

**HISTORY of the
87th MOUNTAIN INFANTRY
in ITALY**



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Captain, 87th Mountain Infantry

1945

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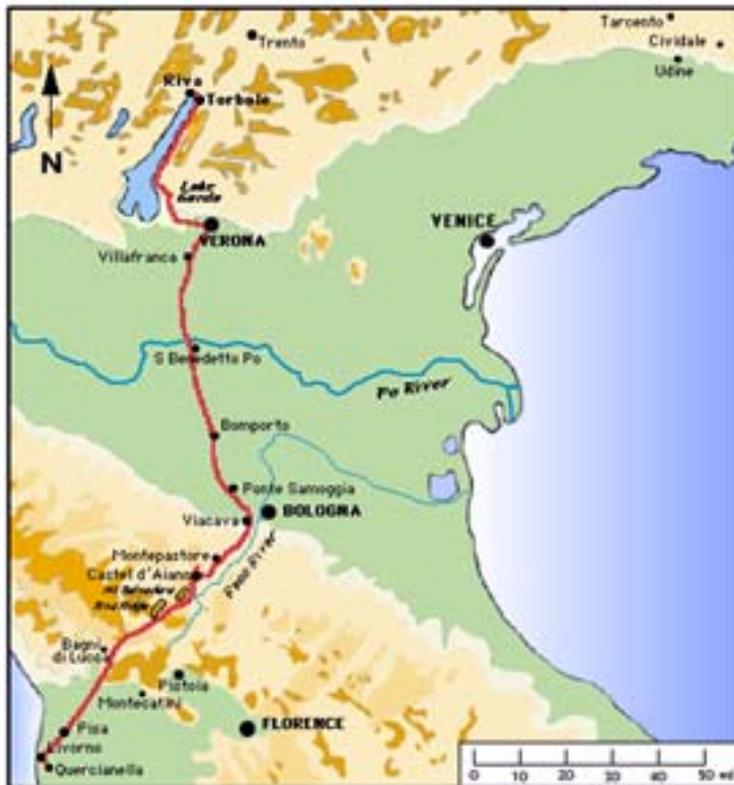
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BATTLE ROUTE OF THE 10th MOUNTAIN DIVISION CAMPAIGN IN ITALY December 1944 – May 1945



*Modified by Barbara Imbrie from original battle diagrams published by Armand Casini in 1945.

PREFACE

THE 87TH REGIMENT FROM DECEMBER 1941 TO JANUARY 1945

The first element of the 87th Mountain Infantry, now part of the 10th Mountain Division, was officially formed at Fort Lewis, Washington on 8 December 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. Four days previously, twelve officers and one enlisted man had met and were designated as the "87th Infantry, Mountain, 1st Battalion, Reinforced." Lieutenant Colonel ONSLOW S. ROLFE was in command. Most of the original officers are now within the 10th Mountain Division, but the identity of the enlisted man is unknown. He was drafted in to stoke the fires, and was the only non-volunteer in the early days of the outfit.

During the next few days a large number of volunteer cadre arrived from regular army units—many from the 15th Cavalry, so that by December 8th, there were approximately 75 officers and enlisted men, all attached to A Company, but forming the nucleus of A, B, C, D, Headquarters, and Service Companies. This first United States mountain organization was the result of efforts of army and civilian groups, which prevailed upon the War Department after more than a year of effort. Most active among civilian groups was the National Ski Patrol Association, headed by MINOT DOLE, who had been in correspondence with General MARSHALL for several months. This organization, through a special arrangement with the War Department, supplied a large proportion of the volunteers. During the previous winter, a ski patrol from the 15th Infantry Regiment had trained on Mount Rainier, and other army skiing had been done at Lake Placid and in Wisconsin.

Almost at once, the present communications officer, Captain (then Private) JOSEPH A. HEARST, caught a communicable disease, quarantining A Company for 21 days over Christmas and New Year's Day, thereby becoming the most unpopular private in the new outfit. This seemed to establish a precedent, for on the following Christmas the outfit was confined because of maneuvers in California; the one after that found most of them on ships returning from the Aleutians; and the Christmas of 1944 was spent in the Staging Area getting ready to ship to Italy.

