



MARCH ORDER

567th AAA (AW) Bn.

MARCH ORDER!

*The 567th Anti-Aircraft Artillery
Automatic Weapons Battalion
(Mobile)*

A Short History

Published by
THE MUZZLEBURST
Epernay, France

1945

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France, France

1944

Dedicated to

Technical Sergeant Roger N. Butt

Killed in Action, December 26, 1944

Hirson, France

Private First Class Jack L. Cox

Killed in Action, March 28, 1945

Mainz Germany



TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 567th:

It has been sincerely my pleasure to serve as Executive and Commanding Officer of your Battalion since its activation on May 10, 1943 until the present time. I know how much you have contributed to the outstanding performance of this unit through your tireless work and complete devotion to duty. You have squarely faced and admirably overcome the obstacles that confronted this unit during the tedium of basic training and desert maneuvers, in the mud and dust of Louisiana, in the freezing weather of the Ardennes and the confusion and danger of the invasion of Germany.

It is with pride that I have called you my comrades-in-arms and it is hoped that in the future peace you will serve America as well as you have during her period of emergency.

I take this means to extend to each of you my congratulations for a job well done, my sincerest wish that we may meet again and continue our friendship and heartiest best wishes for a bright and successful future.

WILSON POTTER JR.,
MAJOR CAC
Commanding



MAJOR WILSON POTTER JR.

Preface



The true and complete history of this Battalion could never be told. For it would be, of necessity, a composite story of the lives of eight hundred men for two and one half years. And these years would not be the normal years of a man's life. During the course of them occur that phenomenon of converting a civilian to a soldier, that odd experience called « Army Life », countless bivouacs, marches, convoys, hardships in the field and passes to strange towns. The powerful experience of travel and the High Adventure of fighting a foreign war. A story of this Battalion could not be complete without a catalogue of 800 sets of emotions while undergoing this experience, the loneliness and homesickness, the individual victories and defeats, the loves and hates or the varied mad, humorous or terrible episodes that transpired.

This volume can be nothing but an outline, a mere skeleton of times and events. It pretends to be nothing else. To form a complete picture of things as they were for the men of the 567th AAA AW Battalion the Reader must draw heavily on his imagination or enlist the services of one of the members who went through it all.





JPB

CALIFORNIA

CALICO PASS

six enlisted cadremen from Camp Hulen, Texas, reported for duty.

At this time most of the men were still civilians in Virginia, in Maryland. By the middle of June 1943 the local draft boards had done their work and most of the men were pulling their first details at Camp Lee, Virginia, by July 4. Two trainleads headed west in early July, the first arriving on July 10 with 286 aboard and the second on July 14 with 406 more. One hundred and fifty additional men were transferred from the 517th Parachute Infantry, Camp Topeka, Georgia.

The mobilization training period is one in which much must be accomplished in little time. The basic weapon of an automatic weapons unit at the time was a remote controlled automatic 40mm cannon supported by a water cooled .50 calibre machine gun. These weapons were operated by 15 men known as a « Gun Section », under the command of a buck sergeant called the « Chief of Section ». The Battalion itself was divided into five batteries, a Headquarters Battery whose duties were supply, operation and communications and four weapons batteries, called « lettered » batteries since they were named alphabetically, A, B, C, and D, or more commonly, called, phonetically, Able, Baker, Charlie and Dog. Organization and orientation occupied the first few weeks of the inductee's training. This was combined by training of the individual soldiers in the various tricks of the trade, the wearing of the uniform, military courtesy, infantry drill, manual of arms and rifle marksmanship.

This month of basic training was followed by a series of « Desert Training Periods ». These were conducted at Camp Irwin, California, located in a barren valley in the Mojave Desert, 125 miles west of Camp Haan. This installation consisted mainly of pyramidal tents pitched in a large hot dusty quadrangle on the desert floor surrounded by jagged treeless mountains. In all directions from this camp were laid out ranges for small arms and antiaircraft weapons fire.

The unit moved by tactical convoy to Camp Irwin, August 16, 1943. The route of march lay through San Bernardino, Cajon Pass, Barstow into the desert over Calico Pass. Each gun section was equipped with two, two and one-half ton trucks which towed their gun and carried their machine gun and equipment. Tarpaulins were removed for

a tactical march and two martyrs, designated as air guards stood behind the cab of each vehicle at all times on the alert for enemy 'planes. Trucks moved at an interval of sixty yards and in convoy the Battalion extended over five miles, a truly impressive sight moving over the chalkline straight desert roads. Long convoys seem the underlying motif of this organization's history, convoys in the Mojave, Louisiana, Georgia, England, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany.

The initial period of desert training extended from August 16 to September 4, 1943 consisting primarily in small arms firing and the running of infiltration courses. The men were not unused to handling weapons and their scores on the range were unusually high, most of them qualifying as experts, sharpshooters or marksmen. The first « field problem », a simulated tactical defense of the Victorville Airport, an uninspired thing, in itself resulted in the establishment of one of the Battalion's cherished traditions, the « taking over » of a town. Other noted « taking overs » were those of Leesville, Louisiana and Longuyon, France. The « Battle of Victorville », however, was the 567th's first social event.

The second period at Camp Irwin, September 26 to November 6 was a rigorous experience under field conditions. The Battalion bivouaced at East Range in pup tents, a camp which came to be known as « Tent City ». Training consisted of firing at towed targets and practice on the antitank range. Two simulated tactical field exercises were held and all participated in a 25 mile hike.

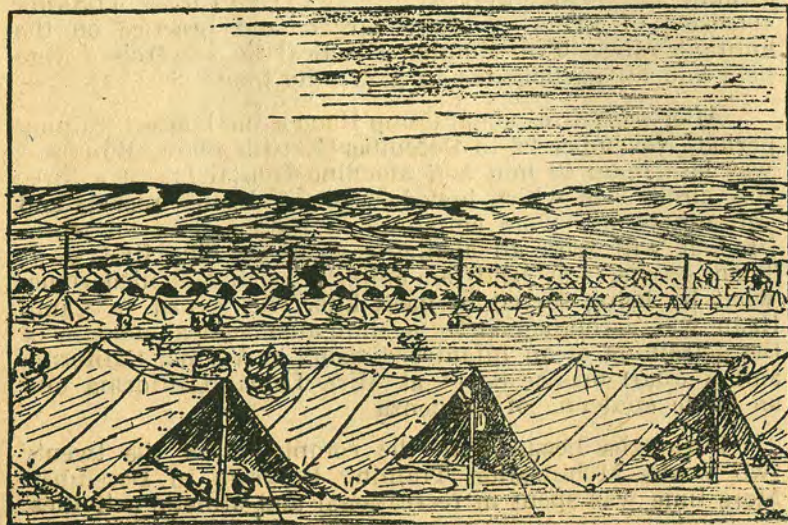
After a brief respite at Camp Haan a final desert training period, November 22 to December 4, took place. Emphasis was laid upon 40 mm and Machine Gun firing, a « three ring circus » in which towed targets, balloons, rockets and antitank targets were employed at random and all hands fired at will with all available weapons. The first G. I. Thanksgiving was held, an ample feast but spoiled somewhat by being served in mess kits. The return to Camp Haan was accompanied by a simulated tactical defense of the detrainning of an Infantry division at Yermo, California and a quartermaster depot at Mira Loma, California and an acute epidemic of influenza.

