S-E-C-R-E-T

HEADQUARTERS

434TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Battle History

1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44.

At 0001, 1 October 1944, the 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was in position west of St. Anthonis, Holland firing upon enemy positions in the vicinity of Overloon, Holland in support of CCB. Information was received that an enemy counterattack threatened to overrun our forward position. At 0010 RO's began to call for fires on counterattacking German infantry. The enemy was using heavy concentrations of nebel-werfers and artillery to support this attack. The battalion fired on all concentrations called for by the RO's and the enemy attack was broken up, but all during the day the enemy repeatedly attacked our forward positions only to be slaughtered by our fire. The forward observers with the 31st Tank Battalion reported one woods west of Overloon in which the fire of the battalion had been especially deadly. In the words of one FO "A dead German in every fox hole". In regard to nebel-werfers, these were the first the battalion had heard since going into action. The long, drawn out whine had a few men guessing as to what to do until several hit near the battalion area. After that, at the sound of the "screeming meenie" all personnel would promptly get under cover.

The tank of FO2, Lt Jones, struck a mine and was disabled. Lt. Jones evacuated his crew but remained on the spot to carry out his mission, narrowly escaping enemy mortar fire that seemed to be following him from place to place in his attempt to keep in communication with the battalion. Lt Kivett, Btry B RO, and Lt Galle[[1]](#footnote-1), Btry C RO, were slightly wounded in action being replaced by Lt's Chapin and Cahill respectively. Cpl Phillips, Btry B, then Pvt Phillips, who was a member of Lt Kivett's crew, took over when Lt Kivett was wounded and conducted fire very efficiently and effectively to hold off an enemy counter-attack before Lt Chapin's arrival.

The Bn CO returned from CC B at 1630 with a new plan of attack. The 31st Tank Battalion and B/23rd Infantry were to attack southwest of the railroad then east to Vortum. The 38th Infantry was to attack south between the railroad and the Maas River. Our battalion was given the mission of being in general support of both forces. The battalion FDC prepared defensive fires against possible enemy thrusts into our lines. Road blocks were put out and every man was told to be especially alert against attack by enemy armored vehicles. The men and officers of the battalion were tired, especially FDC personnel, FO sections, and howitzer sections, having fired 22 missions, expending 1192 rounds of 105mm ammunition during the day.

The battalion executive went to CC B at 0100 hours 2 October 1944 to secure a new plan of attack. He returned at 0230 with two tentative plans. Plan A was the same as the day before with the addition of the 23rd Infantry minus B to attack thru Lactaria Forest. B/87th plus one platoon B/814th were to attack and clear the northwest tip of this forest. B/33rd Eng to follow 23rd Infantry minus B and clear road of mines. B/31st to follow this road and fire along southern edge of forest to support attack south on Overloon. The 434th would fire a preparation on Mullen and Vortum and other targets on call from observers.

-1-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

Plan B called for a withdrawal of the 38th Infantry to assemble with the 23rd Infantry minus B to clear Lactaria Forest. B/23rd and 31st to withdraw north of canal. The 434th was to furnish fires on call from observers. At 0400 the order came to execute Plan B.

As the battle raged on into the night, the battalion S-3 was finding it increasingly difficult to fire on targets received from observers because of the extremely long ranges. The battalion executive and BC's were sent forward to select new positions so as to bring the battalion within range of all targets. But the situation did not permit displacing of the battalion as there was a possibility of an enemy counter attack at any time. The battalion fired 6 missions during the day, expending 104 rounds of ammunition.

The battalion reverted to control of Div Arty on the morning of 3 Oct 44. CC B was placed into Div reserve and CC R passed thru and continued the attack to the south on Overloon. The 434th was ordered to remain in position and continue to support this attack. Observers and RO's who had returned to the battalion were again sent out with various units of CC R. Defensive fires were received from the observers and the battalion fired 11 during the night on targets west of Overloon. Missions fired 3 October: 19. Rounds expended 3 October: 320. 3 Replacement officers arrived at the CP 3 October, namely 2nd Lts Foss, and Bundy, assigned to Btry C, and 2nd Lt Morse, assigned to Btry B.

The situation did not improve the following day to displace the battalion. It could not be given by the CO. The enemy seemed to be making an all out effort to drive our troops out of their positions. The battalion delivered fire on enemy counter attack after counter attack with the enemy supporting his attack with tanks and artillery. Despite heavy losses in personnel and equipment, the counter attacks kept coming one after the other. Observers would often catch an entire enemy company advancing in the open and blast them with fire. One favorite trick was to have friendly infantry fire all their small arms as if counter attacking. Then when the enemy came out of their dug outs to repel this attack the observers would be ready with a heavy concentration of artillery fire to greet them. The last attempted counter attack was dealt with by massed division artillery. This occurred at 1600 and after that and all thru the night harassing fires were laid down in the vicinity of Overloon. The battalion fired 60 missions 4 October 1944 expending 817 rounds of ammunition.

Enemy counter attacks were continued on the 5 October supported by heavy artillery fire. The battalion CO ordered air observers into the air to spot these guns. Two enemy attacks were repulsed by the battalion during the morning, and every one remained alert for a further continuation of these attacks. The battalion received another loss in the morning when the tank of FO3, Lt Shafer, was hit and burned by anti-tank fire. Only one man was wounded seriously, Sgt Lacefield, who suffered a broken arm and other injuries, and was evacuated. The bow gunner, Pvt Douglas performed an extremely heroic deed in returning under fire, to pull Sgt Lacefield out. For this deed, Pvt Douglas was awarded the Silver Star.

At 1730 5 October the Bn CO received from CC R plans for relief of CC R by CC B at 1845. Officers of the Bn were designated to report to various units of CC B as observers and RO's. The remainder of the day and night was very quiet with some firing of interdiction and harassing fire on enemy positions in vicinity of Overloon. The battalion fired 42 missions 5 October, expending 281 rounds of ammunition.

-2-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

The 105mm Assault Guns of the 31st Tank Battalion were attached to the Bn on the 6th October 1944 as reinforcing artillery. All personnel were ready to displace on order from the Bn CO. It was decided to displace in the evening and at 1730 a portion of Hq Btry and Btry B were moved to a forward position. However observers continued to call for urgent fire making it impracticable for the remainder of the Bn to move. That portion of Hq Btry which had been displaced forward, was ordered back to the CP, but Btry B remained forward so as not to be on the road when called upon for fire. During the night and morning of 7th October the Bn continued firing on enemy positions west of Overloon. Missions 6 October: 31. Rounds expended 6 October: 633.

At 0700 7th October the Battalion was ordered to support the British 11th Armd Div during relief of the 7th Armd Div and then displace to new zone of action with 7th Armd Div on line of Deurne, Asten, and Weert. BC parties were sent out of new area to select new CP and firing positions. The battalion continued to fire at all possible preparations were made for movement.[[2]](#footnote-2) Missions 7th October: 35. Rounds expended 7th October: 927.

