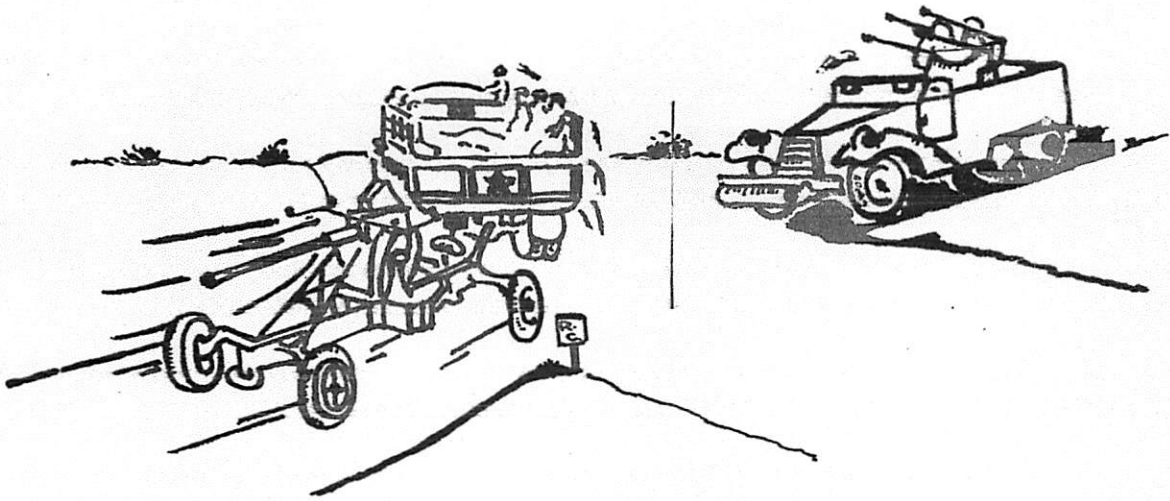


469 AAAA



BATTALION GUIDE

HEADQUARTERS
461ST AAA AW BATTALION
APO 230 c/o PM, NYC

25 September 1944

SUBJECT: Forward Letter

TO :

Since its organization two years ago this Battalion has achieved an enviable reputation for efficiency, spirit and performance. Now that our goal is in sight we must all work together to finish the job with the same vigor and standards with which we began it. To do our job here we must be alert, organized and well behaved. We all know the pride we take in getting a hit on Jerry. We can derive the same satisfaction from the first class condition of our equipment, from the careful construction of our pits, from the vigilant alertness of our crews and from our own soldierly appearance and conduct. All this will lead to a task well done.

In an Army as large as ours not all units will be of the same quality. We should not follow the practices of the weaker units but, rather pride ourselves in setting them an example.

Best wishes and good luck to you.

William R. Kintner
WILLIAM R. KINTNER
Lieut. Colonel, CAC
Commanding

GENERAL

It is much easier to do a job properly, if you know what is wanted. To assist all of you, the various orders and rules under which we have operated are compiled in this guide. In playing any game it's a big help to know the rules. Remember the purpose of these rules is to keep us instantaneously ready to knock down German planes and to be the BATTALION, the Army Commander wants us to be. This is your own personal copy. Make full use of it. When the war is over it will be a keepsake of your days in the 461st.

THIS IS THE WAY WE DO IT:

SECTION I - OPERATIONS

1. POSITIONS

a. Selection. (40MM and M-16)

Your platoon commander will tell you a general area in which he wants you to place your gun. You must use your knowledge of the terrain, direction of possible attack, and the need for a good field of fire, to finally select the exact place you want your gun. Never limit yourself to less than 180 degree field of fire. Always try to get more.

b. Occupation. (40MM)

