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HEADQUARTERS 161ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
APO 35 US Army

Auth: CG 35th Inf Div

Initials *WEL*

Date *13 Oct 44*

1 October 1944

*OPS  
ETO  
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*Sept  
44*

Unit: Jockey  
Period from 2359, 31 August 44  
to 0001, 1 October 44

*Sept*

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports.

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

1. In accordance with ltr, Hq 1st US Army, 13 July 1944, file 319.1/401 (C), above subj. The following report is submitted.

At 1455, on the 29th August 1944, the battalion moved into an assembly area near the town of Aix-en-Othe. The 134th combat team was in reserve and the 127th Field Artillery Battalion was attached to the combat team. The combat team, reinforced, remained in this assembly area until the 8th of September.

On September 2nd this battalion furnished twenty (20) trucks to haul infantry of the 137th for a motor move. On September 3rd we were informed by 134th that another light artillery battalion was being assigned to the combat team and at 0900 that morning, Captain Castle, a liaison officer from the 255th Field Artillery Battalion, reported to this CP. Lt Col Shepard, commanding officer of the 255th Field Artillery Battalion, reported at the same time and was given an area in which to bivouac his battalion.

On September 5th orders were received from 134th headquarters, that units of the combat team would follow a training program during the remainder of the time spent in this bivouac area. The principal items to be stressed had to do with physical conditioning of the troops and the care and cleaning of equipment.

On September 5th, a battalion ceremony was held at retreat and four (4) members of the command were decorated. Lt Foe and Lt Johnson were awarded the air medal and Sgt Miller and T/5 Steika were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

On September 8th, at 0730, the battalion left the bivouac area and marched a distance of 144 miles to positions four miles southeast of Toul, arriving there at 1730. The whole combat team moved by motor. The 1st Battalion was the advance guard and Battery A, 161st Field Artillery Battalion, was attached to it as the artillery support. All units of the combat team occupied assembly areas but all batteries of the artillery placed the pieces in firing positions in a south-easterly direction.

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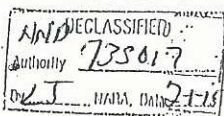
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On September 9th, the 134th Infantry received orders to advance to and reconnoiter the possible crossing sites across the Moselle River. The infantry battalions to have completed their reconnaissance of the possible crossing sites by 1800, on the 10th, with a thought of continuing the advance across the Moselle River on the 11th September.

At 1730 on the 9th, the battalion displaced to positions about two (2) miles east of Thuilley, closing into the new positions at 1800. At 1815 we received word that we were no longer combat teamed with the infantry and that the 945th Field Artillery Battalion was reinforcing our fires as well as the 255th Field Artillery Battalion and the 127th Field Artillery Battalion, which had been with us all along. The 137th Infantry, on our right was to have its own direct support artillery and also three (3) other battalions reinforcing it also. In addition, the 278th Field Artillery Battalion, 240mm outfit was in general support of the division. There was to be no registration and all artillery was to be in position prior to daylight.

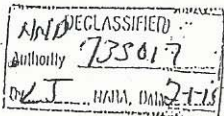
At 0800 on the 10th, the infantry battalions began moving up to the Moselle River to reconnoiter for possible river crossings. It was apparent that the artillery would have to displace to support the actual crossing of the river the next day, but unless positions could be occupied across the Madon Creek, a sufficiently long displacement couldn't be made. Reconnaissance showed that all of the bridges across this creek had been destroyed and that one (1) bridge (In Pulligny) was in German hands. Positions were reconnoitered on the west side of the creek but permission was not granted by Division Artillery to occupy them. Later in the afternoon, word was received that the town of Pulligny had been taken by our forces and also that there was a usable ford at the town of Pierriville so reconnaissance parties were sent on across the Madon Creek and positions were selected. The 945th, the 161st, and the 127th all displaced to positions east of the creek and were able to get registered before dark, using air observation. The 255th displaced to positions north of the junction of the Madon Creek and the Moselle River. The 161st Field Artillery Battalion displaced at 1800 and arrived into the new position at 1920.