Furloughs began with the completion of the twenty two weeks Mobilization Training Program in December. More time was spent in recreational and athletic activities.

The first Battalion dance was held at Camp Haan at this time, fifty girls being trucked in from Los Angeles for the occasion. A brigade review, this units first, was conducted near Camp Headquarters.

On the 9th of January 1945 the 567th was alerted for a temporary change of station to the Louisiana Manuever Area. This was cheering to many of the men who felt they would be nearer home. There followed a period of preparation, marking of equipment, lashing and blocking trucks and guns to flat cars and the conversion of box cars to rolling kitchens.

Shortly after noon in blouses, harness, full packs and helmet liners the Battalion marched north past the main gate of Camp Haan. The AAATC band played « Semper Fidelis », wives, sweethearts and inspecting officers lined the route of march. The men loaded on two sections and were off to the East.



TENT CITY (EAST RANGE)



LOUISIANA

SABINE RIVER

Louisiana

The 567th was first attached to the Third and then the Fourth Army for the Sixth Louisiana Maneuvers. The maneuver period began in February and ended in April. There was a period of dress rehearsal called «Flag Maneuvers» followed by the true maneuvers in which troops contended against each other. The whole maneuver consisted of seven parts, or phases, each phase presented a different tactical problem, an envelopment of a strongly emplaced enemy by a superior force, a counterattack of a river crossing. The contending forces were designated as «Reds» the inferior or enemy force, and «Blues» the superior or friendly force. Every effort was made to simulate actual combat conditions. Blackout and camouflage discipline was rigorously enforced and the conduct of every unit was carefully umpired.

The maneuver area covered much of west central Louis-

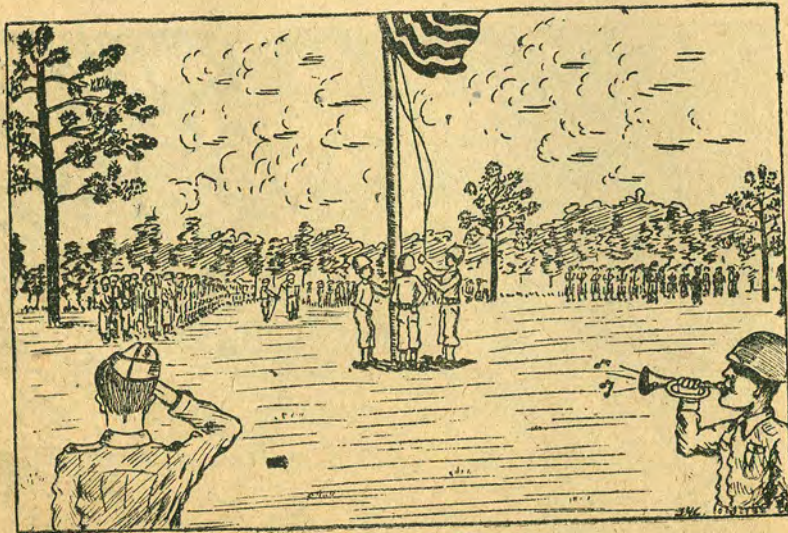


LAND OF WET DREAMS

iana and that portion of Texas adjacent to it across the Sabine River. The terrain presented every kind of tactical problem. The greater part of it was rolling hills covered with second-growth timber, interspersed with flat swampy lands. There were few towns, Leesville and DeRidder being the principal ones. The roads were principally dirt and rapidly deteriorated so maneuvering troops were obliged to choose new areas for each phase while roads were repaired by the engineers.

If a low point were to be selected in the Battalion's history, it would be the period of January 25 to 30, 1944. Debarking from the train at Camp Polk, Louisiana at 0330 January 25, the troops were met by a determined drizzle that continued for seven days thereafter. The bivouac area was located a few miles west of Camp Polk in a sparse pine grove. The vehicles churned up the thin soil and produced mud that became a constant companion to all who lived in that area. It has been said that Louisiana mud «has to be seen to be believed».

Flag maneuvers were held in the vicinity of DeRidder in a cold snap. The formal maneuvers ranged north, west into Texas and north again. Each phase was of three or

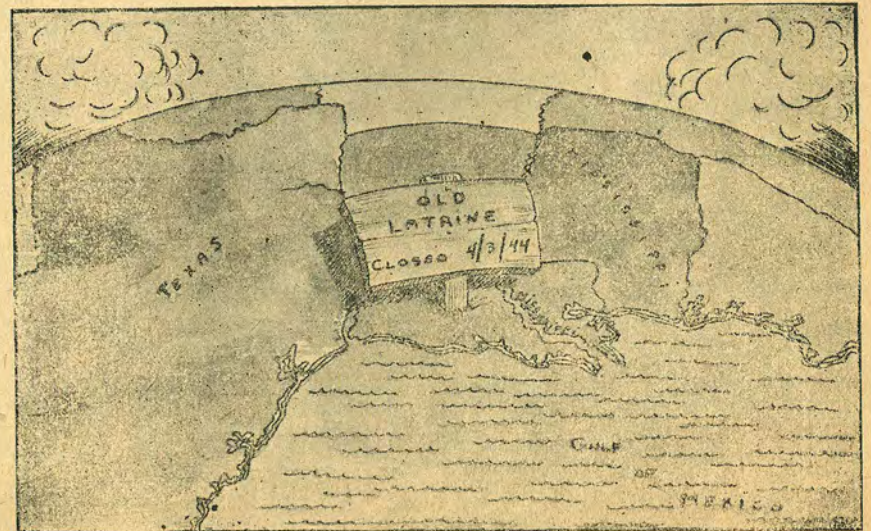


four days duration, ending in a «break» of a few days in which the units reassembled, built fires, washed themselves and their clothes or took off for the gin mills in the towns nearby.

Maneuvers proved to be far more rigorous than actual combat. Camouflage discipline was strict, blackout rigidly enforced, march orders were frequent and inevitably at night. All emplacements were dug in completely and camouflaged before any member of the gun section could rest and upon march order all gun pits and foxholes had to be filled and the area policed before a position could be abandoned. During the sixth phase the batteries moved four times in one night.

Louisiana Maneuvers made the Battalion. Never an outstanding garrison outfit, the men adapted themselves naturally and ingeniously to field conditions. The health record was high, sick call dwindled to nothing. Batteries began to function as integrated units, smoothly and efficiently. Recruits debarked from the train at Camp Polk in January but a battalion of seasoned soldiers went into administrative bivouac near DeRidder at the close of the maneuvers in April '44.