At 0115 8th October the battalion moved out in black out to new position North of Deurne, Holland, marching 14 miles. During this march the peep of Lt Moore, Bn Motor officer, struck a mine laid by an enemy patrol during a gap in the battalion column. Slight cuts and bruises in addition to ear injuries were sustained by Lt Moore and T/Sgt Sislo, driver of the vehicle. Upon arriving at the new area the battalion was laid and as soon as light would permit the battalion was registered from the air by Tec 3 Vickers. The battalion CO arrived at the CP from CC B with missions of the 7th Armd Div in its new position. CC B was to defend Deurne-Asten sector with two forces. The 434th was to support Force 1, and implace medium tanks equipped with 76 mm guns as reinforcing artillery. Everything was made ready to repel any attempt by the enemy to break thru in our sector. RO sections were ordered to be ready to move at dawn 9 October, and firing batteries and battalion FDC were alerted for fire missions. Missions 8th October: 3. Rounds expended 8th October: 35.

At 0800 9 October observers were placed in various church steeples and windmills vicinity of Deurne and Zeilberg. Tanks from A/31st were laid in indirect fire positions and made ready to fire. An air of expectancy hung over the battalion as preparations seemed to be in progress for a large scale artillery barrage on the enemy. However the day passed with only light firing and all personnel were instructed to get as much rest as possible because a hard three or four days of firing was in prospect. Missions 9 October: 7. Rounds expanded 9 October: 117.

The battalion did no firing on the 10th October but all other available tanks and assault guns in CC B were ordered to be placed in indirect firing positions by the Bn. The battalion FDC was ordered to coordinate all of this firing. In addition to this the battalion was further reinforced by the 774 FA Bn equipped with 4.5" guns. All of this entailed an enormous amount of work on various sections of the Bn. By noon 11th October all preparations had been made for a large artillery barrage to be delivered on the enemy on the call of the CG. At 1330 the battalion CO made known the reason for this barrage. A small

-3-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

force from CC B (2 platoons) was to feign an attack on the crossing of the Deurne canal supported by an enormous artillery barrage. The enemy thinking that a major attack was in progress would shift his forces into this area making it possible for the British to attack on the north with the objective of capturing and occupying Overloon. Each BC and the Bn S-2 was designated Bn commanders of various units of supporting artillery from the 31st Tank Bn, 17th Tank Bn, 814 TD Bn, 23d Armd Inf Bn, and 87th Rcn Bn. Each of these officers set up a separate fire direction center which was then tied in to the 434th Armd FA Bn FDC. Every one in the Bn felt at this place the enemy would get a dose of artillery he would not forget about in a long time. Missions (mostly registration) 11th October of Bn and supporting units: 30, rounds expended 420.

At 1100 12th October all attached artillery had been registered and fire was to begin at H hour (1208 hours). Fire began at this time and continued until 1400. The mission of the CC was accomplished without casualties. The battalion continued firing harassing and interdiction missions during the afternoon and night. Missions 12th October: Bn 82, attached artillery 105. Rounds expended 12th October: Bn 1794, attached artillery 2159. 6 projectiles filled with propaganda leaflets were also fired. In this barrage the battalion massed the equivalent of 5 battalions of artillery namely 54 105m howitzers, 13 M-4 76 mm guns, 10 M-4 75mm guns, 6 M-4 105mm howitzers 5 M-8 75mm, assault guns, and 12 M-10 3 inch guns.

Orders were received 13 October to repeat barrage of 12th October 1944. This was complied with at 0630. Morale in the battalion was high as a result of knowing that we were hitting the enemy hard and often. At 1400 word was received that the British had captured Overloon and were fighting toward Venray. CC B was given a new mission of establishing a bridgehead over the Deurne canal and then proceeding toward Venray. The 434th was given the mission of supporting this attack with attached artillery. The battalion operations section began planning artillery preparations for this attack. Missions 13th October: 56. Rounds expended 13th October: 777.

Battalion refired the barrage of 13 October at 0800 14 October and continued firing harassing and interdiction fires or selected concentrations. Also fired were more propaganda leaflets. Missions 14th October: 19. Rounds expended 14th October: 275.

Battalion CO returned from CC B on the morning 15th October and called a meeting of BC's and the Bn Staff. He discussed plans for an attack on Deurne canal crossing and Venray by CC B. The battalion with attached artillery will (1) deliver a preparation fire (2) deliver a rolling barrage (3) deliver fires on targets of opportunity. Information was then received that the enemy was withdrawing from the canal and a scheduled attack might begin at any time. The battalion was ready to support this attack though not much firing had been done during the day. Missions 15th October: 9. Rounds expended 15 October: 69.

At 1730 16th October the scheduled attack began without artillery support on orders from the CG, CC B. At 1930 firing was ordered to begin and continued all during the day and night. Missions 16th October; 36. Rounds expended 16th October: 1661.

-4-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

The battalion was still in position supporting the canal crossing on the morning of 17th October. All men involved in the firing were tired but ready to continue firing at the enemy. A rolling barrage was fired at 1020 in further support of the attack. The battalion continued firing at 1140 in support of a mission of CC B in clearing road in vicinity of bridge crossing of light enemy resistance. After this mission was completed the battalion was ordered with attached artillery to mass fires with the British 11th Armd Div for attack on Ljsselsteijn[[3]](#footnote-3). The capture of this town was reported at 1500 by the British. Observers and RO's continued to ask for fires the remainder of the afternoon and night. Missions 17th October: 28. Rounds expended 17th October: 2091.

On the morning of 18th October the battalion S-3 was again finding it difficult to fire on targets because of extremely long ranges. The Bn RO was sent forward to survey new position areas for the Bn. This was completed at 1100 and at 1330 the Bn RO took one gun from each Btry to forward positions for registration. The Asst S-3 and Com O were also in this party for the purpose of locating a CP and line routes. The guns were registered at 1430 and the bn began displacing by echelon at 1630. The Bn completed displacing and was in position north of Zijlberg ready to fire at 1930. Bn CO returned from CC B with orders for artillery preparation to be placed on Grindstveen[[4]](#footnote-4) 0730 to 0800 19th October, 23rd Armd Inf would then assault position north of town. The Bn operation sections began preparing concentrations for this firing. Miles traveled during displacement: 2.5. Missions 18th October: 19. Rounds expended 18th October: 838.

The Battalion fired harassing and interdiction fire in the vicinity of Grindstveen on 19th October until 0730 at which time the massed fires of the Bn and attached artillery were directed against Grindstveen for one hour as directed. After this preparation the Inf assaulted and took the town without opposition. The Battalion continued firing the rest of the day on enemy positions east of Grindstveen. Missions 19th October: 29. Rounds expended 19th October: 843. Missions and total rounds expended by the Bn and attached artillery in the campaign for the canal crossing 12-19 October: Missions 1142, rounds expended 20833.

On the morning 20 October orders were received that CC B would be relieved by CC R beginning at 0800. Mission of the Bn was to be in direct support of the 440th Armd FA Bn and be attached to CC R. The Bn fired to repulse a large scale enemy counterattack east of Grindstveen at 1215 and again fired effectively on troops concentrated in this area at 1500. At 2200 the attached artillery was relieved and returned to their organization. Officers of the Bn in charge of these groups returned to the Bn. Firing of interdiction and harassing fires on enemy positions east of Grindstveen was continued. Lt Moore, Bn motor officer, was evacuated because of impaired hearing due to mine explosion referred to previously. Lt Shafer, FO 3, was also evacuated due to battle exhaustion. Missions 20 October: 14. Rounds expended 20 October: 645.

