

# **Introduction**

**by Melissa L. Sprouse**

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This book was compiled with love and the utmost respect for my father, Paul Sprouse. Having regaled his family for years with abbreviated stories of his time in the war, we have heard about the different countries that he visited, the time that he had the tires of his Jeep shot out along the Rhine River in Germany, and the munitions train that his unit overcame and burned - netting him the prize of the Nazi flag that was flying on the transport. He also secured several other souvenirs, among them the bayonette from a German officer with a dress green tassel still attached that, according to a recent appraisal, is very rare indeed.

What was not known to us, even after the passage of sixty years, was the extent of his service. The courage displayed by his unit, the 755th Field Artillery Battalion, is immeasurable. In many situations, his unit was not only near the front lines, they were the front lines. They were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their "extraordinary heroism in action against the Germans for the period 18-27 December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge." This book is their story.

My father, Paul Sprouse, was born October 16, 1914 in Whitestone, South Carolina. One of nine children, Paul was inducted into the service of the United States Army on August 15, 1941 at the age of 26. He served until his discharge at Fort Bragg, North Carolina on October 28, 1945. He was 31.

His military occupational specialty was Scout, and he was qualified on the MM 30 Caliber Carbine M1. He began as a private and held the rank of corporal at the time of his discharge. He was a participant in the following battles and campaigns: Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes; and Central Europe.

One of the most amazing things that I discovered while researching this material was that Paul earned several decorations and citations for meritorious service. After finding a listing of these awards on the back of his discharge certificate, a conversation with my mother revealed that he has never possessed any of the medals. The theory is that he mailed them back to his parents while he was still overseas and they were subsequently lost in a house fire sometime during the 1940s.

I contacted the Army and was able to have all of his medals reissued. The honors included: Good Conduct Medal; American Defense Service Medal with Foreign Service Clasp; American Campaign Medal; European - African - Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with five bronze service stars (one silver service star); World War II Victory Medal; and the Presidential Unit Citation for the 755th Field Artillery Battalion.

A large portion of this research was obtained from the Pentagon's Departmental Records Branch, Historical Records Section. Unfortunately, a fire at the Records Branch in the early 1960s claimed many of the unit and personnel records from World War II. The material presented in this compilation is all that remains of the official, once secret records of the 755th.

Terms and slang used during the war can be confusing and fascinating. References in the text to "Jerry" or "Jerries" refers to the Germans. "Doughboys" of course refers to Americans. "FA" is the abbreviation for Field Artillery, with Bn the abbreviation for Battalion. Many units are referred to only by their codenames. The 755th has been known as Highprice and Cheek Bone Item. Other units' codenames include Mystery, Kansas and Lustful.

The conditions of this war were terrible at best. I never fully understood until now what a sacrifice was paid to insure our freedom. I am thankful for all of the men and women who served the Allied Forces during World War II, and I am especially grateful and proud to be an American. Thanks, Daddy.



# Unit History

## 755th Field Artillery Battalion

Monday, 18 Dec 44

War had proved to be a gentlemen's affair since Highprice's entry (the code name for the 755th Field Artillery Battalion is currently "Highprice") into combat at the end of October.

At 1033, the battalion commander, Lt. Col. William F. Hartmann, received alert instructions from the 228th Field Artillery Group, to which the battalion was attached: "Get ready to move." By 1045, the battalion was well into its preparations and ready to move at 1130. Dinner was served while orders were awaited. At 1415, the battalion commander was called to group headquarters. Returning, the battery commanders accompanied the commanding officer to the rear to "Armor" for instructions. There had been a breakthrough in the Allied lines to the south! The 755th Field Artillery Battalion was to assist in counter measures. Destination as revealed was Bastogne, a hitherto unnoticed Belgian town close to the Luxembourg, German and Belgian corner.

Promptly at 1730, the battalion commander with Lt. Rosenberg, route marking officer, and his detail having already left, the battalion rolled. It was just dark, with the last reflected light of sunset fast disappearing. It was to be a cold night. Leaving Schleiden, Germany, the route carried the battalion through the ruins of Aachen and Liege – with destination Bastogne. With tractors in the column, the rate of march was slow. Liege was aglow as the battalion crept through, as an oil dump burned, while robot bombs sputtered – and sometimes stopped sputtering – overhead.

