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KEY OFFICER PERSONNEL

Battalion Commander - Lt. Col. Norman A. Anderson 0305686  
Battalion Executive - Major Conrad Ahrens 0353824  
Battalion S-3 - Major John F Larrick 0389309  
Battalion S-2 - Capt Paul S Nevin  
Battery Commanders:  
Headquarters Battery - Capt Tom F Carey, Jr. 0372422  
"A" Battery - Capt Charles E Howard 0451611  
"B" Battery - Capt Orrell L Patrick 0384913  
"C" Battery - Capt Robert E O'Connell 0405300  
"SV" Battery - Capt Kenneth R Aycock 01169845

S E C R E T

HISTORICAL REPORT (REPORT AFTER ACTION)  
OF  
725th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
FOR  
1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945

The 725th Field Artillery Battalion, medium artillery unit of the 70th Infantry Division, moved into action on the 5th and 6th of February, 1945. Headquarters Battery, plus all of the light vehicles of the Battalion marched from the staging area by motor, while the howitzers and the 13 ton M5 tractors, with firing battery personnel, were transported by rail. The motor column arrived at the Battalion's designated area on the afternoon of 5 February. By the afternoon of 6 February when the firing batteries closed in the area, the Battalion CP had been established, communications installed, positions selected and survey completed. The Battalion was in position and prepared to fire unobserved fires the night of 6 and 7 February. The positions of batteries "A", "B" and "C" were located in the vicinity of Farschviller, Henrville and Seignbouse respectively, while Service Battery was installed in Puttelange. The Battalion CP was established in Henrville. (See overlay No. 1) The mission assigned to us was general support of the division. OP's were selected and occupied early in the morning of the 7th of February.

At 1140A, on 7 February, the first round to be fired into enemy territory by any unit of the 70th Infantry Division Artillery was on the way from the base piece of "B" Battery, 725th Field Artillery Battalion. The projectile, a base ejection smoke shell, was inscribed "Number 1 for Hitler", and Signal Corps photographers were on hand to record the event on film. "A" Battery, 725th Field Artillery Battalion, had the pleasure of being the first unit in Division Artillery to fire a round which actually landed in Germany. This took place at about 1500A the same day. Until 15 February, the organization of these positions continued and the Battalion supported the Division action with harrasing, neutralization, destruction and interdiction fires.

A Division attack order was received on 14 February, and Field Order No. 1, this Battalion, was subsequently issued. Our mission continued to be general support with the additional mission of reinforcing the 882d Field Artillery Battalion. To accomplish this, the Battalion displaced to positions in the vicinity of Diebling on 15 February. (See overlay No. 2) Observation was also moved forward. The attack, the first in which the 725th had played a part, was launched early in the morning of 17 February. Just prior to the jump-off, a 150 round preparation was fired by the howitzers of this Battalion. During that day a total of 324 rounds were unloaded on the Kraut positions. These supporting fires assisted the 274th Infantry to advance 2,000 meters and

capture the town of Oeting. It was shortly after this action that Lieutenant Colonel Arnbrecht, commanding officer of 882d Field Artillery Battalion, conveyed a message to Lieutenant Colonel Anderson of this. Organization commending the officers and men of the 725th on the outstanding support which had been rendered.

On 20 February, 1st Lt. Chester G. Wilkerson, Battalion Forward Observer, captured the first German soldier to be taken by any unit of the 70th Infantry Division Artillery. Wilkerson and his party had been pinned down by automatic weapons fire for most of the afternoon, but finally got a chance to pull back a short distance where the atmosphere was more conducive to a longer, healthier life. He then called for artillery in the area he had vacated. When the fire was lifted, several "square heads" indicated they'd like to learn how to say "uncle" in English, so Wilkerson takes charge and gets himself a prisoner. The next day he collects a highly prized cigarette lighter that Lt Col Anderson, the Commanding Officer, had promised to the first man to bring in a belligerent German.

The Battalion, continuing its mission, remained in the Diebling area until 23 February when Infantry gains afforded a displacement forward to positions in the Vicinity of Buschbach. (See overlay No. 3) Service Battery, the same day, moved from Puttelange to Diebling. Observation was again pushed forward. These positions were still occupied at the end of the period.

#### MUD

Although considerable of our training in the States was spent in wet climates, we had experienced nothing like the mud we have encountered here. "A" Battery in it's initial position was assigned a normal and a contingent zone. Because of the extremely muddy condition, it was necessary to keep a tractor in the position area at all times to winch the pieces into place. The men have readily adapted themselves to working in the mire, however, and it is no longer the obstacle it was at first. The M-5 tractors have proved to be invaluable.

#### AWARDS

Award of the Purple Heart has been made to 2d Lt Saul A. Jackson and to Tec 5 Ned K. Alderdice, both of "B" Battery, for wounds received in action while acting as forward observers. They were both wounded at the same time on 22 February, Lt Jackson receiving shell fragments in the left arm, and Tec 5 Alderdice receiving shell fragments in the buttocks. Lt Jackson was hospitalized while Alderdice was treated at the aid station and returned to duty.

#### PROMOTIONS

Norman A. Anderson, Battalion Commander, promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, 16 February.