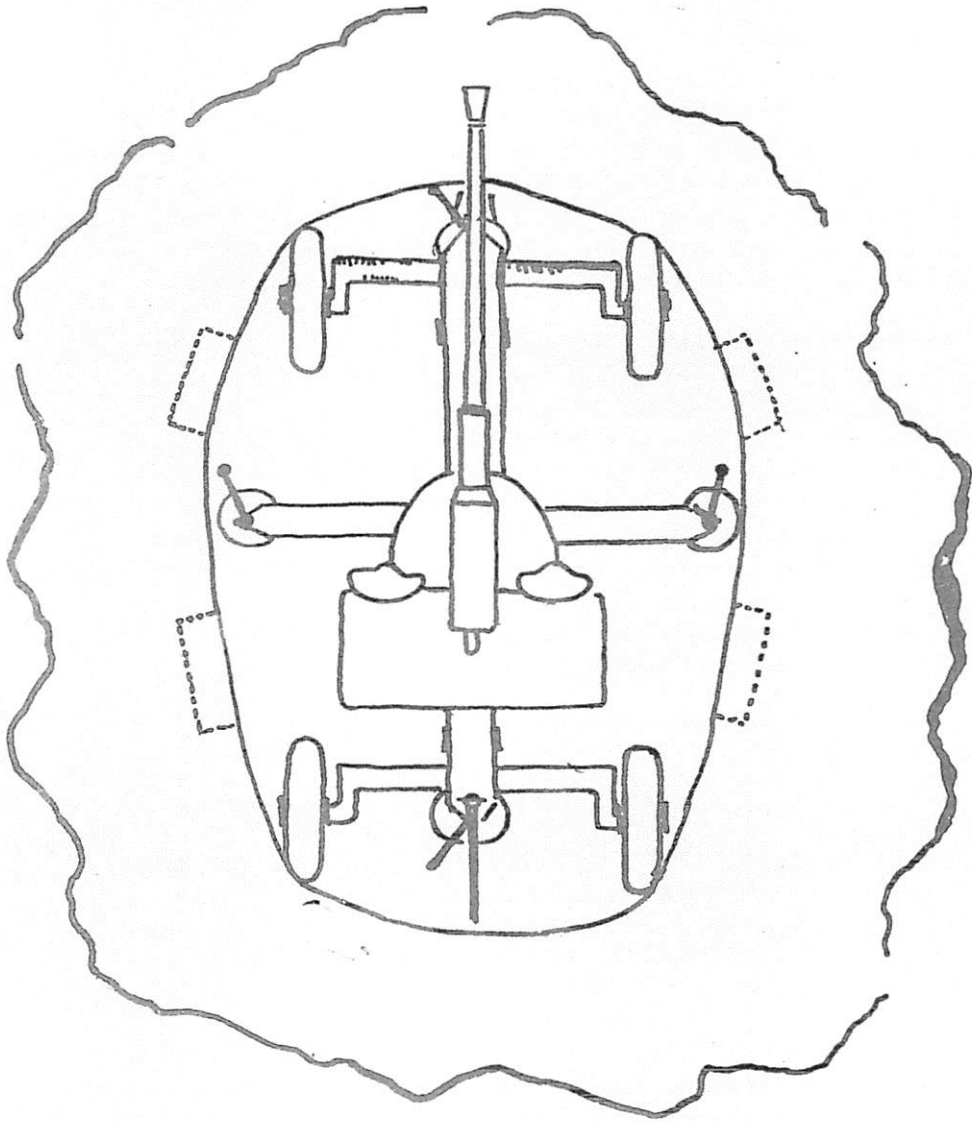
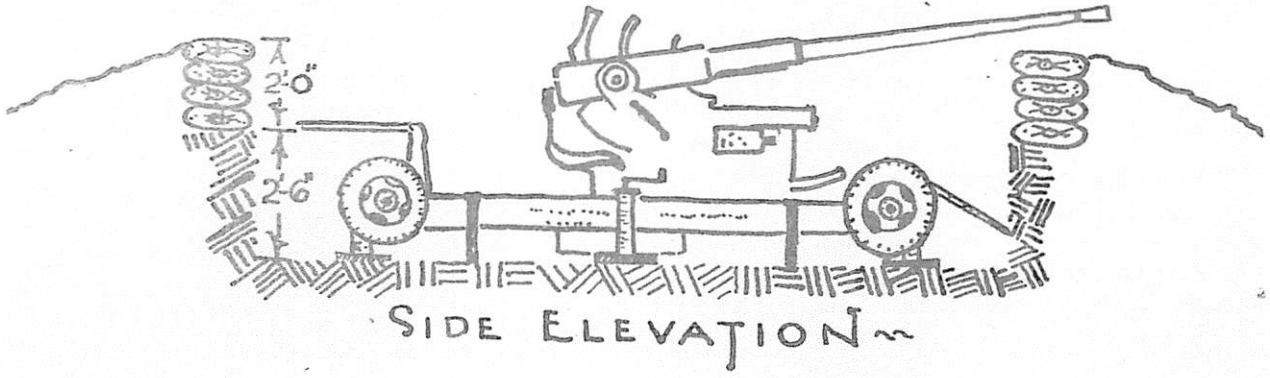
In occupying the position you have selected, use care to avoid heavy tracks to the site. Your pit should be as small as possible to permit movement around the gun, a slope to the bottom of the pit, to be closed after moving the gun in, is necessary to avoid bending or breaking the axle when lowering the piece. The pit should be $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet below ground level, with a parapet to the height of at least 2 feet. The inside walls of both pit and parapet must be perpendicular. Ammo will be recessed in the walls of the pit at ground level so there is protection for it on all but facing side of box.

