DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 735017

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 448
U S Army

HISTORICAL REPORT - AFTER ACTION REPORT DECEMBER 1944

The 87th Infantry Division began movement to France from England 23 November 1944 and final elements debarked 6 December 1944. The crossing was made by L. S. T. and troopships. Some landed at LeHavre, France, other elements waited as many as five (5) days in the estuary of LeHavre before beaching due to storms and high seas. After waiting several days some elements sailed up the Seine River and debarked at Rouen, France. Upon debarkation, the Division moved to assembly areas in the vicinity of Saint Saens and was assigned to Third Army, commanded by Lt General George S. Patton, and III Corps, commanded by Major General Milliken.

On 4, 5, 6 and 7 December 1944, CT's 345, 346, 347 and the remainder of the Division respectively departed from vicinity of Saint Saens to vicinity of Mars La Tours. Motor convoys departed at 0400 each day and closed in vicinity of Mars La Tours approximately 1730 of the same day. Personnel transported by rail were enroute approximetely thirty-six (36) hours.

The Division moved by motor from vicinity of Mars La Tours to Metz, France. CP opened in that city on 8 December 1944. The 345th Infantry was assigned the mission of relieving the 2d Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division on the Metz fortifications. Fort St Quentin and Fort Plappeville were garrisoned; Fort Drient surrendered to the 345th Infantry 081500A December 1944 and Fort Jeanne D Arc was contained.

On 9 December, CT 346 moved from Metz, France to vicinity Gros Rederching, France to initiate the relief of the 26th Infantry Division. The 87th Division was assigned to XII Corps. The 345th Infantry continued to contain Fort Jeanne D Arc.

10 December. 346th Infantry relieved 104th Infantry in position in vicinity Gros Rederching. 345th Infantry continued to contain Fort Jeanne D Arc. The 347th Infantry was in Metz preparing for movement forward.

11 December. 346th Infantry attacked at 0945 and took initial objective. The 345th Infantry continued to contain Fort Jeanne D Arc. The Division CP closed at Metz and opened in Oermingen 1200. CT 347 moved from vicinity Metz to vicinity Gros Rederching 1400. General Patton, 3d Army Commander, visited CP at Oermingen, welcoming and orienting all officers at Division Headquarters.

12 December. The 346th Infantry attacked at 0800 and by 1300 had reached a point 400 yards south and west of Rimling. The 347th Infantry relieved all elements of the 328th Infantry, 26th Division during the night 12-13 December. The 347th CP opened at Weisviller.

13 December. The Division CP opened at Achen, France 0900. Brigadier General Culin, Commanding General, 87th Division assumed command of the 26th Division sector at 1000A. The Division had the following attachments: 549th AAA Battalion, 761st Tank Battalion, 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 35th Division was on the left and the

RESTRICTED

CL

28

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 735017

12th Armored Division and the 92d Reconnaissance Squadron on the right. The 346th and 347th Infantry continued the attack. The 345th Infantry was relieved from mission at Metz by the 101st Infantry, 26th Division and moved to vicinity Kleinmuhl and Mittelmuhl, closing in that area 1530.

14 December. The 346th and 347th Infantry attacked at 0700 - resistance was comparatively light until initial objectives were reached. Both Regiments were counterattacked in late afternoon, but the counterattacks were repulsed. Rimling was captured by the 346th Infantry at 1250. The 25th Reconnaissance Squadron relieved the 12th Armored Division on our right flank. 345th Infantry relieved 328th Infantry, 26th Division and was placed in Division reserve. 37th Tank Battalion, 4th Armored Division attached.

15 December. The 346th and 347th Infantry attacked again at 0700. Resistance was heavy and both units were counterattacked. At the end of the day, both the 346th and 347th Infantry had crossed the German border. 346th Infantry captured Guiderkirch, 347th Infantry captured Obergeilbach. The 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion destroyed four (4) enemy tanks. Our supporting air, 19th TAC attacked Mittelsheim. 761st Tank Battalion relieved from attachment. 345th Infantry relieved 346th Infantry.

16 December. The 345th and 347th Infantry attacked at 0700. Both Regiments encountered heavy resistance from the vicinity of Mittelsheim and the Baumbusch Woods. Counterattacks on both fronts were repulsed. All troops were subjected to intense artillery fire. 602d Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved from attachment to the Division.

