

World War II

558th

FIELD ARTILLERY
BATTALION

10 May 1943 to
10 February 1946

**Fielding the 155mm
M-12 Self-Propelled Gun**

FOREWARD
by
Colonel Mark E. Conway, FA, Colorado NG

Denver, Colorado
September 1960

This copy of the History of the 558th FA Battalion was reproduced by the Military Department, State of Colorado. It was copied from the original history as prepared by Lieutenant. Gilbert Hahn upon request of the Historical Section of the Artillery School. Their request was predicated on the basis that the original cadre came from a Colorado unit - - the 983d FA Battalion.

It would be amiss if we failed to mention the great contribution by the State of Utah from whence came the bulk of the fine young men that filled the ranks. The States of Tennessee, Washington, Oregon and California each sent sizeable contingents; however, most States were represented by one or two.

In retrospect, I regret that better and more elaborate records were not kept on the activities and exploits of this excellent unit. Our history may appear stilted, modest, and formal, but this cannot detract from the accomplishments of the battalion.

Unrecorded in this history are many deeds of valor and unselfish devotion of soldiers of this battalion. These are recorded in the minds of their comrades.

A word about the author, Lieutenant Gilbert Hahn, who did such a fine job assembling this data from limited material. Lieutenant Hahn graduated from Princeton and came to the 558th via the Artillery School. His home was Washington, D. C. From the day he arrived in the battalion he exemplified the best traits required of an officer. He was the last of the original officer complement mustered out on deactivation. He is at present an active young barrister in Washington, D. C. All are indebted to him for his work on this history.

HISTORY OF THE 558TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

10 May 1943 - 10 February 1946

The original battalion was designated the 558th Field Artillery Battalion, organized and activated 10 May 1943. The battalion was activated under tentative TBA 6-56 with 26 officers, 2 warrant officers and 436 enlisted men. Under this TOE the battalion consisted of a Headquarters-Service Battery and three firing batteries, together with an attached medical section.

On the day of activation, the battalion was assigned to the II Armored Corps, Headquarters, San Jose, California and stationed at Camp Roberts, California, in East Garrison. The battalion was armed with twelve 155mm Guns, SF, the M-12 which had been just created by ordnance by placing a 155mm gun M1917, GPF on the chassis of an M-3 medium tank.

The authority for the activation was General Orders #33, Headquarters II Armored Corps, San Jose, California; in accordance with letter, Headquarters, AGF, Army War College, Washington, D. C., 29 March 1943.

By authority of paragraph 6, SO 95, Hq AGF, 13 April 1943 (per authority par 9 AR 605-145) Major Mark E. Conway was appointed battalion commander and assumed command 10 May 1943. The executive officer was Major William R. Binkly and the S-3 Major Henry F. Thorne.

Major Conway had been Executive Officer of the 168th Field Artillery, stationed at Camp Roberts, California, where he had served with distinction. Major Binkly came from the staff of the 168th Field Artillery Group and Major Thorne from the job as S-3 of the 947th Field Artillery, both stationed at Camp Roberts.

Captain Joseph A. Dupont was appointed first battalion surgeon per paragraph 4, SO 92, HQ II Armored Corps. San Jose, California, 14 April 1943 from the 6th Mtz Div, Camp San Luis Obispo, California.

Eighty-three men, the original enlisted cadre, and the following officers, were assigned from the 983d Field Artillery by paragraph 1, SO 105, Hq II Armored Corps, San Jose, California:

- 1st Lieutenant William J. Lawless
- 1st Lieutenant Bernard August
- 2d Lieutenant Stanley B. Bowmar
- 2d Lieutenant Herbert M. Shryock

The following officers were transferred from these respective units to become part of the officer cadre:

- Captain William J. Edwards, 168th Field Artillery
- Captain Dallas E. Marshall, 983d Field Artillery
- 1st Lieutenant Myron L. Steffen, 947th Field Artillery.
- 2 Lieutenant Brandon B. Bodell, 983d Field Artillery
- 2d Lieutenant Ronald D. Klatt, 947th Field Artillery
- all of Camp Roberts, by paragraph 7, SO 116, Hq II Armored Corps, San Jose, California, 11 May 1943.

CWO Frederick B. Dunbar was assigned from the 181st Field Artillery, Camp Roberts, by SO 123, Hq II Armored Corps, 19 May 1943.

2d Lieutenant John B. Price was assigned from the FAS, Fort Sill, Oklahoma by paragraph 30 SO 96, Hq FAS, Fort Sill, 22 April 1943.

The following officers were assigned from the FAS, Fort Sill, by SO 97, Hq Ft Sill, 23 April 1943:

2d Lieutenant Roy A. Alcini
2d Lieutenant George R. Brown
2d Lieutenant Edwin M. Durkin, all from FAS Executive Course;
2d Lieutenant William H. Dix from FAS Survey Course

The following officers were assigned by paragraph 7, SO 120, FAS, Fort Sill, 20 May 1943:

2d Lieutenant Gilbert Hahn, Jr.
2d Lieutenant Rex A. Hudson
2d Lieutenant Ralph M. Major
2d Lieutenant Erwin D. Switzer
2d Lieutenant Woodrow J. Wilson

Captain John S. Martino, Jr., was assigned from FARTC per paragraph 16, SO 122, Hq FARTC, Fort Sill, 2 May 1943.

The two original pilots - 2d Lieutenants Vern L. Cline and Eugene L. Mincks - were assigned 26 July 1943 by paragraph 10 SO 177 Hq FAS Fort Sill.

2d Lieutenant James W. Emerson was assigned from the FAS per paragraph 2, SO 264, Hq AGF, Washington, D. C.

Except for 57 men assigned from the 168th Field Artillery Battalion 5 October 1943 and scattered smaller groups which were excess from the 983d Field Artillery and the 75th Field Artillery Brigade, the fillers for the battalion were entirely draftees, approximately 300 of whom came from the following reception centers without having had any previous training: Fort Douglas, Utah; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort MacArthur, California; Presidio of Monterey, California. The majority of the battalion came from the area of California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. All of them were given basic training by the battalion.

The original TO of the battalion called for a Headquarters-Service Battery, three firing batteries and a medical section. On 15 November 1943, per General Orders 3, Hq 558 FA Battalion, pursuant to letter, Army Ground Forces, 11 October 1943 and instructions in letter, Hq II Armored Corps, 8 October 1943, Headquarters-Service Battery was reorganized as Headquarters & Headquarters Battery and a separate Service Battery under TOE's 6-56, 6-127, 6-128 and 6-129 for Battalion, Headquarters Battery, the Firing Batteries and Service Battery, respectively. October 1943, TOE was changed to reduce the strength of Headquarters Battery from 96 to 93. TOE 6-56 was changed again 20 October 1944, rerating several radio operators in Headquarters Battery.

In Germany, 28 April 1945, provisional Batteries D, E and F were activated for the purpose of administering several POW camps. They were activated per GO 5 Hq 558 from personnel from A, B and C Batteries and overstrength personnel authorized per TWX QX-29345, 12 Army Group. They were inactivated 2 June 1945 per paragraph 1 GO 8 Hq 558, when their need had passed.