A rather pleasant interlude followed the closing of



maneuvers. Camp Pickering, the Battalion bivouac, was located just off the Leesville-DeRidder highway in a clean pine grove. Considerable time was spent in improving the area and building installations. Duties were light. For a few weeks the unit policed up certain portions of the maneuver area and then settled back to a light program of artillery drill and recreation. Many men had their wives in adjacent towns and the pass policy was liberal. Receiving a warning order for overseas movement, men left on furloughs in large numbers.



GEORGIA

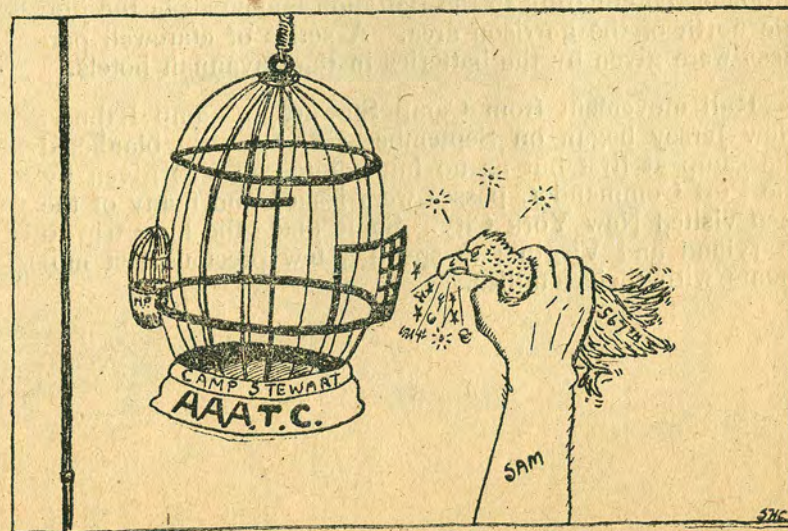
CAMP STEWART RANGE

Georgia

On June 8, 1944 the Battalion left via rail for Camp Stewart, Georgia on permanent charge of station. Camp Stewart was an Antiaircraft Training Center similar in purpose to Camp Haan. It had convenient and elaborate ranges of all descriptions. The camp was located in a jungle-like swamp forty eight miles from Savannah. The tour of duty was for the purpose of refresher training and completion of the combat requirements for overseas movement.

For the first week of its stay at Camp Stewart the unit lived in another «Tent City», this one just outside thearrison area, later moving into Area Q of the camp itself. Preparation for overseas movement began with the never-ending task of issue of clothing, marking it and checking it for shortages. Equipment was crated and waterproofed.

Most of the training time was spent on the range. The



40 mms and new M51 quadruple cal. .50 machine gun mounts were fired at all types of aerial and ground targets, courses in range estimation were given. Individuals threw hand grenades, fired bazookas and rifle grenades and attended schools on land mines and booby traps.

The Battalion was required to take the Army Ground Forces Test for eligibility for overseas movement. This test was divided into three parts, an examination on basic skills, a range test of firing problems and an overnight field problem. The first two parts were passed with high scores and it was felt that with all the field experience the unit had the field problem would be a cinch. However, pride came before a fall, the terrain selected for the problem was heavily wooded, no maps of the area were available, so reconnaissance was impeded, communications struck snags and the ground was so hard as to defy the pick and shovel. It was an unhappy twenty four hours and it was thanks to the previous high scores that the Battalion passed the test as a whole.

Preparations for overseas movement were completed, guns were turned in and everything was in readiness by the end of August. The month of September was a period of waiting. Advanced details left for the Port of New York. The unit spent the training time on infantry problems culminating in the Battalion maneuver in the jungle north of the garrison area. A series of «farewell parties» were given by the batteries in the Savannah hotels.

Rail movement from Camp Stewart to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey began on September 30. Security blanketed the camp at first but as no immediate call was given by the Port Commander, passes were issued and many of the men visited New York City. Some made the long trip to Maryland and Virginia to spend a few precious last moments with their families.



ENGLAND

BLACKSHAWMOOR

England

D Battery crossed the Atlantic first. T-4 Kenneth W. Shepherd describes their embarking: «On the fifth of October Dog Battery pulled out of Camp Kilmer by rail, while the band played at the station. Leaving the train, carrying everything the Army could possibly throw on one person, we ferried across New York Bay past Lady Liberty to the New York POE—Pier 13. Here with broken backs and buckled knees we were greeted by the Red Cross with coffee, doughnuts and Hersheys. Then with a hollow feeling in our hearts, we marched up the gangplank of the Liberty Ship *Santa Margarita*. We were immediately taken to our bunks and quarters in the hold, where the rules were laid down to us. No smoking! No lights on deck after dark and life belts to be worn at all times! D Battery arrived at Newport, Wales, October 17, 1944.»

The balance of the Battalion crossed to the United Kingdom on the *S. S. Marine Robin*, sailing on October 14. The ship was packed with several Engineer Battalions and the 566th AAA Battalion. A Battery pulled ship's guard and B Battery managed the chow line and pulled KP. Conditions were crowded, the food was vile and the trip was a long one. Rumors named landings in Norway, North Africa, France. The ship took the southern route, passing near the Azores. The passage was relatively calm and the air surprisingly warm. It was finally announced that the landing was to be made at Liverpool. On the morning of October 25 the low hills of Ireland were sighted to the west. A few hours later the mountains of Wales rose on the port side. All day long the *Marine Robin* and its convoy moved north through St. George's Channel, rounded Anglesey into the Irish Sea. At dusk the ship entered the long channel in the mouth of the River Mersey leading to the docks of Liverpool. The deck was crowded with men as the landing was made. A British military

band perfunctorily played «The Beer Barrel Polka» and «Dearly Beloved». A British brigadier welcomed officers.

The next morning the troops left the ship, loaded on board a train. For three hours the train passed through the beautiful hedge-checked rural midlands to the town of Leek, Staffordshire, from whence, transferred to GI vehicles, the unit proceeded to Camp Blackshawmoor.

This camp had been a British installation. It consisted of a series of low, one-story barracks heated by inadequate coke stoves. The sanitary facilities were quaint. A Battalion mess was established and the cooks immediately went to work puzzling out the British culinary equipment. Extra blankets were issued for the change from the heat of Georgia to the chill of the moors.

The location of the camp was beautiful. To the north and east were the high moors and to the south across the Leek-Buxton highway a long valley fell away, crisscrossed with hedgerows and stone walls and dotted by ancient and picturesque farm houses.

There was a seven-day quarantine but the ladies of England besieged the gates. There was a dance held in the «Rec Hall» at the end of the week and truckloads of Buxton girls arrived. The «English Honeymoon» was on.

