

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

Subject: After Action Report for Month of April 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 April 1945, was in firing position at Schmachtendorf, Germany, (363268) Sheet Q 1 Essen, Germany, Scale 1/100,000, firing into the "Ruhr Pocket". The mission was general support and reinforcing the fires of the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

This mission terminated on 6 April 1945 and the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Natorp, Germany, (006575) Sheet P 2 Munster, Germany, Scale 1/100,000. The Battalion had rejoined the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in 9<sup>th</sup> Army reserve.

The Battalion conducted an extensive twelve hour program of vehicle maintenance. Emphasis was placed on getting the M-5 tractors repaired in time for anticipated operations. The tractors had proven again that they could not take it on a long march over hard surfaced roads. Several bogie wheels had broken up and many cleats were loosened or thrown during the 66 mile march of the previous day. Almost every man in firing batteries helped in these repairs and the job was completed by nightfall.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 8 April 1945, moved to an assembly area at Rhade, Germany, (444507) Sheet P 1, Becholt, Germany, Scale 1/100,000. The mission was Rear Area Security. Road blocks and motor patrols were in operation within two hours after the Battalion had closed in the area. These road blocks and patrols were charged with stopping all unnecessary circulation of civilians and Allied Prisoners of War, and that of local defense. Besides the rear area security the Battalion was directed to collect and care for transient Allied Prisoners of War and Displaced persons; to establish military government; to collect salvage; and to take the necessary steps to protect the public health. It was necessary to establish camps for the Allied Prisoners of War and Displaced persons.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 9 April 1945, moved its CP to Rhade, Germany (453508) Sheet P1 Bechelt, Germany, Scale 1/100,000. This was an administrative move to place battalion control nearer communications routes and did not change the mission.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 10 April 1945, occupied rear area security positions at Frieling, Germany, (710674) Sheet P1, Bechelt, Germany, Scale 1/100,000, after turning over control of the previous positions to the 224<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion. The mission was rear area security relieving elements of the 175<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. One Allied Prisoner of War Camp and Two Displaced Persons camps were set up. A camp already in operation came under Battalion control. The Battalion with the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division reverted to control of XVI Corps on 12 April 1945.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion was relieved of area responsibility by the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion on 14 April 1945 and moved to Hilstrup, Germany (930675) Sheet P 2, Munster, Germany, Scale 1/100,000. Again the Battalion relieved elements of the 175<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the mission of rear area security, including the city of Munster.

The area controlled by the Battalion was extended considerably when other elements of the 175<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and elements of the 224<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion and the 115<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment were relieved on 15 April 1945. A total of 36 Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons Camps were operated by the battalion besides guarding warehouses and bridges in the area. The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion was relieved of the security of this area by elements of the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 18 April 1945.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 19 April 1945, moved to an assembly area vicinity of Lachendorf, Germany, (699507) Sheet N 4, Hannover, Germany, Scale 1/100,000, in two columns. The M-5 tractors and six guns were moved in a heavy column on retrievers. The Battalion with the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division came under control of XIII Corps this date.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 20 April 1945, at Luder, Germany, (977718) Sheet M 5, Salzwedel, Germany, Scale 1/100,000 occupied firing positions. The mission was general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 22 April 1945, displaced to Klense, Germany, (167871) Sheet M 5, Salzwedel, Germany, Scale 1/100,000 and occupied firing positions. The mission was general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 23 April 1945, displaced to Tolstefans, Germany, (215945) Sheet M 5, Salzwedel, Germany, Scale 1/100,000 and occupied firing positions. The mission was general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, on 24 April 1945, displaced to Riskau, Germany, (209065) Sheet M 5, Salzwedel, Germany, Scale 1/100,000 and occupied firing positions. The mission was general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and reinforcing fires of the 110<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion. The mission was changed on 28 April to general support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and reinforcing the fires of the 111<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion. This mission continued through 30 April 1945.

## II. FORCES ENGAGED.

During the month of 1945 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion came into contact with a host of miscellaneous units of the German Army. The main identifications made during the time the Battalion was attached to the 79<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery were elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Paratroop Division, 190<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier Division and the 180<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier Division.

Forces engaged during the latter part of the month were the 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and a variety of miscellaneous units under control of XXXIX Panzer Corps. These units included elements of the 328<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 130<sup>th</sup> Panzer Lehr Division, 739<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division, 160<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 199<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Division Von Clausewitz, and Kampfgruppe Leptin. Several Volksturm units were also engaged.

A total of 34 German Prisoners of War were captured and evacuated during the month of April 1945.