The Medical Section was inactivated 18 June 1945 per paragraph 2b, AR 345-400 dated 3 January 1945 and was combined with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the battalion.

A shortage of personnel in the Strategic Striking Force in November 1945 made the inactivating of C Battery of the Battalion expedient and that battery was inactivated per letter 32012 GNMC11E 11 Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Special Troops, Fourth Army, 9 November 1945.

The remainder of the battalion was inactivated 10 February 1946 per paragraph 1 General Orders 5 11th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Special Troops, Fourth Army, 7 February 1946 pursuant to authority contained in letter Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 30 January 1946.

No other permanent changes in organization or transfer were made. However, during combat, batteries, platoons and even all 12 individual sections were detached for short missions to other units of the Third Army. In July 1945, the battalion was issued M-40 guns in place of the M-12 for combat in the Pacific, but no changes were made in the TOE since the battalion never actually used the guns.

The original battery commanders of the battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Conway (promoted 28 May 1943) were:

Headquarters:	Captain William J. Lawless 1st Sergeant George F. Michalek
Medical:	Captain Joseph A. Dupont
A:	Captain William J. Edwards 1st Sergeant Ellis J. McKnight
B:	1st Lieutenant Bernard August 1st Sergeant Robert E. Gray
C:	Captain Dallas E. Marshall 1st Sergeant James N. Williamson
Service: (when organized 15 November 1943)	Captain William B. Busch 1st Sergeant Claude B. Rames

During training period, 1st Sergeants Leslie Kerr and Edward J. Powers were appointed to replace Williamson and Gray who were reduced.

On 10 June 1943, Major Lora E. McDonald was assigned the battalion as Executive Officer in place of Major Binkly.

When the battalion went into combat in August 1944, Lt. Colonel Conway commanded the battalion, which included:

Executive Officer:	Major McDonald, Sgt Major Yurkus
S-3:	Major Thorne
S-2:	Captain Steffen
S-4:	Captain Ward
Asst S3:	2d Lieutenant Hahn
Asst S2:	1st Lieutenant Emerson
Hq Battery:	Captain Tillinghast, 1st Sgt Kerr
A Battery:	Captain Edwards, 1st Sgt Michalek
B Battery:	Captain Martino, 1st Sgt Powers
C Battery:	Captain Marshall, 1st Sgt Rames
Service Battery:	Captain Busch, 1st Sgt McKnight
Medical Officer:	Captain Joe H. Hillsman

The battalion strength 10 May 1943 was 6 officers and 83 enlisted men. By 31 December 1943, the strength, including overstrength for training, was 46 commissioned and 525 enlisted.

During this period the battalion organized and trained, first in basic training and finally advanced training, passing the Corps tests in December 1943. In 1943, the battalion was transferred to 4th Special Troops and assigned to the 204th Group commanded by Colonel Burnell (III Corps).

The battalion remained under control of III Corps until it went overseas at which time it passed to control of the Third Army.

The main object of training was to fit the battalion for assault of fortified positions with direct laying on strong points and pillboxes as the foremost objective. The field training was conducted in Hunter-

Liggett Military Reservation, 15 miles from Camp Roberts; the battalion moved to no other post until it moved to the Port of Embarkation in July 1944. One tragedy marred the training period at Roberts. Private Arden E. Pickler was killed when he fell from the M-12 on which he was riding during a field maneuver and was crushed by the track.

One private of A Battery distinguished himself during training by remaining with one gun that threatened to explode when the powder which was carried in the rear of the gun was set afire by the heat of the tank engines operating in the hot climate. He and several other cannoneers were blown into the air, but luckily their fall was broken by trees and they escaped with minor injuries.

During the period 1 January 1944 to 30 May 1944 the strength changed from 44 commissioned and 525 enlisted to 33 commissioned and 478 enlisted, a decrease of 11 commissioned (which were all lost in April) and a decrease of 37 enlisted most of whom were lost in March. During this period the training of the battalion was completed and preparations were made for overseas shipment.

MONTH OF JUNE 1944

1 June, the battalion strength, 33 commissioned, 478 enlisted. Net change during the month - decrease 5 commissioned and 16 enlisted by end of the month. By this date, the battalion was alerted and prepared for overseas shipment and notified to be ready for transfer to the Port of Embarkation.

4 June, the battalion was assigned to Third United States Army, pending arrival in the European Theater of Operations per letter Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, subject: Troop Assignment (No 78), 4 June 1944.

8 June, battalion left Camp Roberts per instructions by the New York Port of Embarkation and entrained for permanent change of station. Distance marched 1st day - 250 miles to Los Angeles, California. Authority for the move: Letter Order Headquarters III Corps, Presidio of Monterey, California, 2 June 1944.

9 June, Douglas, Arizona, marched 625 miles.

10 June, Liberal, Kansas, marched 650 miles.

11 June, Bloomington, Illinois, marched 890 miles.

12 June, Lyons, New York, marched 780 miles.

13 June, arrived Camp Shanks, New York at 1045.

Advanced Detachment: 1 officer, 1 warrant officer, 1 enlisted man:

18 May - left Camp Roberts

22 May - arrived Fort Hamilton, New York

28 May - left NYPE for overseas

8 Jun - arrived Liverpool, England.

MONTH OF JULY 1944

Strength at the beginning of month - 28 commissioned, 462 enlisted. Net change by the end of the month - decrease 1 enlisted.

1 July - battalion left Camp Shanks for permanent change of station and embarked United States Army Transport Edmund B. Alexander 2030.

2 July - United States Army Transport Alexander weighed anchor 0230.

12 July - United States Army Transport Alexander drops anchor Mersey River.

13 July - battalion disembarked and entrained for destination 2100.

14 July - joined the Advanced Detachment at Moreton Morell, Warwickshire and dissolved the advanced detachment.

When the battalion arrived in England, it was assigned under the Third Army to XX Corps and to 193d Field Artillery Group per Troop Assignment Order No. 51 and Troop Attachment Order 12, Headquarters XX Corps, 17 June 1944.

26 July - an order received this date attached the battalion to the 182d Field Artillery Group, per Troop Attachment Order 16, Headquarters XX Corps, 18 July 1944.

31 July - battalion attached 33d Field Artillery Brigade as of 19 July.

MONTH OF AUGUST 1944

Strength at the beginning of the month - 28 commissioned, 461 enlisted. Net change by the end of the month - decrease of 6 enlisted.

1 August - at the beginning of this month, the battalion was preparing for the channel crossing and combat in France.

9 August - left Moreton, Morrel 1945 for permanent change of station; arrived at a staging area 2.3 miles SE of Romsey, Hants in the vicinity of Southampton at 1920 after a march of 235 miles. The weather and the road conditions were excellent. One gun was lost due to engine trouble during the march and had to be left behind in an advance Ordnance Shop.

10 August - left Romsely. Hants and embarked LST at 1720. The battalion traveled in two Landing Ship Tanks and one LCT.

Headquarters Battery and Baker Battery in LST 294.

Charlie, Service and part of Able in LST 506.

Firing Battery of Able in LCT 721.