The Battalion's mission at Camp Blackshaw Moor was to equip itself for an operational assignment. A detachment unpacked guns and mounts at Chester, convoys covered England filling out shortages in equipment and drawing ammunition. The troops were subjected to physical training, long hikes through the steep moors and «walked through» rehearsals of the ETO AAA Operational SOP, a procedure that differed from that employed by the unit during maneuvers.

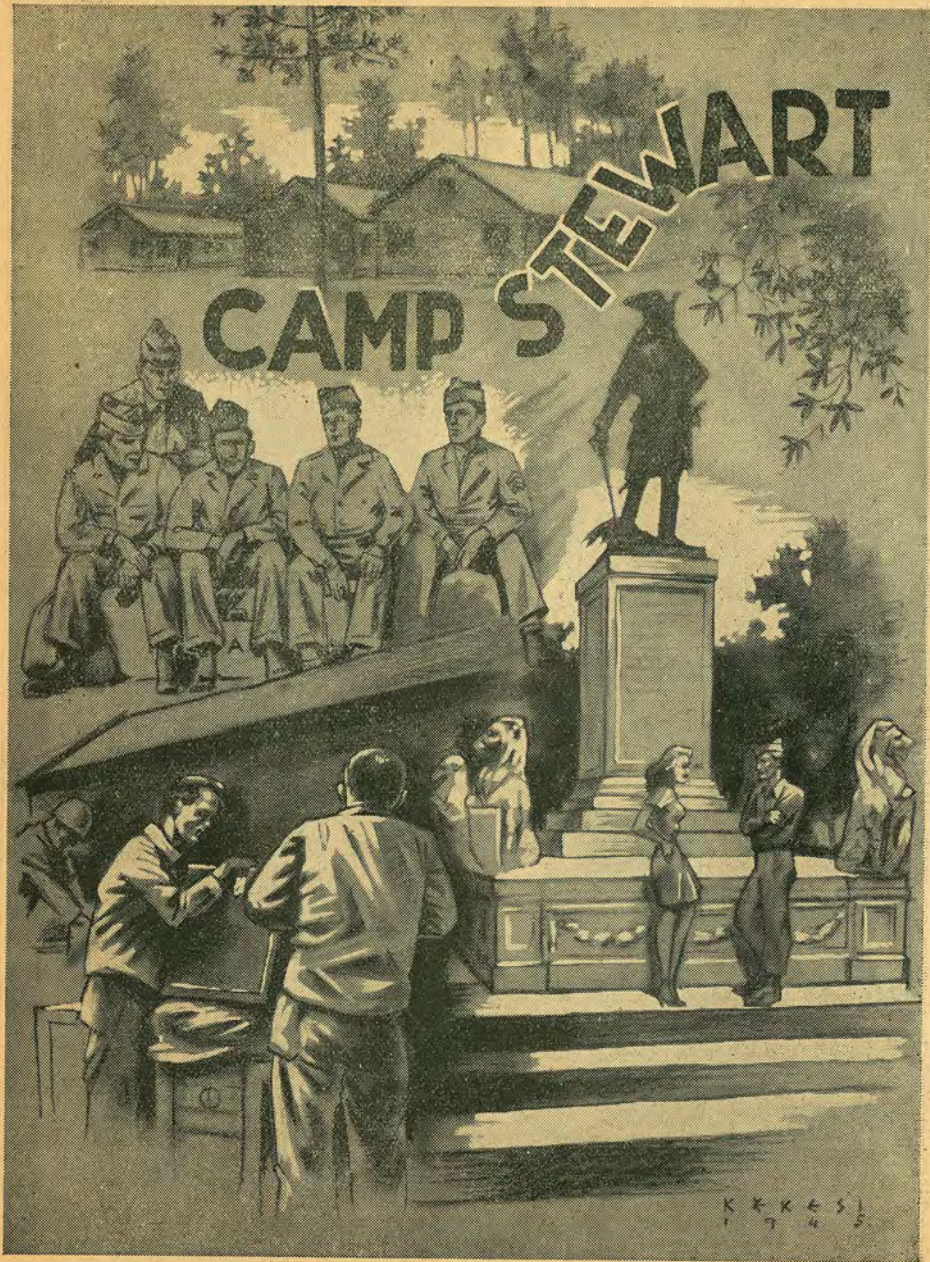
Short furloughs were granted at this time and men visited London, Edinburgh, Stratford-on-Avon and other points of interest in the United Kingdom.

December 12, 1944 the Battalion left Blackshawmoor in convoy for Southampton. This was a long cold trip passing south through the outskirts of Manchester, Eve-

sham, Cirencester, Marlborough, arriving in the bivouac area late at night. A few days were spent in the city park, subsisting on C rations. The vehicles and some personnel left Southampton on 16 December 1944, crossed the English Channel, anchored off Le Havre, France and then, on a beautiful sunny day, sailed up the Seine to land at Rouen.

The personnel party marched through the streets of Southampton early in the morning of 17 December, loaded aboard a British channel steamer. It was a miserably crowded affair and the food hardly deserved to be called that. By noon of the Eighteenth it anchored in Le Havre harbor in the midst of an air alert. That afternoon an LCT took the troops off the ship and at dusk they set foot on the Le Havre beach.



