tank Battalion jumped off from Altenfelden, with the mission of attacking and securing Allersberg. Smoke laid down by the Battalion allowed the 25th Tankers to pass "SS Junction", where a tank and tank destroyer had previously been knocked out.

Fierce fighting continued. Many rounds of enemy artillery fire landed near the Battalion position. Service Battery returned to Feutsch and Headquarters Battery moved back up the Autobahn about a mile, where it continued to receive artillery fire. "A" Battery, at the left of the highway, was exposed on its left flank near enemy infantry and also was subjected to high bursts. "A" Battery finally was forced to move back some fifteen hundred yards. Only four casualties resulted from all this constant action.

On the 21st and 22nd of April, the Battalion, at Sperberslohe, found innumerable targets, firing 1,187 rounds on the former day and 995 on the latter, at personnel, tanks, and gun flashes in or near Allersberg.

The following evening, "B" Battery encountered enemy snipers who had infiltrated to the left of the Battery position. Several vehicles had been knocked out along the highway and personnel of some of these vehicles were wounded. Small arms fire began coming into the Battery position. The outpost guards were withdrawn and the Battery prepared for a stand against enemy infantry. However, contact through our Battalion with the 400th Field Artillery at Sperberslohe brought covering fire. Several rounds landed in the Battery position, but there were no casualties.

On April 23rd, the attack to clear Allersberg and drive to the Danube began. "A" Battery remained in position to help the 25th Tankers keep the Autobahn open until relieved by CC"A", and the Battalion left the Sperberslohe area and moved south, going into firing position at Pyras, after suffering one casualty from enemy artillery fire on the way.

The Division was transferred from the XV Corps of the Seventh Army to the III Corps of the Third Army. The attack continued on the 24th of April, the Battalion marching to Schofhausen. Blown bridges over the Altmuhl River held up the advance, and enemy SS troops held up the construction of a bridge by the engineers with counter attacks. However, on April 26th, the Battalion left Schofhausen and marched south-west to Kosching.

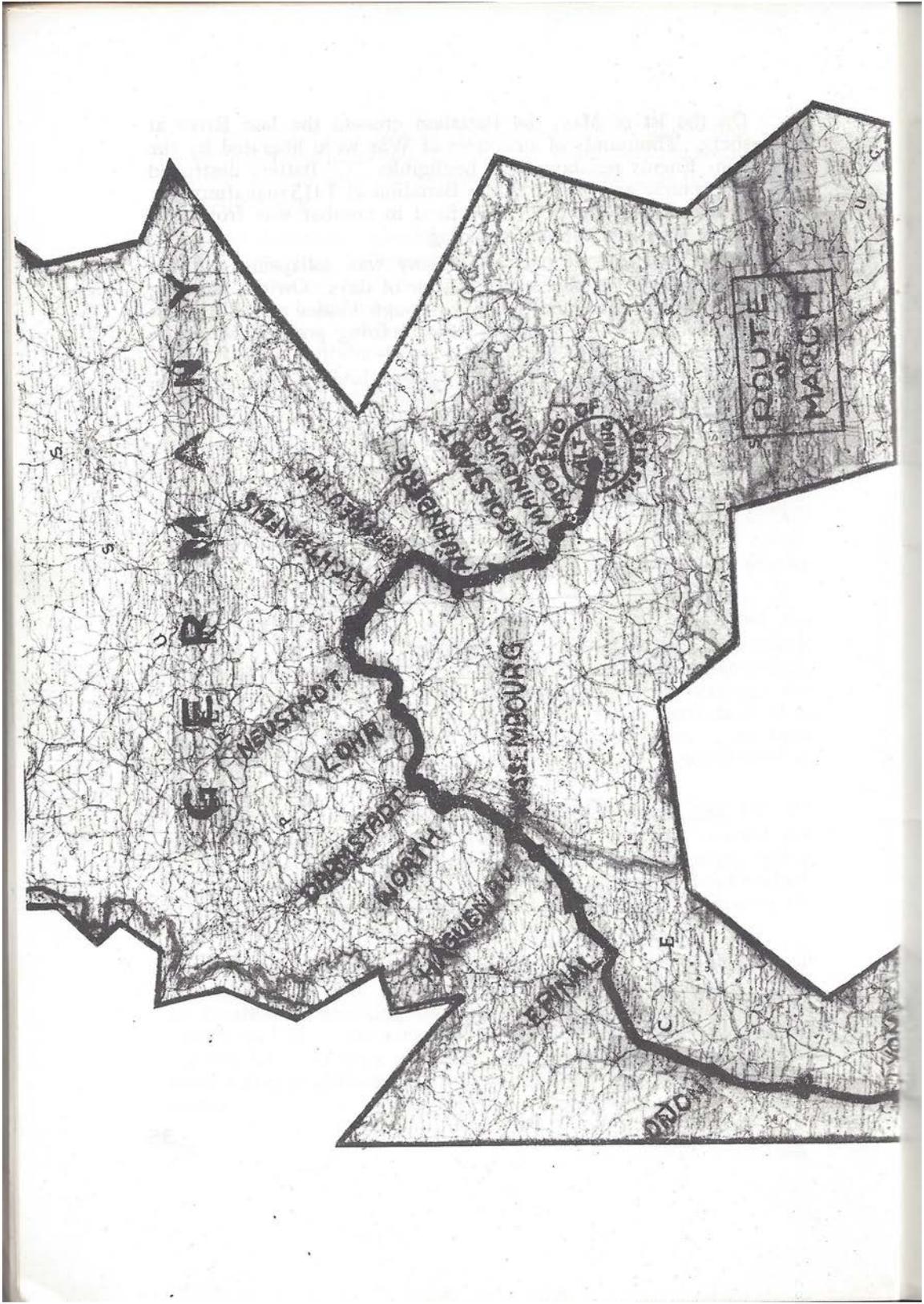
Ingolstadt was cleared on the 28th of April, and CC"R" began its drive to the Isar River. The Battalion crossed the Danube at Ingolstadt, and marched south to Rotteneegg, going into positions the next day at Obersussbach and Reichersdorf. On April 30th, the Battalion moved to Eugenbach to support the attack of CC"R" on Landshut.