12 August - the battalion disembarked Utah beach 1900 and moved to Rendezvous Area B near the village of Le Feyar at 1600, from where the battalion moved to rendezvous near Briquobec. Battalion was relieved of attachment to XX Corps and attached to XII Corps, assigned to 182d Field Artillery Group per Troop Assignment Number A-23, 13 August, Headquarters Third United States Army and Troop Assignment A-2, Headquarters XII Corps, 15 August 1944. The cannoner who had been left behind in England arrived in the battalion area with his M-12.

14 August - battalion left rendezvous area near Bricquobec and arrived bivouac area 9 1/2 miles east of Le Mans after a road march of 230 miles. The weather was good, but the road conditions were congested. All of the vehicles of the battalion arrived in spite of being on the road 22 hours.

16 August - battalion marched from the Le Mans area to vicinity of Vendome Forest. Marching 120 miles; the weather and road conditions were good.

17 August - the battalion marched to Vendome to temporary bivouac 3 miles SW of Cloyes. Battalion detached from the 182d Field Artillery Group and established the 558 Provisional Group, attaching the 731st Field Artillery Battalion. That night the battalion marched 30 miles and went into position 5 miles NW of Orleans and prepared to support the Combat Team of part of the 7th Armored Division and the 5th Infantry on the south bank of the Loire River.

The marches that the battalion had already made were a small part of the tremendous sweep of the Third Army out of the Normandy Bridgehead to take Le Mans and then the sweep in three prongs east, one of which passed through Orleans as they turned and swept north towards Paris. The mission of the 558th Provisional Group, in support of the Third Battalion, 137th Infantry, 35th Division and a party of French Maquis under Colonel O'Neal, a French Maquis officer, was to prevent scattered

German units fleeing the Seventh Army advance, from passing north of the Loire River at Orleans and joining the forces opposing the Third Army.

18-20 August - no action pending the negotiation for surrender of German troops on the south side of the river.

21 August - upon failure of Colonel Wallace, the infantry commander, to secure surrender of all the units, the battalion opened with its first round in combat at 1345. The provisional group was dissolved and the battalion attached and detached from the 177th Field Artillery Group and attached to the 404th Field Artillery Group.

22 August - battalion attached to the XX Corps.

24 August - with this change in assignment, the mission of the battalion changed and it moved 150 miles over good roads to bivouac 6 miles southwest of Melun and was assigned to 193d Field Artillery Group. The battalion was now part of the striking force pushing north towards Paris.

25 August - assigned and detached from the 195th Field Artillery Group.

25 August - assigned to 5th Field Artillery Group.

26 August - fired an extensive preparation for the crossing of the 7th Armored Division at the Melun bridgehead across the Seine. The battalion marched 60 miles and crossed the Seine river at Fontainebleau on ponton bridge and on the morning of the 27th marched 80 miles on good roads in good weather to join the 5th Field Artillery Group in the vicinity of Chenoise.

28 August - departed with the Group to follow CCB of XX Corps North toward Rheims. This phase of the battle was becoming a pursuit and the mission was to keep on the roads and move. Near the town of Le Gault, sniper fire and an M-4 tank disrupted the column's march. PFC Joseph D. Donahue distinguished himself by manning a 50 calibre machine gun and fired until his ammunition expended. In so doing, he damaged the machine guns of the tank and confused the enemy long enough for a bazooka team to get into a favorable position. One of the guns of A Battery went into position and drove the tank off so that the march could be resumed. PFC Donahue was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his heroism.

The battalion continued the march after this interruption and arrived in the vicinity of Epernay after a march of 120 miles.

28 August - went into position 6 miles west of Epernay.

29 August - attached to the 5th Field Artillery Group in support of CCB of the 7th Armored Division, the battalion crossed the Marne River at Port Brincon. Word was received that Paris had fallen to the French 11 Armored Division and the objective of the Corps was changed to a swing east of Paris towards Verdun.

At the town of St. Masmès, Major McDonald won the Bronze Star for organizing a party which captured 73 German prisoners. In the vicinity of this town, the truck vehicles ran out of gas after a march of 140 miles without reaching Warmerville, the objective. Gas was not immediately available so the battalion had to remain in the area until 31 August at which time the battalion was attached CCR of the 7th Armored Division.

The battalion read with great pride the commendation to the XX Corps Artillery for their part in forcing the crossing at Melun, sent to General Walker by General Patton.

Corporal Paul H. Smith of C Battery was wounded during the month.

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1944

Strength at the beginning of the month - 28 commissioned, 455 enlisted. Net gain by the end of the month - 7 enlisted.

At the beginning of the month, the battalion was in support of CCB of the 10th Armored, one of the pursuit forces that were cutting deeper into eastern France towards the Corps objectives, Verdun, Metz and Frankfurt.

2 September - marched to the vicinity Sainte Hilaire, 40 miles.

6 September - the battalion departed St. Hilaire following CCA of the 7th Armored Division crossing the Meuse at Verdun. A platoon of tanks was attached to the battalion for protection of CCR. The battalion followed in the rear of CCA changing its course to conform to that of the Combat Command as it moved through or around its objectives. Following a 100 mile march on congested roads, Colonel Conway, not trusting the unreliable information as to the course of the combat command, towards evening pulled the battalion and the train of the 7th Armored Division which was following us, off the road. The next morning showed us that to have moved into the next town that night would have destroyed the battalion and the division train.

7 September - the battalion marched 20 miles to a new position 1/2 mile west of Vionville. The battalion had the mission of general support of the 7th Armored Division and the 5th Division in their crossing of Moselle south of Metz. The columns of the Third Army had been delayed so many days by the gas shortage that the Germans had time to prepare some opposition at the Moselle and the operation was more difficult than some of the previous ones. The battalion laid a smoke screen to assist in the crossing: three roving guns were detached to fire on the Metz bridges.

10 September - concrete piercing fuse T-105 was issued to C Battery for the first time in preparation for direct lay missions.

11 September - the mayor of Verdun honored the whole XX Corps for their part in the liberation of Verdun.

14 September - the battalion was assigned a mission reinforcing fires of the 90th Division Artillery which had moved into the area.

15 September - the battalion marched 35 miles to a new position southwest of Gorze and assigned to general support of the 7th Armored and the 5th Infantry, though continued rains limited the effective fires with which we could support their attack.

18 September - the battalion marched 20 miles crossing the Moselle river. Mud, traffic, and urgent missions which forced the battalion to go into position, made displacement painfully slow.

19 September - the whole battalion finally crossed the Moselle. One section from C Battery was attached to the 204th Group for direct lay missions. This gun was commanded by 1st Lieutenant Brandon B. Bodell, who distinguished himself by his gallantry and courage during all these operations.

20 September - Lieutenant Bodell's gun destroyed an 88mm gun in spite of heavy counterbattery.

21 September - Lieutenant Bodell's gun scored a hit on the North Fort of Verdun series causing internal explosions and blowing two ventilators from the roof. Second gun commanded by Lieutenant August was assigned on the same mission.

27, 28 September - Sergeant Malcom Jones, Privates Saxwold and Scott were wounded during action with Lieutenant August's gun.