The Bn CO recd instructions 21 October that the Bn would be in direct support of CC R in north sector. The Bn Ln 0 accordingly reported to CC R. During the morning and afternoon the Bn fired effectively on targets of opportunity as received from the observers. Lts McLemore and Davis former observers who had been evacuated due to wounds, returned to the Battalion and were made quite welcome inasmuch as they had made an excellent name for themselves and the battalion by their efficient work with supported elements. During the night interdiction and

-5-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

harassing fires were placed on enemy positions east of GRINDSTVEEN. Missions 21 October: 22. Rds expended 21 October: 503.

Interdiction and harassing fires were continued on the morning of 22 October 1944. RO's reported the situation unchanged with not much activity. The CO of C/17th Tank Bn reported to the CP 0830 to implace his tanks in an indirect fire position. These were placed in position and tied into the Bn FDC. A message was received at 1100 that the BR II Corps Comdr Lt Gen Connor would inspect the Bn area on the 23d October. Btrys accordingly shined up a bit so as to be ready for such a high ranking guest. In addition to the Tanks of Co C 17th Tank Bn, assault guns, 105mm, of the 17th Tank Bn were reported to the CP of the Bn and placed in indirect fire position. At 1420 all attached Arty was laid and ready to fire and missions were prepared by the Bn FDC for these guns. A large number of rds were fired at 2230 on a suspected enemy counterattack following an enemy rolling barrage of 105 caliber. However, only an enemy patrol moved in under this fire and withdrew after incountering our forward elements. Interdiction and harassing fires on enemy positions was resumed at 2330 and continued throughout the night.

On 23d October 1944 the Bn was still in position north of Zijlberg, Holland firing on targets of opportunity. Information was received from the RO's that the situation was mostly quiet. However, a great deal of enemy activity was reported by the RO's and air observers and a large amount of fire was placed by this Bn. The morale of the Bn was lifted considerbly by the showing of movies in the vicinity of the CP beginning that evening. Movies were shown on nights and mornings for personnel of Hq and Sv Btrys and in the afternoon and evening for personnel of firing Btrys. Enemy Btrys and targets of opportunity were fired on during the night by the Bn and the 774th FA. Missions 23d October: Bn; 41; AG/31, 12. Rds expended: Bn, 1033; AG/31, 72.

The Bn CO retd from a unit comdrs meeting on the 24th and assembled Btry Comdrs and Bn Staff to pass on to them the information he had received. After informing them that CC B would relieve CC R on 25 October and that the Bn would be prepared to displace on order, administrative notes were discussed concerning tops of vehicles, Div history book, and reassignment of officers. Reassignment of officers effected: Lt Shively to Btry A, and Lt Smith, P. F. to Btry C. Col Martin, the Div Arty Officer, stopped by and commended the battalion on its work in the current operations, instructing that such commendation be passed on to all EM. Information was sent to the Btrys concerning Div history book and considerable enthusiasm was in evidence throughout the Bn about these books. The Bn CO and Bn RO went forward at 1500 to select new positions areas. The survey of these positions was completed at 1750. The Bn had continued firing all during the day on targets of opportunity, but firing was decreased considerably from the preceding day by lack of enemy activity. Missions 24 October: 27. Rds expended. 24 October: 392.

Very little firing was done on the 25 October by the Bn thru lack of enemy activity except for a few targets of opportunity called for from observers. Morale in the Bn was high due to the fact that most of the men were rested and receiving hot meals. Movies were still being held at the CP and football games between batteries were scheduled and the first game was played in Deurne between Hq and A Btrys in the afternoon. Nights were sometimes spent rather anxiously due to the presence of a few enemy planes and one aircraft generally considered to be a flying bomb. Missions 25 October: 26. Rds expended: 220.

-6-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

On the 26th October the Bn fired a preparation for reconnaissance in force by 23rd Inf thru woods SE of GRINDSTVEEN. At 1100 all supporting Arty of 17th Tank Bn was reld by corresponding units from the 31st Tank Bn. The morning and afternoon passed rather quietly but urgent fire missions were received from B RO at 1815. Considerable enemy activity was being reported at this time and the Bn was prepared to move on short notice in case of attack by our forces or the enemy. Missions, Bn:, 26 October: 25; AG/31, 1; B/31, 1. Rds expended, Bn, 26 October: 404; AG/31, 7; B/31, 18.

A large amount of enemy activity was reported on the morning of the 27 October. RO's began calling for fire on enemy positions. Counterattacks were being reported and it appeared that the enemy was moving up a large number of troops for an attack. Information was received at 0900 that the enemy had retaken Meijel and that the Bn would be ready to move on call in that direction. Information continued to pour into the CP concerning enemy activity and an air patrol was placed along the canal on orders from the Div Arty Comdr. The Bn CO ordered the Bn RO and BC's to move south to vicinity of Liesel to select and survey new positions. The Bn was instructed to support relief of CC B by elements Br Inf and then displace to vicinity of Liesel. The Bn CO assembled the Bn Staff and BC's and made known to them the seriousness of the situation. The enemy had crossed the Deurne canal in force between HOOGEBURG and Meijel with tanks and had driven our forces from these towns and they were rapidly extending the bridgehead thus gained. CC B had been ordered to move to this area and counterattack the enemy bridgehead. Movement of Bn was discussed and plans were made for Arty support following arrival at new position. The Bn moved out at 2120 and arrived at new position at 2145 traveling 8 miles. Upon arrival at new position all personnel began preparation for a hard fight because it was becoming apparent that the Germans were attacking with a large number of tanks and Inf with objective of overrunning our position.

Preparations were continued on the morning of 28 October 44 for it was rapidly becoming apparent that this fight was to be one of the toughest yet experienced by the battalion and the division. The battalion commenced firing in support of an attack by CC B at 0605 and after the first mission no gun crew in the battalion or the FDC received any rest during the remainder of the day because of fire missions being called for by everyone from, CG CC B to the Btry RO. All ammunition in trains was brought up to the battalion area and gun crews poured round after round into the chambers of their guns. From intelligence reports and reports from FO's and RO's it became apparent in the middle of the day that our forward elements were having a tough time of it and the enemy was attacking on their positions but despite superior numbers the forward elements continued to repel these attacks assisted by fires of the battalion. Ferocity of the fighting did not lessen during the night and the battalion continued firing concentration after concentration on enemy targets including infantry mortars, tanks, and enemy batteries. Heavy enemy artillery fire was landing intermittently in and around the battalion area all during the day and night. An air attack was witnessed by the battalion at 1900. This was the first attack of this sort the battalion had seen since the bombing of Verdun in France and was considerably closer than anything ever experienced.