c. Selection, (.50 Cal)

Again, bearing these points in mind you must select a good site for your protective piece, the .50 Cal MG a minimum of 50 yards from the 40mm gun. This as you know, is your protection from an attack from the rear or directly opposite your priority arc. If you have a blind approach to the Bofors always cover it with the machine gun.

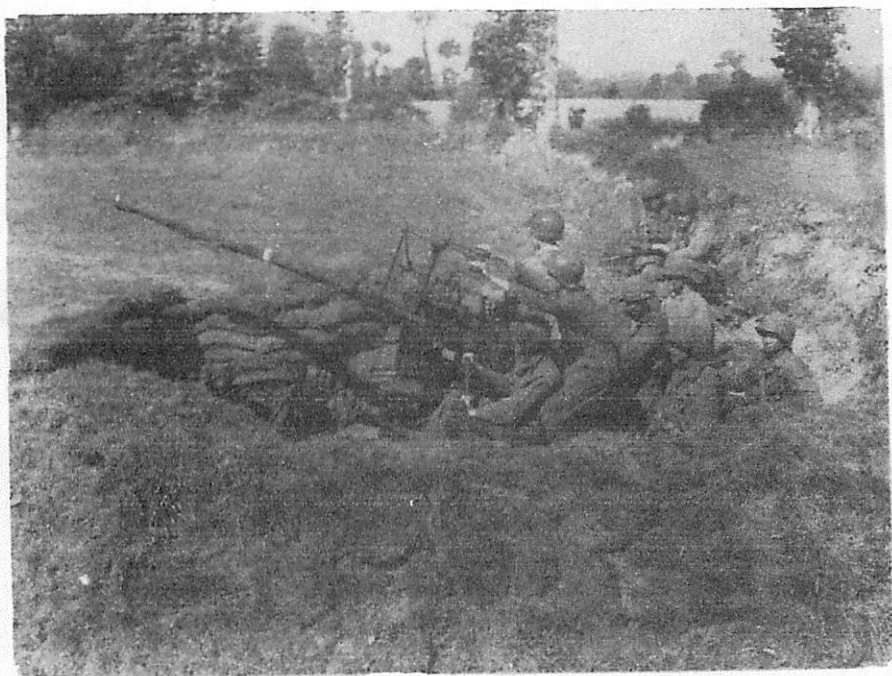
d. Camouflage.

You all know the value of good camouflage and concealment by the use of small nets over the two axles and natural foliage (replaced each day). A place must be found to conceal your truck, your men and the messing facilities. Remember to make as few tracks as possible around your area, evidence like this tells of your location. Never drape the net over the halftrack. Site guns to make camouflage easy, but never sacrifice field of fire.



