

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

Subject: After Action Report For Month of January 1945

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.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 1 January 1945, was in position at Obermerz, Germany, (956540) Sheet 5103 Eschweiler, Germany, Scale 1/25000. The mission of the Battalion was general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1945 Battery "C" was ordered into this position in order to make better use of M 102 ammunition which has a shorter range than the M 107 ammunition. Battery "C" remained in this position thru the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1945.

During the month schools were held in "Care of Motors During Cold Weather", "Gas", "Care of Material and Equipment During Cold Weather", "Instruction and Education", "Organization and Operations of O.P.'S", etc.

The Battalion supported raids across the Roer River, conducted by the Infantry, and engaged in harassing and interdiction fires.

The task of guarding a B-17 plane that was in the Battalion area was assigned to the Battalion from 1 January 1945 to 16 January 1945.

The Commanding General of the XIII Corps inspected the Battalion on 14 January 1945.

Stress as laid on 1<sup>st</sup> echelon maintenance, care of equipment and material and care of the individual during the month.

The Battalion less Battery "C" remained in position at Obermerz, Germany thru the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1945. Battery "C" remained in position in Putzdorf, Germany

II. FORCES ENGAGED.

During the month of January 1945 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion came into contact with elements of the 59<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier Division and of the 363<sup>rd</sup> Volksgrenadier Division.

III. LOSSES IN ACTION.

During the month of January 1945 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion sustained no losses in action. A resume of the losses of the Battalion since entering combat until the end of January 1945 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 January 1945 the following awards were made to members of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion:

Silver Star Medals	2
Bronze Star Medals	8
Purple Hearts	1
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal	6
Certificates of Merit	10

V. 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. Walter J. Rakow
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
Liason Officer	Capt. Bruce Bliven, Jr.

VI. Miscellaneous.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion completed a total of two hundred and fifty-nine (259) missions, and expended a total of three thousand three hundred and thirty-nine (3,339) rounds of ammunition for the month of January 1945. A breakdown of these is as follows:

TYPES OF MISSIONS	NUMBER
Registration	36
Counter Battery	11
Personnel	10
Vehicles	4
Pill Boxes and Forts	9
C.P.'s and O.P.'s	10
Harassing and Interdiction	157
Other types	22
TOTAL	259

The air OP section of the Battalion flew on 22 days for a total of 56 missions during January 1945. A breakdown of the flights made is as follows:

Number of hours flown	52 Hrs. 15 Min.
Fire Missions	29
Reconnaissance Missions	27

During the month of January 1945 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion saw quite a few movies and several stage shows. The Red Cross Clubmobile visited the Battalion. The movies, stage shows and Clubmobile were all thoroughly enjoyed by the personnel of the Battalion and did much to help keep up the morale.

Major Frederick B. Johnson, 0239725, the Battalion S-3, T.Sgt. Frank W. Jones, 20321305, of Service Battery and Tec 5 Albert T. Hayducke, 33036343, of Battery "B" were placed on Temporary Duty in the United States of America on 11 January 1945. All had been with the Battalion throughout all of its overseas service which began on 5 October 1945.

The Combat Efficiency of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion has been excellent throughout the month of January 1945.

Morale during the 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. Care of equipment cannot be stressed enough during cold weather. Constant inspections are necessary, as operators will overlook small things because of the cold.
2. A pike pole (MC 123) of twelve or fourteen feet in length would make for faster and more efficient laying of wire.
3. Keep wire off the ground, it may become frozen in the ground in cold weather.