-7-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

But due to excellent black out discipline the battalion area proper received no bombs or strafing. Protective and interdiction fires were prepared by the FDC and sent to Btrys and the 774th FA. All personnel were informed to be especially alert during the night against infiltrating enemy patrols and tanks as the enemy was doing his utmost to penetrate our position. A tremendous amount of firing had been done during the day, the battalion firing 44 missions and expending 1523 rounds of ammunition. The battalion continued firing in the early morning of 29 October and the situation continued to be very serious for all units under the combat command. Fire missions continued to pour into the battalion FDC and the guns of the battalion were never cold during the night of 28 October and the morning of 29 October. All personnel were tired but were ready to continue firing at the enemy because everyone understood the seriousness of the situation. Considerable strength was taken from the enemy attacks on the morning of 29 October by attacking British planes. By 0900 it became apparent that the battalion would have to displace a short distance to the rear because of the nearness of enemy tanks to firing battery positions. All batteries had been firing with only charge one all morning. The battalion CO ordered the battalion to be displaced by echelon and battery and a portion of Hq Btry moved out to new positions 2 1/2 miles NE of ASTEN at 0930. The remainder of the battalion was displaced to this position during the day, but displacement was very difficult due to the fact that fire was being called for continuously. At least two batteries were kept firing at all times however and displacement of the battalion was completed at 1630. The fires of the battalion were being reinforced by British artillery and forward elements were being relieved by elements of British infantry and tanks. The fire was continued in the new position to support this action and interdiction fires was placed on enemy positions all during the night and into the morning of 30 October 44. The howitzer crews of the battalion had had another busy day firing 75 missions and expending 2005 rounds of ammunitions

Two more enemy air attacks were experienced by the battalion during the night of 29 October 44 with several bombs falling in Sv Btry area but again no bombs fell in the battalion area proper. All men remained alert and ready for anything that might develop, because it was made known to all personnel that the enemy force consisted of at least two divisions of tanks and panzer grenadiers. Lt. Jones, "A" Battery, RO was seriously wounded and Tec 4. Hyden was killed in the action of the early morning of 30th Oct. by some short friendly artillery concentrations. This fire however was determined as not having come from our battalion.

Orders were received 30 October 44 that the battalion would move from its present location to an area vicinity of Weert, Holland to support an attack together with other units Div Arty by CC A and CC R on the enemy's southern flank. The battalion moved out at l100 and arrived at new position north of Weert, Holland at 1350. Route: Asten, Heeze, Marheeze, position. Distance traveled: 26.3 miles, on good roads. Batteries were laid and ready to fire, Bn FDC was set up and all preparations were made for the battalion to begin firing on orders of the Div Arty Comdr. But immediately, following this the battalion CO ordered the battalion to prepare to move out to a new position because the battalion could not accomplish its mission in that area. The leading vehicle moved at 1600 and the battalion cleared into new position south of Weert, Holland at 1635. Route: Weert, position (E590945). Distance traveled: 4.6 miles. After arriving in new area preparations were again made for firing of the battalion in support of the contemplated attack.

-8-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Hq., 434th Armd FA Bn., Battle History, 1 Oct 44 - 31 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

Battalion was registered and harassing fires were placed on enemy positions during the night. Again considerable firing had been done by howitzer crews with 12 missions expending 1094 rounds of ammunition.

After the battalion had been laid and registered on the night of 30 October, firing of harassing and interdiction missions was commenced and continued into the morning of the 31 October. The battalion S-3 began preparation of a fire plan for demonstration by CC B and at an hour to be announced later. A large number of concentrations were plotted and placed on an observed fire chart and an overlay of these was sent to various units of CC B to he called for if and when needed. Most of the men in the battalion had received much needed rest in the present position of the battalion because although considerable firing was in progress the action had slowed down considerably from the two proceeding days. All men were given time to take care of themselves and their equipment. A movie was shown at the CP in the evening with a large number of men attending. It was not finished due to a fuse being blown in the projector. The battalion settled down for the night with one thought paramount in every one's mind, "How are the British doing at Liesel".

The battalion had traveled during the month of October 58 miles, and fired 878 missions, expending 21763 rounds of ammunition. This figure did not include missions fired and rounds expended through the battalion FDC by attached artillery and tank units. Casualties for the battalion during the month were fairly light; one man killed in action, one man seriously wounded in action, six slightly wounded in action, one slightly injured in action, three injured (NBC), and 10 sick (NBC). 32 replacements were received during the month and 9 former members of the battalion were returned to duty from various hospitals. Morale remained excellent despite adverse weather conditions, with most of the month being cold and rainy. Action by observers was also curtailed considerably by the weather also. At 2400 31 October the 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was in position 1 mile south of Weert, Holland firing at the enemy, ready and willing to continue until the fight was over.

-8-

S-E-C-R-E-T

 (BATTLE REPORT 1 thru 31 Oct 1944) Sv Btry 434th Armd FA Bn

Our unit stayed near the shrapnel-torn village of Vlierden 1 MI SW of Deurne 1 Oct and 2 Oct. During these evenings enemy planes reconnoitering dropped a series of bright flares over the far outlying areas of our positions. 3 Oct unit moved north up toward an allied peninsular strip of land to Ledeacker through Oploo and St.Anthonis. From 4 to 7 Oct we remained in Ledeacer where we watched rocket-firing Typhoons blasting at and strafing enemy installations in the vicinity of Overloon. 5 Oct we observed a huge armada of British Lancasters heavy bombers returning from missions over the Arnhem and Nijmegen areas. We witnessed one plane burst in flames from flak over enemy territory. The firing batteries quickened the tempo of their shelling and hurled thousands of rounds of ammo at the enemy from positions in the St. Anthonis area. In the early morning of 8 Oct the enemy stealthily crept up to the roadway traversing Milheeze and Deurne and planted a group of mines. This incident occurred shortly after units of our battalion marched over this route. Tec Sgt Frank Sislo and 1st Lt Gordon E. Moore were left behind the columns to retrieve a disabled vehicle. They were driving a peep and had just left Milheeze going south when their vehicle struck an exposed mine. The enemy had their guns zeroed in on that point of the road. Sgt. Sislo and Lt. Moore were not fired on. They extricated themselves with light injuries only. Lt. Moore went to Milheeze and solicted help from some British engineer units who came down to clear the mines off the path. Their job was an incomplete one. One undetected mine cost the lives of two of their men. 8 Oct unit shifted back down to 1 MI W of Deurne and paused in that locality until 28 Oct. Enemy activity east of Deurne and especially southeast near the Peel of Helena Canal between 8 and 28 Oct consisted solely of small harassing patrols, skirmishing probing thrusts and ineffective artillery fire. Opposition seemed disorganized in this sector. Their aggressiveness was lukewarm. Alien troops with weak affiliation for Wehrmacht were reported to be fighting against us. Surrender pamphlets were dumped over enemy positions by our artillery. Results from these tactics were negligible. 28 Oct unit shoved down to Asten. Firing batteries established positions east of Asten to engage enemy elements filtered across the canal and dug in near Liesel. Enemy resistance was fierce in this sector. The savageness of their assaults threw our units back 1000 yards. At dusk a Jerry plane strafed and sowed Asten with anti-personnel bombs inflicting a number of casualties. In the afternoon 29 Oct some enemy shells ricocheted and whined over our heads. A few of the armor piercing projectiles dropped in our area. No casualties. Pvt Peter A. Velotta removing the clip from his carbine accidentally discharged it boring a clean whole through his foot. 29 Oct our unit really caught hell. We were unharmed in the first enemy air raid. We got our baptism with the second and last air attack which came at 1040 hours in a clear, cold night. We reeled under this stinging aerial blow. A bright moonlight helped to illumne the targets for the attackers who probably sought to knock out gun emplacements north of Asten. Artillery was wedged in on all sides of us. Our CP was an annex of a

Page 2 (BATTLE REPORT 1 thru 31 Oct 1944) Sv Btry 434th Armd FA Bn

large, two-storied brick warehouse which received a direct bomb hit. The attack though lasting a couple of minutes was furious. The Nazi raiders used a Stuka dive-bomber and 4 ME 109's. One end of the building was completely demolished and turned to rubble. Pfc Freemont Meabon slept a twilight sleep. He miraculously escaped death. He slept under the nose of that bomb. He was showered with debris and spun around. That projectile was so close that it tickled his toes. The only thing Pfc Meabon suffered was a numbing cold standing around too long in his drawers before he could retrieve his senses. In the room adjoining Meabon's slept 6 other men. A dud pierced a neat hole through the roof, cut through the floor above and buried itself only a few feet from the heads of these men. St. Peter was with our boys that night. A large part of our area was raked with anti-personnel bombs. Our casualties were minor despite the intensity of the enemy assault. S/Sgt Joseph E. Evens had his back wrenched from the bomb-concussion. Tec 5 Elmer R. Shepard incurred a severe stomach wound from splintering fragments. 30 Oct unit left for new bivouac 1 MI S of Weert passing through Heeze, Leende, Maarheeze. 31 Oct unit rested in Weert area. Skies were overcast and a light rain fell.