~ Plan ~

This is a picture of a good gun section of this Battalion. Notice how carefully the gun is sited and the care that has been taken to build the pit. This picture was taken in Europe during operations of the First U.S. Army.



Notice the alert excellent appearance of the men.

_____, NCO Commanding

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____

SECTION II - ACTION

1. MANNING STATUS

The main job we've got to do as AAA is shoot down planes. To do this the guns must be manned by at least four men at all times. Two trackers, one Stiffkey Stick operator and a loader and firer. It is easy to see the gun cannot be operated with any less men. AAA is like insurance, you have it, pay the premiums on it, but if you stop you lose the insurance and possibly something happens. The infantryman does his job in the foxhole; your job is on the seats. The four men should be rotated on duty so as not to become stale. No one can sit in one spot for long and still be alert.

2. FIRE CONTROL

a. The stiffkey stick is our method of fire control. Discipline yourself to use it rather than depending upon tracer observation. Its advantages are numerous, it requires only one lead expert, gives smooth and accurate tracking with the crosshairs on the target, prevents conflict between the trackers and when visibility is poor it is easier to keep the stick on the fuselage of the plane than to keep the target flying toward the center of the sight. Use it always.

b. The M-16 must have two men on duty, one to observe and one to fire. The speed ring sight is the accepted type to be used by members of this unit. In putting in leads with this sight the same principle applies as when using the speed ring sight of the 40mm. On the approaching leg the plane will be kept flying [REDACTED] toward the center of the ring. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The angle of approach and the speed of the aircraft must be accurately estimated to put in the correct lead.

3. ORIENTATION

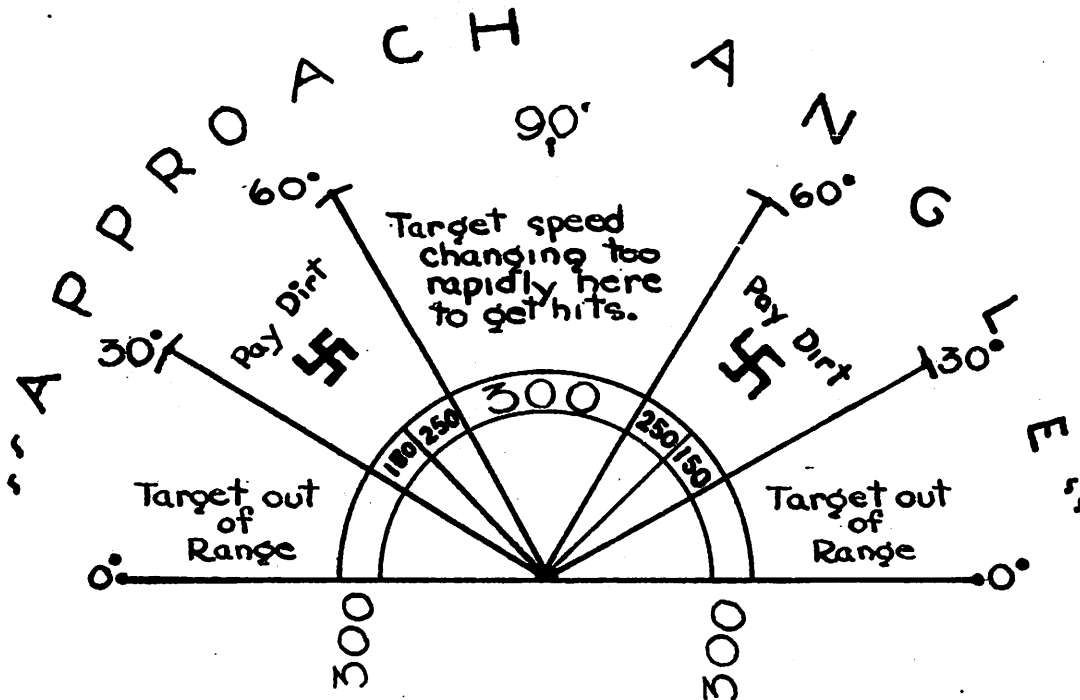
If your sights are not correctly lined up with the bore of your gun the best shooting in the world will be wasted. Daily, and always at the completion of a move check your orientation. Correct orientation cannot be taken for granted.

