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HEADQUARTERS 216TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

APO 35

% Postmaster, New York, N Y

1 November 1944

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

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D C, (THRU: The Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division, APO 35 U S Army. ATTENTION: Public Relations Officer, Rear Echelon)

In compliance with the provisions of paragraph 10, change 3, 9 March 1943, to AR 345-105, 18 November 1943, the following Report After/After Action Report is submitted.

UNIT HISTORY 216TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

October 1944 brought to the Battalion a new type of warfare, that of defense. Only one change of Howitzer positions was made during the period. On the first day of the month positions were located between the villages of Brin Sur Seille and Bay Sur Seille, coordinates Z9822 and remained in these positions until 6 October, when due to an advance of the 320th Infantry Regiment thru the Foret de Greamecey woods, the positions were changed. The Battalion Commander, Lt Col Kenneth H Reed, ordered displacement to positions just southwest of above woods to give close support and extension of range into enemy territory. Coordinates 00.689-23.910.

This Battalion had received word early in the month to dig in and prepare positions for a stay of several weeks. Whereupon the excitement of war that welds units together began to subside and leadership of officers and Enlisted Men alike began to utilize their efforts and natural American genius to make themselves secure, safe and comfortable. A hasty inspection would disclose many forms of shelter mostly of the dugout type. A description of one such shelter might be interesting:

A two room dugout was constructed in the edge of the woods by digging a hole in the ground approximately three feet in depth. A wall extended three or four feet above the ground of heavy timber, also covered with same type of construction. The entire outside covered with three to four feet of dirt.

The interior contains tables, chairs, built-in bunks, with abundance of pin-up girls. Some have built-in fire places made and shaped out of clay, others with every type of stove. Some commercial, some hand made. They are quite adequate.

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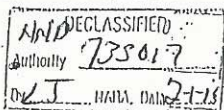
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As Lt Col Reed the Battalion Commander was out looking for a suitable Command Post for the Battalion, a beautiful chateau was noted along the winding banks of the Seille River. Using the theory nothing's to good for the 216th further reconnaissance netted the use of the beautiful chateau. The owners of this place, Mr & Mrs Berbor, owners of two large hotels in Dakar, Africa, are quite cosmopolitan and quickly adopted themselves to sharing their home. Out of friendship and admiration the chateau was rededicated with proper fanfare in typical French style. "Chateau Deux Cent Sieze" meaning "House of the 216th".

During the month the Battalion was requested to use tanks and tank destroyers as artillery. This presented a new problem of placing into position, Survey and Communications of artillery above that generally handled by the Battalion as an organic unit. However, the problem was quickly solved and within 24 hours all crews had been trained in indirect fire. Commands were sent to them as a 4th Battery known through the Fire Direction Center as Fox Battery. From the 16th day of October until the month's end Fox Battery had expended approximately 5000 rounds of 75mm ammunition.

Time and again this Battalion throughout its combat experience has run into similar problems and have come to the conclusion "If it will shoot we can utilize it". Infantry Cannon, 4.2 mortars and other weapons have thus far been used at one time or another. Now Tanks and Tank Destroyers are added to the growing list.

Higher Headquarters informed us that our little winding river would be flooded to an additional depth of six feet. To effect this flooding the Air Corps was going to bomb a large earthen dam on the Seille River in the vicinity of Dieuze.

The tactical consideration given this flooding was to prevent the enemy from using this body of water as a weapon against an offensive action. Whereupon to remove this threat it was decided to destroy the dam. Preparations were adequately made; troops and French Civilians were ordered to move to high ground. Dykes were constructed to protect bridges and low roads. Four days supply of rations, gasoline and water were ordered to all units east of the river. Emergency supply of Howitzer ammunition was placed at each Battery position. After every detail was attended to the Dam was broken and in due time the River rose six feet remaining at such height, 4 days and began to recede, as predicted by the U S Army Engineers. As a result the only damage caused was to the enemy who were obliged to evacuate several towns and no doubt lost much in the way of precious supplies. This Artillery Battalion added to their plight by firing large concentrations into the towns and interdiction of escape routes from flooded areas during the time the water was forcing such evacuations.