Leaving Liege, the overcast grew worse, as what little starlight had helped dimmed out. Snow began to appear along the roadside and the ground mist grew heavier. At one halt, some dim figures trudged past – members of the 82nd Airborne Division. It was an eerie night. Creeping past, the battalion met another motor column

headed the other way. The road was narrow and the column long, for it seemed an interminable time before the convoy passed. All traffic seemed headed north – yet the battalion still bored through to the south.

Tuesday, 19 Dec 44

At Houffalize, the battalion column caught up to its route markers. Investigation by the battalion commander revealed that Jerry was very close, so close in fact that the road to Bastogne was already in their possession.

In view of this, the column moved out towards the southwest, via Bertogne. Just out of Houffalize, as the false dawn gave slight visibility, the column stopped to pick up approximately 40 officers and men from units which had been cut off by the Germans, and who had escaped by going cross country. They reiterated the proximity of the Hun and climbed willingly aboard, scattering themselves one or two per vehicle with the net result that the battalion's personnel realized that this wasn't to be the same type of war that had heretofore been known. Carbines peeked over the sides of the overloaded vehicles and the column moved on. Soon a message came to the head of the column from the rear by radio – the battalion was not to enter Bastogne without specific permission of the Corps commander! In compliance with this, the column moved southeast to within six miles of Libramont, where it pulled to the side of the road for a short rest and breakfast. Here, at 1400, the battalion commander left for XIII Corps for instructions leaving Maj. Bliss, S-3, in command. The battalion had been on its toes for over 24 hours now, but the prospect before it kept everyone awake.

After three quarters of an hour, Pfc. Overstreet rushed to the head of the column. He had been a route marker in Houffalize and had been chased out by German machine gun fire. The military police had brought him forward, by another route, picking up Tec 5 Vause, another route marker, on the way. His information was that the battalion was the last column through on the road; that the tail of the column, with Maj. Edgerton, Executive, Lt. Fisk, battalion motor officer, and the maintenance section were still the other side of Houffalize, and that Jerry was coming through fast. Upon this information, Maj. Bliss moved the column into the outskirts of

Libramont, rendezvousing along the side of the road.

Activity seemed to increase, as vehicles and personnel from the 28th Infantry Division, which had been holding the sector, passed by to the rear to reorganize. Rumors flew thick and fast, but it finally appeared that the breakthrough was far more serious than the battalion had guessed; that Jerry didn't hold any ground as such, but was spearheading down different roads, and that the situation in regard to Allied troops was disorganized.

Shortly after noon, the battalion commander returned to the column and, having told Maj. Bliss that the situation was in a state of flux, left for reconnaissance of Bastogne with his party, which included the battery commanders. Evidently a plan had been made by Corps, and the battalion was committed.

At 1600, the battalion column followed, stopping along the road, near Flamierge, until complete darkness fell. Service Battery had already been assigned an area along the route, and had dropped out of the column before this stop.

At 1800, the battalion arrived in Bastogne and immediately occupied position with Headquarters in Bastogne and the firing batteries on the outskirts, along the road to Neufchateau. The battalion was ready for action. Strong local security was set out. Maj. Edgerton arrived at the CP proving that the tail of the column had gotten through, yet all the vehicles hadn't caught up, for the Headquarters Battery wire truck, with route markers, still had not arrived.

Wednesday, 20 Dec 44

The night itself was quiet, and the situation didn't look so bad in the light of dawn. The battalion was assigned as close support to the 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion, a 105mm unit which was the heavy battalion of the 101st Airborne Division. They were glad to have the support and Lt. Rosenberg, Liaison Officer, with his party, Tec 5 Sanders and Pvt. Garcia, reported to headquarters.

It was a foggy morning, with a heavy ground mist, which cleared intermittently as morning wore on. Jerry was in the neighborhood, for his shells began to come in – both near the batteries and the headquarters. Rounds came closer and closer, and once more the battalion awoke to the fact that this time the war was more active and that Jerry really meant it. Word was received by the CP shortly

after noon that the road to Service Battery, over which the battalion had entered Bastogne, was blocked. Yet the road via Neufchateau was open, so there was no need to worry.

Shells continued to land in close proximity to the battalion's installations. In the late afternoon, #4 piece of Battery A had a near hit. Four men were injured, the extent unknown, but at least two were serious. They were evacuated to the rear.