While at Eugenbach, the town was taken under fire by light enemy artillery. "B" Battery was moved to a rear position from its location overlooking the village, as it was believed that the enemy had direct observation on the Battalion. One enemy shell hit the CP and took the roof off the building. No casualties were suffered although almost every room was pierced by fragments.

On the 1st of May, the Battalion crossed the Isar River at Moosberg. Thousands of Prisoners of War were liberated by the Division. Enemy resistance was negligible. "C" Battery destroyed the last vehicle accredited to the Battalion at 1415 that afternoon. The last round of the 501 AFA fired in combat was from "C" Battery at the town of Hohenpolding.

It became evident that the enemy was collapsing and the end of resistance just became a matter of days. On the morning of May 2nd, the Battalion marched through Velden and Buchbach to Ranoldsberg, where its guns were in firing position when the war officially ended in Europe.

The "Cease Fire" had been given — — — our mission accomplished.



Dates and Places

Oct.	30—Nov. 22	. . .	Septemes, France
			Avignon
			Valence
	40 et 8		Lyon
			Dijon
			Nomexy (station)
Nov.	25—31	. . . . .	Portieux
Dec.	1	. . . . .	Scherlenheim
	2—3	. . . . .	Niefern
	4—11	. . . . .	Engwiller
	12	. . . . .	Mertzwiller
	12—13	. . . . .	Hegeny
	13	. . . . .	Surbourg
	14	. . . . .	Soultz
	14—15	. . . . .	Schoenenburg
	16—20	. . . . .	Riedseltz
	20—21	. . . . .	Altenstadt
	21—24	. . . . .	Riedseltz
	24—28	. . . . .	Ingolsheim
	28—1 Jan.	. . . . .	Weyer
Jan.	1—2	. . . . .	Butten
	2—3	. . . . .	Reidheim
	3—6	. . . . .	Weinbourg
	6—16	. . . . .	Ingwiller
	16—17	. . . . .	Zinswiller
	17—20	. . . . .	Offwiller
	20—23	. . . . .	Ettendorf
	23—1 Feb.	. . . . .	Weitbruch
Feb.	1—5	. . . . .	Bischwiller
	5—18	. . . . .	Kurtzenhausen
	18—11 March	. . . . .	Ettendorf
March	11—15	. . . . .	Niederalt Dorf
	15—17	. . . . .	Neidermodern
	17—18	. . . . .	Forstheim
	18—19	. . . . .	Oberseebach

	19—21	Geitershof
	21—23	Altenstadt, Germany
	23—24	Kapsweyer
	24—31	Vollmersweiler Worms Darmstadt
April	1—2	Georgenhausen
	3	Lohr (German National Forest)
	4—6	Nautenbach
	6—7	Aschfeld Wulfershausen
	9—11	Oberstreu
	11—12	Roth
	12—13	Birkach
	13—15	Krogelstein
	15—18	Leups
	18—20	Sindlbach
	20—21	(Near) Altenfelden
	21—23	Sperberslohe
	23—24	Pyras
	24—26	Schoffhausen
	26—28	Kosching Ingolstadt (Danube River)
	28—29	Rottenegg Obersussbach
	29—30	Reichersdorf
	30—1 May	Eugenbach Moosburg
May	1	Hohenpolding Velden Buchbach
	2—12	Ranoldsburg



Wir kämpfen bis zum Sieg!

It did not



Interesting omit Statistics

The Division was in Combat 165 days.