An item quite worthy of note is the manner of performance of the motor maintenance section of Service Battery. A stable situation was the green light to this section. During the month most all vehicles of this organization

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were repaired and given a very thorough inspection. This extra effort on the part of this Battery has reflected, in official reports, the gratitude of the Division Commander as well as Brigadier General Theodore L Futch 35th Division Artillery Commander.

The location of Service Battery in an old well bombed factory at Brin Sur Seille was converted to a maintenance shop; quarters and messing facilities. Yank photographers hearing of this organization sent its representatives out to take pictures. Captain Walter S Gunnarson, newly appointed Battalion S-4 has shown commendable aggressiveness and alertness in taking full advantage of every opportunity for improvement of the organization.

Throughout the month various types of inspections were authorized by General Futch. These inspections included such things as; living conditions, kitchens, Battery Positions, conditions of weapons, Battalion Fire Direction Centers and included not only the Battalions of this Division Artillery, but those of all Corps reinforcing Battalions. The theme behind these inspections were to obtain ideas and pass on to others any benefits obtained. The inspecting Officers and Enlisted Men of this Battalion received many ideas, some of which are not in effect.

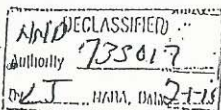
Rain - Rain and mud - the kind of mud that sucks at your shoes and tugs at the tires of vehicles - the kind of weather in short that bogs down armies is the kind the Battalion has been "sweating out" for the past month. Up front the doughboys cursed and bailed out their foxholes with canteen cups. Back at "Chateau" 216 Headquarters Battery slid up and down the slope to the stream that rolled placidly by. Farther away, closer to the Infantry, the three firing batteries sank deeper into slush and mire, but received some assistance from the Engineers in getting wood for shelters and gun pits.

During the month many officers were kept quite busy pondering over some of their combat experiences and answering many questions, and in the preparation of reports for forwarding to higher headquarters. According to information received, these reports go all the way back to the War Department where they are studied. Thus perhaps this Battalion may be responsible for many future methods of training as well as changes of Tables of Organization, Tables of Equipment and other changes urgently recommended.

The Battalion has been quite fortunate during this month in the amount of entertainment made available and has benefited greatly as a time consumer, morale, and breaking of monotony. The various outlets and a brief description is hereinafter set out;

75 men to Marlene Dietrich Show
80 men to 35 Div Band Show
 $\frac{1}{2}$ of command to a GI Stage Show in Sv Btry area
All men to regular GI picture show (4 during month) Sv Btry
All Men to Baths and Picture show in Nancy.
Red Cross Clubmobile in Battalion once this Month
6 men 1 officer, 48 hours in Paris.

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This form of amusement has been of the highest type and expression of gratitude can be heard through out the Battalion. The amount of entertainment provided has in no case interfered with the excellent efficiency of this Battalion. However, it is felt that continuation will improve rather than retard its fighting ability.

Such other items of convenience are also provided. There is now an established PX within the Battalion. Commercial Radio hookup through out the entire wire net of all good radio programs, and late war news. Daily issue of Stars and Stripes. Weekly issue of Yank Magazine.

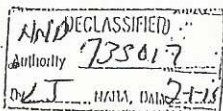
During the month the first passes to Paris were authorized and on the 26th of October six enlisted men and one officer were chosen by lot within the various units of the Battalion for a 48 hour pass in Paris. Holders of the lucky tickets were offered as high as 5000 francs for their privileges, although none would sell. This trip is experimental and every man hopes it proves successful. As all feel to have been in France and not seeing Paris would be unexplainable to our home folks. The men who did go will be hounded, so to speak, upon their return, in fact every one wants to see Paris. According to information thus far received the Red Cross has the entire program under its direction. No better outside agency could be employed for such project.