28 September - 1st Lieutenant Bodell, Sergeant Sanderson, Privates Hall and Vina were all seriously burned when an enemy shell hit the powder at the gun's emplacement. All four died of wounds later

in the hospital and all four received the Bronze star posthumously for their actions against the Metz forts. Lieutenant Bodell's loss was one of the greatest the battalion was to suffer for his command ability and calm efficiency in the face of the enemy was an inspiration to all.. He seemed to have an uncanny knack of inspiring the men around him.

Tec 4 Ralph L. Gilliam and Corporal Claude E. Bare distinguished themselves that day and were awarded the Bronze Star:

Tec 4 Gilliam, when an enemy shell struck near his position, fragments of the bursting missile ignited a nearby powder charge and the flames from the burning powder quickly set fire to the clothes of the lieutenant commanding the gun crew. After rolling on the ground in an effort to smother the searing flames, the officer started to run aimlessly about the area, screaming and tearing at his clothes. Instantly, disregarding the enemy bombardment which was continuing in the area, T/4 Gilliam, a radio operator, seized a can of water, raced after the stricken officer, caught him, and helped to extinguish the blaze. When medical aid arrived, he assisted in evacuating the casualty to a safe position.

Corporal Bare, during the same action, when the officer and sergeant were put out of action, with utter disregard for his own safety, braved the fire to assist in the evacuation of the casualties and as junior non-commissioned officer in charge, aided materially in repairing the damage caused by the barrage.

30 September - the battalion displaced to position 1 1/2 miles east of Vittonville after a difficult march through the mud of the Moselle Valley.

MONTH OF OCTOBER 1944

Strength at the beginning of the month - 28 commissioned, 462 enlisted. Net change by the end of the month - gained 2 commissioned, 5 enlisted.

At the beginning of October, the battalion (less one section from B and C Battery) occupied the high ground east of Vittonville overlooking the Seille River Valley, south of Metz. The mission of the battalion was general support of the 5th infantry Division, which held the northern half of the Pagny bridgehead across the Moselle in a position threatening Metz. Since the Third Army had about reached the limit of its supplies, our force across the Moselle had only power enough to hold onto the bridgehead. The battalion was also available to the 33d Brigade for counterbattery missions. The battalion remained in this position until 31 October. During the month, an excellent long base observation system was established from two OPs, one manned by 1st Lieutenant Emerson and S/Sgt Staedtler, the other by Lieutenant Hahn and S/Sgt Wiles. In addition, air observation of a very high order was done by 1st Lieutenant Clyde Edmonds.

The battalion fired on a wide variety of targets in the valley using American and captured German 155 shell. During this period, aided by our better position on the hills, our battalion alone destroyed or neutralized more than 20 enemy batteries.

On 16 October two captured 150mm howitzers were put into action against the enemy under command of 1st Lieutenant Carl Luft.

18 October - the battalion mission was modified to support of the 95th Division as it relieved the 5th Division in the line.

Two Direct Lay Guns

Lieutenant Ralph M. Major, who replaced Lieutenant Bodell, and his section distinguished themselves from the 1-4 October by putting Battery Moselle out of action from a distance of 800 yards, knocking out a gun turret mounting two 150mm guns.

Lieutenant Bernard August, with the other gun, was attached to the 90th Division near Maiziere-les-Metz. He did good work, firing on strong points and pillboxes varying in range from 1200 to 200 yards.

8 October - a gun from A Battery and two more guns from B Battery were moved into the area. One of the guns, A Battery's, was put out of action. Eventually, the whole of B Battery moved into the area.

Wounded in action during the month were:

A Battery:	Pvt Root and Pvt Gainey
B Battery:	T/4 Chandler, Sgt Depue, Cpl Lupien, T/5 King, PFC Rifkin, Pvt Dwyer, Cpl Reese and Cpl Aiello
C Battery:	T/4 Mumford, T/5 Hicks, PFC Clemens, PFC Bryant, Pvt Martinez
Hq Battery:	Pvt Miller

All were working on the direct lay guns except Private Miller.

Corporal Raymond Lupien was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service on 5 October:

“Serving in the wire section of his battery, Corporal Lupien repeatedly came under German artillery and small arms fire while servicing the battery communications net. Seemingly oblivious to the danger, however, he steadfastly persevered in his work both night and day. On the afternoon of 12 October 1944, the battery wire lines were cut by enemy shell fire and vital communications between the batteries were severed. Corporal Lupien unhesitatingly led his wire section to the break and calmly repaired it under heavy enemy fire. Though wounded, he remained until the break was fixed.

MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1944

Strength at the beginning of the month - 30 commissioned, 467 enlisted. Net gain during the month - 1 commissioned.

At the beginning of the month, the battalion pulled out of the bridgehead, came back across the Moselle into the town of Pierrepont, 65 miles away. There the battalion was reconditioned to prepare for assaulting pillboxes in support of the CCB of the 10th Armored's drive in the large attack on Metz and the Metz forts to be carried out with the 5th, 90th and 95th Divisions as a part of the November drive. Three sections of B Battery remained in the Maiziere area to carry on the direct lay missions.

7 November - the battalion marched 80 miles, going up through Luxembourg to deceive the Germans during the night, under very adverse conditions, and occupied positions near Himeling in good order. The credit for this march goes to Lt. Colonel Conway, the battalion commander.

8 November - the battalion, minus B and C Batteries, was assigned the mission supporting the 90th infantry Division and was attached to the 40th FA Group.

11 November - Battery C, under the command of Major Henry Thorne, was attached to the 83d infantry Division.

13 November - the battalion crossed the Moselle at Thionville and went into position in the vicinity of Metrich.

16 November - the battalion displaced forward to vicinity of Haut Sierck. The displacement was difficult and time consuming due to congested traffic and mined roads. A tank set off a mine, just missing Colonel Conway, and wounding T/5 Thielke, riding in his car. S/Sgt Staedtler was injured by another mine explosion and had to be evacuated.

20 November - C Battery rejoined the battalion as part of the 5th FA Group. The battalion, less B Battery, marched 45 miles to vicinity of Ritzing. Due to adverse weather conditions, the battalion was unable to reach its destination but remained in place in the column, arriving at Ritzing on the 21st.

23 November - battalion, less B Battery, plus Battery A, 274th Field Artillery, attached on the 22d, displaced to vicinity of Merschweiller. Battalion assigned direct support 1st Battalion, 358th infantry, for combined assault on the Siegfried Line near Borg, Germany. The operation was part of an unsuccessful attack by combined 90th Infantry and 10th Armored Divisions on that part of the line. Lieutenant Hahn and T/4 Gilliam were wounded shortly after reporting as forward observer team to the 358th.

26 November - Lieutenant Kepler, replacement as forward observer, was wounded and evacuated at Oberlueken.

29 November - battalion, less B Battery, displaced to vicinity of Manderen, 15 miles distance.

B Battery detached during month of November

During the month, B Battery, under the command of Captain Martino, operated with devastating effect in direct lay fire against fortified area still holding out around Metz. The leadership of Captain Martino and 1st Sergeant Powers plus the work of gun commanders, Lts August, Alcini and Major, was continually outstanding.

1 November - entire battery less 4th section with 204th Group, with mission to blast open Fort Driant and Fort Verdun from positions east of Gorze.

1-5 November - Lts Major and August fire on Fort Verdun.

