

HEADQUARTERS 313TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
APO #80 U. S. Army

6 February 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for period 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 inclusive. (Section I - Summary of daily operations and action).

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. (Through Channels).

1. NARRATIVE OF EVENTS:

a. At the beginning of the period, the 80th Infantry Division occupied defensive positions, 313th Field Artillery Battalion in position vicinity of OBERFEULEN, LUXEMBOURG with mission of D/S 317th Inf, reinforced by 512th FA Bn. With the exception of active patrolling by both sides there was little activity from 1 - 5 January 1945. Although the visibility was generally poor, a normal number of observed missions were fired accompanied with a large number of harrassing and interdiction missions. 5 January, Co A, 91st Clm Bn was attached with the mission of reinforcing our fire. Plans were made for an attack on the towns of KEHMEN and BOURSCHEID, and a preparation prepared on call. The clm mortars went into position ready to support the attack. The attack was postponed.

b. 6 January, D Btry displaced forward to obtain more effective range. The numbers 1 and 2 pieces of D Btry were set up to form a "road runner" on the road leading from KEHMEN to BOURSCHEID. The pieces were emplaced so that their line of fire was a prolongation of the road. Listening posts were set up by the infantry and whenever any traffic was reported, the "road runner" was fired. By this method of emplacing the howitzers range dispersion did not hinder the effect of the fire as it would still be on the road.

c. The night of 7 - 8 January, the clm mortars fired approximately one hundred and fifty rounds of white phosphorous into the town of KEHMEN and started many fires. 8 January the enemy strongly counter-attacked in the sector of the 319th Inf. The 80th Div Arty, reinforced, fired several previously prepared missions with the result that the counter-attacks were repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy.

d. 9 January, the clm mortars fired one hundred and eleven rounds of white phosphorous into the town of BOURSCHEID, which started several fires that continued to blaze throughout the night. 11 January, the clm mortars fired white phosphorous into the town of SCHEIDEL, and started several fires. 12 January, Co A, 91st Clm Bn was relieved from attachment to this battalion.

e. There was no unusual activity during the next few days. Several propaganda missions were fired in conjunction with speeches given by the Psychological Warfare Department. They met with little success. 16 January the following units were placed under this battalion for fire control:

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1 platoon of Co B, 91st Clm Bn, 5 tanks (75mm Guns) from Co A, 702 Tank Bn, 1 platoon of quads (50 cal MG) from Btry A, 633 AAA, and 1 platoon of quads (50 cal MG) from Btry C, 633 AAA.

f. The morning of 18 January, the battalion fired a preparation for an attack by the 319th Inf and the 5th US Inf Div. On the same day the tanks from Co A, 702 Tank Bn were relieved from our control. On the morning of 19 January a mock preparation was fired for the 1st Bn 317th Inf to draw the enemy's attention away from the 319th Inf sector where they were attempting to advance. Reconnaissance was made for positions in the vicinity of GOESDORF, and an unsuccessful attempt to register a roving howitzer from the new position area was made.

g. On the morning of 21 January the 318th Inf attacked and seized the town of BOURSHEID. The 2nd Bn, 317th Inf started to attack BOURSCHIED from another direction, but when the 318th reached the objective first the 2nd Bn was given the mission of crossing the SURE RIVER, and of seizing the high ground in the vicinity of MASSLER. This second attack was not successful. In the afternoon the Battalion, less Hq Btry, displaced to positions between NEIDERFEULEN and KEHMEN. Later in the evening the town of KEHMEN was cleared by the 1st Bn 317th Inf. The battalion again displaced that night to the previously selected positions in the vicinity of GOESDORF. During the displacement the 512th FA Bn took over the mission of direct support of 317th Inf. The following units were relieved from our control at the start of this move: 1 platoon of Co B, 91st Clm Bn, 1 platoon of Btry A, 633 AAA, and 1 platoon of Btry C, 633 AAA.