In January of 1942 all manner of ski and winter equipment was issued, and ski calisthenics were given in the mud of Fort Lewis, Washington. Late in the month, Companies A, B, and C moved up to Tatoosh and Paradise Lodges on Mount Rainier for ski training. Tests were devised and a ski school set up. The testing of equipment and mountain techniques were handled by a section of the unit called the Mountain and Winter Warfare Board. Master Sergeant WILLIAM P. JONES, then First Sergeant of Company A, and now regimental Sergeant Major, at this time proved to the satisfaction of Colonel ROLFE and the Board that all soldiers could not be made into skiers. As advised, Sergeant JONES permanently put away his skis.

Meanwhile, Company D and the Service Company under Captain GEORGE FLETCHER, now Colonel, G-3 of the 91st Division in Italy, remained down at Fort Lewis, building a corral for the mules. In the spring, Company D moved up for a brief ski period. The Battalion returned to Fort Lewis in May, and by this time, the all-volunteer outfit had grown large enough to form a Second Battalion under the command of Major RICHARD F. READY. Major FLETCHER was given command of the First.

At this time, the unit was made up of world-famous skiers, mountaineers, forest rangers and trappers, lumbermen and guides, and a group of cowboys, muleskinners and horsemen, in addition to the regular army cadre. A riding school was begun at Fort Lewis in July. A detachment

spent two summer months in the Columbian Ice Fields in Canada to develop an over-snow vehicle, the great-granddaddy of the present M-29 "Weasel." Incredible as it may seem to the Infantry, another detachment made a movie short in Hollywood, the first of several films featuring ski troops of the 87th. At a later date, both Warner Brothers and Paramount made pictures on the Army ski slopes.

Intensive military training began in September at the Main Camp in Fort Lewis with rigorous conditioning and range work. Colonel JEFFERSON B. WILLIS took command of the regiment under the over-all command of Colonel ROLFE. On 18 November 1942, the 1st and 2nd Battalions entrained for maneuvers at Jolon, California, accompanied by the horses and mules. For six weeks the two battalions maneuvered against a battalion of the First Filipino Regiment. Meanwhile, a site had been chosen for a brand new camp to house the 87th, on the Continental Divide in Colorado, at 9,480 feet above sea level. Camp Hale was to be complete with a mile-long ski tow, several rope tows, stables, and even ski waxing rooms in the barracks. The camp was nearing completion while the 1st and 2nd Battalions maneuvered, and a skeleton 3rd Battalion, formed in September, moved and waited at Camp Hale until rejoined by the rest of the regiment just before the new year.

Many new problems in winter-military training were presented by the extreme high altitude and weather. Over a hundred types of equipment and vehicles were tested. Units and detachments, to the size of battalions, bivouacked in the surrounding mountains at 12,000 feet, and ran problems and tests in the snow and extreme cold. Unusual schools were set up with experienced men in charge to teach—not only skiing, but snow-shoeing, snow freighting, and trail breaking on toboggan. Dog teams were attached, and men were trained in their handling. Men were trained to build snow caves; taught to cook the mountain ration individually; trained in the prevention of avalanches; and instructed in rescue work. Detachments were sent to teach skiing and mountaineering at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, and to a mountain-training center at Seneca Falls, Virginia. Techniques slowly evolved both from winter military operations, and from living successfully under the extreme conditions.

Various manuals were written. A "Manual of Skis" for drilling and marching in the snow was taught. The Mountain Soldier carried his rifle on his back, and his skis at "right shoulder" while marching. He also gave the "Ski salute," and learned to stack skis and to mount and dismount them "by the numbers." Also, early in the winter, a nucleus of officers and enlisted men from the 87th formed the cadre for the new 86th Infantry Regiment. Later, in the spring, schools were set up for rock-climbing, mule packing, and forest fire fighting. Scout and Attack Dog Detachment joined; and even pigeons, reputedly helpless at the camp altitude, not only flew missions, but presented the regiment with its first egg late in May. The development of the snow vehicle was progressing with revisions of the old model, and also rejections of several abortive experimental contraptions. Civilian Arctic explorers and renowned mountaineers lent technical advice. Yet the severe conditions caused a high casualty and reclassification rate. The old Regular Army cadre at times despaired of ever doing any soldiering, considering the experts on detached service, the many schools, and the reclassifications. Meanwhile, the regular infantry training struggled on, men often firing on the range at twenty below zero in swirling snow.