 S/Sgt Nicholas W. Zasorin

 Unit Historian

*Summary of Personnel Data October 1944[[5]](#footnote-5)*

*Losses:*

 *Killed in action 1*

 *Slightly wounded in action 6*

 *Seriously wounded in action 1*

 *Slightly injured in action 1*

 *Injured (Non Battle Casualty) 3*

 *Sick (Non Battle Casualty) 10*

 *Total losses 22*

*Gains:*

 *Replacement recieved 32*

 *RTD (former men retd to duty) \_9*

 *41*

*Assigned strength 1 Oct 1944 495*

*Gains +41*

*Losses -22*

*Assigned strength 31 Oct 1944 514*

*T/O strength 521 (8 EM short, 1 officer over)*

 *Paul A. Smith*

 *1st Lt, 434 Armd F.A. Bn*

 *S-1*

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS

434TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

APO 257, U. S. ARMY

 2 December 1944

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of November 1944.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C. (Through Channels)

November first the Battalion was in general support of the 4th Armored Brigade (Br) from positions one mile south of WEERT, Holland (590945). Reconnaissance Officers Richards, Bundy, and Shively were attached to dismounted troops astride the WEERT - ROERMOND railroad and highway. Forward Observers Davis and Klein were attached to armored troops and Reconnaissance Officer Groco attached to dismounted troops dispersed along the canal south of WEERT.

At 0730 hours the Commanding Officer, 7th Armored Division Artillery, advised the Battalion Commander that the Battalion would be released from its mission when the 48th Armored Brigade (Br) was relieved by the 158th Welsh Brigade (Br). The Battalion to move to position northeast of WEERT. The Battalion Commander, Battalion Reconnaissance Officer and Battery Commanders left immediately for a reconnaissance of the assigned position area. Relief of the 4th Armored Brigade (Br) was effected 1900 hours and the Reconnaissance Officers and Forward Observers were recalled. The Battalion marched by moonlight on improved roads to positions north of WEERT (5895) without incident. Battalion closed in position 2230 hours. Distance four miles.

After a conference with the Commanding Officer, 7th Armored Division Artillery, the Battalion Commander oriented the battalion staff and battery commanders at the CP. Combat Command "A" was to attack south along the WILLEN CANAL, Combat Command "R" to support the attack from positions west of NEDERWEERT. 489th Field Artillery in direct support Combat Command "A". 440th Field Artillery direct support Combat Command "R". 434th and 774th in general support, reinforcing the fires of the 489th Field Artillery. Liaison Officer to the 489th Field Artillery. Two Reconnaissance Officers to act as Liaison Officers to the 48th and 38th Infantry. Lt Richards and Lt Morse were assigned that mission.

The morning of second November was foggy, but the Battalion was able to fire all missions by applying metro corrections to map data. The fog lifted in the afternoon and the Battalion was registered from the air by Tec 3 Vickers. The Battalion Motor Officer began a 6000 mile maintenance check of wheeled vehicles. One half-track and one peep to be sent to the maintenance section daily, beginning with vehicles in Headquarters Battery.

During the night of 2-3 November the Battalion assisted in a program of harassing the enemy by fire from single guns or a battery volley every fifteen minutes on likely traffic routes and installations.

- 1 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

The third of November the Battalion was used extensively when massed fires of the Division Artillery was placed on enemy strong points in the vicinity of HORIK, HOLLAND. This strong point was reduced, and the supported infantry passed through and continued to the objective, CANAL DU NORD, after which the troops turned to attack MEIJEL to the east. At this time the Division Artillery Commander directed the Battalion to displace to positions east of NUDERWEERT. The battalion Commander, Battalion Reconnaissance Officer, and Battery Commanders went forward on reconnaissance of the new position area.

The intensity of harassing and protective fires was increased the night of 3-4 November due to reported enemy activity on the right flank, south of the CANAL DU NORD. "A" Reconnaissance Officer, Lt Richards, was required by the supported units as an observer and was attached to A/48th Infantry. Lt Morse continued in the role of Liaison Officer with the 38th Infantry.

At 0930 hours 4 November the Battalion moved to selected positions east of NEDERWEERT vicinity of HORID, HOLLAND (631038). The route after crossing the Baily bridge at NEDERWEERT was over unimproved roads through the lowlands. Difficulty was experienced in getting all vehicles into position due to soft soil and the Battalion recovery vehicle was used extensively in pulling vehicles through the soft spots. Additional hazard was the uncleared mine fields. Staff Sergeant Durham, "A" Battery, was seriously injured when his peep struck a mine while on reconnaissance of perimeter defense positions. Battalion closed in positions 1030 hours and registered by the Battalion Reconnaissance Officer from the air 1300 hours. The Battalion resumed firing requests of Divisions Artillery, 489th Field Artillery, and the "A" RO, on enemy positions West of MEIJEL.

The Divisions SSO PX truck arrived in the Battalion area and was sent to each battery area where personnel purchased their allotments of sweets and tobacco. The battalion movie projector was set up in a barn in "B" Battery area and films were shown to small groups of men from A, B, and C Batteries during the afternoon and evenings.

A new experience for the Battalion occurred the night of 4-5 November, when the enemy photographed the area using photoflash bombs. Accordingly an alternate position for the Battalion was selected the following day and swept clear of mines.

Although the attack of the supported units had progressed satisfactorily, it became apparent by the fifth of November that the enemy's indiscriminate use of mines had slowed the attack to a snails pace. Consequently artillery fire was lifted to a bombardment of MEIJEL and all routes leading thereto to impede the movement of enemy supplies and reserves.

The night of 5-6 November harassing and protective fires were directed on enemy approaches from the south and east. "A" RO Lt Richards was relieved by Lt Shively, "A" Asst Ex. Weather became more disagreeable and torrents of rain fell upon an already sodden land making the roads almost impassible and movement of vehicles within the battery positions almost prohibitive. Service Battery was to be commended for their usual service to the Battalion in spite of muddy roads.

- 2 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

During the day of 6 November reconnaissance elements of British troops appeared in the area and word was received that the Division was to be relieved in this sector. This was confirmed 1900 hours when two billeting officers were directed to report to Division Headquarters. Lt. Smith and Lt. Kettenring were dispatched on this mission.

