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Auth: CG 35th Inf Div

Initials: *R&C*

HEADQUARTERS 161ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
APO 35

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO: *22 May 1945*

CANCELLED

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Report After
TO : The Adjutant General, *Washington, DC COMMITTEE*

1. In compliance with the provisions of Par 10 C3, AR 345-105, submitted below is report after action against the enemy for the 161st Field Artillery Battalion covering the period 1-30 April 1945.

1 April 1945

The 134th Inf reported that it was meeting very little resistance, that being small arms fire and some artillery fire. The infantry reported that the enemy was retreating "on the run" to the town of Rechlinghausen, Germany. When our infantry reached Rechlinghausen, they moved through the town without meeting resistance. This battalion fired many missions for the infantry along the west edge of Rechlinghausen and knocked out a SP gun and tank that was offering resistance. The 8th Armored Div was reported to be moving into Rechlinghausen from the NE at the same time that our infantry was moving in from the west. This report was found to be false, as the armor was enemy; but the false report was not cleared up until it was too late to fire the artillery. When the town was cleared, one American sailor and 150 wounded German soldiers were found in a hospital. This battalion closed station and moved to Rechlinghausen. The gun positions were along the west edge of town. Hq Btry was quartered in a German labor office; the FDC was set up in a bomb-proof shelter. One of the greatest difficulties this unit encounters when it moves into a German town is the control of the civilians. The civilians immediately come to us with problems that should be controlled by Military Government, but the Military Government is never in operation in the towns when we occupy them. Btry "C" and a rear FDC were left at the last position to fire missions in support of the infantry until the remainder of the battalion moved into position and had registered. The battalion was registered by Air OP. The infantry was moving so fast that by the time two batteries of the unit had completed the base point registration, it was unsafe; so the other battery and the 134th Inf Cannon Co. had to be registered on another point further into enemy territory. Ammunition expended: 2684 rounds. One casualty; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers.

2 April 1945

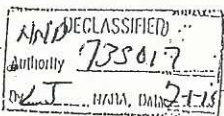
At 0200 hours the batteries were notified of the change to Double British Summer Time. One soldier of the German Army turned himself in to Hq. Btry, and also two members of the People's Army. PWs and civilians gave us the location of a SP gun. The reported position was fired on and the artillery fire our infantry had been receiving ceased. This gun had two battalions pinned down. Four 88mm guns were knocked out by

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd.)

2 April (cont'd)

artillery, according to a PW report; this unit had fired on reported location. Verbal orders were received by telephone on sanitary measures for latrines and garbage pits. The civilians continued to come to our CP for advice and requests that this Hq. could not grant. Protestant Church Services were held in the German labor office building. Ammunition expended: 2143. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers. 1 PW.

3 April 1945

The 134th Inf was relieved by a regiment of the 75th Inf Div. This artillery unit (161 FA Bn) will support the fires of the 216th FA Bn when the infantry is relieved. This artillery battalion closed station at Rechlinghausen and moved back to Westerholt, Germany to accomplish this reinforcing mission. The battalion was registered by Air OP on a compass azimuth of approximately 3200 in the Ruhr Sector. A defensive fire plan was set up. The present plan is to advance south through the Ruhr district. Two FOs were sent to the 216th FA Bn. Lt. Bendl was sent to the 216th FDC as Ln O. Ammunition expended: 1086. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: cloudy, rain.

4 April 1945

The infantry is in a defensive position; the artillery fired targets called for by the FOs. The artillery observers observed activity across the Rhine Herne Canal. One observer fired on a train and scored hits that destroyed the locomotive. Ammunition expended: 1248. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Partly Cloudy.

5 April 1945

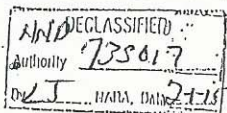
The 134th Inf is still in a defensive position along the north edge of the Ruhr pocket. Two enemy soldiers crossed the Rhine Herne Canal today and described the location of their CP's gun positions, guard posts, and strong points to the interrogator. Some of the located targets were fired on by this artillery battalion. The artillery observers reported rail activity in the Ruhr pocket. Ammunition expended: 1438. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: partly cloudy.

6 April 1945

The artillery has added to and improved the defensive fire plan along the north edge of the Ruhr pocket. A civilian reported that 30 enemy troops wanted to surrender and that one SS trooper was trying to keep them from giving up. The civilian was sent back with the order that they surrender by noon or the artillery would continue to fire. They did not surrender, and the artillery concentration fired in the vicinity of said troops started fires and broke a water main. The 1st Battalion, 134th Inf, relieved one battalion of the 320th Inf on the left of the division sector. Ammunition Expended: 1789. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers.

