912th Field Artillery After Action Report

December 1944

1. **Personnel:**
   a. **Total Effective strength…at beginning of period 1 December 1944: 35 Officers; 471 enlisted men.**
   b. **At the end of period 31 December: 32 Officers and 446 Enlisted Men**
   c. **Killed in action: 1 Enlisted Man; Wounded in action: 3 Officers & 3 Enlisted Men**
   d. **Replacements: None**
   e. **Other changes: 14 Enlisted Men transferred to 87th Signal Co. and 6 Enlisted men in hospital**
2. **Enemy Artillery Actions:**
   a. **1 to 9 December 1944: None.**
   b. **10 to 20 December 1944: Battalion under enemy shelling at Woelfing, France; on 12 December 1944, and at Obergailbach, France on 17 December 1944.**
   c. **21 to 31 December: None.**
3. **Own Operations:**
   a. **1 Dec 1944 – 912th F.A. Bn. Laid in harbor at LeHavre, France during the night on LST boats. Weighed anchor at 0830 and proceeded up the Seine River. Disembarked at 1730 at Rouen, France, and motored to Bivouac Area three (3) miles south of St. Saens, France under the command of Lt. Col Monn. – 2 – 5 Dec 1944 – Bn in administrative & supply duties and loading of trucks in preparation for motor movment. – 6 – Dec 1944 – Bn left Bivouac area at 0525. Moving with Combat Team and arriving at assembly area at Valleroy, France at 2045. 7 Dec 1944 Bn departs Valleroy, France at 0900 and arrived in Metz, France at 1800. Mission to fire on Forts Driant & Jeanne D' Arc. First Round fired three years after Pearl Harbor. Fort San Quentin & Fort Driant surrendered. 11 Dec 1944 – Bn dept. Metz, France and motored to Bivouac area 3 miles Northwest of Oermingen, France. – 12 Dec 1944 Bn dept Bivouac area and moved forward to Woelfing, France going into position for mission of reinforcing 263rd F.A. Bn. 13 – 16 Dec 1944 – Fired mission on German infantry in vicinity of Obergailbach, France, while reinforcing 263rd F.A Bn. Bn. Assumed D/S of CT 347th Inf. 253rd, 263rd & 180th F.A. Bns. Now reinforcing our fires. Bn firing observed and unobserved missions on call in addition to H & Is & RRs. 334th F.A. Bn assigned missions on call in addition to H & Is RRs. 334th F.A Bn assigned mission of reinforcing 912 F.A Bn.; 263rd & 180th F.A. Bn. Reld of reinforcing Bn. 35th Div in sector on our left. 334th F.A Bn reld 912th F.A. Bn. Counter attack by enemy repulsed. Captain Harding, "C" Btry Commander wounded in right arm by shell fragments while acting as FO. Captain Botkin, "B" Btry Commander, acting as F.O. wounded by enemy shell fragments and his radio operator, Pfc Raymond Johnson killed. Inf advanced prox 4000 yards during this time period. 17 – 23 Dec 1944 – Bn occupied positions in vicinity of**