5 November - Lt Major gets hits on south Fort causing damage.

9 November - one of the turrets of Verdun was believed silenced.

16 November - Lt. Alcini moved 3d section to 50th FA Battalion near Beaux and Lt. August to Verny with the 46th FA Battalion.

19 November - 3 sections moved to 19th FA.

20 November - attached to 5th Infantry Division Artillery with whole battery.

C Battery detached, 10- 20 November

One platoon commanded by Major Thorne fired on forts from range of 3000 yards and destroyed three guns in one fort, two guns in another, in support of the 3d battalion, 347th Infantry.

17 November - Lt. Bowmar and one section detached to 95th Division Artillery. One platoon commanded by Captain Tillinghast supported the 90th infantry crossing of the Moselle the 14th at the Cattenom bridge.

Fired on three forts in Koenigsmaker area, three holes blown in one fort, three 75mm guns destroyed.

Section commanded by Lt. Bowmar distinguished itself in support of the 378th Infantry by attacking Fort Julian from the infantry skirmish line. The gun fired on the entrance to the fort from 100 yards and demolished the main door of the fort from 25 yards.

19 November - Lt. Bowmar's section followed the tanks into Metz for an attack on Gestapo Headquarters, but no fire was necessary.

One A Battery section under Lt. Luft, attached to the 274th FA Battalion, knocked out three enemy pillboxes in the vicinity of Borg, Germany, on the 22d of November. On the next day, his section crossed into German territory for the first time that any part of the battalion was in German territory, and fired on outer pillboxes of the Siegfried line.

S/Sgt Farnsworth (C) was wounded during the month.

The Bronze Star Medal was awarded to Cpl Fritz Zimmerman (C), Sergeant Murt McMullen (B), and T/5 Paul Gooden (B).

The Air Medal was awarded to 1st Lieutenants Cline and Gettle, the pilots, and Lieutenants Edmonds and Major, the observers.

PFC Roy O. Brooks was awarded the Bronze Star Medal; "when information was received that the enemy intended to destroy a vital railway tunnel by demolition near Hombourg Bundage, France, Private Brooks immediately proceeded to the scene. Exhibiting courageous aggressiveness, he captured the German demolition crew with the assistance of a comrade and prevented them from destroying the heavily mined area.

PFC Brooks' companion was T/5 John B. Harvey, who was also awarded the Bronze Star.

MONTH OF DECEMBER 1944

Strength at the beginning of the month - 31 commissioned, 467 enlisted. Net change by the end of the month - decrease 3 commissioned, 73 enlisted.

During this month, the main action of the battalion was to support the drive of the 90th, 95th and 5th Divisions in the Saarlautern area, attempting to push and then to enlarge the bridgehead across the Saar and to breach the line. When the Ardennes offensive came on the 25th, the battalion was pulled out with the 5th Division and rushed to the south flank of the bulge to support the Third Cavalry Group in the Saar-Moselle triangle.

Most of the month, the batteries and the individual sections were detached to other units to do direct lay work. At night a great deal of harrassing fires were laid down by the M-12's which acted as roving guns in the infantry lines at night.

1 December - the battalion was in position near Manderen with the mission of supporting the 10th Armored Division. B Battery, under Captain Martino, was in the vicinity of Metz firing on the forts attached to the 5th Division. On this date, A Battery was attached to the 95th Division and C Battery to the 90th.

2 December - Battalion, less firing batteries, was attached to the 204th FA Group to assist in liaison and communications.

3 December - battalion crossed into Germany this date.

15 December - the battalion came under control of the XII Corps and was attached to the 193d FA Group with the assignment as subcounter-battery headquarters.

16 December - 5% enlisted men transferred to Infantry Training Center at Metz. One section of C Battery was ferried across the Saar River on rafts to Dillengen and later was joined by a second.

22 December - battalion assigned the mission of support of 3d Cavalry Group. A & C Batteries reverted to battalion control, and battalion moved from Ramelfangen to Evendorf.

Month of December - 1st Platoon, A Battery, commanded by Captain Charles Shadle.

6 December - Counterbattery on one gun killed Corporal Crocket and Pvt Heglund, wounded T/5 Boyd, Pvt. Shelley and Pvt Anderson. Pvt Bowers was also wounded, but remained in action.

21 December - returned to battalion control.

2 Platoon, commanded by Captain Busch

5 December - gun section commanded by Lt. Switzer fired on three pillboxes, destroying two. Three cannoneers were wounded in the action: T/5 Smuin, PFC Wolford and Cpl Sports.

6 December - Lt. Johnson fired on a pillbox and took 30 prisoners in a stunned condition. Captain Busch and a section severely damaged pillbox and forced it to surrender after a penetration.

7 December - Captain Busch and section fired through to the 21st of December together with Lts. Switzer and Johnson and their sections, firing on strong points and pillboxes and destroyed a total of 35 pillboxes, 2 bunkers, 3 antitank positions and two brick defensive positions. PFC Pena was wounded during these operations.

Month of December - B Battery under Captain Martino

1-5 December - fired on Fort St. Quentin. 3d section penetrated a cast steel turret concrete pillbox emplacement and another structure on the east side.

6 December - Fort St. Quentin surrendered, and the 2d section directed its attack on Fort Jeanne D'Arc. The other sections attacked Fort Plapperville, which surrendered the same day. The 4th section penetrated one concrete wall seven feet thick and two smaller inner walls and started fires in the powder magazines.

7-12 December - firing on Fort Jeanne D'Arc resulted in blasting an iron OP, damaging many parts of the buildings, four turrets, 5 88's and one other six foot wall.

13 December - Fort Jeanne D'Arc surrendered.

21 December - returned to battalion control.

C Battery, commanded by Captain Tillinghast and Captain Marshall, who controlled one platoon.

Working with Lieutenant Klatt, the guns of the battery knocked out 21 pillboxes and destroyed two bridges and one concrete OP.

During these operations, the following were wounded: Captain Martino, Pvt Tonkin, T/4 Taylor and PFC Gonzales of B Battery, and Major Thorne, the S-3, while observing the fire on Fort Driant.

Major Thorne later died of wounds in the hospital. In losing him, the battalion suffered almost its greatest single loss. Major Thorne was the driving force of the battalion as Colonel Conway was its guiding force; he never spared himself in performing his duties on behalf of the battalion. He was held in the highest esteem by the whole command.

For his superior performance of duty and heroism in the face of danger, the Bronze Star was awarded posthumously.

In C Battery, Cpl Sasser, Cpl Bare, Pvt Rivera and Pvt Ortega were wounded.

PFC Contris of A Battery was wounded, together with Pvt Mallon, Pvt Jaslow, T/5 Stafford and Pvt John C. Russel.

The following were awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French: T/5 Chandler, 1st Lt Bernard August and Captain Martino.

The following were awarded the Bronze Star: 1st Lt August., 2 Lt Major, Cpl Bare, Cpl Forsythe, Cpl Pons, PFC Slate, PFC Stolls, Cpl Zimmerman, T/4 Gilliarn and Captain Busch.