4. AIRCRAFT ENGAGED REPORTS

Reports of aircraft engaged must be made immediately to your battery headquarters giving the following information: Time of engagement, no, and type of E/A engaged, altitude, direction and type of attack, length of engagement, rounds fired, hits observed, claims, air tactics observed, action taken by E/A when engaged and results of AAA fire. Make immediate notes of just what happened.

HIT CONTROL

The trained alert gun crew get hits because its waiting for Jerry and knows what to do with him when he gets in range. Direct approaches are Duck soup. Crossing targets are a real test of your skill and fire discipline. No matter what you're firing, the Bofors, the halftrack or the fifty you'll get your hits if you have the proper lead on the line Jerry is flying. The pay dirt of



any crossing course is on either side of midpoint. PLAN to get your hits there.

1. If you follow the rules intelligently you can get hits without seeing a single tracer.

a. 40MM

Direction of Aim Off: Constantly align the straight edge with the fuselage of the plane. Don't worry about the tracer.

Lead: Estimate the average lead for the course, set it in and stick to it. The determination of this lead will be effected by what part of the course you are able to engage target. Generally two-thirds of maximum speed will be the best spot, for a 300 mph FW 190 this would mean a constant lead of four clicks.

b. M-16 Halftrack

Direction of Aim Off: Lay so that the plane is always flying toward the center of the sight.

Lead: Estimate lead as above. Hold the aircraft in your sight at the ring which represents this lead. Don't worry about the tracer.

2. .50 Calibre Machine Gun

You've got to use your tracer. Set in plenty of lead and let him have it.

SECTION III - AAAIS

1. GENERAL

In order to give the Anti-aircraft guns of this Battalion as well as other Battalions in the Corps, help in getting advance information of flights of E/A, a warning system has been set up to supplement the warnings given by observers at gun sites. This system never has and never will reduce the importance of the observer at the gun. It should be considered only as an aid and not a foolproof system. If it gives you ten seconds warning it has done its job.

2. AAAIS WITHIN THE BATTERY

a. The purpose of observation posts within the Btry area is to give a warning on the air, not only to guns of the Btry, but also the guns of other Btrys and Battalions within radio range of the CP.

b. The AAAIS set up within the Battery consists of one observation post with each platoon. When platoons are deployed as individual units, it is always necessary for each to have an OP that functions independently. When the Battery is set up as a unit, it may be possible that one platoon OP is sufficient to warn the whole Battery area. Normally, however, both platoon OPs are necessary. In order to take full advantage of the platoon OPs it is necessary that you follow these rules without fail.

1. Always be sure that you know the directions by the use of directional stakes placed about the pit.

2. Be sure that you know what square of the AAAIS location plan you are in, A, B, C, or D.

3. Be sure that the man who is in the azimuth trackers seat has his earphones on at all times and tests his line to platoon at least once every half hour.

4. When a German plane comes within firing range call it over the hot loop, thus, "No. 5, firing, Focke Wolfe, East.

5. Last and most important, be sure that the observer is alert and that he has the necessary equipment to do his job. Field glasses, colored glasses if possible, are a necessity for good observing.

EXTRACT, OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #5, HEADQUARTERS,
 V CORPS, DATED, 4 August 1944.

"THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENGAGEMENT OF ANY PARTICULAR TARGET RESTS WITH THE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER IN IMMEDIATE COMMAND OF THE GUN. THE FACT THAT ANOTHER GUN POSITION HAS, OR HAS NOT, ENGAGED THE ENEMY DOES NOT ABSOLVE EACH SEPARATE COMMANDER FROM MAKING HIS OWN DECISION".