Meantime, the Headquarters Battery wire truck had come in. Picking up the route markers the night before hadn't turned out well, and the truck, under Cpl. Blaskewicz, had parked by the roadside until morning, for the route was unknown. At dawn, the sounds of firing had grown heavier. Advance was cut off and they turned towards Service Battery, only to find that the bridge in between had been blown. After reconnaissance, the truck was winched cross country, until finally Service Battery was reached. From there, the journey to the battalion at 1400 was easy.

The battalion commander, meanwhile, had been on recon for new positions, and as dusk fell, the battalion infiltrated to these positions in the village of Villeroux. The move was made successfully and the night interdiction missions were set up. Again, strong local security was established, augmented by an armored half-track which had joined the battalion. Perhaps this might still turn into a stabilized situation.

Thursday, 21 Dec 44

In this history of the battalion this day, there will be ever new and varied accounts. Most of them will be true, for it was a hard day. The account as written below is as the situation was observed by Capt. Ferris, Assistant S-3.

“It was an ordinary night, with several interdiction missions being fired prior to dawn. Missions were still being assigned by the supported unit, Kilogram, and in addition, a lateral wire to Monster – another confirmed 155mm Howitzer battalion – giving additional security. Strong local security was established, and before dawn some flares were reported. There were no observers out as such, although listening posts were established.

“Ammunition was running low as dawn approached and Maj. Edgerton left for Service Battery, with Pfc. Grubb as driver, to bring up the ammunition train.

“More flares were seen and a steadily increasing sound of small arms fire was heard as breakfast was eaten. The direction seemed to be from north to southwest, along the eastern perimeter.

“After breakfast, Maj. Bliss took over the Fire Direction Center, and I went past the Headquarters Battery defenses to Point #1. Tanks and tank destroyers were firing to the east from the vicinity of their CP. Visibility was about 2000 yards, but very misty. Machine gun fire could be heard from near the Bastogne road to the southeast. Occasional burp guns added their chatter. Still no enemy was visible. As this sector was well covered by Headquarters machine guns and personnel, I went to Position #2. There also the flank was well covered, Capt. Herrick of Battery C in charge. Proceeding to Battery A, I found approximately 20 men of the firing battery were scattered to the battery’s right flank, observing to the south. Watching, individual enemy soldiers could be seen moving east along the crest over the railroad cut. From Position #3, visibility was poor, and the range estimated at 400 yards. Occasional single rounds zipped overhead, but the battery held its fire. Altogether, about 15 enemy were seen, the largest group being four men who were well separated.

“Meantime, the noise of firing to the east increased, varying from the thud of tank fire to the staccato of small arms and chirping of machine guns. Burp guns were also evident.

“Two tanks moved south towards the Neufchateau – Bastogne road about 1030, and Battery A breathed a sigh of relief, but too soon, for a single round hit Cpl. Gibson, who was acting as assistant machine gunner, in the neck. He was promptly evacuated to the battalion aid station by the attached medic, Pfc. Russo. No more enemy were seen and shortly thereafter I left Battery A to complete the perimeter of the town along its eastern N-S road and back to the command post. As I left Battery A 200 yards behind, I saw mortar fire start to drop in.

“The eastern front had been active. Tanks, with a polyglot foree of doughboys, redlegs and tankers, had advanced to the railroad cut to the east. Among the battalion’s personnel participating were Tec 4 Brady of Headquarters and Cpl. Eddy of Battery B. It had been an active affair, with few casualties on our side, but many on the Jerry side. The first prisoners were prodded in.

“Meeting the battalion commander, I was instructed to keep rotating and observe and report the situation. At the same time, I

learned that an attack was imminent from the town of Sibret to the west.

“Checking on the defenses in this direction, I found Capt. Herrick still active in the situation. And then the mortars came. . . . . There was no damage, but their fire was voluminous and close. After 20 minutes, the firing died down to occasional rounds, for visibility had increased.

“At this time, the battalion’s first prisoner was brought to the CP. A young paratrooper soldier who had been wounded, he had been taken by a Battery B patrol. Meantime, the battalion commander destroyed the secret and confidential material in the battalion headquarters.

“Completing one more circuit before the noon meal, I found that generally the perimeter was quiet and apparently secure. The assignment of defense was similar to before. The noon meal at Headquarters Battery was a rapid affair, for the situation seemed to be getting really serious.

“Suddenly, enemy artillery found the town. With the rounds landing along the streets in the center of town, the battalion, being on both sides, was spared. Mortar fire started up once more, however, and snipers worked over the town. The tempo of the war increased. The town was definitely hot! A few small fires were started in the center of town, while every direction resounded with small arms fire. Visibility closed down, with the attack, so that it was possible to see only 250-300 yards.