Obergailback, France. Inf. Occupied Gershiem & Walshiem, Germany and woods north of Walshiem, Germany. After advancing prox 1000 yds. Mission of inf changed to that of "Hold at all costs". Defensive fires planned. Light preparation fires fired to deceive enemy. Rpt received that Captain Sexton, Ln O, 1st Bn, T/5 Trapino,Rad Opr, and Pfc Kohrman, driver, were wounded by enemy shell fire while operating with infantry. T/5 Trapino recommended for Silver Star for continuing to transmit fire missionsafter being wounded and before first was administered. kRpt rec that Pvt May "C" was wounded by fragments from German "S" Mine. 347th Inf Anti-Mine personnel cleared Btry position of mines. Bn continued firing defensive fire while infantry was under continuous artillery & mortar fire. Casualties reported as hvy. No ground lost. 335th Div on left reld by 346th Inf. 912th F.A Bn assigned as D/S of 346th Inf until 335th F.A. Bn was in position and ready to fire. 335th F.A. Bn reld fr reinforcing 912th F.A. Bn Inf patrols rpt enemy building fortifications in Groswald Woods. On 23rd orders rcd for rcn kTroops & Co "C" 44th Div., to relieve inf. Artillery support to be taken over by 156th F.A. Bn, 44th Div, 24 – 25 Dec 1944 – Bn dept Obergailbach, France and motored to Lohr, France. Spent Christmas at Lohr, France enjoying services and Christmas dinner which was with all the trimmings. Bn dpt Lohr, France 251800 Dec 1944 and motored to Bivouac area in vicinity of Reims, France where Division was displaced in SHEAF Strategic Reserve. Bn closed in Bivouac area 261300 Dec 1944 . 27 – 29 Dec – Bn remained in Bivouac area, digging in and spending time in Care and Cleaning of material. Gen Ford visited this area and was well pleased. Orders were reeived for Bn to move out at 290830 Dec 1944. -30-31 Dec 1944- Bn arrive area vicinity of Bertrix, Belgium. At 1100 Bn depart Assembly Area and arrived in position at Recogne, Belgium. CP established, Com complete, Btries laid & rdy 301200 Dec 1944. On 31st Dec 1944 Mission established as defensive. Bn Ex reports morale of personnel as being superior. Rcn was being made to move Bn forward. 7348 rounds expended during month of Dec 1944.

4. **Supply**
   a. **Class 1 – Supplies of food and water were excellent. Bread was the only item of which a greater supply was desired. It was found advisable to maintain on hand one day's ration of "10 in 1", "C" and K rations. kA greater supply than this overloaded the kitchen. "D" rations were very much in demand but unable to obtain. It was also found to requisition daily approximately 25 operational rations for details which were separated from their messes part time only.**
   b. **Class II – There was very little supply of clothing and equipment due to the priority of the infantry for these supplies. Items most in demand were heavy wool socks, overshoes, sleeping bags and items of kitchen cooking equipment.**
   c. **Class III – Supply of gasoline and oil were excellent and restricted only by our ability to haul them. Kerosene was the only item that couldn't be gotten everytime that it was needed.**
   d. **Class IV – No activity.**

e. Class V – Supply of ammunition was excellent with little or no restrictions on our ability to maintain basic loads at all times.

5. a. Results of operations: Bn remained in D/S of Inf Regt. During the month. Reports from PW's indicated that our artillery fire was very effective and held in great respect by the enemy.

b. Lessons learned:

(1) To not allow Forward Observers to be so influenced by Inf Co Officers that the FO's mission is and he finds himself unable to see anything and is pinned down by small arms fire whereby he becomes nothing more than another rifleman

(2) The value of an initial round WP during adjustment in difficult terrain.

(3) To use ammunition boxes filled with earth in building parapets.

(4) To require accurate reports from observers and save ammunition by not firing at noises in the night.

(5) To continually practice the lessons learned in the US regarding camouflage, concealment and dispersion.

(6) To analyze jumbled reports from front line units – make the utmost use of them – and call for further information as soon as the situation permits, to clarify the picture.

(7) By FO's & Ln O's to stay away from bunched groups of infantry hvy weapons and MG positions and above all stear clear of old Geman CP's, OP's or other installations.

(8) Dispense with excess equipment. Fo's can operate with a set of field glasses M- 13. A folded map which can be carried in the pocket and one means of communication. Travel as light as possible. The other impediments slows one down especially in rough terrain.

<u>Notes:</u> FO's and Ln O's should maintain closer contact with infantry units to be supported and if need be engage in squad – platoon - company – and battalion manuvers while in training in the U.S. Knowledge of personalities is invaluable – particularly of Company Commanders and the Infantry Battalion Staff. Also some knowledge of infantry tactics is of great help so that the artillery officer may clearly understand what the infantry is trying to do and how the artillery may be most effectively employed.

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