PFC Howard L. Johnson was awarded the Bronze Star: “when operating with his battery on the Saar River, overlooking Saarlautern, a direct hit from enemy artillery on 6 December 1944 seriously damaged an ammunition vehicle, killing two men and wounding three others. The carrier couldn’t be moved because of the damage, and the area in which it was located was under continuous murderous enemy fire. On 7 December, PFC Johnson, a tank mechanic, volunteered to enter the area and inspect the carrier for damages. The next day he again volunteered, went to the position and made necessary repairs following which he brought the vehicle to shelter.”

S/Sgt Ivan R. Diffendaffer was awarded the Bronze Star when: “commanding a gun section with the mission of reducing enemy guns emplaced in Forts St. Quentin and Jeanne D’Arc near Metz between 5-13 December, the sergeant crawled forward to a vantage point where he was dangerously exposed to enemy action. He promptly and accurately directed his crew in silencing the hostile gun. When his crew received destructive fire from a turret covered gun in Fort Jeanne D’Arc, Sgt Diffendaffer maneuvered his weapons in a highly deceptive fashion and heedless of danger remained in the area as forward observer for his section.”

MONTH OF JANUARY 1945

The strength at the beginning of the month was 28 commissioned and 394 enlisted. The net change by the end of the month was - increase 4 commissioned and 1 enlisted.

1 January - the battalion started the month in general support of the 3d Cavalry Group, which was containing the Ardennes offensive on the south flank. The battalion successfully assisted in this mission until the attack was turned back and then reported to the Saarlautern area and the attempt to force the way through the key to the Siegfried defenses in that area.

Battalion headquarters were at Eversdorf or at Ritzing in the Saarlautern area all during the month, in an area about 15 miles square and moved around a great deal in this small area, assaulting pillboxes and strong points and firing from the front lines as roving guns during the night.

2-3 January - Lt Carl Luft took a direct lay gun forward to assist in the cavalry attack and defense in the Campholz woods. Lt. Major, T/5 Mitts and PFC Cutshaw distinguished themselves here by remaining in position and observing fires on the German position, when the cavalry at one point was forced to withdraw.

7 January - gun section from A Battery returned to battalion.

9 January - assigned mission of battalion changed to general support of 94th infantry Division.

13 January - battalion transferred from 5th FA Group to 50th FA Group and moved to Villing.

14 January - roving gun sent from A Battery to support 106th Cavalry Group.

18 January - Lts Cline and Gettle were awarded 1st, 2d and 3d Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal for their missions flown in L-4 liaison planes; Lt Edmonds, their observer, awarded 1st Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal.

21 January - Battery A attached 689th FA Battalion and moved to Manderen. The battalion, less A and C Batteries, attached to 5th FA Group.

23 January - Battery B, 733d FA, attached to the battalion. Battery C sent one gun section to 359th FA Battalion; Battery A furnished one gun to the 356th FA Battalion of the 94th Division, and destroyed one pillbox.

28 January - one section, Battery A, supports infantry in the vicinity of Wies. Battery C transferred to the control of the 204th FA Group.

29 January - one section, Battery C, returned to battery.

31 January - one section, Battery A, crossed the Moselle at Remich, destroyed pillboxes at Thorn and returned.

The following men, all of A Battery, received the Bronze Star Medal: S/Sgt. Harold E. Means, T/5 William H. Lofquist, T/4 A. J. Bumbalis, PFC Howard L. Johnson.

The following men of C Battery were wounded during the month: T/5 Howard B. McCoy, T/5 John B. Harvey, T/5 Q. N. Haakonstad, and Pvt Julian Enriquez.

The Silver Star was awarded to: "2d Lieutenant Ralph M. Major was assigned to a cavalry platoon which had the mission of assaulting a heavily fortified enemy strong point. A strong enemy counter-attack was developing on the platoon's flank and Lt. Major volunteered to go forward and direct artillery fire. Advancing to a point within fifty yards of the German lines, he unhesitatingly called for artillery concentrations to be laid down just ahead of his position. Though the resulting fire brought shells crashing down within a few yards of his position, he courageously and coolly continued to direct his fire until the accurate and devastating barrage had routed the enemy."

T/5 David L. Mitts, Silver Star: "A radio operator, accompanied a cavalry force in an assault upon a heavily defended enemy strong point near Borg. Shortly after he had established contact with his artillery batteries, the advancing troops met such an intense concentration of hostile fire that they were forced to withdraw. Determined to procure artillery support, T/5 Mitts disregarding the danger, remained at his post and relayed adjustments, which brought effective fire upon many German gun positions. His actions so reduced the enemy's fire power that the cavalry attack was resumed and the position taken.

PFC Clarence E. Cutshaw, Silver Star: "A radio operator advanced with forward elements during a cavalry attack upon a strongly defended enemy installation in the Campholz woods near Borg. When withering automatic weapons, mortar and artillery fire poured down from the position and forced the troops to withdraw, Private First Class Cutshaw, realizing the great necessity for maintaining contact with supporting Artillery Batteries, remained behind with his radio and disregarding the danger as shells burst around him, coolly transmitted adjustments and brought effective fire upon hostile gun emplacements, enabling the assault to continue.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1945

Strength at the beginning of the month: 32 officers and 395 enlisted. Net change at the end of the month - decrease 5 officers; increase 29 enlisted.

At the beginning of the month the battalion was in position in Ritzing in support of the 94th infantry Division. The big drive on was to push through in the Saar Moselle triangle and get into Trier. Finally, the battalion, supporting the 10th Armored Division, saw that come to pass, and the toughest nut in the Siegfried line was cracked.

4 February - B Battery of 733d, which was attached to the battalion, moved to the vicinity of Ritzing.

5 February - C Battery relieved of attachment to the 204th Group and attached to XII Corps.

6 February - A Battery is transferred to the XII Corps and attached to the 80th Division.

The greatest blow to the battalion was Lieutenant Colonel Mark Conway being relieved of command. It was largely his skill as an artilleryman that so placed the batteries that our casualties remained ridiculously low and we performed our missions with great effectiveness. Under his command, the battalion out-marched and out-shot the other battalions in the group, according to the 5th FA Group Commander. No man in the battalion could speak too highly of Lt. Colonel Conway, a great artilleryman.

Major George W. Elkins of XX Corps Staff, who had a fine record in the operations section of that staff, is sent to take command of the battalion.

8-20 February - A Battery section destroys 5 pillboxes in its operations, and once crosses the Oder River at night to accomplish one mission. Corporal Stafford and PFC Gonzales are wounded during these operations.

10 February - the new pozit fuse is explained to the battalion.

17 February - Corporal Jack Farrington, on duty with one of B Battery's guns, is severely wounded.

20 February - the battalion is detached from the 5th FA Group and attached to the 10th Armored Division. B Battery of the 733d is relieved of attached to the 558th. A Battery returns to battalion control.

21 February - one section of A Battery attached to 423d Field Artillery. Battalion moves to vicinity of Billingen. B Battery, 733d, and B Battery, 736th, are attached to the battalion.

23 February - Captain Dallas Marshall made Executive Officer in place of Major McDonald who is evacuated for combat fatigue. 1st Lt. James W. Emerson has been acting as Battalion S-3 since the S-3, Major Thorne, became a casualty in December.

