

HEADQUARTERS  
227<sup>TH</sup> FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
A.P.O. 29, U.S. ARMY

Subject: After Action Report for Month of December 1944

TO: The Adjutant General, Washington, D.C.

THRU: Commanding General, 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Artillery,  
A.P.O. 29, U.S. Army

I. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

1 December 1944 found the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion in position at (960573) Sheet 5003 Linnich, Germany, Scale 1/25000, with the mission of general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

While the Battalion remained in this position it was subjected to some strafing by German planes. Fortunately no casualties were sustained from any of the strafing. Artillery fire on these positions during the month of December was practically nil.

At 1800 hours 21 December 1944 the Battalion was alerted to move to positions at (956540) Sheet 5103 Eschweiler, Germany, Scale 1/25000, in order to be able to better cover the front of the Division. Reconnaissance was made on the morning of 22 December 1944 and Close Station March Order was given to Headquarters, "A" and "B" Batteries at 1345 hours. "C" Battery was ordered to remain in their position until "A" and "B" Batteries had closed in to their new positions. After "A" and "B" Batteries occupied their new positions, "C" Battery left their position at (960573) and closed in the Battalion area at 1800 hours 22 December 1944.

On 23 December 1944 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion became a part of XIII Corps, Ninth United States Army.

The Battalion was ordered to prepare alternate defensive positions at (906504) Sheet 5103 Eschweiler, Germany, 1/25000, on 27 December 1944.

The Battalion remained in positions at (956540) Sheet 5103, Eschweiler, Germany, Scale 1/25000, thru the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1944.

II. FORCES ENGAGED

During the month of December 1944 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion came in contact with elements of the 363<sup>rd</sup> and 246<sup>th</sup> Volks-Grenadier Divisions, the 695<sup>th</sup> and the 404<sup>th</sup> Volks-Grenadier Regiments, and various other elements of the enemy.

III. LOSSES IN ACTION

During the month of December 1944 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion had no casualties. A resume of the losses of the Battalion since entering combat until the end of December 1944 is as follows:

	KIA	DOW	SWA	LWA	LIA	MIA
Officers	4	0	2	2	0	0
Enlisted Men	2	1	10	4	1	0

IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

During the month of December 1944 the following awards were made to members of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion:

Silver Star Medals	3
Bronze Star Medals	9
Purple Hearts	2
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal	4

II. COMMANDING OFFICERS.

The Commanding Officers for the month of November 1944 were as follows:

Battalion Commander	Lt. Col. Neal W. Harper
Headquarters Battery	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert M. Godber
Battery "A"	?Capt. George F. Weidl
Battery "B"	?Capt. Charles G. Ward
Battery "C"	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. David D. Honick
Service Battery	Capt. Eugene D. Jones
Medical Detachment	Capt. Harold L. Bacon
The Battalion Commander's Staff consisted of:	
Executive Officer	Major Norman D. Aboosh
S-3	Major Frederick B. Johnson
Ass't S-3	Capt. John C. Vallor
S-2	Capt. Cecil L. Harvey
Ass't S-2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Herman G. DeMoss
Liaison Officer	Capt. Bruce Bliven, Jr.

III. MISCELLANEOUS.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion completed a total of one hundred and ninety-nine (199) missions and expended a total of 2528 rounds of ammunition for the month of December 1944. A breakdown of these is as follows:

TYPES OF MISSIONS	NUMBER
Registration	16
Counter Battery	65
Personnel	44
Vehicles	4
Mortars	2
Harrassing and Interdiction	30
Other types	38
TOTAL	199

During the month of December 1944 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion was shown several movies. The Red Cross Clubmobile visited the Battalion on Christmas Day, 25 December 1944. These movies and the visit of the Clubmobile were thoroughly enjoyed by the personnel of the Battalion and did much to help keep up their morale.

On 6 December 1944 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Westley H. Dodson, 33036198, of Battery "A" and Technician 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Louis I Roth, 33036016, Medical Detachment, were placed on Temporary Duty in the United States of America. Both men had been with the Battalion thru all of its overseas service which began on 5 October 1942.