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd)

7 April 1945

Very little activity has been reported today. The artillery FOs fired observed missions. The infantry reported that they were receiving a little artillery fire but no mortar or SP fire. Ammunition expended: 1521. Grand total: 142,392. One casualty; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy.

8 April 1945

The infantry is still in a defensive set-up. The artillery FOs are firing observed missions from OPs established in a building along the Rhine Herne Canal. The overlay and order for attack across the canal 090630 April were received. A radio relay station was set up to assure communications on the attack. Lt. DeVoe was presented the Air Medal at Westerholt. Ammunition expended: 994. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Partly Cloudy.

9 April 1945

The infantry jumped off in the attack as planned, crossed the Rhine Herne Canal, and reported very little resistance. On arrival at objective, a new plan of attack was issued: '1st and 3rd Battalions to continue on along railroad, 2nd Battalion to be relieved by 35th Reconnaissance'. This artillery battalion closed station and moved to Buer-Erle. The infantry reports no resistance. Ammunition expended: 2151. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

10 April 1945

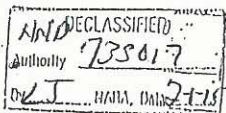
The 134th Inf is still moving, meeting no resistance in the Ruhr Pocket. The artillery closed station and moved across the Rhine Herne Canal to the town of Gelsenkirchen, Germany. This battalion fired very few missions throughout this period. At 1700, the new order of attack was received: 'Division to turn south and seize objective on Ruhr River'. The civilian population is living almost entirely below the ground level. As American troops came through, people came out of their "holes", welcomed the troops, and were extremely cooperative. They were jubilant because the bombings and artillery fire would come to an end. Ammunition expended: 111. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: clear.

11 April 1945

The battalion closed station and moved to the town of Bochum, Germany. Hq. Btry was in a large residence that was being remodeled for a hotel. The German director and his staff of Hollanders were moved from the building. The Air OP reported that the bridges were intact across the Ruhr River. The battalion was registered by Air OP in this position. The battalion began firing ground observation and Air OP missions on enemy troops and vehicles across the Ruhr River; this resulted in a congested retreat of German troops and vehicles. 1675 rounds were expended by this artillery battalion, and approximately

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd)

900 rounds were expended by 216th FA Bn between 1145 hours and dark. More rounds were fired during this period on observers missions than at any other similar period since the arrival of this unit in France. Ammunition expended: 2036. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: clear.

12 Apr 1945

The infantry cleared pockets of resistance in the 134th Inf sector and the FOs for the artillery fired on targets of opportunity across the Ruhr River. These targets consisted of enemy infantry and vehicles. The 216th FA Bn was released at 1300. The quartering party left the 134th Inf CP at 1200 going east as far as Hanover, Germany and possibly farther. Each unit was allowed one vehicle. Col. Ashlock was in charge. This party arrived in vicinity of Hanover at 0400. Ammunition expended: 1713. One casualty; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

13 April 1945

The 134th Inf continued clearing pockets of resistance on their objective which was ⁸⁷the Ruhr River. The 134th Inf was relieved by a regiment of the 79th Inf Div. The quartering party left the vicinity of Hanover with orders to occupy position to the east about 100 miles. In one small town the quartering party entered, 35 enemy troops were observed. When asked to surrender, they refused, which made it evident that we would have to fight for the town. However, the enemy officer reversed his decision and surrendered, as he observed other Allied vehicles moving into the town. When the 161st FA Bn quartering party arrived in their assigned town, they found 120 British soldiers that had been PWs for 5 years. The German guards surrendered their arms and were awaiting the American troops. Ammunition expended: 1291. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear. 24 PWs

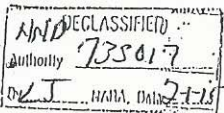
14 April 1945

The battalion moved from Bochum, Germany to Meisterhorst, Germany under combat team control. They were on the road 20 hours. Ammunition expended: 0. Grand total: 150,688. No Casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: cloudy.

15 April 1945

The battalion arrived at Meisterhorst at 0300 hours. The 134th Inf received orders to move out to objective which was the Elbe River. Btry "C" went with the 3rd Battalion as strip battery. The infantry was motorized, met no resistance, and took many PWs. The artillery went into an assembly area at 1010 hours and moved out at 1310. It arrived in another assembly area at 1340 and moved out for positions at 1415 hours in the town of Cobbel, Germany (81.0-29.9). Hq. Btry took a German soldier in civilian clothes. On arrival in Meisterhorst, Germany, Sv Btry made arrangements for evacuation of the sick and wounded British PWs. There were 25 sick and wounded in the total of 300. Sv. Btry also captured 147 PWs in this position. The German officer came to Capt. Holden, Sv Btry commander, and asked for surrender terms. He agreed to the terms Capt Holden imposed. Ammunition expended: 69. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: clear. 148 PWs.

