

## EPILOGUE

In mid June 1945 the 80th Div. was relieved of all combat related duties in Austria and assigned an Occupation Area in Germany southwest of Munich. The area extended south to the Austrian border and west to the Iller River -- the boundary between the US and French occupation zones. 80th Div. Hq was located in Kaufbeuren. 318th Inf Hq was in Kempten. Div Arty Hq was in Memmingen. The 314th FA Bn. moved from Ebensee on June 12 to its assigned area, which extended north east from Kempten. The Bn. CP and Hq Btry were located in Heising. "Hq" Btry was housed in a big cheese factory. "Hq" and the CP were in the factory owner's house across the street. "A" Btry was in Obergünzberg, "B" Btry in Ebersbach, "C" Btry in Dietmansried, "D" Btry (318th Cannon Co -- still attached), in Haldenwang, "Sv" Btry in Probstried.

The Battalion mission was to maintain law and order in its area. Operations consisted mainly of watching for civilian subversive activities, making surprise raids to confiscate illegal weapons and supplies, and stopping displaced persons from raiding the countryside. Actually problems were minimal. The area economy was primarily agricultural and dairyland. The German civilians were cooperative, desiring only to be able to return to their normal way of life. In response to 3rd Army's desire to keep all units combat efficient, Div Arty, now commanded by Col. Norman J. McMahon, (replacing Gen. MacKelvie who had been transferred stateside) instituted a training program, essentially designed to prepare for a rerun of the old AGF Artillery Tests.

In mid July stateside rotation of high pointers began, resulting in almost daily losses of veteran 314th FA men. Most went to the 10th Armored Div. which had been designated a homeward bound carrier. Many others went, as individuals, through the redeployment centers, those miserable camps back in France named after cigarette brands of that era, e.g., Lucky Strike, Fleetwood, etc., where they waited for space available on troop transports. Bn. replacements came mostly from late comer divisions, especially the 16th Armored.

Meanwhile, there were lots of award and decoration ceremonies, Battalion parades, and athletic programs to keep the men occupied and out of trouble.

Evenings were devoted generally to farewell parties for departing comrades.

In September the training for the AGF tests was cancelled, because (1) the Japanese war had ended, assuring the 80th was not going to the Pacific and (2) constant changes in personnel made a cohesive training program impossible.

Originally, the 80th Div. had been designated a long-term occupation division in 3rd Army, The Occupation Army. In late October, the 80th was ordered to Czechoslovakia to replace the 76 Inf Div, with the mission of maintaining law and order in the Sudetenland, that part of Czechoslovakia that Nazi Germany had annexed. The 80th Div. moved there in stages. The 80th Div. CP was in Marianbad. The 314th FA briefly took over the 318th area around Kempten and eventually moved to Czechoslovakia. After brief stays in long

forgotten towns, the 314th ended up responsible for the industrial city of Asch, which is in a triangle on the northwest side of the country.

From Czechoslovakia, in late November, Col. Minahan, being Regular Army and, therefore, earmarked for long-term occupation duty, was ordered stateside on 30 days leave. While he was at home all US forces were pulled out of Czechoslovakia, supposedly because it was capable of self government, having once been a democracy. (Result, as we know, Czechoslovakia ended up behind the Iron Curtain, under a Communist government dominated by Moscow.)

The 80th moved back to Germany and was designated a high point carrier to be returned to the US for deactivation.

Capt. Wilmer, as senior officer, became Bn. Commander and under very arduous circumstances, brought the 314th Bn. back to Camp Kilmer, the last stateside station before departing for overseas.

Col. Minahan, while on leave, went down to Camp Kilmer for the deactivation and recalls how sad it was. "Only a few of the old veterans who had made the 314th the outstanding combat unit it once was were there for me to bid farewell. Naturally, they were anxious to get discharged and go home to their loved ones. I still think how much better and more satisfying it would have been for all of us if there had been no individual redeployment and the miseries of coming home with a bunch of strangers, and, instead, we could have all returned home together as the 314th FA Bn.

"But for proof that the comradeship, dedication, and fighting spirit that made the 314th FA Bn. the best artillery battalion in the whole Army still lives on, one need only report for the Annual 80th Div. Reunion and check into the 314th Day Room."