0900 hours 7 November instructions were received to displace to positions West of NEDERWEERT and support the relief of our troops. The Battalion Commander and Battery Commanders proceded to the new area on reconnaissance, while the Battery executives reconnoitered for suitable routes out of the positions. The Battalion was ordered to move across the bridge at NEDERWEERT by 1300 hours and began movement in order B - A - C - Hq - Medics - and Bn recovery vehicles at 1045 hours. Movement out of the position was eventful in that a British Spitfire pilot bailed out of his disabled plane in vicinity of "A" Battery's area. The Battalion closed in the new positions vicinity of BOEKET, HOLLAND (597012) and covered the relief of the supported units with continuous fire from single pieces or platoon volleys, during the night of 7-8 November.

The relief of the supported units completed, Reconnaissance Officer Morse and Shively returned to the Battalion the morning of 8 November. The Battalion was directed to move to an assembly position north of WEERT in preparation for a march to a Division Assembly area in the vicinity of MAASTRICHT. The Battalion moved out at 1230 hours and closed in the assembly position vicinity of HUSHOVEN, HOLLAND (578982). Weather continued cloudy and cold with scattered rain. During the campaign for MEIJEL 214 missions were fired expending 6178 rounds.

The ninth of November the Battalion prepared for the march to the Division Assembly position. Vehicles were marked with the convoy number, and serial CO's were briefed as to convoy regulations and the route. The Battalion Commander held a formation and awarded the Silver Star to Capt Irland and Pvt Douglas, and the Purple Heart to T/Sgt Sislo, S/Sgt Rosenkrans, and Sgt Collins; Pfc's Brinkley, Kovensky and Whitis; and Pvts Douglas, Pugh and Whillock. The Battalion moved out 1312 hours in order Hq - C - A - AB - Sv - Med - Maint. The Battalion closed in the Division Assembly area vicinity of GRONSVEL, HOLLAND (589479) at 1730 hours. Route: WEERT, KINROY, MAESEYCK, MAASTRICHT, HEER. Distance: 38 miles. Roads: Improved. Weather: Cloudy and cold. Snow fell for a few minutes during the first minutes of the march.

The 10th and 11th of November was spent in maintenance of personnel, vehicles and weapons. The Battalion movie projector was put into operation, passes were granted to one officer and 15% of the enlisted personnel to MAASTRICHT, and shower bath were available to the unit, personnel being transported in trucks from Service Battery to the shower point. The Battalion Motor Officer located his maintenance section in a barn and the program of 6000 mile maintenance check was continued. The Battalion S - 3 drew up a training plan for the Battalion based on requirements set by S - 3, Division Artillery.

Sunday 13 November marked another new experience for the Battalion, and particularly for Battery "B", when a flying bomb hit in the vicinity of the battery area. The resulting explosion was felt throughout the entire battalion. Fortunately there were no casualties and damage to "B" Battery's command post was confined to shattering of windows. Religious services for both those of Catholic and Protestant faith were held, and scheduled training and maintenance continued in effect.

- 3 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

A lecture on military government was held on 13 November, and attended by all Officers and the NCO's of the first three grades. Brigadier General Hasbrouck, the new commanding General of the 7th Armored Division, addressed the assembly as to conduct in Germany. In the afternoon the Battalion area was visited by the Red Cross clubmobile and doughnuts and coffee were served to members of the Battalion. Movies were held in the CP during the evening and a large representation from all Batteries attended.

During the 14th and 15th of November the Battalion continued its scheduled training and maintenance, however the pass policy was regulated by Division Artillery changing the time to read from 1200 to 2030. This change was effected to allow the men to eat the noon meal before departing to Maastricht, where food restrictions were stringent.

At 1330 of the 14th, Lt. Cahill, Battalion Motor Officer, attended a demonstration of the M-1 Treadway, in the vicinity of EYSDEN, HOLLAND, and upon returning, reported the results of the demonstration to the Battalion Commander. Later in the afternoon, at a ceremony held in the CP, the Battalion Commander presented the Bronze Star Medal to the following personnel of the Battalion: Lt. Fitzsimmons, Lt. Ellis, S/Sgt Phillips, Sgt. Brown, Sgt Levites, Tec 4 Frolich, Cpl. Olivieri, Tec 5 Lewis, Tec 5 Brace, Pfc Dailey and Pfc Rams. Certificates of Merit were presented to Sgt. Ealer, Tec4 Garber, Tec 4 Wagner, and Pvt. Motto.

On Wednesday the Battalion CP was visited by Col. Matthews, the new Chief of Staff of the Division. During the day the Battalion Commander presented Bronze Star Medals to Capt. Gaulke and Tec 5 Bagshaw, and was himself presented with the Bronze Star. At 2000 hours the Battalion Commander returned from Division Artillery Headquarters bearing information that the Battalion was to participate in the initial action of the XIII Corps in the GEILENKIRCHEN area. The Battalion Commander directed that the Battalion Reconnaissance Officer in the company of the Battery RO's set out and reconnoiter the Division Artillery Assembly area which was to be in the vicinity of NUTH, HOLLAND. The entertainment program continued with the showing of movies in the CP. However, it is to be noted that the popularity of the cinema increased, with both performances playing to capacity. This may be attributed to the fact that the show place was quite comfortable and the film current.

The 16th of November was notably marked by the visit of Major General Gillem, Commanding General of the XIII Corps. General Gillem in company with General Hasbrouck visited "B" Battery area, where conditions were found satisfactory. The Battalion Commander presented Cpl. Schultz with the Bronze Star Medal. Immediately following the presentation, the Battalion Commander issued orders for a Battery Commander's call. At the call, plans for the projected operation with Task Force Biddle (40th Tank Bn, 125th Cav Rcn Sq Mecz, 113 Cav Rcn Sq Mecs, A/814th TD, C/203rd AAA, 7th Armd Div Arty). Missions: Pass thru elements 84th ID and establish line LIWDERN - BEEK in order to protect a flank. At 1805 hours the Battalion was warned to prepare for march order at 1000 hours on the 17th.

At 1107 hours 17th November the Battalion marched out of Assembly position vicinity GRONSVELD, HOLLAND (589479) too new assembly area vicinity NUTH, HOLLAND (697592), marching in order HQ, A, B, C, Sv, Bn Maint and Medics. Battalion closed in new assembly area at 1330 hours. Route: HEER - VALKENBURG - HULSHUR - NUTH.

S E C R E T

- 4 -

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

Distance: 14 Miles. Roads: Improved. Weather: Cloudy, slight rain.

Prior to the departure of the Battalion, Capt Gaulke, "A" Battery Commander, was evacuated for treatment of a Thyro Glossol Cyst. A Civilian child in the company with Pfc Harville and Pvt Greco were likewise evacuated due to a fuel fire in the "A" Battery area.

The 18th of November the men adjusted themselves to the new experience of being billeted in private homes. This move was motivated by the inclement weather and hospitality of the citizens.

At a BC call the Battalion Commander called attention to a memorandum from the Commanding General, and indorsed by the Division Artillery Commander directing that special care be given to the feet of the personnel of the Battalion. The presence of Trench feet in the command necessitates such caution. The Battalion Commander stressed that frequent checks will be made by the Battery Commanders and the Medical Detachment.

A Division directive discussing military discipline was another subject brought up by the Battalion Commander. There have been too frequent infractions, and in the future they will not be tolerated. Remedial and corrective action will be taken.