“Stopping by the battalion aid station, I discovered that the majority of the casualties were from Battery A. Reporting to the battalion commander, I was instructed to have Battery A march order their material, but have the personnel remain in place. Arriving in A’s position, I found that the whole area was covered with small arms fire. The attack seemed to be from the south, directly at the battery.

“The infantry in the battery sector had been partially withdrawn and the tanks were busy to the southeast.

“The battery was alerted for movement and pieces were coupled up individually. Luckily, one piece, which had arrived at the position in the later morning, had not been placed in action. At the same time this was going on, two tanks saved the battery by proceeding southeast from the vicinity of the haystack – Battery A’s executive post. Lt. Kandell, the battery executive, had been

wounded by small arms fire and was attended by Pfc. Russo, the medical aid man, who also received a round through the shoulder. Sgt. Byers ably made a stretcher from a blanket and two camouflage poles and, under fire, and with the help of other Battery A cannoneers, removed Lt. Kandell to a ½ ton vehicle on which he was evacuated.

“Leaving Battery A under Capt. Stanley’s able direction, I accompanied Lt. Kandell’s ½ ton to the aid station, only to find that it, together with Headquarters, B and C batteries, had already left. Following the one road open, towards Sennenchamps, I found Monster in the process of march order, and behind them Headquarters Battery and Battery C’s personnel in two waves, approximately 200 yards apart, withdrawing on foot towards Sennenchamps, with Maj. Bliss in charge. Joining the withdrawal, I accompanied the march to Sennenchamps where the new position was established, having passed a self-propelled 105mm howitzer unit, Choo-Choo, covering the battalion’s withdrawal.

“At Sennenchamps, Battery C was established firing southeast while other batteries occupied position. Soon, only B was laid to the east, A and C being placed again in the direction of our close support mission.

“Security guards were resituated as the battalion settled down for the night, to lick its wounds, and start afresh. One howitzer had received a round of mortar fire and had been abandoned. Camouflage nets, bedding rolls and various small equipment had also been abandoned.

“Morale was excellent, however, and the battalion was now battle tested – with a very small loss, comparatively speaking. Field Artillery could and DID fight as doughs.”

Friday, 22 Dec 44

There were many reports on enemy activity, but the pre-dawn darkness was quiet. Machine guns, burp guns and varied small arms could be heard, yet there was no damage. It had become clear by this time that the battalion, together with the 101st Airborne Division and other attached troops, had been cut off and that it was now surrounded. This meant that the ammunition on hand would have to suffice; that no more rations, including gasoline, which was badly needed, would be immediately available and that the

situation had become definitely serious. On the credit side, however, the battalion had few losses, comparatively speaking, the morale was excellent and they all knew what to expect.

Dawn broke to find it snowing, with half an inch already covering the ground. Breakfast was composed of coffee and two hot cakes as a new ration regime was instituted – still three meals a day, but the noon meal was coffee (later on to be tea) and the evening meal was a “C” ration. It was sufficient.

Although a registration had been fired Thursday afternoon by Battery A upon occupying its new position, fire direction was quiet. Throughout the entire day, there was a constant threat of attack from the west, yet none materialized, despite sporadic firing and sorties by tanks and tank destroyers.

In the afternoon, CP personnel gagged for air. Its cellar, under a larger than average occupied Belgian house and barn, contained a sewer sump. It overflowed. Aromatic odors pervaded the semi-darkness as personnel stepped from turnip to sugar beet to keep reasonably pure.

Darkness fell, bringing with it a close shelling of the area, followed by mortars and once more small arms fire. One Headquarters Battery outpost, manned, among others, by Cpls. Blake, Varipapa, Heiden and Campa, with Tec 5 Dowling and Pvt. Viola, was kept pinned in their holes all night, luckily with no injury, although members of other units who were also with them were hit.

Saturday, 23 Dec 44

Despite threats, the enemy had not attacked at dawn, but firing was still close to the battalion. Visibility had increased and today the group looked for friendly planes – and saw them!! They were the finest sight in the world!

Following a noon reconnaissance by the battalion commander, the battalion displaced by infiltration to the vicinity of Isle la Hesse, a “Y” road junction. Sennenchamps had been getting warm and the Division perimeter was narrowing.