### II. The Firing Battery

1. Remember in snow or rainy weather to dig a small drainage trench around the howitzer, ammunition pits, fox-holes and all other dug in installations. This will keep the pits dry.
2. Ammunition pits, dug-outs, etc. should have some form of water repellant such as shelter-halves, tarpaulins, tar paper, etc. over them to make them waterproof. Dirt alone will not protect pits from water.
3. Firing jacks should be built up with added floatation even when the ground is frozen; otherwise the jack will sink when the ground thaws.
4. An oil spray gun can be used to oil the innersprings of the equilibrators.
5. Never count on any material, especially ammunition as being water proof even if they are supposed to be. You will have much less trouble if you keep all material as free from water as possible.
6. By using duckboards in powder pits from 5" to 6" high, and digging a sump pit in the center or at the open end of the pit, powder will be kept perfectly dry when changing weather allows water to seep into the pits.
7. Anti-dim used on the lens of sights will prevent them from fogging.
8. During long lulls in firing keep all covers on the howitzer, this will prevent snow and ice from collecting over the howitzer.
9. Before fuzing round, examine top of booster in shell for ice, which may cause a dud.
10. When moving from one position to another carry all necessary equipment to put the howitzer in action on the howitzer trails. Then when a prime mover breaks down substitution can be made with a minimum of delay.
11. As soon as shells are brought from the dump clean them of mud, ice, and snow with hot water and a steel brush, then dry them with a rag or waste. Place the shells in a straw filled pit. When the shells are needed in a hurry no time is lost in the cleaning prior to loading.
12. By use of salvaged German luminous buttons on the orienting line stakes they are easy to locate at night.

### III. Motors

1. Vehicles that are dug in must be placed on boards or logs to get them off the ground to prevent their freezing to the ground in cold weather.
2. Oil will congeal on the central linkage and on the bendix springs (starter) of the M-5 tractor in cold weather which will cause them to stiffen. By periodically washing the linkage and starter assembly with kerosene this can be prevented.

### IV. Air O.P.

1. Enemy flak can be avoided to some extent by Cubs not flying too close together.
2. By flying higher and a little behind the outpost line small arms will not be used against Cubs.
3. The life of radio batteries can be increased during intense cold weather if they are removed from the plane and placed in a warm room after a mission.

4. By using a pyramid tent with a stove, a comfortable place can be established to work on the plane. The nose is pushed in thru the entrance of the tent and the tail jacked to get the nose of the plane into the entrance. Ground crews can work on the planes motor very comfortably.
5. The pilot should always know what the target is. He can then materially aid the observer by planning is course accordingly.
6. By the use of "frost shields" on the wings and elevators of the plane during cold weather, the surfaces are kept free of frost. This can be accomplished by using shelter halves and burlap sacks to cover these surfaces when the plane is on the ground.
7. An "Island of Safety" can be found by knowing the location of all friendly AA Artillery positions in the area and heading for one of the positions and circling close to the ground around the position.
8. Possible targets for interdiction fire at night can be obtained by noting the tracks of enemy night traffic made in the frost of snow during a flight just after daylight and reporting these tracks to the Battalion S-2.
9. An observer can materially aid his pilot by familiar with the characteristics of the plane, the requirements of landing fields, and hazards that must be avoided, especially when engine trouble develops, as the pilot must concentrate on staying aloft as long as possible to make a safe landing, the observer can then pick an emergency landing field for the pilot.
10. Each observer must experiment with his own meeting arrangement in the plane. By sitting with his back to the pilot, the observer can best attend his radio and provide 360 degrees vision for the plane. By sitting in the plane in the same direction as the pilot, communication between the pilot and observer is much better.
11. Observers will have less headaches in shooting if the G.T. line is kept in mind. An occasional glimpse back at the G.P. will help keep the G.T. line fixed in the mind of the observer.
12. By studying aerial photos of the area before going up, points become much easier to identify on the map.
13. The Germans use two tricks which confuse observers.
  - a. The use of smoke either from mortar, artillery, or smoke pots to obscure the target. The best thing to do is to keep an eye on the area while it is being smoked and continuing the adjustment when smoke lifts. Quite often personnel, or S.P.'s will try to move from their spot under cover of the smoke.
  - b. The use of explosives to simulate artillery firing. A good method of detecting this is to observe the flashes a few times. When explosives are used much dirt and debris is thrown about.

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