During the day the Battalion Commander presented the Purple Heart to Tec 5 Federmack and the Bronze Star Medal to T/Sgt Malecki, Tec 4 Berman, Tec 4 Finkle, and Cpl Willard. At 2000 hours the Battalion Commander returned from a meeting Task Force Biddle with movement order Task Force Biddle.

Sunday 19 November was spent with religious services and maintenance. The Battalion Commander called a BC call in the morning and instructed the BC's as to the function of TF Biddle. Mission of the Battalion: Direct support of 125 Cav Rcn Sq. Btry RO's to observe for A, C, & F Tps. FO Lt Davis to 40th Tank Bn to coordinate fires of 40th Tank Bn on left of 125th Cav Sq. One platoon of A/203 AAA was attached to the Battalion for the contemplated march and one section was assigned to each firing battery.

At 1400 hours the Battalion Commander in company of Lt Shively, "A" Reconnaissance Officer, Lt Chapin, "B" Reconnaissance Officer, Lt Foss, "C" Reconnaissance Officer and Lt McKeon, Battalion Communications Officer departed for Headquarters 125th Cavalry Group for a conference on artillery support for the Cavalry Group. Upon his return the Battalion Commander called for the BC's and discussed with them the progress of the 2nd Armored Division. The Batteries were ordered to hold themselves in readiness for a march order TF Biddle. The Battery Commanders were also instructed to reconnoiter the route to the IP, TF Biddle.

Word was received that Lt. Alton had been presented an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal at Division Artillery and that Tec 3 Vickers had been approved for the Air Medal.

- 5 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

Due to the lack of a suitable site to show the movies, it was decided to allot the Projector to the batteries for individual showings, and in that way the Battalion personnel were entertained.

On Monday 20th of November, the Battalion was still in assembly area awaiting orders to march. Lt. Bundy, "C" Battery, was attached to "A" Battery for the duration of the operation. The Battalion Commander directed the Battalion Reconnaissance Officer to reconnoiter the Battalion area for possible assembly position for other units of the Division.

At 1630 hours the Battalion Commander returned from Division Artillery Headquarters and issued a call for all Battery Commanders to meet at the CP. At the meeting the Battalion Commander declared that due to the success of the attacks in this, and other army sectors there was an indication that Task Force Biddle would be dissolved. The Battalion Commander stated that the remainder of the Seventh Armored Division would assemble in this area and ready themselves to further the success of the Second Armored Division. A Division Memorandum dealing with the awarding of the Certificate of Merit was read by the Battalion Commander, and its import discussed. At the conclusion of the call, Lt. Richards "A" Battery, was presented with the Bronze Star Medal.

The Battalion S-3 was directed to draw up a training schedule which was to be effective the following day.

A training schedule of section training and news orientation was passed on to the Batteries by the Battalion S-3. The orientation lectures were prepared and delivered by the Battalion S-2, Captain Cheek.

During the day the CP was moved to a new location in the village, and it was there that Lt Kettenring, Lt Layton and Tec 3 Vickers were presented with the Air Medal, and Corporals Short, Peairs, and Meade with the Bronze Star Medal.

Showers were found available at the HOENSBROEK MINES, and arrangements were made to transport the personnel of the Battalion to the showers.

At 1130 hours on 22 November, Division Artillery warned all Reconnaissance parties to be available for movement on one hours notice, and once more the stir of impending movement was in the air. However, an hour later Division Artillery canceled its order.

The Battalion continued its training schedule as outlined by the Battalion S-3, and the news orientation lectures were received with enthusiasm.

Special orders from Ninth Army brought the news of the promotion to First Lieutenants of Lt Jones, now evacuated, Lt Chapin, B Battery, and Lt Ellis, C Battery.

S-E-C-R-E-T

- 6 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

Thanksgiving day services were prepared by Chaplains Barth and O'Brien, with Protestant Services to be held at each battery position, starting at 0830 in Headquarters Battery. Chaplain O'Brien arranged for a Thanksgiving Mass to be celebrated in the village church of NUTH at 0900.

Staff Sergeant Leighton, in a ceremony held at the CP was presented with the Air Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster by the Battalion Commander.

Thanksgiving Day 1944, found the Battalion in a new environment and strange surrounds. The menu remained the same and the traditional turkey plus all the trimmings were served to the Battalion personnel.

At 1500 hours the Battalion was removed from Division Artillery control and placed under the control of CC "B". Liaison with CC "B" was established, and the liaison officer later returned with the composition of forces of CC "B"; Hq CC B, 31st Tank Battalion, 23 Armd Inf Bn, B/38th Inf Bn, C/814 TD, B/33rd Eng Bn, C/33 Eng Bn, 434th Armd FA Bn, and 440th Armd FA Bn. The mission of CC "B" was to be prepared to extend the LINNICH Bridgehead when established by the 102d Inf Div. Information was received that the 40th Tank Bn and A/814 TD were attached to the 2d Armd Div and the 17th Bank Bn was attached to the 84th Inf Div.

Friday, 24 November brought good news to some of the Battalion personnel, when Div Arty informed the Battalion Commander that one officer and 15 enlisted men were to be granted 48 hour passes to PARIS. The Battalion Commander promptly ordered that this information be relayed to the batteries, in addition the Battalion Commander expressly stated that only the most deserving men would be granted passes.

The Battalion plus the 440th and 489th Field Artillery's, plus Batteries A and C of the 203 AAA, were informed that they were once more under Div Arty control, and Div Arty reverts to control of XIII Corps, subject to call.

At 1830 hours the Battalion Commander, was called to unit CO's meeting at Div Arty. On his return, the Battalion Commander had information for the Battalion march to vicinity PUFFENDORF, GERMANY, with the mission of general support XIII Corps Artillery. The Battalion Commander then directed that all Battery Commanders be at the CP at 0745, the following day prepared to go on a reconnaissance of the area.

On Saturday 25 November at 0745, the Bn CO in company with the Bn RO, the Btry commanders and the Bn Com O, set out for a reconnaissance of forward positions in the vicinity of PUFFENDORF, GERMANY. Vehicles were limited to one peep per Battery. Lt. Snyder joined the Battalion and was assigned to Battry A.

In the afternoon, Staff Sergeant Leighton was commissioned Second Lieutenant at a ceremony attended by Brigadier General HASBROUCK, Division Commander and Colonel Martin, Division Artillery Commander. General Hasbrouch presented the gold bars to Lt Leighton.

Sunday 26 November was spent in training and religious services. Lt. Ejar was presented with the Bronze Star Medal at the CP by the Bn CO.

- 7 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Nov 44 (Cont'd)

In the afternoon, at a Battery Commanders call held at the Battalion CP, the Battalion Commander discussed secrecy of movement among the civilian population, and stressed that effort would be made to maintain security. The Battalion personnel should be ready at all times for a quick march order.

In the evening a Special Service show was held in HOENSBROEK, and many members of the Battalion were in attendance. Movie for the Battalion was held in the Service Battery area.