At Isle la Hesse, the battalion’s position was similar. The nearest enemy was to the west, yet the zone of fire was nearly 3200 miles opposite. There was a threat from the north, yet the battalion had been driven from the south. C-47s dropped supplies, two crashing

in the process, both on fire. In the distance, P-47s dive-bombed to the north. One P-47 was seen to crash within view.

Outposts were established and strong security set out. It was to be another “quiet” night – flares, machine guns and small arms were continually seen and heard.

Sunday, 24 Dec 44

The day before Christmas and all through the house, echoes resounded as personnel reoriented themselves. It was another Air Corps day, with good visibility. Enemy firing died down noticeably, although the area was definitely close to the front lines, if not THE front line itself. The rear was the front and the front the rear, with both flanks possible fronts.

Word reached the battalion that Sennenchamps was occupied by the Germans. Again, the battalion had gotten clear.

Again, C-47s came over, and with the gliders, which were seen to land in the distance, one crashing. Fire direction remained quiet, so much so that a Christmas tree was decorated as befitted the day.

Santa’s costume, as worn by Staff Sgt. McGuire and Tec 5 Dowling, included loaded carbines.

Darkness fell, and with it an increasing volume of small arms fire. S-2 reports poured in from the outposts, from flares to burp guns. The principal direction seemed to be northwest, but the range was uncertain, if close.

Monday, 25 Dec 44

Christmas. Pre-dawn activity was marked. The battalion area was bombed, shelled and subjected to mortar fire. Heavy mortars could be heard in “Tank” woods. Small arms fire persisted.

At 0300 the noise increased, to be followed by a report of tanks approaching from the NW. Owing to the darkness, it was impossible to determine whether they were friendly or enemy, for the battalion didn’t know who was beyond them, other than the fact that there was supposed to be an outer screen of protecting troops.

False dawn brought pleas from Battery C to fire at enemy tanks, yet the battalion commander had the fire held until positive identification could be made. At least two tanks were located at “X.”

Finally, positive identification was made, the tank’s muzzle

brakes could be seen. The order was given to open fire. As fire was opened with .50 caliber machine guns, the tanks advanced, firing as they came. Division was advised.

Through Battery C's position, up the hill toward A and across the Bastogne road they went, firing all the while. The 155mm howitzers could not be brought to bear, however bazookas and machine guns added to the uproar. German infantry followed slowly in the wake, but not successfully.

Reaching the wood to the east of Battery B, the tide turned and the tanks started to withdraw. By this time one tank had been identified as a tracked personnel carrier. Friendly tank destroyers came from the east, one in particular maneuvering into position by Headquarters Battery CP. As the enemy tanks retired to the "Tank" woods, this TD opened fire. With eight rounds, it hit and knocked out two tanks and one personnel carrier. Reputedly two more tanks were knocked out by friendly aircraft on the northerly side of "Tank" woods.

Sniping became worse as Capt. Herrick of Battery C organized a patrol, consisting of everyone nearby. This patrol captured a total of 41 prisoners, four seriously wounded.

This patrol was a heterogenous affair, as several groups of men from the battalion had previously chased the Germans toward the wood and had already taken prisoners before the patrol arrived. This day, like Villeroux, will also have many true tales related about it. As they become known, they will be added to the battalion's record.

The prisoners were searched, yielding many letters and documents which were forwarded to G-2.

Numerous small arms were taken and many hand grenades from prisoners who had given up the fight, yet there were still many weapons unaccounted for. Some of these weapons were recovered from a stream, in which the Jerries had hidden them, tied with shoelaces to twigs on the bank, before surrendering.

About two hours after this attack, while the last of the prisoners were being disposed of, enemy shells of 150mm caliber started in once more. Once again the battalion's luck held.

Sniping increased throughout the entire area. Although it didn't pin the battalion to the ground, the trips to meals and throughout the area were made in low crouching runs. It was definitely harassing.

Word of an approaching relief column from the south was rapidly passed throughout the battalion as a Christmas greeting from Division told of a German ultimatum to surrender several days previous when the complete encirclement had first been made. The commanding general's reply had been, "Nuts!"

The remainder of the day was quiet, but small arms fire persisted. Darkness fell and the security posts were reinforced again. It had been a different kind of Christmas than the battalion had experienced in the past.