The Battalion was in firing position 152 days.

Exceptions:

Weyer, France	3 days
Vollmerswiller, Germany	7 days
Oberstreu, Germany	2 days
Near Lohr, Germany	1 day

The Battalion took 1,043 PWs between 2 December, 1944, and 24 May, 1945.

The Battalion fired 47,193 rounds during combat.

"A" Battery	13,873 rounds
"B" Battery	16,957 rounds
"C" Battery	16,363 rounds



Presentation of Awards-

Headquarters combat Command "A"
14th Armored Division, APO No. 446
U. S. Army

CHK/nrb
30 March 1945

SUBJECT: Appreciation of Support Rendered.

TO : Commanding Officer, 14th Armored Division Artillery, APO 446, U. S. Army.

THRU : Commanding General, 14th Armored Division, APO 446, U. S. Army, France.

1. Combat Command "A" has now fought several actions in which it has had the direct support of a part or all of the 14th Armored Division Artillery. The most recent battle was that for the penetration of the SEIGFRIED LINE, near KAPSWEYER, GERMANY.

2. I wish to take this means of making of record that the cooperation of yourself, staff and battalion commanders has been complete and of highly proficient character. The organization of your artillery fires, the communications to effect prompt delivery, the distribution of your liaison officers and forward observers to insure coordination and certainty of results, and the generous attitude of your representatives at my headquarters, have met my fullest expectations of fine artillery support for the tactical operations of Combat Command A.

3. An extra copy of this communication is being forwarded so that the Division Commander, if he deems it appropriate, may forward a copy of it with your next efficiency report for permanent file with your record in the War Department.

/s/ C. H. Karlstad
/t/ C. H. KARLSTAD
Col, CCA
Comdg

AG 201.22 (G) 1st Ind. jpm
(30 Mar 45 — Appreciation of Support Rendered)
HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMORED DIVISION, APO 446,
U. S. Army, 4 April 1945.

TO: Commanding Officer, 14th Armored Division Artillery.

The Commanding General is pleased to transmit this letter of commendation and to add his personal commendation for the outstanding work of all artillery units in the Division.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL SMITH:

/s/ William C. Golden
/t/ WILLIAM C. GOLDEN
Lt. Col., A. G. D.,
Adjutant General.

AG 201.22 (G) 2nd Ind.
(30 Mar 45 — Appreciation of Support Rendered).
HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMORED DIVISION ARTILLERY,
APO 446, U. S. Army.

TO: CO 499, 500, 501 A. F. A. Bns.

1. The Artillery Commander is pleased to note this letter of appreciation and the commendation by the Commanding General contained therein and desires that the contents of this letter be made known to all members of your command at the earliest opportunity.

2. I further take this opportunity to make known to you that the VI Corps Commander and the VI Corps Artillery Commander have each stated that in their belief the artillery of this Division is the equal of any artillery that had been under their command.

/s/ Maurice K. Kurtz
/t/ MAURICE K. KURTZ
Colonel, FA
Commanding

AG 201.22 (G) 3rd Ind. (Appreciation of Support Rendered, 30 Mar 45)

hjd

HEADQUARTERS, 501ST ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY
BATTALION, APO 446 U.S. Army, 10 April 1945.

TO: All Battery Commanders.

It is my pleasure to forward this letter of appreciation and commendation to you, and I suggest you have it brought to the attention of all members of your battery at your earliest convenience.

JOSEPH H. HARRISON
Lt. Col., FA
Commanding

Headquarters
501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion
Apo 446 U S Army

2 July 1945

SUBJECT: Farewell Address.

TO : All men of the 501st Arm'd FA Bn.

1. Since taking over the Battalion, I have always known that someday I would be called upon to say good-bye to you and have always hoped that we could get together and do it personally. The speed with which we have begun to break up as a Battalion, however, has made it impractical to call you together and so I have asked that this message be read to each of you and I want you to consider it as a personal one.

2. Never has there been a finer bunch of men, who gave so much, complained so little, and did everything I asked of them so cheerfully, whether it was whipping the Germans, or getting ready for 2nd Army inspections back home. You have done a peach of a job. I've seen many Field Artillery Battalions, but never have seen one as good as the 501st. I'm proud of you and am the most fortunate man in the army to have been your commander. It is only with the deepest regret that I stand by and watch the outfit break up, but the 501st will never be duplicated and its spirit will always live in all of us for years after the war is over, just as it does now.

3. To those of you that are leaving now — "So Long", and the best of luck. To you others that will remain for awhile, I'll see you, but will say, "So Long" now, as it's impossible to know when any of us may be ordered away.

4. Remember what you've learned, do a good job, and my best wish for you is that you may be home soon... Good luck and Thanks again, all of you, for the marvelous job you've done for me... You're a good crew.

JOSEPH H. HARRISON
Lt. Col., FA
Commanding