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd.)

16 April 1945

The 134th Inf is in defensive positions along the west bank of the Elbe River. The artillery observers had a "field day" firing on enemy troops, vehicles, and barges. The infantry mortars started a fire in one barge, which later exploded and shattered the windows in the village near the barge. This barge was evidently loaded with high explosives. This FA Bn fired missions on targets located by PWs. The regiment boundary was changed at 1900 today. The south boundary was moved 5,000 meters farther south, which makes the sector as wide as a normal division sector. It is necessary for the direct support artillery battalion to shift the trails of the guns to fire missions in the extremes of the sector. Ammunition expended: 995. One casualty; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

17 April 1945

In the defensive position along the Elbe River the artillery fired approximately 1,000 rounds on observed targets. The FOs from Btry "B" fired on four barges, sinking all four of them. The only other activity reported was light patrol activity. Lt. Ambrose and three EM went on DS to 18th Reinforcement Depot to train reinforcements. Maj. Carroll, the 134th Inf Regt S-3, visited this CP and stated that Co "G" of the 134th Inf was the nearest infantry unit to Berlin on the western front, also that the 161st FA Bn was the nearest artillery battalion to Berlin on the western front. Ammunition expended: 894. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

18 April 1945

The battalion, minus Btry "A", closed station and moved to new position in the vicinity of Angern, Germany. Btry "A" remained in the old position and fired missions through the rear FDC. The battalion moved laterally, then forward; this move was necessary because of the extreme width of the sector. The battalion was registered by the Air OP. The ammunition allotment for this sector, which includes the 161st FA Bn and the 216th FA Bn, for a five-day period (180600 to 230600) is 1170 rounds. Capt. Lee and two EM left on DS to Military Government. Ammunition expended: 396. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

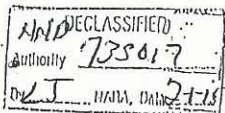
19 April 1945

In this position along the Elbe River we did not prepare a defensive fire plan overlay; but each artillery FO and Ln O adjusted missions on likely avenues of approach and assigned concentration numbers to them. This unit fired on enemy installations reported by PWs. Ammunition expended: 27. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Clear.

20 April 1945

The situation indicates that we will be in this position for an indefinite period. The Battalion Commander had a meeting with the Btry Commanders and Staff Officers to orient them on the situation. Plans for training and improvement of positions were discussed and a plan was

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd.)

20 April 1945 (cont'd)

set up. Ammunition Expended: 158. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: clear.

21 April 1945

Very little activity was reported today. The artillery observers fired observed missions; but due to the ammunition allotment, we did not fire on the enemy activity reported across the river unless it was of outstanding importance. The AAA platoon, with Btry "A" picked up 4 PWs, including a NCO who was wounded. These PWs were probably a part of the raiding party that the 1st Battalion encountered earlier in the evening. The NCO was taken to the collecting station and the other three men were turned over to the MPs. These PWs had in their possession an overlay with our gun positions and the 134th Inf Regt CP plotted. Ammunition expended: 256. Grand total: 153,487. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, rain. 4 PWs.

22 April 1945

The artillery OPs are located in houses along the Elbe River; from these OPs the activities of the enemy can be readily observed. The only activity reported was patrol activity. The artillery observers fired observed targets. An infantry OP reported seeing two red flares at an undetermined distance; these flares could be of Russian origin because a prearranged signal has been set up to mean that two red flares was an indication that Russian troops were in the vicinity. The veracity of this incident has never been cleared up. Lt. Pemberton, a FO from the 216th FA Bn, was going through a forest in this area when his 1/4-ton vehicle was fired on and hit by a bazooka. A patrol from the 134th Inf found the wounded lieutenant and driver. Ammunition expended: 376. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Partly cloudy, rain.