Tuesday, 26 Dec 44

Early morning hours brought multitudinous S-2 reports, as the battalion awaited another dawn attack. Although mortar fire and some artillery fire were prevalent and although sniping continued, there was no attack on the actual positions. An anti-tank outpost at Monty had been surrounded and taken. One survivor arrived in the battalion CP at 0630, giving the news. Friendly troops halted the advance of the white-caped Jerries approximately 300 yards west of the Headquarters Battery CP.

Visibility was good, and sniping persisted. Before morning's end, following a visit by Lt. Col. Nelson of Kilogram, the battalion commander determined to interchange the battalion CP and Battery A CP, which was done by infiltration during the course of the day, despite occasional strafing of the road.

Gliders were overhead again, this time in real force. It was a thrilling sight to the beleaguered garrison.

At this time, the battalion guns were sighted in all directions, covering possible approaches, but with six pieces covering the normal zone. Battery A had 3 guns, B had 3 available and one without spades, which had been left behind at Villeroux, and C had all 4 – or 11 guns in the battalion, with 10 available for firing. Aside of the moving of the CP, the battery positions were not changed.

At 2030, a no fire line was received, placed though the battalion position. This could only mean one thing – friendly troops were very close. It was in good humor that the battalion bedded down.

Wednesday, 27 Dec 44

The encirclement had been broken! For as dawn approached, three trucks of the Service Battery ammunition train arrived. Lt. Williams, train commander, had been in a fourth truck, but didn't arrive. Service Battery was safe, although seven men were missing, having been removed from a truck for use as a bazooka team by an unknown colonel. Lt. Hanner was safe, his plane having been hit over Villeroux, forcing Lt. Simpson, the observer, to jump over Neufchateau. The plane was destroyed upon landing. Lt. Gunn and Lt. Bell in the other plane were safe and on the way.

More gliders came in, some containing 155mm howitzer ammunition. One C47 was seen to crash, four 'chutes opening in the nick of time. One P47, overhead to cover the gliders as they came in, crashed just across the road from the battalion CP. The pilot bailed out just before the plane burst into flames, about 200 yards off the ground, but his parachute failed to open.

Sniping, mortar fire and occasional nearby shelling continued as the day wore on. Several missions were fired, but the battalion wasn't nearly performing its primary mission yet.

Word was received before midnight that Maj. Edgerton had arrived in Bastogne and would return in the morning. Night came on and the security posts were again strengthened as the battalion settled down for another night.

Thursday, 28 Dec 44

A foggy day dawned following a quiet night. Small arms fire persisted in the direction of Sennenchamps, but the news was good.

Early in the morning Maj. Edgerton arrived, confirming previous reports and assuming the ammunitions responsibility. The battalion was now "well healed" and ready to go. The situation was getting better all the time.

In the afternoon the battalion's mission was changed, for now the battalion was to be general support with the special mission of reinforcing the fires of Kansas, 321st Glider FA Bn.

As the situation gradually returned to normal, enemy snipers continued their work, but without satisfactory results. It wasn't pleasant to be pestered by them, though.

This new assignment necessitated reforming the battery fronts which was done as a foggy dusk settled with visibility at approxi-

mately 15 yards. The direction of fire was now 800m.

Friday, 29 Dec 44

It was another comparatively quiet night, although reports streamed in as had become the custom. The OPs and outposts were functioning at full capacity.

Firing started as morning wore on, both Kingfish and Kansas calling for concentrations. Observed missions proved effective, and also unobserved missions were reported as effective.

Notice was received that first class mail service was again functioning. The corridor was established!

Sniping continued with occasional mortar fire. Visibility was good and sounds of small arms fire towards Sennenchamps persisted. As darkness fell, enemy shells landed nearby. Battery C received a hit on the #3 piece, putting it out of commission. This brought the battalion down to nine usable guns, and one without trail spades in Battery B.

Harassing missions were received for the night. News of the corridor was constantly improving. The battalion settled down.

Saturday, 30 Dec 44

During the early morning harassing missions, the #2 piece of Battery C refused to return to battery and one piece of Battery B developed a bad recoil leak, due to previous shell fragments.

It was a quiet morning, but the noise of bombing in Bastogne sounded close. Sniping continued and the small arms fire towards Sennenchamps continued unabated.

Lt. Gunn, Simpson and Bell reported to the battalion commander at 1300, to be followed by Capt. Turner, S-2, who had been declared "dead" at the hospital where he recovered from pneumonia. The reunion was another definite step up in the situation.

A report that Lt. Williams was safe, although wounded and in the hospital, was also good news. The circumstances were unknown at this time.