The original plan of attack called for reconnaissance by the infantry battalions to be completed by 1800 on the 10th and the actual crossings to be made on the morning of the 11th September. However, the 2nd Battalion of the 134th Infantry discovered a bridge across the Moselle River that had not been blown and from all appearances the Germans were hurriedly withdrawing from that area. When this was reported to Regiment they were ordered to effect a crossing at once and secure a bridgehead. After the greater part of a battalion had crossed, the bridge was destroyed by the enemy and heavy fire of all calibers was brought to bear on the troops that were on the east side of the river. Their positions became untenable and it was necessary for all troops who escaped the trap to swim the river and the canal.

On the 11th September, the enemy attempted to effect a crossing in force with the mission of recapturing the high ground at Fort De Pont St. Vincent. A number of artillery concentrations including time fire were fired on the enemy and the attack was repulsed at 1000. However, a few individual enemy soldiers were picked up from time to time in that vicinity for the next two (2) days. Due to the losses incurred by the 2nd Battalion and the threat of another attempted crossing by the enemy to take the high ground at Fort De Pont S. Vincent, Division ordered the 134th to hold instead of attempting a river crossing on this date.

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During the period that the battalion was in position in this area, our observers had very good observation on enemy held territory. The battalion was kept busy firing observed missions and it is felt that we hampered the enemy's activities greatly. A total of        rounds were fired while in this position, mostly on observed missions.

During the night of 11th, 12th September, the CP area was shelled by enemy artillery. No damage nor casualties resulted.

On the 12th, the 255th and the 945th were both relieved from reinforcing this battalion and on the 13th, the 127th was relieved. During the period from 11th to the 13th September, the mission of the 134th Infantry was to protect the west bank of the Moselle River from any attempted crossing on the part of the enemy.

At 0900, the combat team moved from these positions to positions east of Toul across the Moselle River. The batteries occupied firing positions, and were ready to fire at 1300. The combat team was organized into a Task Force to be commanded by General Seebree. The task force to be composed of the 134th Infantry, less one (1) battalion, the 319th Infantry, less one (1) battalion, the 905th Field Artillery Battalion, the 696th Field Artillery Battalion, the 161st Field Artillery Battalion and the 974th Field Artillery Battalion. In addition there were two (2) heavy artillery battalions in position further south that would be available to fire on targets in our area if we needed additional artillery support. A 240mm battalion, the 278th Field Artillery Battalion and 731st Field Artillery Battalion, a 155 gun battalion. In addition there was a battalion of towed tank destroyers, the 691st, and a company of self-propelled TD's, Company A, of the 654th.

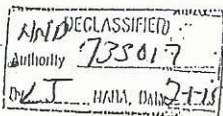
The plan of the task force commander was to proceed toward Nancy along the Toul-Nancy road with regiments of infantry in column of battalions, the 319th leading and the 134th following. The 161st in direct support of the 134th with the 974th reinforcing the fires of the 161st Field Artillery Battalion. Col McClure, group commander of the 410th Group to be in command of all the artillery.

The infantry started moving on Nancy at 0600 on the 15th and no enemy personnel was encountered. However, the roads and all critical areas were mined heavily. The column moved right on into Nancy and the artillery occupied positions about three miles west of Nancy on the high ground in the edge of the forest. The task force was broken up at 1300 on the 15th and we became combat-teamed with the 134th again. The 134th Infantry had the mission of holding Nancy and cleaning out of the forests to the west of the city.

On 17th September, at 1110, the 127th Field Artillery Battalion, was attached to reinforce the fires of the 161st Field Artillery Battalion and occupied position to the southwest of Nancy.