23 April 1945

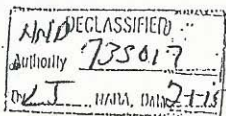
This morning at daybreak, the artillery observers on the OP observed a 20mm AA gun set up on the railroad tracks just across the Elbe River. This gun was the supporting weapon for an enemy crossing of about 50 men. The artillery observers adjusted fire on the attempted crossing. of the 50 man patrol, approximately 30 crossed the river, 14 were captured, 14 were killed, and the 20mm gun was destroyed. In this area a forest along the river has been good cover for enemy patrols that cross the river; these patrols have harassed the troops in this area several days, but today the infantry sent three companies into the woods to clean them out. This battalion fired on enemy position located by PW reports. Ammunition expended: 1292. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers, and hail.

24 April 1945

Very little activity was reported today. Artillery was observed bursting east of the Elbe River; the observers believe it to be Russian artillery. This battalion received a no fire line, the Elbe River, for unobserved fire missions. Ammunition expended: 107. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: cloudy.

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (contd)

25 April 1945

The infantry in this sector is expecting to contact the Russians at any time. The infantry observed three red flares to the east; our infantry answered with three green flares and were answered by more red flares. This artillery unit fired very few missions because of the evidence of Russian troops; missions could be fired only if the observer was sure it was an enemy target. Ammunition expended: 56. No casualties; 3 reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers.

26 April 1945

Major Funk left this morning, going to the area assigned to us in the vicinity of Hannover, to become familiar with the Military Government of civilians. Capt. Schaper, "A" Btry Commander, is attending a school at Div Arty, for Information and Education Officers. Ammunition expended: 0. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: Cloudy, showers, hail.

27 April 1945

The 134th Inf was relieved by a regiment of the 102nd Inf Div. This Battalion became a General Support Battalion. This Battalion fired no missions today. The FOs were relieved today also. Ammunition expended: 0. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: showers.

28 April 1945

The 134th Inf left this area today, going to an assigned area in vicinity of Hannover. This FA Bn is under Div Arty control in general support of 102nd Div. We were not called on to fire. The quartering party left this morning, going to Hannover area. Ammunition expended: 0. Grand total: 155,318. No casualties; 2 reinforcements. Weather: cloudy, showers.

29 April 1945

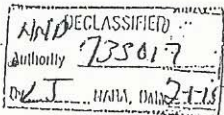
One Company of 407th Regt. jumped off this morning in an attempt to contact the Russians; this company was surrounded by a large number of SS Troops and 50 tanks. The company surrendered and the Germans sent 12 wounded American soldiers back to the Elbe River to be cared for by American Medics. The remainder of the company was taken prisoner (S-2, 927 F.A. Bn). Ammunition expended: 0. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: cloudy, showers.

30 April 1945

This battalion still in general support. We have not been called on to fire any missions. Ammunition expended: 0. No casualties; no reinforcements. Weather: cloudy, showers.

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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd)

The Battle Casualties for the month of April 1945 are as follows:

	<u>OFF</u>	<u>EM</u>
KIA.....	0	1
DOW.....	0	0
SWA.....	0	0
SIA.....	0	0
LWA.....	0	3
LIA.....	0	0
MIA.....	0	0
Total	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>

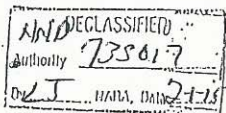
Awards received by members of 161st Field Artillery Battalion are as follows:

	<u>DSC</u>		<u>Silver Star</u>		<u>Soldier's Medal</u>		<u>Bronze Star</u>		<u>Air Medal</u>	
	Reg	OLC	Reg	OLC	Reg	OLC	Reg	OLC	reg	OLC
Officers							4		3	1
Enlisted										
Men							3			

The number of Purple Heart Medals awarded is: 13

The number of Purple Heart (Oak Leaf Clusters) is: 2

The number of prisoners captured is: 177.



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Hq 161 FA Bn, Action Against Enemy, Report After, 1-30 Apr 45 (cont'd)

S U M M A R Y

This period was roughly divided into four phases. The first phase was the cleaning up of pockets left during the rapid drive east of the Rhine and the south turn to the Rhein-Herne Canal. The second phase was the drive south to the Ruhr River through a thickly populated industrial section. This was our first experience with saturation bombing on the tremendous scale used in reducing the Ruhr industrial plants to rubble heaps. Route marking was more difficult and careful reconnaissance was necessary to find battery position areas.

The third phase was the turning east and driving hard to the Elbe River. During this period we made our longest sustained motor march—21 hours and 235 miles, and the degree to which first echelon maintenance had been performed showed up very markedly. The fourth and final phase was the watch on the Elbe. We were continually harrassed by roving bands of detached Germans and patrols which crossed the river. Careful attention to local security enabled us to complete this phase without casualties.


HERMAN F SCHUSTER

Lt Col, FA
Commanding

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