These are the planes we must know. To be able to spot them instantaneously we must review them daily. Remember there are several different views of the same plane:

THUNDERBOLT

TYPHOON

MARAUDER

ME 109

MUSTANG

ME 210

FW 190

SPITFIRE

HAVOC

HURRICANE

DAKOTA

MITCHELL

MOSQUITO

JU 88



SECTION IV - LOCAL SECURITY

1. GUARD

a. As we come closer to our final objective the question of local security becomes more and more important. When we are on German soil we must be alert for anything. The General Orders you learned back at Camp Haan are your orders and cover anything that may happen. Review them, understand them, apply them.

b. These are some ideas which may help you do a better job of safeguarding yourself, the equipment you are responsible for and the lives of your buddies.

1. When you go on guard be sure you have all your equipment with you. Check your rifle and make sure it works.

2. Pick a spot where you can see what you are guarding and as much of the area as possible.

3. Get down as low as possible so you can see objects silhouetted against the sky. (The gun pit near the phone is a good place.)

4. If you see something at night you are not sure of, look a little above it - it may clear it up for you.

5. Don't day dream - keep your mind on what you are doing.

6. Know the password.

7. Keep cool.

2. BAZOOKAS

a. The Bazooka is a part of your local security. When you go into a position check it to see if it's in firing shape. Keep it along the pit where you can get it in a hurry.

b. Look over your gun position for possible avenues of approach and pick a site where the Bazooka can be used most effectively against tanks.

3. CIVILIANS

a. Never allow civilians in or about your location. You never know who they are.

b. Signs can help you keep them out. In French and German these will do it:

FRENCH:	"Defense d'entree ici"
GERMAN:	"Verboten Hereingehen"

4. IDENTIFICATION

All military personnel that you do not know should be checked for identification. If you don't know what an Officer's identification card looks like, ask one of your Officers to see one.

SECTION V - MOVEMENT

1. ASSEMBLY

An assembly area is picked for you, usually by the BC or Platoon CO which will provide cover, easy entrance and exit and good firm ground for your vehicles. Cover will be sacrificed for the last two points. Obviously, you can understand why these points are made, a large body of trucks must be hidden, able to move in and out quickly and have a good foundation to accomplish this.

2. ALERTNESS

On the move, an air guard is on each truck. His job is to alert those riding in the truck, in case of an attack. As we come into Germany proper the Luftwaffe will be out in a last desperate effort to stop us. This calls for double alertness to protect yourself from their attacks.

3. CONVOY DISCIPLINE

We've always had a good reputation for the appearance of our men in convoy, uniforms alike, helmets on, no shouting or whistling, generally behaving like the men we are. It's true we're overcrowded but we've got to make the best of it.

4. DRIVERS

All you drivers should know where you're going and through what towns you'll pass. Ask for this information if you don't get it. Route strips are easy to follow and your Officers will give them to you. And remember "NO SMOKING" while you're driving. You cannot smoke and drive as you should. You've got an ass't driver, use him if you have to smoke.

5. LOST VEHICLES

All drivers whose vehicles become separated from their unit column must go to the LVRV where they will be met by a representative of the unit. Failing to find the LVRV, report to an MP that you want to get to VICTOR CP. There you go to AA Section and they'll put on the right road to your unit headquarters.

SECTION VI - MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT

1. MOTOR TRANSPORTATION

Remember, your vehicle is just as important as any piece of equipment in the section, and it must be cared for. Before you start, be sure that tires, gas, oil, water, wipers, and lights have been checked and are in good condition. When you stop, make the same check again. If any malfunction occurs that is beyond the scope of first echelon maintenance, notify your Motor Sgt., as soon as possible. It is easier to prevent than to repair. Check your mileage regularly and notify your Motor Sgt., when 1,000 and 6,000 mile checks are due.

These inspections are not to find fault with any driver, but to insure a longer life for your vehicle.

a. First Echelon Maintenance.