## III. LOSSES IN ACTION.

During the month of April 1945 the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion did not suffer a single casualty. A resume of the losses of the Battalion since entering combat until the end of April 1945 is as follows:

	KIA	DOW	SWA	LWA	LIA	MIA
Officers	4	0	2	2	0	0
Enlisted Men	2	1	11	4	1	0

## IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

During the month of April 1945 the following awards were made to members of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion:

Bronze Star Medal	5
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star	3

## 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	
1 April to 23 April 1945	Capt. Eugene D. Jones
23 April to 30 April 1945	Capt. Anthony M. Kemp Jr.
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 (TDY-USA)
Ass't S-3	Capt. John C. Vallor (Acting S-3)
S-2	Capt. Cecil L. Harvey (Acting Ass't S-3)
Ass't S-2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Herman G. DeMoss
Liason Officer	Capt. Bruce Bliven, Jr.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS.

The 227<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion completed a total of fifty-six (56) missions, and expended a total of seven hundred and sixteen rounds (716) rounds of ammunition for the month of April 1945. A breakdown of these is as follows:

TYPES OF MISSIONS	NUMBER
Registration	4
Counter Battery	7
Fortifications	5
Harassing and Interdiction	31
Miscellaneous	9
TOTAL	56

The Air OP Section of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion flew a total of 74 missions during April 1945. A breakdown of the flights made is as follows:

Number of hours flown	91 Hrs 50 Min.
Fire Mission	2
Reconnaissance	16
Administrative	52
Training	4

The 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion during the period of 8 April to 18 April 1945 while carrying out the mission of rear area security housed and cared for 7,465 Allied Prisoners of War and 7,640 Displaced Persons.

During the month of April six (6) enlisted men were placed on Temporary Duty in the United States of America. This brought the total to one (1) officer and eighteen (18) enlisted men that have been sent to the United States for Temporary Duty.

During the month of April 1945 seven day leaves or furloughs were given to three (3) officers and five (5) enlisted men. The officers and four (4) of the enlisted men visited the Riviera. The other enlisted men visited England.

On 27 April 1945 a movie was shown to the Battalion. 350 men attended.

The combat efficiency of the 227<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion was excellent throughout the month of April 1945.

Morale during the period was excellent. 29 LET'S GO.

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

## BATTLE LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### I. COMMUNICATIONS

1. During the past rapidly moving situation it was necessary to rely solely on radio communication with the forward observers. This was accomplished by having in each forward observer's party a ¾ ton C&R equipped with a 608 radio to act as a relay when it had reached it's maximum range.

### II. MOTORS

1. In the maintenance of the M-5, 13 ton High Speed Tractor, since entering combat, our biggest headaches has been the track links. The tracks on our tractors are made up of grouser type links which are held together by two bolts. These bolts break easily and cause no end of trouble. We have found by disassembling the tracks and welding a bead on both sides of the links we have eliminated our biggest maintenance problem.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS

1. ¼ ton Trailers have to be towed by a vehicle of the same wheel spacing in order to cross some of the treadway bridges that have been erected for river and canal crossings, the towed vehicle must track the towing vehicle.
2. It was found that a complete section could be transported on a M-19 tank retriever by backing the 155 M-1 Howitzer on the retriever, uncoupling the tractor and backing ti over a portion of the trail. It was necessary however, to lift the front end of the tractor with the wrecker in order to permit the ramps to be put into place.

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

## LESSONS LEARNED IN REAR AREA SECURITY

### I. CAMPS

1. Displaced persons and Allied Prisoners of War should be placed in separate camps as to nationality wherever possible. In any case they should be segregated, this facilitates the appointing of leaders from the particular groups and tend for better cooperation and control.
2. For control, interpreters are necessary for the staff of each camp. These interpreters are usually available within the battalion. A canvas of the battalion must be made for these interpreters, because in many cases it does not show on their Form 20.
3. Post the rules of the camp in the various languages so that the inhabitants will know what is expected of them.
4. Sanitation as to use of latrines, delousing powder, and cleanliness in the preparation of foods must be rigidly enforced.

### II. PATROLS

1. Motorized patrols were operated, each with a particular sector of responsibility. Their duties were to report all salvageable materials, German Military installations, hospitals, etc. They were also charged with keeping civilians, etc, off the main supply routes.
2. Stationary patrols were placed at important cross roads. These patrols were to stop all Allied Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons, when they had collected a truck load they would radio for a vehicle to take the persons to the proper camps. They were also given the mission of screening German male citizens. At least one interpreter was furnished each patrol.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS

1. When moving into an area the local Military Government detachment should be contacted. This section can orient you in regards to regulations that are in force, names of burgermeister, etc.
2. Men on guard duty, patrols, etc., must be given detailed instruction in the various forms of passes used in the sector of operation. Lack of this knowledge has caused considerable difficulty.
3. Uniform curfew laws should prevail throughout area in which a unit operates.
4. It is important that all soldiers who are engaged in Military Government be well groomed and act militaristic in manner. The impression made by the soldier is an important factor in controlling the Germans and refugees in the area.

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