On 11 June 1943, the outfit left for amphibious training, conducted by the Marines at Fort Ord, California. After a two-week training cruise to San Diego, the regiment entrained at Fort Ord on the night of 27 July, boarded four ships in San Francisco the same night, and sailed for Adak in the Aleutians on the 29th of July as part of Amphibian Training Force Nine, preparatory to the occupation of Kiska. The regiment landed on the beach at Adak and bivouacked there from 9 to 12 August under their new commander, Colonel ROY V. RICKARD.

In the lee of volcanic Great Sitkin, in Adak's outer harbor, a great convoy including forty thousand troops and a large portion of the Pacific Fleet formed up in a rare Aleutian sunset on 13 August. Land-based planes were still returning from Kiska, and paratroopers waited on Amchitka to support the occupation. Each battalion was to assault a separate landing point, each the spearhead to one of the three major landings. Through the fog, on the mornings of the 15th and 16th, the regiment hit the beaches, quickly climbed the precipitous cliffs of the north shore, and obtained their initial objectives. There was no opposition encountered beyond the severe winds, fog, and occasional mines. On the landing, the 1st Battalion was commanded by one of the organization's earliest arrivals, Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON, the 2nd by Major EMMETT L. NATIONS, and the 3rd by Lieutenant Colonel ARTHUR H. HENDERSON.

During the operation and occupation, much of the special equipment proved itself. Especially notable was the early model of the present M-29, then called the T-15, which gave promise of its future combat value. At the conclusion of the successful occupation, Colonel RICKARD and the regiment received commendation from observers of the War and Navy Departments. Colonel RICKARD moved on to another assignment, leaving the regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel JOHN F. SCHMELZER, in temporary command. On 5 October, Colonel JESSE E. GRAHAM assumed command of the regiment, now reassembled as a unit. During November and December, battalions were withdrawn individually to the States, and by 1 January 1944, the entire regiment was back at Camp Carson, Colorado.

In the middle of February, the 87th replaced the 90th in the 10th Light Division and was moved up again to Camp Hale, Colorado, coming under the command of Colonel PAUL F. "Pop" GOODE. The 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment shortly became the 87th Infantry Regiment, Light. In the Division were the 86th and 85th Regiments, the latter activated at Camp Hale after the 87th left for Kiska. With the 85th and 86th Regiments, the 87th went into the "D-Series," a six-week maneuver in sub-zero weather, down to thirty-eight degrees below zero, conducted in the mountainous terrain near Camp Hale. In one night alone, over one hundred cases of frostbite were evacuated, and all men who completed the maneuver were commended.

Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER assumed command of the regiment in early June. In late June, the regiment moved with the Division to Camp Swift, Texas, into a broiling summer of small-unit problems, and 25-mile speed marches. A final reorganization took place in the fall. The 10th became the only Mountain Division in the U.S. Army, and the 87th, at one time the only Mountain Regiment, now shared that distinction with the 85th and the 86th.

The 87th Mountain Infantry entrained from Camp Swift, Texas on 20 December, for Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, and embarked at Newport News on the USS *West Point* on 3 January 1945. Sailing time: 1100, 4 January 1945; destination: Naples, Italy.