Yours is the responsibility for proper first echelon maintenance. You must be sure that the gear boxes and differentials have the proper grease at the right levels. Your vehicle must be greased once each week, whether it is run or not. Lights, horn, windshield wipers, gauges on the instrument panel, brakes, tires, and brake connections must be checked daily and kept in perfect condition. Keep your vehicle as clean looking as possible, especially the glass, cab, and truck bed, for they are a direct reflection on you as a caretaker. A good clean looking vehicle is usually in good condition, for it shows some pride is taken by the driver.

b. Second Echelon Maintenance.

The second echelon section is set up to help you. If something goes wrong that is beyond your knowledge, these men are trained to locate and repair the damage. If they check or inspect your vehicle, it is to make sure that your vehicle is going to finish the war in good shape, not to give you especially, any trouble. If you know of any special trouble you are having, tell them, they will be glad to help. They are on call at the Battalion Headquarters at all time.

2. ARTILLERY

You're all old Artillerymen, and we know that your knowledge of the functioning and maintenance of the "piece" is generally very satisfactory, but some of you still have to be "sold" on continuous maintenance. Did you know that numerous Gunnery inspections have proven that "The smartest gun Sergeants have the best maintained Guns."

The best sections never develop the Art of Alibi, because they're too hard to put on the spot, they don't need the alibis.

Don't pass the buck and don't give up after a half-hearted try at getting care and maintenance material.

Keep your carriage clean, painted and lubricated, and don't feel exempt from cleaning because you haven't paint handy. The reason for lack of paint has been due innumerable times to failure of sections to repeatedly request delivery. Don't be careless when removing dry dirt, you'll invariably remove the paint beneath it.

Read your Manuals! Learn the specification lubricants.

Check your equilibrators, leveling, and orientation. Search for Rust spots. You shouldn't find any. Don't let your "half-stripping" become a habit--it's dangerous!

One hour of preventative maintenance will save you ten hours of "after maintenance. Stop and think. Won't it?

Don't ever develop the fatal notion that a "cat. 1" for your section disproves what's been said about care and maintenance, or that you are automatically exempt from it.

Unfortunately your sections are not judged individually. You're judged on the basis of what the "best" gun sections are doing. Once on top, it's not easy to stay there, you've got to work to maintain your position.

Bear in mind the future of these guns. These guns may have another war to fight, and finally, thousands of future AA gunners to train. Apply the Golden Rule here, "Maintain the Artillery and turn it back in the excellent condition in which you would want to receive it."

SECTION VII - POLICE AND SANITATION

Police your areas before leaving and while you're there. An unsanitary area breeds the germs that often gives you the GI's and they're not good, as you who've had them know. Your latrines should be deep and narrow and filled in when within one foot of ground level. Don't you ever forget to keep it covered. Take pride in your living quarters, and yourselves as we do in showing you off to visitors. You've got a lot to be proud of.

SECTION VIII - UNIFORMS

You all know the prescribed uniform: denims, leggins, field jackets, helmets, and sidearms. You can wear them properly, it's not any harder to do than being sloppy about it. You have enough time daily for personal maintenance. Take all advantage of it to keep yourself and your uniforms clean. From now on in, our helmet and sidearms are part of the uniform. A 461st man is considered undressed without them. Remember you're going into Germany where the Army is rated the best looking; best disciplined and most feared by the German people. If we have the right spirit, appearance and conduct ourselves as we know how, the Germans will come to realize they are not the MASTER RACE they thought themselves, not only because we've beaten them in battle, but because we surpass them in conduct, spirit and soldierly appearance.

SECTION IX - HEADQUARTERS MEN

In every step of command there is a headquarters whose job is to assist and supervise the organizations under it. In AA, the gun sections do the ball carrying. They fight our war, but they do it because headquarters men have been working with them all the time to form the Battalion team.

The Battalion has its Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and the Staff Officers, S1, S2, S3, S4, MTO and Surgeon. In a similar manner the battery has its Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, First Sergeant, Supply Sergeant, Mess Sergeant and Motor Sergeant. The duties of each are the same, but the duties of the Battalion Staff are more detailed and complex.