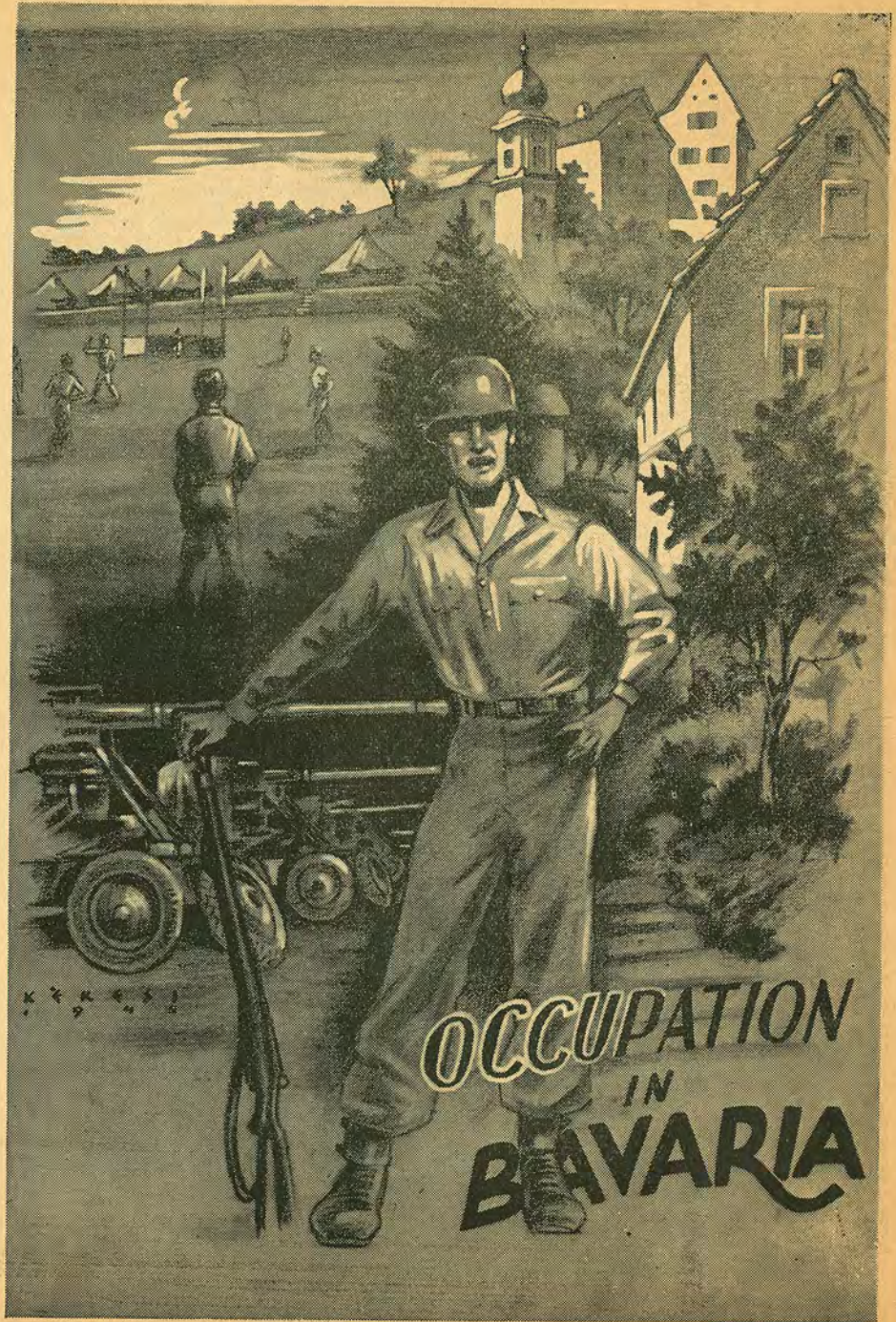
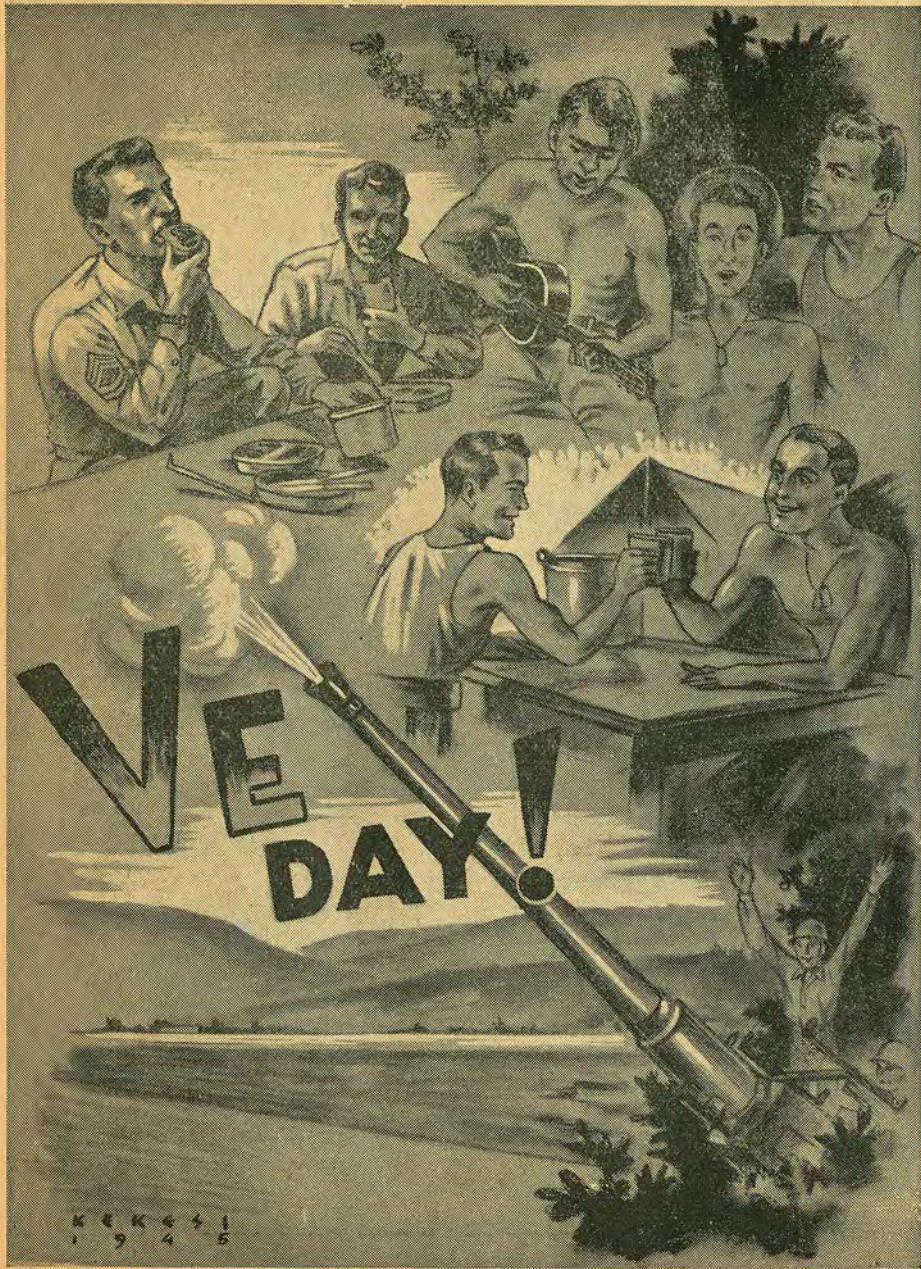