h. About 1600 hours on the afternoon of 23 January a message was received which changed the mission of the Battalion from direct support to attached to the 317th Combat Team. The Combat Team was to assemble in Wiltz as soon as possible. The Battalion marched at 1930 hours, and closed in the new area at 0230 hours. AP and AT mines were encountered on the road leading to the position area; this delayed the occupation of position by several hours. The 512th FA Bn was relieved from reinforcing our fires at 1630 hours.

i. The morning of 24 January the Combat Team started to advance with the mission of regaining contact with the enemy. The enemy was first contacted just to west of the town of WILWERWILTZ. The Battalion displaced to positions in the vicinity of EPRALANGE. The 315th FA Bn was assigned the mission of reinforcing our fire. The mission of the Battalion was changed from attached to CT 317th Inf to direct support of 317th Inf. 25 January the infantry consolidated their positions, and prepared for an attack the following day. The 314th FA Bn, 215th FA Bn, and Co B, 91st Clm Bn were assigned the mission of reinforcing our fire. Throughout the night of 25 January many concentrations were fired by all the available artillery in an attempt to neutralized the area held by the enemy. The morning of 25 January the infantry pushed ahead and met with some resistance but were able to gain the town of PINSCHÉ and the high ground in the vicinity. The visibility was excellent throughout the daylight hours, and the Air OP was able to render

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valuable assistance to the ground observers. 27 January, the Battalion displaced to the vicinity of WILWERWILTZ. The infantry continued the advance and D Btry displaced on the 27th to a position near the town of BOCKHOLTZ. 28 January, the 17th Airborne Division relieved the elements of the 80th Inf Div in this sector. The mission of the Battalion was changed from direct support 317th Inf to general support of the Division. All battalions which had been reinforcing our fire, were relieved, and the battalion displaced to positions near ERMSDORF, closing in the new area at 1800 hours.

j. The remainder of the month was spent in defensive positions in this area. Schools were held for the new personnel. Positions were dug in, and time spent in rehabilitating personnel and equipment.

## 2. SUMMARY

### a. Missions Fired.

TOT	74
Counter-battery	40
Infantry	264
Mortars	11
Tanks	5
Vehicles	13
OP	2
Interdiction	282
Registrations	34
Propaganda	79
Normal Barrages	4
Preparations	<u>24</u>

TOTAL MISSIONS 832

Average number of rounds per mission	21 rds
Percent of total missions fired in which fire for effect was fired by the battalion	37%
Percent of total missions fired in which high angle fire was used	12%
Percent of total missions fired in which Pozit fuzes were used	17%
Percent of total missions in which delay fuzes were used	5%
Percent of total missions fired in which Time fuzes (54) were used	10%
Percent of total missions fired which were observed missions	22%

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b. SURVEY - The 1/25,000 map has continued to be of sufficient accuracy, and the number available has been sufficient to meet normal needs.

c. COMMUNICATIONS - During the moving phases, radio remained the primary means of communication with Ln Os and FOs. Difficulties were encountered during the past month's operation which had not been met before. It is felt that a great deal of this was due to:

1. Inexperienced FOs and parties.
2. Extremely rugged and hilly terrain.

During the month approximately 215 miles of wire were laid. Due to excellent servicing upon the initial installation, little difficulty was experienced with lines going out.

d. AIR OP - A total of 50 missions were fired by the Air OP during the period. Missions as follows:

Registrations	22
Enemy Batteries	7
Enemy Troops	16
Tanks	2
Mortars	2
Enemy OP	1
Total	<u>50</u>

Bad weather and poor visibility hampered the use of the planes throughout the month. A device was tried which greatly aided in removing the ice and frost from the plane. A length of hose was attached to the exhaust and the other end inserted in the inspection plates. It facilitated the preparation of the planes for flight, and made it possible for them to get into the air at an earlier hour than normally would have been possible.

e. AMMUNITION - The supply of ammunition was adequate within the prescribed allotments. The use of Pozit fuzes was increased, and the howitzer crews became more proficient in its handling with practice. Reports from observers and from PWs indicate that the effect of these fuzes is excellent. Ammunition was expended as follows during the period:

	<u>m-2</u>	<u>m-3</u>
Shell HE Fuze M48	9832	2010
Shell HE Fuze M-54	2197	22
Shell HE Fuze Pozit	3141	
Shell Propaganda	124	
Shell Smoke W. P.	54	4
Shell Smoke H. C.	34	
Shell Violet Smoke	2	
Totals	<u>15384</u>	<u>2036</u>

GRAND TOTAL (m-2 & m-3) 17420

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f. MISCELLANEOUS:

A great deal of difficulty was encountered by the FOs and by the infantry in keeping located accurately on the map. This was especially true of several night operations. It was found that we could aid the observers in locating themselves by marking certain concentrations for them with smoke. This was used on two occasions to orient observers and the infantry. It was also found that in night attacks we could guide the infantry to their objectives with White Phosphorous. The explosions of these shells were clearly visible at night and were of a distinct aid to the infantry. Time fire set to burst high in the air over a known location is also an effective means of orientation. The maintenance of sufficient well-trained FOs and parties still remains as one of the major problems. The reinforcements which have been received here have not had sufficient training in this type of work, and as the casualty rate has been rather high on this job, it has proved difficult to keep the necessary trained personnel available.

*Burton E. Beck*  
BURTON E. BECK,  
Captain, FA,  
S-3.

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HEADQUARTERS 313TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
APO #80 U.S. Army

6 February 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for period 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 inclusive. (Section III - Logistics, supply procedure, problems).

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. (Through Channels).

1. Class I Supply: Types of rations issued during the past month were sufficient. Factors on certain items, (i.e.) bread, lard and fresh meats should be higher. Condiments have improved considerably. Pepper is still not plentiful. Corned beef hash and stew have proven unsatisfactory due to lack of seasoning, thus large quantities were wasted.

2. Class II Supply: Issue of Quartermaster clothing and individual equipment is satisfactory. At times class "B" clothing has been issued that was unserviceable. In one instance, a pair of trousers issued had a large tear and all the buttons torn off.

Brushes for washing mess gear are still critical. Other branches of supply are satisfactory.

3. Class III Supply: Gasoline and oil supply has been good. It was necessary to go back to the original allowance of gasoline cans. Movements made by this organization have never been hindered by a shortage of gasoline.

4. Class V Supply: Satisfactory.

5. Battalion Motors: Rear and intermediate differential assemblies of GMC split-type housings. Recommend modification to prevent mechanical failure.

S.A.E. No. 80 gear oil and No. 0 grade grease not available. Supply of Ethylene Glycol not sufficient to refill radiators damaged through combat.

600 x 16 tires critical item.

Recommend an assortment of cross chains be issued to facilitate repair.

Recommend 3/4-ton battery maintenance vehicle be replaced by 1 1/2-ton Dodge.

Speedier replacement of common size tools for more efficient repair, (i.e.) 1/2 x 9/16, 5/8 x 3/4 box end wrench, 1/2, 3/4 sockets, and common type screw drivers.

*A. L. Servilio*  
A. L. SERVILIO  
Captain, FA,  
S-4

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HEADQUARTERS 313TH FIELD ARTILLERY 1 BATTALION  
APO #80 U.S. Army

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6 February 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for period 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 inclusive. (Section IV - Personnel and Allied Administration).

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. (Through Channels).

## TABLE NUMBER 1.

## BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT BY TYPE OF CASUALTY

(Figures taken from Morning Report up to  
(Source of Information)  
and including 31 January 1945 for the period  
1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 inclusive.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>LIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RTD's</u>
5 Jan			1			1	
6 Jan					2	2	
8 Jan			2			2	2
21 Jan	2					2	
22 Jan				2		2	1
23 Jan		1	4			5	4
24 Jan			1			1	
29 Jan			1			1	1
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	2	1	9	2	2	16	8

## CANNON COMPANY, 317TH INFANTRY (Atchd)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>LIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RTD's</u>
1 Jan							1
7 Jan							1
23 Jan			1			1	
24 Jan			1			1	
25 Jan							1
26 Jan							1
27 Jan			1			1	
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL			3			3	4

## TABLE NUMBER 2.

## PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PW's</u>
	None



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TABLE NUMBER 3.