The Commanding Officer is the one who coordinates the efforts of all into a smooth running organization and makes the final decisions. The Executive Officer is the Assistant Commanding Officer and is in command during the absence of the Commanding Officer.

The S-1 section is the Adjutant's section and all administrative and personnel matters are handled here. All the matters that pertain to your pay, allotments, promotions, furloughs, and everything that pertains to your Battalion and you in an administrative way.

The S-2 section is the Intelligence Section, which handles all matters pertaining to the enemy. All your maps, your information of the enemy lines, his weapons, tactics, and strength are distributed from this section. AAAS, our aircraft warning service, the primary means of learning of the enemy is under the direction of the Intelligence Officer. All claims of enemy planes shot down are handled by this section.

The S-3 section is a two purpose section. Before combat it's the Plans and Training Section, where all the plans for your basic and final training originate. After combat this section is the Operations Section where plans for your deployment are made, orders issued for your moves, situation maps of your positions in relation to the whole front are kept and checks made of your positions to see that you are operating according to your training.

The S-4 section is the Battalion Supply Section and it is here that all your clothing and food problems are handled. From the time you joined this Battalion until you leave every item of clothing you wear and all the food you eat are checked and issued from this section. All other items of supply necessary for your comfort and equipment to make you the best fighting man, such as your guns, ammunition, trucks and gas are also handled by the S-4.

The Surgeon is your doctor. Your Battery Aid Men act as his assistants. They are qualified to render First Aid to you in all cases. Should you be injured they'll help you until you can be taken to a hospital or to the Battalion Aid Station. Go to them, trust them and you'll be all right.

The Motor Maintenance Section is the last, but not the least of the Staff Sections. We are a mobile battalion and to keep us rolling is the duty of this section. All maintenance above your first and second echelon are handled by this section. Your motto is to "Keep them Falling" theirs is to "Keep them Rolling".

These are your Headquarters Sections. Without them you would not be fed, clothed, armed, trained, medically cared for and the best battalion in the United States Army.

SECTION X - CHECK LIST

GUN POSITION, BIVOUAC AREA, GENERAL POINTS:

1. Does gun have all around field of fire?
2. Does position blend into surroundings whether natural or artificial? Is it well camouflaged?
3. Will emplacement protect crew from shell fragments?
4. Is truck and bivouac area clean and well camouflaged?
5. Are there direction indication stakes at positions?
6. Are individual weapons on hand and clean? Is there ammo in chamber of rifle?
7. Are there four men on gun (stick operator, 2 trackers, and loader and firer)?
8. Has #9 man the earphones?
9. Is spare gun barrel outside gun pit?
10. Is pistol flare kept in a definite, uniform, and easily accessible place?
11. Are all planes reported over hot loop?
12. Has local security been taken care of by posting of sentries? Have sentries been properly instructed and know countersign and reply?
13. Does each man have a fox-hole of his own near bivouac area?
14. Has alternate position been selected and is it readily accessible?
15. Has first echelon maintenance been performed on vehicle today?
16. Has a latrine been dug? Is it kept covered?
17. Does section have an allotted time each day for C & M?
18. Has Stiffkey Stick been oriented on a well defined distant object? Was it unlocked? Is it unlocked now? Do you have an orienting board?
19. Is auto-loader filled with round on tray? Is hand operating lever in forward catch? Is feed control lever to the left?
20. Have all mechanical gun checks been made?
21. Is superelevation cam on far?
22. Is gun level? Are level vial covers on vial?
23. Is breech closed and rammer forward during period of C & M and during the night?
24. Is the MG ready to fire? Does it have proper head space?
25. Do all men know general situation and latest news? Do they know locations of all CPs? Do you have a map? Are OO coordinates for AAAIS located on it?
26. Do all men know the rules of firing?
27. Can all men orient Stiffkey Stick? Can they perform all duties on the gun?
28. Do you and all your men know how to report to a visiting Officer?