INTRODUCTION TO ITALY

PATROL ACTION (4 JAN — 16 FEB)

Unique in being the first infantry regiment to sail to both the Pacific and European Theaters, the 87th Mountain Infantry embarked at Newport News, Virginia, on the morning of 3 January 1945, shortly after the start of our country's fourth year of World War II. Less than one-half of the heavily burdened men who struggled up the steep gangplanks of the USS *West Point*, and filed down to their compartments, had made the amphibious landing on Kiska Island a year and a half before. A large percentage had joined the regiment since the conclusion of mountain training six months previously, when the move from Camp Hale, Colorado, to Camp Swift, Texas, was accomplished. But a strong nucleus of officers and enlisted men remained who had followed the Regimental Colors most, or all of the way, from Fort Lewis and Mount Rainier, to Jolon, to Camp Hale, to Fort Ord on the west coast, to San Francisco, to Adak, and to Kiska; then back to Camp Carson, to Camp Hale, and finally to Camp Swift and the East Coast Staging Area, Camp Patrick Henry.

Under the command of Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER, old and new had shaken down into a well-integrated force. On New Year's Day, a brief ceremony had been held at Camp Patrick Henry in which the history of the organization was reviewed, and some of its traditional songs were sung to pass on to the new men some of the spirit of the regiment.

On the gray morning of 4 January, the *West Point* slid from the pier, and moved down the calm harbor past Old Point Comfort, and out into the long Atlantic swells. The 87th Mountain Infantry had completed one of the longest wartime training periods of any U.S. Army combat unit, and certainly the most unusual and varied. The morale was of the kind known only to a unit old enough and rich enough in its own traditions, possessing a colorful individuality, a unit with songs and stories.

The *West Point*, formerly the peacetime liner SS *America*, largest ship ever built in the United States, made the Atlantic crossing in nine days. Landfall was made in the forenoon of the seventh day, and the Straits of Gibraltar were passed through that afternoon in a rare spell of sunshine. Two days later the great ship slipped close by the towering Isle of Capri and docked at Naples on 13 January in a series of cold rainsqualls that all but blotted out snow-spotted Mount Vesuvius. At an end were the seasickness, and the normal friction of crowded troops on a rough crossing. The 87th and its sister regiment, the 85th Mountain Infantry, had crossed on the *West Point* without convoy escort. Nothing important occurred, except for those men in the compartments beneath the troop dispensary where, just after daybreak on the sixth day out, heavy seas tore life rafts loose from the decks above, and smashed them through the port side of the ship, staving in three plates and pouring tons of sea water into just-vacated bunks. The icy seawater washed duffel bags and gear against the alarmed men as they waded out of bed. The hold compartment below had to be evacuated as it filled with several feet of water before the damage could be shored up.

The arrival of the 87th in Naples brought them some fifteen and one-half degrees beyond halfway around the world since their departure from Kiska Harbor a little more than a year before. No sharper contrast could be drawn than between that stark, rain-washed, uninhabited island jutting out of the North Pacific, and this ancient Italian port, cluttered and teeming with people, ships, and crowded buildings.

Jan 13

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, and Company D, immediately debarked and boarded Italian four-wheel freight cars for the long overland trip north, through Rome, to Leghorn. The men slept on the boxcar floors, and cooked C-rations on small open fires kindled on the floors. They left Naples on the night of 13 January and rode all day and night of the 14th, through scenes of the previous year's devastation. Especially marked was the area near Cisterno and Anzio. They passed through Rome on the second night, and on 15 January, changed to trucks at Leghorn—reaching the staging area north of Pisa late in the evening.

The 1st Battalion, less Company D, Headquarters Company of the regiment, and Service Company, were to make the trip north by ship. They remained in Naples Harbor almost three days until the Italian stevedores could, in the greatest confusion, complete the loading of organizational equipment on the Italian freighter *Sestriere*. Short exercise marches within the harbor area displayed the terrible war damage to the local buildings and to human beings alike. The stunted, malnourished Neapolitans of the docks appeared degenerate and loathsome to the American soldier as they clambered around in their rags, and picked little morsels of garbage from the cracks of the docks. However, the soldiers were very willing to swap American cigarettes for rings and trinkets.