Monday 27th November the Battalion Commander oriented the Battalion Staff and Battery Commanders. The 7th Armored Division Artillery to move to positions selected in the vicinity of BEGGENDORF, GERMANY to support the attack of the 84th Infantry Division and 40th Tank Battalion to secure high ground in the vicinity of LINNICH, GERMANY. The 17th Tank Battalion to support the attack from indirect fire positions under the supervision of the 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. 489th Armd FA Bn in direct support of the 40th Tank Bn. The 434th and 440th Field Artillery Battalions in general support. March details later. Lt Kettenring to forward position to survey battery positions. Lt McLemore, FO, to select and survey position area for the 17th Tank Battalion, Lt Layton, Pilot, to forward positions to locate an air strip. At 1300 hours the Battalion Commander and S-3 were called to CP, Division artillery for final orders and at 1830 hours the Battalion Commander issued his orders to the assembled staff and battery commanders. Battalion to move in order Hq, B, C, A, Med, Sv. Battalion to follow 489th Field Artillery at 25 min interval, head of column pulling out at 0744 hours, 28 November and crossing Div Arty IP at VOORENDAHL 0815 hours. Captain Workman, Liaison Officer, as Liaison to Division Artillery. Captain Cheek, S-2, as march liaison officer to 489th Field Artillery. Route markers to Division artillery IP to be posted by Battalion Executive at head of column.

Tuesday 28 November the Battalion moved out of assembly position NUTH, Holland, and marched to firing positions vicinity BEGGENDORF, GERMANY via NUTH - TENASSCHEN - VOORENHAAL - HEERLEN - WANBACH - RIMBURG - UBACH - GEILENKIRCHEN - BEFFENDORF. Distance: 22 miles. Roads: Improved. Weather: Clear and cold. Battalion arrived in position 0950 hours and registration was begun by Battalion Reconnaissance Officer from the air. Battalion Commander returned from a conference with Division Artillery Commander at 1430 hours and oriented the assembled staff and Battery Commanders. 84th Inf Div to attack 0630 hours 29th November to seize high ground vicinity LINNICH. 40th Tank Battalion to support the attack with direct fire beginning at daylight. Lt Foss, C RO, to Hq 102d Inf as 7th Armd Div Liaison. Mission to keep 7th Armd Div informed as to location of friendly elements. Lt's McLemore and Klein to conduct FDG 17th Tank Battalion. The fire plan of 7th Armd Div Arty was received 2230 hours and the tasks allocated to the batterys and 17th Tank Battalion by Battalion S-3.

Wednesday 29th November the Battalion Commander instructed Battery Commanders B and A to establish CP's at GERONSWEILER and APWEILER due to heavy enemy action. The attack of the 84th was postponed and the Battalion massed fires with the Div Arty on the enemy assembly for an attack.

Thursday 30 November the Battalion Liaison Officer delivered at 0530 hours the fire plan 84th Inf Div Arty for resumption of the planned attact at 0730 hours this attack succeded in the capture of LINDERN and WELZ by 84th and 102d

- 8 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

After Action Report, 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion Nov 44 (Cont'd)

Inf Divisions and the high ground vicinity of LINNICH by the 40th Tank Battalion.

Sgt Peter Van Ecchaute, Belgiam Military Mission, was assigned the Battalion by Ninth Army as an interpreter. During the day the Bronze Star Medal was awarded to Lt Kettenring, T/Sgt Guy, T/Sgt Rosenberg, and Tec 3 Vickers.

During the month the Battalion traveled 114 miles, fired 237 missions, and expended 6809 rounds of ammunition. Personnel data for the month: Strength (Officers and Enlisted Men) 514: Gains, replacements 17, R T D's 7, total gains 24; losses, slightly wounded in action 1, seriously wounded in action 1, injured in action 1, on battle casualties 12, total losses 15; strength 30 November 523.

 JAMES G. DUBUISSON,

 Lt. Col., 434th Armd F. A. Bn.,

 Commanding.

- 9 -

S E C R E T

 (BATTLE REPORT 1 thru 30 Nov 1944) Sv[[6]](#footnote-6) Btry 434th Armd FA Bn

1, 2 Nov unit encamped 1/2 MI N. Tungelroy, south of Weert. A light rain fell. Thick mists hung over the fields continually. The unit then moved north to 1-1/2 MI SE Maarheeze 3 Nov while the firing batteries shifted around to shell the enemy entrenched in Nederweert. Artillery and infantry assault drove the enemy out of Nederweert back across the canal. From 3 to 5 Nov our unit stayed in the Maarheeze area. Enemy V-1 weapons on the Holland Front were observed for the first time. When the firing batteries pushed across the Nederweert canal into mined postions left by th enemy we advanced to Laar, midway between Weert and Nederweert and remained here till 8 Nov. The Division withdrew from the Nederweert sector 9 Nov and traveled to an area southeast of Maastricht for rest. We bivouacked in the locality of St. Geertruid 10 to 16 Nov. The Flying Bomb traffic over this area grew in intensity. The whirring robots seemed to ride on schedule and in a lane directly over the heads of the troops. The missiles darted by with regularity. As long as the soupy weather lasted the pilotless planes were certain to be heard. The flights of these were checked and we noticed that almost every time they were beamed southeast, probably destined for the city of Liege. One morning (12 Nov) we happened to be watching the progress of a buzz bomb, suddenly its motor cut out, the nose dipped, plummeted down sharply and blasted a deep crater in a vacant beet field off to the edge of our bivouac. The terrific concussion shattered windows of homes more than 500 yards away. Casualties...1 dead crow. We enjoyed another interlude of rest 17 to Nov 27 at Hellebroek. The enemy gave us a little disturbance on 26 Nov at 2300 hours. 4 armed Nazi SS men on some sort of espionage mission interrupted our sleep with a little shooting. Dressed in American uniforms over their German togs with credentials pilfered probably from dead American soldiers, they sped wildly through Hollebroek in a jeep. They were detected in the vicinity of Hoensbroek, fired upon and fled. They dashed through Hellebroek, veered right and headed for Nuth. Their last ride. Alert Dutch Underground halted them. Quick investigation revealed their true identity. 28 Nov the unit moved to the Holland-German frontier town of Rimburg, close to the outer defenses of the already breached Siegfried Line. The Wurm River which cleaves both countries is fortified on the east by a series of bunkers plainly visible from our bivouac. Studded in among these bunkers is the Rimburg Castle now housing American troops formerly occupied by Baron Von Brauvitz. Our unit remained in Rimburg 28 to 30 Nov. Further east inside Germany, the firing batteries stand poised Beggendorf waiting to thrust forward with other elements of the newly formed US 9th Army. 5 Panzer divisions are massed along the West Wall facing our troops ready to challenge any threat to the highly important industrial Saar Region. The 15th Panzer Grenadiers, the 9th Panzer Division have already been identified. The Germans have mobilized a larger part of their armor in northwestern Germany because he knows he cannot afford to suffer any reverses in the vital Saar Region.

 S/Sgt N. Zasorin

 Unit Historian

1. This spelling is as in the original. The actual name was Galke (Gordon Moore, 26 Feb 2006 e-mail). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This sentence is as in the original. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is the town of IJsseltsteijn, also spelled Ysseltsteyn, east of Deurne, not to be confused with IJsselstein near Utrecht. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Griendtsveen [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This short page is entirely hand-written. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Most of the S and all of the v is obliterated by a hole intentionally punched in the paper. However, it can not be A nor C, since there is a flat bottom line clearly still visible. The fact that the flat bottom has a tail on the left, and the fact that Nicholas Zasorin appeared in the 7th Armored Division Association 2005 roster as member of Service Company confirm that the partially-visible letter was an S and not a B. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)