REINFORCEMENTS RECEIVED  
 (Including Hospital Returnees)  
 317th Cannon Company included in figures

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO.</u>
1 Jan	3
5 Jan	1
6 Jan	2
9 Jan	2
12 Jan	3
14 Jan	2
18 Jan	1
20 Jan	1
25 Jan	2
28 Jan	3
29 Jan	1
30 Jan	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	22

TABLE NUMBER 4.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations awarded from 1 Jan 45 to 31 Jan 45 incl.  
 (317th Cannon Company included in figures)

NO.

1	Silver Star Medal
14	Bronze Star Medal
1	Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously)
1	Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal
16	Purple Heart Award
5	(1st) Oak Leaf Cluster to Purple Heart

2. Payment of Battalion: All officers and enlisted men of the Battalion and Cannon Company, 317th Infantry, were paid on 31 January 1945.

3. Reinforcements: Requisitions for enlisted reinforcements have not been filled. The accepted explanation is that reinforcements are not available at Reinforcement Depots which supply this Division.

*M. R. Callaway*  
 M. R. CALLAWAY,  
 WOJG USA,  
 Personnel Officer.



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TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. (Through Channels).

1. At the opening of the period covered by this report, the division occupied defensive positions, vicinity of OBERFEULEN, on the south flank of the German counter offensive salient into Luxembourg and Belgium. The first of the period was characterized by small local attacks to secure ground. No large scale operations were executed during this phase. The Battalion remained in direct support of the 317th Infantry Regiment.
2. OP's were manned in the regimental sector and used for S-2 information and the adjustment of fire. There was a decrease of enemy activity and the enemy showed little inclination to attack, but fiercely resisted our attempts to extend our front lines.
3. During this period we were in contact with elements of the 226 VG Regiment, 208 VG Regiment and the 212 VG Regiment, all a part of the German 79 VG Division. This is the unit committed on the south flank of the salient in place of the 352 VG Division, which was contacted by us in the initial phase of the "Battle of the Bulge".
4. On the left (West) flank of the division elements of the German 9th VG Division was contacted. This division was founded in November 1944 in Denmark from remnants of the 9th and 15th Infantry Divisions. The division was formed of overaged and limited service personnel and was very inferior. Morale of PW's taken from unit was low and there were several deserters.
5. By this time the German salient had begun to collapse and when an attack was made by this division resistance was not too heavy.
6. On 21 January 1945 the Battalion moved to positions in the vicinity of GOESDORF with 317th Infantry Regiment preparatory to moving north to the vicinity of WILTZ as part of CT 317.
7. On 22 January 1945 the Battalion moved to the vicinity of WILTZ and occupied positions. CT 317 moved to assembly area vicinity of WILTZ and on 23 January 1945 moved to forward assembly area vicinity of ERPLEDANCE preparatory to attacking East with the mission of regaining contact with the enemy who had begun to withdraw. Contact was regained vicinity of CLERF river in the zone of advance.

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8. After contact was made, it was not known just what forces were contacted, but it was presumed to be small delaying forces of several organizations. Definite identification was not made until 24 January 1945 when elements of the 986th, 987th and 988th Regiments were contacted along the vision front. Elements of a Paratroop unit were also contacted at this time. These were elements of the 212 VG Division and the 352 VG Division.

9. The enemy continued his withdrawal selling space for time until we occupied the high ground in the vicinity of HOSINGEN, just west of the OUR River.

10. The division was relieved by the 17th Airborne Division and on 28 January 1945 moved to present positions in the vicinity of EPPLEDORF. Balance of period was spent in improving positions and rehabilitation of personnel. Defensive positions were organized and OP's were manned. Units identified so far in front of us are elements of the 423rd VGR and the 915th VGR. From positions in the Siegfried Line the enemy continues his practice of padding the line with second rate troops. Evidence points to the fact that the best troops have been withdrawn and rushed to the eastern front. It is not known at this time just how strongly held the Siegfried Line is in our sector.

11. During the period of this report the division has taken 1,838 Prisoners of War. Enemy dead buried, 1,022. Tanks destroyed, 21.

*John W. Bussey*  
 JOHN W. BUSSEY,  
 Captain, FA  
 S-2.

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