The evening meal marked the first departure from the ration standard established in Sennonchamps as hamburgers were served, two packs of cigarettes and two candy bars per man were distributed. This was good news.

It was a quiet day, with little firing, although harassing missions were assigned for the night.

Sniping continued, but only sporadically. Mortars and occasional shells persisted in landing near the battery installations, slightly injuring 1st Sgt. Galvin and T/Sgt. O'Donnell of Headquarters Battery.

Batteries were warned of an impending tank attack from Sennenchamps as snow fell through the darkness upon the outposts and local security guards.

Sunday, 31 Dec 44

Harassing fires kept the cannoneers active in the pre-dawn moonlight, for the snow had stopped falling, leaving a picturesque landscape in full winter glory. Reports still poured in to the S-2 from the OPs and outposts. Sounds of small arms firing in Sennenchamps persisted as strongly as ever.

Dawn came, bringing with it poor visibility. Varying from light mist to light snow, it was clear enough for the liaison planes to adjust fire, yet a planned air raid on enemy flak installations did not materialize.

During the course of the day, there was more good news, for Service Battery, through Mr. Clark, assistant S-4, who was acting as Forward S-4, produced more rations, candy, chewing gum and miracle of miracles, a truckload of long awaited sleeping bags for the battalion's enlisted personnel.

On the whole, however, it was a quiet day. Towards evening the infantry withdrew from Sennenchamps and established their new front line along the battalion's rear.

New Year's Eve, 1944, was here – and was celebrated by heavy artillery concentrations as the Belgian clocks tolled midnight.

NOTE: The 755th Field Artillery Battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation for their “extraordinary heroism in action against the Germans for the period 18-27 December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge.”

Monday, 01 Jan 45

New Year's Day - The cacophony of the New Year's greeting

barrage died down as normal harassing missions were resumed. Aside of these missions, however, it was a reasonably quiet day.

Dawn was clear with good visibility. A few robot bombs were heard to sputter overhead, confirming previous reports of their presence. Small arms persisted in the vicinity of Sennonchamps, but there was not an attack on the battalion's position as been thought possible earlier.

Shells dropped close to batteries A and B during the course of the morning, but there was no apparent damage.

Sleeping bags and an additional cigarette and candy ration were distributed while a salvage party returned by devious route to Villeroux, recovering "A's" missing howitzer, but leaving some ammunition for recovery on the morrow.

Battery A shifted its direction to a compass of 1600 at 0930 and by nightfall was again a four gun battery, proving that the captured and recaptured piece had suffered no ill effects.

QPs reported numerous movements of vehicles and unidentified personnel but the day closed quietly. Strong outposts were still the rule and the falling darkness found all in order. Ordnance had appeared on the scene to replace the battalion's damaged pieces, yet no replacements appeared by midnight. The battalion had nine howitzers in firing order.

Tuesday, 02 Jan 45

Once again the battalion fired harassing missions from midnight to dawn. In addition, the now familiar side show of flares, machine guns firing, shells, mortars, unidentified planes, small arms firing and whining of motors continued to form the bulk of the S-2 information.

At 0851, a report told the battalion that Sennonchamps was once more in Allied hands. If true, this meant a lot, for its close proximity to the battalion's position area was a constant threat.

Visibility was fair and several observed missions were fired, including an afternoon registration which gave a new VE of plus 86 to the fire direction.

Lt. Pfeiffer, able reconnaissance officer of Battery B, led a last salvage crew to Villeroux to pick up any remaining battalion property. Jerry had gotten most of the portable paraphernalia.

The great news of the day was the arrival of the mail. Sacks of it!!

Principally Christmas packages, although there were a few letters, it marked the first mail in sixteen days - a long time when it had been so near and yet so far. Morale soared sky high over its previous condition of "excellent."

As evening came on, a message to the battalion commander warned of a possible advance! One battery would have to displace forward to cover future operations.

Night brought with it a sharp decrease in visibility which finally petered down to 50 yards. Harassing fires for the night were set up as the battalion digested its largely indigestible packages of goodies from home.

Wednesday, 3 Jan 45

A murky night broke into an intermittently foggy and semi-clear dawn. S-2 information was limited. A few distant rounds were heard, but there was no immediate cause for alarm to the battalion.

Following instructions from higher headquarters, the commanding officer left for a reconnaissance of new positions at 1010 in the general vicinity of Savy, WNW of Bastogne. The front seemed to be turning into a more easterly direction.