17 December. The 345th and 347th Infantry resumed the attack at 0700. Resistance was very heavy, but both Regiments advanced. The 345th Infantry took Hill 304 and advanced to the west edge of Renbrunnen Woods. The 347th Infantry captured Melsheim at 1150. Late in the day Le Buckwald Woods were captured by the 347th Infantry. The Sagenwald Woods and Medelsheim were bombed and strafed by our supporting aircraft.

18 December. The 345th and 347th Infantry were directed to reorganize and consolidate the positions they held. Strong patrols were sent out by the 345th Infantry into Medelsheim and Seyweiller. Medelsheim was occupied by a platoon of the 345th Infantry at 1100.

19 December. The 87th Division continued improving and maintaining defensive positions. The Division CP was subjected to long range harassing enemy artillery throughout the afternoon and night 19 December 1944. The 691st Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed) attached. 80th Infantry Division now on our right flank. 37th Tank Battalion, 4th Armored Division, relieved from attachment.

20 December. Improvement of defensive positions was continued. The 347th Infantry rotated their battalions. All fronts were subjected to intense enemy artillery fire. Leading elements of Division are now six (6) kilometers from the SIEGFRIED LINE. Additional assault training was initiated by Infantry and Engineer troops. 12th Armored Division was on our right flank. 761st Tank Battalion attached.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 735017

21 December. The 87th Division sector was widened when the 346th Infantry relieved the 320th Infantry, 35th Division on the left. The relief was completed 1730. The 347th Infantry sent strong patrols to Grosserwald Woods during the night 21-22 December. The Division passed from XII Corps, 3d Army to XV Corps, 7th Army. 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved from attachment.

22 December. Bridges and other prepared demolitions were ready to be blown upon orders of immediate tactical commander. The Division CP moved from Gros Rederching to Achen. Lt General Patch, 7th Army Commander, visited the Division CP at Achen.

23 December. Orders were issued to the 87th Division at 1300 by XV Corps to immediately begin movement to vicinity of Dieuze, France. The Division was relieved by elements of the 44th and 100th Infantry Divisions. Movement began at 1930 and was continuous throughout the night 23-24 December. Enemy aircraft was operating during the movement and the column of the 346th Infantry was strafed resulting in four casualties.

24 December. The 87th Division closed vicinity of Dieuze 1630. At 1200, the 87th Division passed into SHAEF reserve under control of the 12th Army Group.

25 December. Upon orders from the Seventh Army, the 87th Division and attached troops began movement from Dieuze, France to vicinity NE Reims, France. First elements of the Division began movement at 1600.

26-27 December. The 87th Division and attached troops closed in assembly area NE Reims 1830. All troops were in field bivouac. Units performing maintenance and care and cleaning of equipment. The Division CP was opened in vicinity south of Pont-Faverger, France.

28 December. Orders received from VIII Corps at 2330 to move Division to vicinity Bertrix, Belgium.

29 December. At 1120 the 87th Division began movement to Bertrix, Belgium. The Division CP opened at Bertrix, Belgium at 2100. The Division passed to control of VIII Corps, 3d Army. 345th Infantry closed vicinity south and west of Sevisscourt at 2000.

30 December. 346th Infantry closed in vicinity Bois De Mochamps Woods 0045. 347th Infantry closed in assembly area vicinity Rossart at 0630 prepared for prompt movement. At 0730, 345th and 346th Infantry attacked. Both Regiments progressed rapidly. By 1300, the 345th Infantry had captured Moircy. The 346th Infantry advanced nine (9) kilometers and contained Vesqueville and St Hubert. At 2100, 345th Infantry was counterattacked in Moircy and the town was reported by the Regiment as lost to the enemy. However, Company C and a platoon of Company B remained in Moircy throughout the night. The move of the entire Division a distance of more than one hundred (100) miles and the attack by two (2) RCT's in less than twenty (20) hours is particularly noteworthy.

31 December. The 345th Infantry attacked at 1330. At 1430, Remange was captured. The 345th Infantry was passed through by the 347th Infantry during the night 31 December 1944 - 1 January 1945 and passed into Division reserve. The 346th Infantry continued to contain St Hubert and Vesqueville.

[redacted]

GAYLE,
Actg G-3