The combat efficiency of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion has been excellent throughout the month of December 1944.

Morale during this period has been excellent. 29 LET'S GO.

(signed-Neal W. Harper)  
 NEAL W. HARPER  
 Lt. Colonel, F.A.  
 Commanding

## BATTLE LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### I. Communications

1. By the use of a number of extension cords we were able to make use of available cover and still receive from our 608 radios. With an additional cable, now provided, transmitting will be possible too.
2. When you start laying wire to any point, be sure you have knowledge of all friendly territory, and exact location of your nearest Artillery switchboard.
3. A telephone should be installed at each machine gun position.
4. Communications with our Service Battery has always been a problem. We have partially solved this by using an SCR 284. We made up a slidex card for this particular situation which included the necessary information to handle S-4, Ammunition Officer, and Battalion Motor Officer traffic.
5. Rotation of radio operators has been found to be a necessity in combat due to the fact that operators will get lax and sloppy in procedure.

### II. Gunnery

1. Aerial photos taken from F.A. Liaison planes have been a valuable aid to F.O.'s in locating points and objects that can't be picked up from maps.
2. Experience in Firing M102 Ammunition with M1A1 and M2 Powder:  
Early experience with M102 ammunition that had been converted to firing in the 155mm howitzer indicated that it followed closely the data given us as to its performance. We were able to work up slides for the graphical firing table based on this information. Later experience showed, however, that the ammunition was very unreliable. We have had one case while firing, of obtaining 80 yards per thousand further than was indicated by this direction, giving a greater range than expected. In firing map data corrected any errors in firing are likely to be over, but the discrepancies observed have been so numerous as to indicate that little confidence should be placed in such fires. If a "K" is determined and used for the "over-shooting" there is a danger that short rounds will be obtained. For this reason it has been found desirable, when possible to limit the use of M102 ammunition to observed fires and even then when an accurate replot of the target is required there is no way of determining the accuracy of the adjustment except by firing a few rounds of standard M107 ammunition.

It is believed that the trouble is caused by failure of the various powder lots to conform to standard and it is suggested that, if so, each powder lot should be test fired to determine its performance. The wide variety of powder lots obtained; however, make this impracticable except in isolated cases. For example out of 232 rounds of powder on hand in one batter there are 25 different powder lots, the number of rounds in each lot varies from 1 to 18.

### III. The Firing Battery

1. By digging the trails deeper than the jack float, the gun will hold much better.
2. Each cannoneer should be issued a pair of working gloves in addition to his wool gloves.
3. A constant check must be made for loose set screws caused by vibration of the gun.
4. When the firing mechanism flies from the breech block, while the gun is firing, it can be corrected by stretching the handle spring in the firing mechanism.
5. During the rapidity of firing a great number of round, a constant check must be made of the oberator spindle plug. The oberator [missing words] This may cause the primer to

burn off and may also effect the firing mechanism. If this should occur a new obterater spindle plug should be installed.

6. Flat timber used under float in muddy ground help keep the gun from moving laterally.
7. The use of prestone in the water for swabbing out the bore of the gun keeps the water from freezing in the bore.

IV. Motors

1. Motor Parts are always scarce, good supply and maintenance discipline must be practiced.

V. Miscellaneous

1. W-143 wire has been a big help to us within the battery area with the PE-75 power unit. The seven strand copper makes it ideal for light wire.
2. Men have a tendency to disregard basic teachings when they have not had occasion to use them for sometime. Basic teachings must be repeated at various times.
3. Do not handle men with kid gloves after they have been shelled or bombed. Keep the men busy with physical activity. This will tend to lessen their realization of danger.
4. Due to a shortage of BA 03 batteries it was decided to alter construction of aiming post light M-14 so it would be possible to switch the light off or on at will from the gun position, thus eliminating the necessity of the light burning continually through the night. This was accomplished by drilling two holes in the metal shell, one on either side of the light, between the clamp and base of the reflector. Two positive battery lead was removed from the switch and attached to one binding post, and a –[missing rest of section]

(signed-Neal W. Harper)

NEAL W. HARPER

Lt. Colonel, F.A.

Commanding