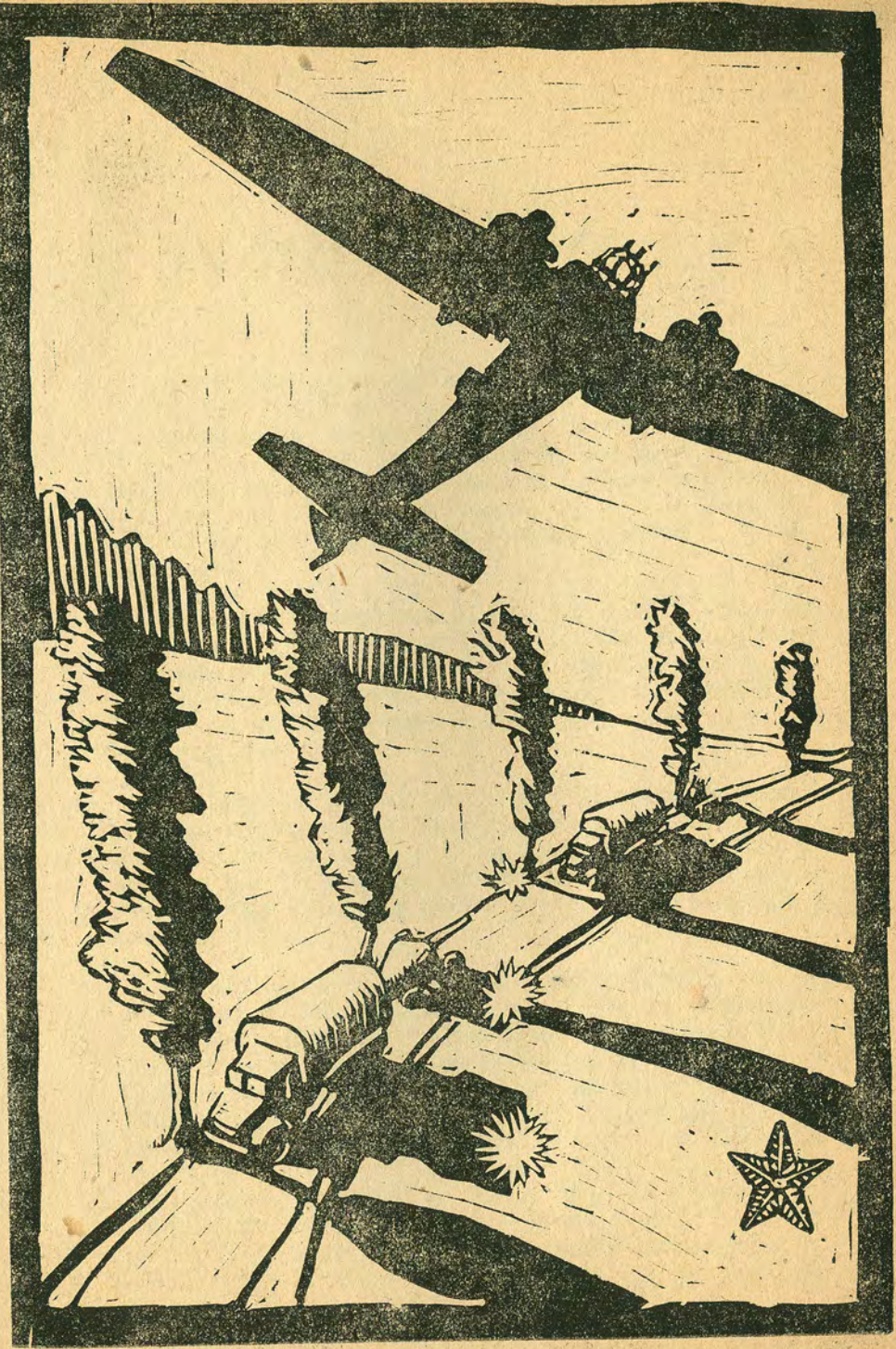


Rhineland
CAMPAIGN



CENTRAL
Germany
APRIL 1945





NORTHERN FRANCE

HIRSON

Ardennes Salient

In its entirety, the Battalion never actually entered the designated Ardennes Salient. Over two hundred men were awarded battle participation stars for their activities in the area but the Battalion was located just north of the «Bulge» area near Brand, Germany, and was not therefore entitled to a unit award.

After the strafing attack at Hirson the column left the geographical limits of the Northern France sector, moving east on N-39 then north on N-5 through Rocroi, Phillippeville, turning east on N-22 at Charleville. The weather was bitter cold and a breakfast stop was made just across the Belgian border at Fosses, Belgium. During the day the column passed through Namur, Tirlemont and St. Trond.

At 1700, low on gas and having been on the road for thirty-two hours of steady driving, the Battalion ran into difficulties in the form of a British tank column which cut the line of march in several places and caused a general dispersal of the unit. Orders had been changed while the march was in progress but only the leading elements were intact to meet the Battalion CO and continue on the new destination of Brand, Germany. Dog, Charley and Able Batteries straggled into Visé, Germany, through Tongres and the bridge at Visé. The leading elements of Baker Battery were cut off and the column turned blind southeast toward Liege instead of continuing through Tongres to Visé. While passing through Liege the column was subjected to aerial attack aimed at the Meuse bridge.

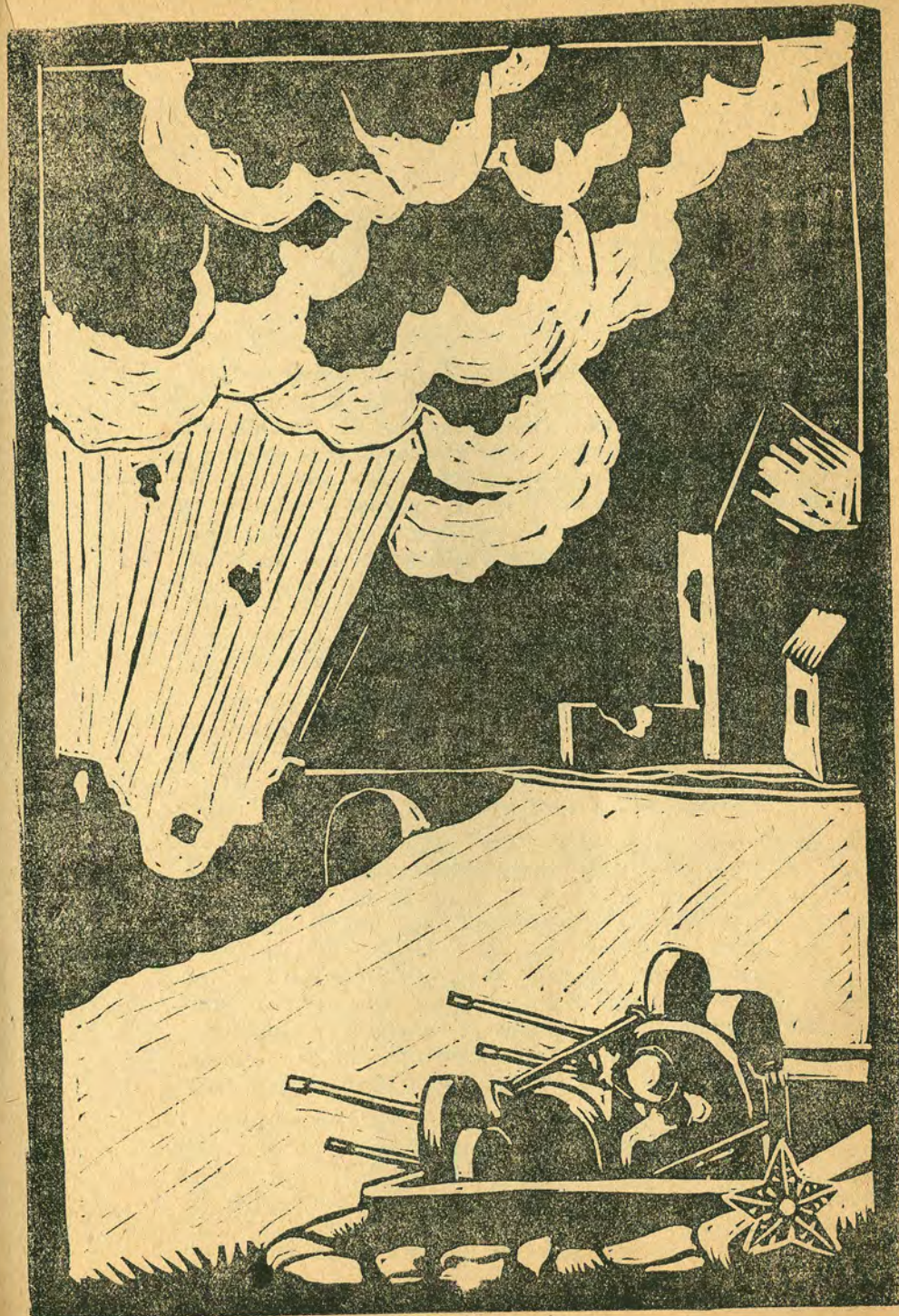
After a night in the local schoolhouse in Visé, during the course of which there was continuous air attacks, the batteries moved separately north into Holland to Heer and east into Germany through destroyed Aachen and on De-