At 1045 on 18th September, the battalion displaced to positions north east of Nancy, arriving in the new positions at 1115. The 127th Field Artillery Battalion, also displaced to an area east of Nancy. The direction of attack of the 134th Infantry was north to meet the 80th Division which was attacking



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south on the east side of the Moselle River.

On September 19th, the 512th Field Artillery Battalion, and the 802nd Field Artillery Battalion, both 105mm howitzer battalions were assigned the mission of reinforcing the fires of our battalion.

On September 20th, the 134th Infantry moved north capturing several towns and hills in their advance. During the night of 20th, 21st, the Germans counter-attacked the town of Agin-Court and the high ground to the southeast of it and by morning had retaken both of the places. During the day of the 21st, the 3rd Battalion of the 134th, retook both places and on the evening of the 21st, forward observers and liaison officers with the infantry prepared very complete defensive fires to protect the areas from a possible counter-attack again by the Germans. The Germans did counter-attack again the night of the 21st, 22nd, and the 802nd, the 512th and our battalion fired most of the night on call of the forward observers and our liaison officers and the counter-attacks were repulsed.

On September 22nd, the 802nd Field Artillery Battalion was given the mission of reinforcing the fires of the 219th Field Artillery Battalion, and their liaison officer left our CP.

The battalion displaced at 0930 on the 24th September and reported ready to fire in new positions at Moulins at 1100. While in this position we were in direct support of the 134th Infantry, with 127th Field Artillery Battalion and the 512th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How) reenforcing fires for this battalion. While in this position we received seven (7) replacements: three (3) officers and four (4) enlisted men. From this position missions were fired on call.

At 1010, 26th September, the battalion displaced to new positions near the town of Bey, arriving there at 1115. The tactical setup was to prepare for a defensive position with alternate positions and to use our AAA as anti-tank protection. Forward observers to maintain forward OP's at all times. During the night of 27th, all units of the battalion maintained very heavy local security due to reported break-through by German armor and infantry. However no incidents were reported.

At 1500, 27 September, enemy artillery landed in our CP. No casualties reported. September 27th and 28th all missions were fired on call, reenforced by the 216th Field Artillery Battalion, 752nd Field Artillery Battalion, and the 255th Field Artillery Battalion.

At 1025, 29 September to 30th, a forward observer helped break up a counterattack due to his observation. Tank attack also broken up due to forward observation. During this period the firing batteries have received frequent counter battery fire ranging from 75mm to 150mm shell.

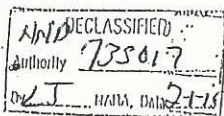
The morale of the troops is excellent and fighting efficiency continues to improve with combat experience.

There were two (2) Silver Star decorations and one (1) Bronze Star decoration for bravery and valliant service during the month.

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Shortage of BA-40 radio battery have caused no end of trouble. The drain on this type of battery has been much greater than expected. Due to the fast moving situation and the use of armor, radio communication has been used almost constantly. Communications officer has stated his desire for a longer switchboard. Something similar to the ED-91 now used by Division Artillery. At this time the battalion has forty-one (41) lines running into its board.

No decisive exploits were made by this battalion during the month.

*Douglas G. Dwyre*

DOUGLAS G DWYRE

Lieutenant Colonel, FA  
Commanding

3 Incls

- 1 - Ammunition Report
- 2 - Unit Journal
- 3 - S-2 Work Sheet

*not rec'd 28 Nov 44  
Combat Analysis mfr*

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1st Ind

RGC/mla

(1 Oct 44)

HQ 35TH INF DIV, APO 35, U S Army, 12 Oct 44

TO: Commanding General, XII Corps, APO 312, U S Army

Forwarded in compliance with paragraph 2, letter Headquarters Third U. S. Army, AG 314.7 (GNMCF), subject: Action Against Enemy, Reports After, dated 24 September 1944.

For the Commanding General:

*Richard G. Chadwick*

RICHARD G. CHADWICK  
Lt. Col., A. G. D.  
Adjutant General

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