The dirty little *Sestriere* seemed dwarfed and was a poor sequel to the *West Point*; but the trip up the Tyrrhenian Coast, threading through the historic islands on a calm sea turned out to be more pleasant than anticipated. On the following day, the 17th, in the afternoon, the ship passed through Leghorn's ancient seawall and her recent wall of German-scuttled ships, and the troops entrucked to join the remainder of the regiment beyond Pisa.

The Peninsular Base Section, Staging Area No. 3, was a conveniently arranged bivouac of pyramidal and pup tents located on property formerly part of King Victor Emanuel's Hunting Grounds; and the rows of stately trees and vistas of distant snowy mountain masses remained fit for a king.

On 21 January, the regiment moved into a bivouac east of Camaiore, as IV Corps reserve, with the possible mission of supporting the 92nd Division either in the narrow coastal plain or in the Serchio Valley. The 3rd Battalion bivouacked and billeted in and around Villa Colli; the 2nd Battalion bivouacked on a hillside nearby, while the 1st Battalion bivouacked down the road toward Valpromaro. Except for battalion headquarters, and some other elements of the 3rd Battalion, the regiment passed up the many possible farmhouse billets in the neighborhood for the Spartan life in the open; and the tents were surrounded with mud and snow. The bivouac area near Villa Colli was a good seven airline miles to the rear of the 92nd Division, and the unit's position was strategic rather than tactical. From that point, they could be rapidly shifted to either the coastal plain or to the Serchio Valley—avenues of approach where the Germans had made alarming penetrations in the past. Directly to the front, however, was a series of jagged mountain peaks and ridges, and deep roadless valleys that had never seen any action, and were only scouted by occasional patrols of both sides.

So the statement that there was nothing between the 87th and the enemy, which flashed around the regiment, was the truth—but not the whole truth. The system of setting up tactically, with guards, outposts, and gun emplacements further supported the belief that this was more than a training area. Consequently, the area developed into a hotbed of flashing lights, green and blue flares, skulking figures on ridges, and assorted rifle, pistol, and machine gun shots. Patrols discovered houses with candles set by the window so that the shade might be drawn and raised for the enemy, and finally, a poor suspicious-looking character (a local Italian) was held until ordered released to the CIC (Counter Intelligence). The nights were exciting, and the only

Jan 21

reason the promiscuous shooting by guards didn't bring more positive results is that some Providence looked after the drunken American soldier as he staggered back to his tent.

Winter equipment was issued in this area, and various firing ranges were established for training. Training hikes and patrols were made. Field Order No. 1, dealing with the defense of the Serchio Valley and the Coastal Sectors was completed and sent to IV Corps headquarters at Lucca, on 25 January 1945.

Introduction to Battle

Meanwhile, on the narrow coastal plain dotted with resort towns and laced with canals, a memorable "First" occurred. It was the morning of 27 January that the first shot was fired against the enemy by the 87th Mountain Infantry. After hundreds of thousands of expended rounds of ammunition, one round was finally fired against the enemy—in the fourth year of the unit's existence. Not the first shot fired in anger—thousands of angry shots had peppered the Kiska fog—but the first shot against a living and present enemy.

The first bang was a resounding one, fired from one of nine pack howitzers brought up and dug into position on the coast, in the sector held by the 371st Infantry, supported by the 599th Field Artillery. Pfc. RAYMOND IWANKOWSKI pulled the lanyard of Gun No. 1, 1st Platoon, 1st Battalion, under command of Second Lieutenant ROCCO C. SICILIANO. This use of the 92nd Division front line for the howitzers was the first of several arrangements whereby the 87th Mountain Infantry "borrowed" a few of the enemy opposing the 92nd Division, to use as targets for a last-minute "warm-up" before moving up into our own sector of the front. The 92nd Division was very willing and cooperative in arranging for the mountaineers' "practice" on their enemy.