The Battalion was very proud of the outstanding bravery and conspicuous gallantry in action of First Lieutenant Arthur I Traub, who at the time was forward observer from Battery B to the 2nd Battalion 320th Infantry Regiment. So that such outstanding acts shall be preserved the complete citation for Silver Star Medal is hereinafter set out. Lt Col Reed presented the medal to Lt Traub, on October 27, 1944.

CITATION FOR THE SILVER STAR

To FIRST LIEUTENANT ARTHUR I TRAUB, 01183209, 216th Field Artillery Battalion, for gallantry in action in the Forest De Grenecey, France, on 9 October 1944. This officer was on duty as a forward artillery observer with the Second Battalion, 320th Infantry, when the area was subjected to and intense and prolong enemy artillery barrage. An enlisted member of Lieutenant Traub's section was seriously wounded by shell fragments, whereupon Lieutenant Traub without hesitation jumped out of his foxhole and covered the wounded soldier with his own body in order to protect him from further wounds. Lieutenant Traub was himself slightly wounded by shell fragments, when the artillery barrage ceased, Lieutenant Traub carried the wounded soldier to a nearby vehicle, administered first aid, then evacuated him to the rear. Lieutenant Traub's conspicuous gallantry in protecting a wounded soldier at the risk of his own life, reflects the highest credit upon his character as an officer. Entered military service from New York.

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The following is a complete resume of awards and decorations received by members of this Battalion since entering combat:

Silver Star	2
Air Medal	5
Air Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster)	5
Bronze Star	51
Bronze Star (Oak Leaf Cluster)	1
Purple Heart Received	28
(Eligible in addition	19
Purple Heart (Oak Leaf Cluster)	
(Eligible)	1

The month of October was a good month for the Unit Personnel Section to complete any work that had to be left undone because of the swift movement across France. Having moved into the buildings of a French Junior College, their working conditions were excellent. The UPS, since commitment of this organization into combat, has always been situated with the Division Rear Echelon composed of the Administrative Center, Personnel Sections of the units attached and assigned to the division, and the rear installations of the division.

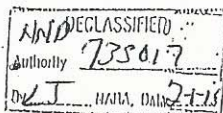
The 216th Field Artillery Battalion Unit Personnel Section was sheltered in one large room with the three personnel sections of the Division's other three artillery Battalions, the personnel being quartered in various large rooms of the college. A captured 220 volt generator furnished ample power for the lighting system of most of the Personnel Sections so the clerical work could be performed during the hours of darkness when necessary. Light bulbs were purchased from an electric supply shop in Nancy.

During the many moves of the section in the rapid advance across France the obtaining of adequate tables was a constant problem in occupying a new position. This was solved by purchasing four long well constructed folding tables from a brewery in Vezelise. These four tables with the desks authorized by T/E furnish ample room for all clerks and occupy little room on the move.

During this month in addition to the daily routine administration, the Personnel Section was able to write up many recommendations for awards for acts performed in previous months, and was able to make a complete check of all records, and was able to contact individuals personally in the solving of their problems.

The 216th Field Artillery Battalion Unit Personnel Section consisted of the following personnel:

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Personnel Officer
 Personnel Sergeant
 Personnel Clerk
 Administrative Clerk
 Clerk Typist
 Hq Btry Clerk
 A Btry Clerk
 B Btry
 C Btry
 Sv Btry
 Mail Orderly
 Cook

WOJG GAIL R THOMAS
 T Sgt Alfonso Q Roberts
 Tec 4 James W Roddy
 Tec 5 Robert N Bradbury
 Pvt John J Weinfurter
 Cpl Bernard Hershkowitz
 Cpl Frank Kinsey
 Cpl Oscar J Starnes, Jr
 Cpl Lawrence Laurie
 Cpl Raymond L Watts
 Tec 5 Virgil C F Herrmann
 Tec 5 Hershel O Kell

Kenneth H Reed.
 KENNETH H REED
 Lt Col FA
 Commanding

Incl:
 Unit Journal with supporting papers

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