Returning to the position area for the noon meal, the battalion commander went forward once more at 1310, accompanied by the battery commanders. It was an unfortunate time, for Jerry was tired of going backwards and attacked with tanks. The reconnaissance party returned safely.

Bastogne was shelled at 1605 with unfortunate results. The vehicle used by the battalion agents, T/5 Windle, was hit on the right front. However, this was the only damage, T/5 Windle being safely out of harm's way.

Firing during this period was normal, with no extraordinary missions.

Thursday, 4 Jan 45

Predawn harassing missions on the towns of Wicount, Bourcy, Noville, and Rauchamps continued as usual. The dawn found slightly improved visibility, but it still left much to be desired. Snow in the afternoon reduced visibility to a minimum.

Strange faces continued to be seen in the vicinity of the position

as more and more troops entered the Bastogne bastion.

It was a quiet day. Sniping had apparently been silenced for good, and although movement orders to go forward to the reconnoitered area were awaited, they did not materialize.

Several missions were fired in the afternoon on counter-battery and tank assembly areas, but no results were reported. The war was simmering down to a simple affair of front lines in known directions and locations.

Friday, 5 Jan 45

Although snow fell during the early hours, it was a comparatively clear day.

In the late morning, T/4 Thornhill of the battalion personnel section brought forward 36 reinforcements for the battalion. Following dinner at the Headquarters Battery mess, they were assigned to the battalion's firing batteries and Headquarters battery by CWO Charles Vaughn, battalion personnel officer.

During the course of the day, the 257th Ordnance returned one of Battery C's howitzers, which had been repaired in the afternoon. Lt. Fisk, battalion motor officer, withdrew to the rear with a damaged howitzer from Battery B, which was towed behind the 10 ton wrecker.

Starting at 1515 Lt. Pfeiffer, Battery "BÓ RO, fired several problems from the Kansas Ground OP, reporting "mission accomplished" on the enemy truck column on the road and on intermittent vehicular movement. Several sound and flash missions were started at 2200 on Noville, Bourcy, Michamps, Hardigny, Compogne, Mabonpre, Rauchamps, Wicount, Foy and several other crossroads.

Saturday, 6 Jan 45

Once more the usual harassing missions were fired, carrying on from the 5th through 0700 in the morning. At 0810, a sound adjustment, due to poor visibility, was attempted in cooperation with Hillman Blue Sugar, but the result was unsatisfactory.

At 1255, however, the battalion adjusted efficiently on a group of enemy infantry, expending 10 rounds. Counter-preparation employing 40 rounds of white phosphorous was fired at 1545 and

visibility closed in again after several activity and enemy battery missions, the normal harassing fires were resumed. A morning reconnaissance by the battalion commander from 1000 to 1200 in the vicinity of Longchamps marked the only unusual item of the day, but no movement orders were received.

Sunday, 7 Jan 45

An addition to the harassing fire was made at 0135 as a counter-preparation of 55 rounds was fired. The day itself was a quiet one with 24 missions being fired for a total of 311 rounds.

A Pozit mission at 1955, however, excited interest as the first battalion Pozit mission fired, although Battery C had won laurels for its part in a demonstration firing near Maastricht a month previously. The target was an emplace enemy battery.

At 1210, Major Edgerton, Executive, returned from Service Battery, who brought with him a new 155mm howitzer which was still well to the rear, accompanied by Lt. Edgar McCoy. Lt. McCoy was now acting battalion ammunition train commander in the absence of 1st Lt. Williams, who was still recuperating from injuries to his "derriere." The new piece was assigned to Battery C, bringing the battery back to normal operating force. It was a quiet day.

Monday, 8 Jan 45

The normal harassing missions until 0700 revealed that poor visibility continued. Snow, fog, and occasional clearing revealed low scudding clouds, then more snow and fog were the steady variations of weather throughout this period. Luckily for the battalion, the situation was such that constant moving did not enter into the living accommodation problem and all managed to find shelter in reasonably comfortable quarters (principally well dug super foxholes). The temperature hovered between 17 and 28 degrees, occasionally warming sufficiently to melt the snow covered roads into sheet ice. Vehicular traffic was severely handicapped and the steel treaded tractors behaved as though equipped with ice skates. Wire lines were buried in the ice and snow, complicating the linemen's work when an occasional break caused by a skidding tank tore out the frozen lines.