25 February - one section, B Battery, moved to Saarburg for direct lay mission with the 10th Armored Division. Battalion is attached to the 193d FA Group.

28 February - another section is sent from B Battery to replace the one there which has motor trouble.

This month the following enlisted men received the Purple Heart; Corporal Jack Farrington, B Battery; T/5 Sylvester Streetman, A Battery, T/4 Dale W. Stevens, Hq Battvry; T/4 Henry Kahl of C Battery, who won the 1st oak leaf cluster to the Purple Heart.

Bronze Stars were won by: Pvt Leroy J. Nessen, B Battery; PFC Robert R. Freitas, B Battery; and 2d Lt. Hubert Johnson, A Battery. 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star was won by S/Sgt Harold E. Means, A Battery.

MONTH OF MARCH 1945

At the beginning of the month, the strength was 28 commissioned and 424 enlisted. Net increase at the end of the month was 49 enlisted.

1 March - at the beginning of the month, the battalion was attached to the 193d Field Artillery Group, reinforcing the fires of the 10th Armored Division.

From the 18th of February on into the beginning of this month, the artillery of the whole area had been concentrating on cleaning out Trier and pounding away with the heaviest artillery barrage in the war. The first part of March the pressure was still on even though Trier fell, and after the second week in March the fighting was over as far as the 558 was concerned. They followed the combat command into Trier and then were assigned to take over POW camps for the rest of the campaign.

1 March - the battalion was less C Battery, less two sections each from A and B Batteries, plus B, 773 and B, 736, attached to the battalion.

2 March - the battalion moved to the vicinity of Chermannig, 20 miles.

3 March - C Battery returned to battalion control.

4 March - Battalion attached to the 5th FA Group and the 10th Armored Division.

8 March - battalion attached to 193d FA Group with the secondary mission of general support of the Third Cavalry Group.

10 March - moved to the vicinity of Trier.

11 March - B Battery returned to battalion control, and B, 217th AAA Battalion, 90mm attached to be fired through FDC. In the next few days, four more 90mm batteries were attached to be fired through FDC, so that the battalion at one time controlled the fires of 12 batteries through its FDC even though they were not all attached.

The 90's were used to great effect against a Nebelwerfer Battery. The rocketeers were well dug in so that they could get to safety when they heard the 155 gun shells coming, but Lt. Major, observing from a cub, adjusted four 90mm batteries on the Nebelwerfer position and laid three volleys into the rocketeers while on their rockets before they would hear them coming. Needless to say, the Nebelwerfers were neutralized.

13 March - two guns, A Battery, attached 26th infantry Division and the 263d FA Battalion.

15 March - battalion mission changed to direct support of the 16th Cavalry Group and to reinforce the fires to the 241st Field Artillery. Battalion marched 10 miles to vicinity of Irsch, Germany.

20 March - the battalion marched 20 miles, crossing the Saarlautern Bridge, occupied a position NW of Saarwellingen.

21 March - the battalion marched 18 miles and arrived in the vicinity of Kaisen.

23-24 March - the battalion marched 140 miles, arrived in the vicinity of Hohenollen and was attached to the 193d Group.

25 March - 193d Group issued the order that the 558 would be responsible in its area for military government to collect all arms. Each battery was assigned an area.

26 March - battalion displaced to Spredlingen, a distance of 120 miles

27 March - battalion relieved of assignment to XX Corps and attached to the Provost Marshal, Third Army. Instructions issued that the battalion be withdrawn from combat and put on duty guarding camps for displaced persons.

29 March - batteries moved to new locations as follows: Hq & Service to Trier, A Battery to Labach, B Battery to Baumholder and C Battery to Wittlick.

The following Bronze Stars were presented during the month:

PFC William Raley, Medics	S/Sgt Staedtler, Hq
S/Sgt William Jennings, Hq	PFC Howard L. Johnson (1st OLC)

Battery B:

Pvt Salvador Onate
Sgt Edmond Maloney
T/5 Robert Haas
T/4 Leo Montoya
Cpl Ernst Anderson
T/5 Dewitt Cline
Sgt Malcolm Jones
T/4 Billie B. Knight

Battery C:

PFC Clinton Smith
PFC Clifford Fischer
T/4 Henry Kahl
Cpl Dewey Hokins
S/Sgt Eugene Girardi
Sgt Bernard Sackett
Pvt Ellis O. Kelley
T/4 Euclid K. Knight
Cpl Charles B. May

MONTH OF APRIL 1945

Strength at the beginning of the month: 27 off, 473 EM. Net increase during the month: 1 Officer, 171 EM.

1 April - At the beginning of the month, the battalion is assigned, less all attached batteries, to special duty at the Third Army Provost Marshal with the mission of guarding Displaced Persons Camps, Hq and Svc Btrys at Trier, A Battery at Lebach and Neunkirchen, B Btry at Baumholder, and C Battery at Wittlich and Ditburg.

10 April - the battalion placed on temporary duty with XXIII Corps. 15th Army. Battalion assembled in Baumholder per orders for movement..

14 April - the battalion returned to Third Army control. Battalion assigned the general mission to guard Allied POW Camps. Battalion displaced less B Btry, crossed the Rhine River Mainz Germany, entered bivouac seven miles east of Frankfurt.

15 April - Batteries moved to the following locations. Hq and Sv to Eisenach, A Battery to Obersuhl to guard a camp of German political prisoners, C Battery to Ziegenhain to a PW Camp.

16 April - Captain Shadle in command at Eisenach. Lieutenant Major with a detail to Saalfield to guard records and PW's.

17 April - 304th French Truck Company attached to the battalion.

21 April - B Battery relieved and assembled at Eisenach.

23 April - Battalion less A and C Batteries assemblies at Eisenach.

24 April - A Battery remained in Hammelberg. C Battery moved to Bamberg. The rest of the battalion, plus French Truck, moved to Bamberg.

26 April - C Battery proceeded to Nurnberg to operate a PW Camp.

27 April - 199 reinforcements arrived to assist in operations.

28 April - three provisional batteries formed and commanded as follows: D Battery, 1st Lt Switzer; E Battery, Capt Shadle; F Btry, 1st Lt Bomar. Captain Edmunds assigned Battery Commander of C Battery. B and Sv Btry remain in Bamberg. F Battery to Nurnberg to join C Battery. E Battery to Hammelberg. A and D Battery to Hersbruck. Hq to Regensberg. Detachments from Hq at Saalfield and Meiningen. The provisional batteries were formed with the regular strength of the battalion and the reinforcements.

30 April - All batteries assumed duties in Allied PW Camps. Batteries A and D have war criminals and civilian internees camps.

Awards for April.

The Air Medal awarded to: 1st. Lt McCarthy.

The 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th bronze oak leaf clusters to Air Medal awarded to 1st Lt Gettle.

The 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th bronze oak leaf clusters to Air Medal were awarded to Captain Clyde B. Edmonds.

The 4th oak leaf cluster to Air Medal awarded to 1st Lt Vern Cline.

MONTH OFMAY 1945

Strength at the beginning of the month: 28 officers, 644 EM. Net increase during the month: 1 Officer, 11 EM.