cember 28, 1944, took up its first tactical mission in the European Theater of Operations.

The Ninth Army front was lightly held to the south and east and a heavy concentration of enemy armor was threatening a breakthrough at any time. Although the Battalion's primary mission was antiaircraft, immediate provisions were made for antitank defense. Each battery was assigned a kilometer square for all-around defense and gun sections were emplaced with antitank fields of fire for primary consideration. Extra bazooka ammunition was issued.

The weather continued cold and snow began to fall. The ground was deeply frozen and digging was a back-breaking task. At this time the equipment issued to the unit was inadequate for winter warfare. There were no parkas, pyramidal tents, stoves or even fuel. Some few sections found billets in houses but the majority had to make out as best they could on the freezing hills. Shacks were built and some sections even burrowed into turnip piles for protection. A low cloud ceiling kept any targets from being visible but low-flying V-1's could be discerned at times and the «sewing machine» motors of German aircraft commonly heard.

Late at night on December 30, 1944, orders were received reassigning the Battalion to the Third United States Army. The next morning dawned clear. As the gun sections march ordered a Stuka divebomber made its appearance and bombed Brand adjacent to Battalion Headquarters. The long convoy started south at 0700 December 31, 1944. It reached Maastricht, Holland, turned south at St. Trond, Belgium, to Namur and traveled all afternoon on N-17 along the west bank of the Meuse River, skirting the «Bulge». By nightfall the unit passed through Dinant, the focal point of the attack at the time and were in the vicinity of Rocroi and Charleville, France, as the churchbells rang out the old year.



RHINELAND

SAARALBE

Rhineland

The «Battle of the Bulge» was over. But an attack on the Seventh Army front in the vicinity of Haguenau and Strassbourg, France, originally planned as a diversion, continued unaccountably into Spring of 1945. The Battalion worked south, covering road nets and supply dumps in Alsace and on the 19th of February was temporarily attached to the Seventh Army. On the 12th of February the Battalion Command Post was located at Wickersheim, France, after being shelled in Saaralbe. Dog Battery saw action at Haguenau and Charlie suffered casualties from eight rounds of 380 mm fired by «Alsace Alice», the elusive German railroad gun.

During this period Major Robert J. Foster assumed command of the Battalion. Cot. Lamberton was relieved due to ill health.

The high point of the Rhineland Campaign was the crossing at Mainz, Germany later in the Spring.

While the Battalion was stationed in the vicinity of Thionville, France, things broke loose up at the front. The Third Army had pinched off the Saar Pocket and pushed across the Rhine near Mannheim, swinging north toward Frankfurt. The First Army had made a surprise crossing on the Ludendorf Bridge at Remagen and swung south to form a large pocket across the Rhine from Mainz. The XX Corps were given the assignment of making a crossing at that point and cleaning out that pocket. The Battalion was assigned to give AA protection to this crossing.

Movement from Thionville began early in the morning of the 26th of March, 1945. The Battalion convoy entered Germany at Kaiserlautern and continued northeast up N-269 through Oder Iberstein and Kirn. Just at dusk it went into concentration near Bad Kreuznach. A reconnaissance was made of Mainz and the batteries went into position

under cover of darkness. Able Battery received mortar fire while going into position, Baker Battery's first section was shelled by 88 mm from across the Rhine. Pfc. Jack Cox was killed instantly and the Chief of Section Sgt. Hubert G. Nicol was wounded.

The Battalion had arrived on the Rhinebank in advance of the Infantry and at Hechsheim where Dog Battery established a CP in the Burgomeister's office, German civilians caught their first sight of Americans. During the day of the 27th, field artillery units began to arrive and go into position in concealment in the hills surrounding Mainz.

The actual crossing was scheduled for 0130 on March 26, 1945. During the early part of the evening the U. S. Navy arrived with assault boats and the 80th Infantry Division moved down for the crossing. A little later than the scheduled time the artillery opened up a tremendous barrage which continued intermittently throughout the next day. The casualties on this Rhine crossing were considered higher than any other. Counterbattery fire followed and drove everyone into foxholes and gunpits. An 88 hit a mount of Able Battery and a mortar shell passed through the fifth section's tent and destroyed a truck.

During the course of the next two days the longest pontoon bridge in the world (632 yards) was constructed across the Rhine under a heavy smoke screen. The expected air attack never materialized and the only firing that the Battalion did was on the mission given to the first platoon of Dog Battery which lined up on the Rhine bank and fired on everything moving on the river surface above the bridge. The purpose of this mission was to prevent sabotage of the bridge by mines or «schwimmenkämpfers», suicide demolitionists.

On the 31st of March Charlie and one platoon of Able crossed the Rhine and set up a defense of the east bank and Headquarters moved to Wiesbaden. Baker and Dog crossed the Rhine on Easter Sunday, 1945.



CENTRAL EUROPE

GERMANY IN APRIL 1945

Central Europe

After the Rhine crossing the deterioration of Germany was rapid. The armored divisions pronged out in every direction and the enemy was never allowed a chance to dig in. Strong point after strong point was engulfed into pockets and the pockets dissolved or surrendered quickly. Gasoline had to be shuttled up to the front quickly to feed the armored columns. Great fleets of C-47s were employed in this work.

It was natural that the Battalion's mission would consist of protection of airstrips and main supply routes. Bridges had been consistently destroyed throughout Germany and required air protection. This last month of the war consisted of short missions and long convoys through central Germany, over roads congested with evacuees and displaced persons.

On the Eighth of April Battalion Headquarters moved to Friedberg with the batteries being in AA defense of airstrips in the vicinity of Borsdorf, Harbach and Rothenbergen, supply dumps around Hutsdorf and of highway and railroad bridges around Hanau, just outside of Frankfurt. It was here that protection was afforded the landing of the flotilla of C-47s that were landing gasoline for Gen. Patton's driving armor.

A change of mission threw the unit many miles to the northeast of Frankfurt to Langensalza, the batteries protecting vital areas at Merkers, Meiningen, Gotha, Wenigenlupnitz and the air strip at Langensalza. The latter was an airfield extensively used by the Luftwaffe. Every type of German plane was parked about on the field, all grounded for lack of fuel and obviously deserted with no attempt to disperse or conceal them. Many men went to visit the gruesome concentration camp at Ohrdruf just at the time that the former prison guards and local civilians

were burying the many bodies of slaughtered prisoners.

April 18, 1945 found the Battalion moving south through Thuringia into Bavaria. After a temporary bivouac at Wurzburg, Headquarters moved to Schweinfurt. The batteries set up in the vicinity of Werneck, Wurzburg, Bamberg and Erfurt.

Germany was deteriorating rapidly. All systematic resistance seemed at an end. The remains of the Luftwaffe were out at night strafing. The larger towns were in shambles. Armored columns would clear a town of the Wehrmacht and all semblance of law and order would vanish until days later American military government would move in. During the interim German civilians, displaced persons and liberated prisoners would loot and pillage to their heart's content. Wine cellars were breached and the whole town would go on a wild binge.

This was truly an unforgettable period. Able Battery got in plenty of firing in the vicinity of Wurzburg. They commandeered German 20 mm Ack Ack to add the fireworks. At Werneck Charlie Battery was heavily strafed and had nightly action.

The story of Bamberg is typical of this period. Dog Battery was assigned to the protection of a huge gasoline dump in the city park. When this battery rolled into town the enemy had been cleared out by armor just thirty hours before. Released prisoners, slave laborers and pillaging German civilians were on the loose. The guns went into position in two rings about the dump, the CP moved into a nearby apartment house. Immediately this installation was mistaken as the new military government and the headquarters platoon had its hands full trying to prevent pillage by day and rape by night. One gun section was called on to guard a large warehouse that was being looted, another found itself taking care of deserted poultry. An ammunition train, which had in it among other things, three loaded boxcars of dynamite, was set afire by saboteurs and went off, blasting out the center of town and killing and maiming many persons. The first night Jerry arrived at moonset and dropped three bombs. The target was so obscure that firing was erratic. The next day in coordination with the nearby gun battalion a barrage system was laid out to

prevent the destruction of the dump. The following night the raider appeared again but visibility was far better and many hits were observed. Although the plane was not seen to fall the battery was awarded a Cat. III (aircraft crippled so unable to return to base) for the action.

A narrative of this length could never include all the adventures experienced by this battalion during the month of April 1945. Any single man's experience exceeded anything he had previously known and a story of his personal adventures during this time would make good reading. Yarns have grown taller and taller as we have receded from the event and at the present writing, not five months after the Victory in Europe, it is hard to unspool fact from fiction and follow the thin thread of truth through the tangle of legend. It is the purpose of this volume to make no pretense at episodic description, but to provide a simple guide and reference for the spinners of yarns and the builders of legends, and yet not be too specific lest some good stories be spoiled through over documentation.

Toward the end of April there were frequent movements to the south and east to the vicinity of Nurnberg along the Danube river. Battalion Command Post moved south from Forcheim 29 April 1945 to Beilngries and on the Second of May crossed the Danube to Abensberg. The batteries continued on a single mission during these moves, protecting airstrips and Class III dumps in the vicinities of Regensburg, Bathdausen, Ingolstadt and Roth.

The final tactical mission was assigned the unit on May 5, 1945 when it was given defense of the Danube crossings and Third Army Headquarters at Regensburg. Line batteries set up at Regensburg, Deggendorf and Barbing.

V-E Day, May 8, 1945, was greeted with apathy for the most part in Germany although Baker Battery displayed a little night fireworks around Third Army Headquarters that caused comment from General Patton himself.



Dorfs». Headquarters was established in the little feudal town of Egloffstein, the line batteries each taking a district for police and administration. Able and Baker went into bivouac at Ermreuth, Charlie at Grafenbergerhull and Dog at Egloffsteinerhull.

This part of Germany was untouched by the war. There were excellent trout streams, good hunting and lovely scenery to be viewed afoot. At this time the Army had established a non-fraternization policy with German civilians. This was a patent failure and no clearer could it be demonstrated than at this time, for it was Spring, the war was over and Nature has a way of undeniably asserting Herself.

The battery bivouac areas, thanks to the beautiful setting and generous quantities of Prisoner of War labor, became very models of perfection, with white graveled walks and elaborately built and brightly painted installations. At this time too the men were allowed to visit places of interest in the surrounding vicinity. Tours left for Munich, Pilsen and Berchtesgaden. Every local schoolhouse was commandeered and put to the use of the unit school. A Battalion newspaper, «*The Muzzleburst*», was printed weekly in the nearby town of Forcheim. Special Service «liberated» a large building in the centrally located village of Thuisbrunn where nightly movies were shown. A softball league was formed and became a center of Battalion interest, Charlie Battery winning the first half and Dog the second.

On the Third of July the Battalion received «permanent change of station» orders and began movement westward towards France. After a night's bivouac near Trier, on July 4, Germany was left behind and the Battalion rolled into Camp New York, one of the Assembly Area Camps near Suippes, France. At this time Major Potter assumed command of the battalion.

The Assembly Area Command was established in Rheims, France, in the center of the Champagne country. Camps were set up, all named after American cities, to handle troops returning from Germany, processing them to be shipped either to the Pacific Theater of Operations or to the United States. These camps covered about sixty

square miles of flat dusty plains of the Champagne area. The Battalion's mission was a duty with Army Postal Units and various other duties for the Assembly Area Command. Personnel was divided into thirty separate detachments sorting mail and guarding prisoners. Battalion Headquarters was established in Epernay, France.

And thus it was when the atomic bomb made an end of the War with Japan. The men working at many different jobs but their minds unified in one single thought, «When do we go home?» Waiting for that final and most welcome «March Order» that would send them there.

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The 567^{th's} Europe

Travels from December 20, 1944 to May 8, 1945

LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| I—TOTES | XIII—THIONVILLE |
| II—ST. QUENTIN | XIV—MAINZ |
| III—HIRSON | XV—WIESBADEN |
| IV—NAMUR | XVI—FRANKFURT |
| V—VISE | XVII—LANGENSALZA |
| VI—AACHEN | XVIII—WURZBURG |
| VII—BRAND | XIX—SCHWEINFURT |
| VIII—METZ | XX—BAMBERG |
| IX—SAAREBOURG | XXI—NURNBERG |
| X—SAARALBE | XXII—REGENSBERG |
| XI—WICKERSHEIM | XXIII—PFATTER |
| XII—HAGUENAU | XXIV—EGLOFFSTEIN |

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