1 May - at the beginning of the month, the battalion is assigned to Hq TUSA on special duty with the Provost Marshal and attached 195th FA Group. The specific duties of this battalion are the receiving, processing, and guarding of released Allied Prisoners of War, and A Battery is guarding civilian

internees. The widespread between batteries and parts of batteries has necessitated the forming of provisional D, E, and F Batteries. The locations are as mentioned above. The 304th French Truck Company is attached this organization to furnish necessary transportation for the present mission.

2 May - Battery E moved to Regensberg.

5 May - Detachment Hq returned to Regensberg.

6 May - D Battery transferred to Natternberg; their new mission is guarding a civilian internee camp.

8 May - A Battery relieved guarding internee camp.

12 May - B and Sv Btrys arrive Regensberg.

17 May - Btry B and E displaced to vicinity of Pilsen.

22 May - Mission of C and F Btrys changed to evacuation.

25 May - A Btry transferred to Moosberg to open civilian internee camp.

28 May - 1st Sgt George F. Michalek battlefield promotion to 2d Lt.

30 May - Major Walter G. Todd assigned to battalion as S-3. Btry B and E arrive Regensberg from Pilsen. Btry C and F arrive Regensberg from Nurnberg.

31 May - Btry D arrives Regensberg.

Awards for May:

The Bronze Star Medal to the following:

T/Sgt Charles A. Lemmon, Hq

Major Henry F. Thorne, posthumously

PFC Berta Bidwell, B

1st Sgt Edward J. Powers, B

Pvt Walter J. Novak, C

The 5th, 6th oak leaf clusters to Air Medal to 1st Lt Vern Cline.

The 5th and 6th oak leaf clusters to Air Medal to Capt Clyde B. Edmunds.

The 1st oak leaf cluster to Air Medal awarded to 1st Lt Ralph M. Major.

The 1st and 2 oak leaf clusters to Air Medal awarded to 1st Lt Mortimer C. McCarthy.

Purple Heart awarded to:

1st Lt James W. Emerson

Corporal Paul M. Smith, Hq

MONTH OF JUNE 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 29 Officers, 633 EM. Net decrease during the month: 1 Officer, 164 EM.

1 June - at the beginning of the period, the battalion was in a training period. The location of the entire battalion was in Regensberg, Germany.

2 June - The provisional batteries D, E, and F were inactivated.

18 June - order received from 194th FA Group for the battalion to proceed to Staging Area Three at Aries just north of Marseille.

19 June - battalion ordered to turn in M-12's to the 317th Ordnance Battalion. M-40's to be shipped to the battalion at the Port of Embarkation.

27 June - battalion left Regensburg; arrived near Ainsbach, 220 miles. 52 enlisted men of the battalion to go by rail.

28 June - battalion left Ainsbach, arrived bivouac area Kaiserlautern. Train party left Regensburg.

29 June - battalion arrived Dijon, France - 280 miles.

30 June - battalion arrived St. Rampert, France - 270 miles.

Awards for June.

The Bronze Star Medal awarded to
Pfc Roy O. Brooks, C
Capt William Busch, A
1st Lt James W. Emerson, Hq
T/4 John B. Harvey

The 8th oak leaf cluster to Air Medal awarded to 1st Lt John L. Gettle.

The Purple Heart awarded to S/Sgt Charles E. Farnsworth.

MONTH OF JULY 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 28 officers, 469 EM. Net increase during the month: 65 EM.

1 July - battalion arrived Aries Staging Area - 150 miles.

2 July - Train party arrives in staging area.

25 July - battalion relieved assignment XII Army Group and assigned command for Delta Base Section. During the rest of the month the battalion prepared for overseas shipment.

MONTH OF AUGUST 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 28 officers, 534 EM. Net decrease during month: 67 EM.

14 August - Left Aries Staging Area for permanent change of station. Embarked USS General J. C. Breckinridge, Marseille, 2200. Destination of the battalion - Philippine Islands via Panama Canal.

15 August - USS Breckinridge weighed anchor at 1400.

17 August - Passed the Strait of Gibraltar at 0300.

18 August - Destination of USS Breckinridge changed to New York Port of Embarkation at 1200.

24 August - Arrived New York Port of Embarkation at 1200. Arrived Camp Kilmer. N. J., 1630.

26 August - Organization ordered permanent change of station to Camp Hood, Texas, per paragraph 39, SO 225, ASF NYPE, Camp Kilmer N. J., 25 August.

27 August - All officers and men of the battalion departed for 45 days rest and recuperation. Advance party of one officer and one enlisted man sent to Camp Hood.

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 28 officers, 467 EM. No change during the month. Entire battalion on temporary duty for rest and recuperation.

MONTH OF OCTOBER 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 28 officers, 467 EM. Net change during the month: 7 officer increase; 71 EM decrease.

1 October - during the month the entire original enlisted strength of the battalion were discharged and separated from the service while on their temporary duty and none of them returned to the battalion. The officers who did return to the battalion were gradually separated or discharged as their points came up.

21 October - Major George W. Elkins returned from TDY and assumed command of the battalion.

31 October - Major Walter J. Todd assumed command of the battalion in the place of Major Elkins and Major Marshall, Executive Officer, who were relieved to be separated from the service. Captain James W. Emerson appointed Executive Officer of battalion and 2 Lt Gilbert Hahn appointed S-3. The battalion was informed that it would remain as a Regular Army unit.

MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 35 officers, 396 EM. Net decrease during month: 11 officers, 232 EM.

1 November - more replacements were shipped into the battalion, but officers and enlisted men were being discharged so quickly that the battalion was in a state of constant flux. The command of the batteries was changed so rapidly that it is only of importance as a record. In spite of this, a strenuous effort was made to train the remaining men in the battalion, form a cadre to receive possible fillers in the near future.

10 November - C Battery commanded at the time by Lt. Harvey Kelsey, was inactivated per letter, 320. 2 GNMC11E, 11th Hq & Hq Det Sp Trps, 4th Army, dated 9 November, and the battery was inactivated on that date.

MONTH OF DECEMBER 1945

Strength at beginning of month: 24 officers, 164 EM. Net decrease during month: 7 officers, 29 EM.

MONTH OF JANUARY 1946

Strength at beginning of month: 27 officers, 173 enlisted. Net decrease during the month: 2 officers, 34 enlisted.

4 January - Lt. Colonel William Y. Frentzel took command of the battalion and preparation was made to train the battalion a new cadre for the possible receiving of Regular Army fillers.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1946

Strength at beginning of month: 15 officers, 139 EM. Net decrease during month - 15 officers, 139 EM.

10 February - The battalion, with Lieutenant Colonel William Y. Frentzel in command, was inactivated per GO #5, 11th Hq, and all officers and enlisted men remaining in the unit at the time were transferred to other units by order of 11th Hq. The only two remaining members of the original unit were Captain James W. Emerson and 1st Lt Gilbert Hahn.

So closes the history of a little publicized artillery unit that was contained of a fierce pride in itself and a knowledge of their direct contribution to the front line soldier. This artillery battalion had earned, the hard way, privilege to wear on its European Theatre Ribbon, stars for the following campaigns:

Northern France)	WD GO #33, 1945
Rhineland)	
Ardennes-Alsace)	- WD GO #40, 1945
Central Europe)	