The next day, 28 January, eighteen mortars from the weapons companies were emplaced and fired behind Company E, 371st Infantry. Meanwhile, on the 29th and 30th, sixty riflemen from the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 87th, went out on sniping missions in the mountainous terrain just inland from the coast near Seravezza, twenty miles northwest of Lucca, in front of Companies K and L and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I & R) Platoon of the 371st Infantry. Initially, in these missions, the front line was approached with some misgivings. The observation posts were selected for the 75s with great caution, but quickly the awe of the front line disappeared and by nightfall, the situation around the guns seemed almost festive, with the crews bunking in the houses of the congenial Italian families. Life seemed to prove more comfortable at the front than it had been at the rear. As they ate breakfast after the second day's firing, German 88s zeroed in, bracketing Second Lieutenant EDWIN A. SMITH's 2nd Battalion gun positions, breaking up breakfast, and finally striking within two feet of a gun, damaging it slightly. Quick counter-battery fire from the 599th allowed the guns to be pulled out and saved. The crew, although without casualty, had one man knocked down by shrapnel and his wind knocked out. Everyone was shaken up and sobered down. Jerry had taken notice of the first shots of the 87th.

Jan 28

Later, the mortar crews fired their mission without event, and some of the sniper groups, under Second Lieutenant CHARLES L. PFEIFFER and First Lieutenant MORLAN W. NELSON, found targets and drew fire, from both automatic weapons and 88-mm artillery which drove a group of them from a house at noon and struck one man with a flying rock.

On short notice, this training activity and the range firing, marches, and practice patrols in progress near the bivouac area ended. The regiment reverted back to 10th Mountain Division control on 29 January, and prepared to relieve the 86th Mountain Infantry in the old Task Force 45 sector, now controlled by 10th Mountain Division. A movement order was received on 1 February. The 87th was to relieve the 86th, which had been on the line for a month. On the left, the

85th would continue as they had for the past two weeks. The 2nd Battalion moved forward on the early afternoon of 2 February, riding by truck 47 miles, detrucking and then marching eight miles over a most difficult mud and ice trail, closing at 2245 in Vidiciatico, after five hours of stumbling and falling in the foggy blackness under full field equipment. Colonel FOWLER called it a feat of war which only the Infantry is called upon to perform. Every man, he believed, fell down on the mud-coated ice at least once, and he felt that the march alone, within range of German artillery, entitled all who made it to the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

The 3rd Battalion went into regimental reserve, in and around San Marcello, with Battalion Headquarters at the sanatorium at Colonia Montana. Replacing the 1st Battalion, 86th, the 3rd Battalion made the fifty-eight mile trip by truck. The regimental command post (CP) opened in a villa in San Marcello. The 1st Battalion stayed on a few days longer at the rear. Although an advance CP was opened at Cutigliano on 1 February, the troops did not move up until the 5th.

Patrol Action and Minor Skirmishes

Seventeen days elapsed between the arrival of the regiment at the front and D-Day. The action was largely of a patrol nature. The firefights divided themselves into, first, our patrols attacking enemy positions in the Vidiciatico-Belvedere area, and, second, our 1st and 3rd Battalions successively defending the Cutigliano-la Lima sector against German patrols. The Vidiciatico-Belvedere area, occupied continuously by the 2nd Battalion through D-Day, was the more important, since the eventual battle was fought there. The series of active patrols that felt their way forward, and eventually confirmed accurately the enemy line on the slopes of Mt. Belvedere, were important. The patrol work of the whole regiment, while overshadowed by the battle that followed, and looked back upon as comparatively easy, should be evaluated against several factors. The men were new to the front, and had never entered no-man's-land before; not to mention that probing beyond, into the unknown land of the enemy, can be more nerve-racking to the individual than the mass movements of battle. There is the long strain of silent movement, the breathless waits, the inexorable searching out of him who lies in wait to kill. There is the physical punishment and even torture of alternately sweating up the rough terrain and lying motionless for hours on the snow—freezing in your own icy sweat. Finally, there is the fast withdrawal, possibly under fire, with no litter bearers for the casualty, and only the desperate loyalty of a comrade to drag the wounded in. The 2nd Battalion scheduled a total of 33 patrols prior to D-Day. Its patrols were the most numerous, and some performed brilliantly in their encounters with the enemy.

VIDICIATICO FRONT

The 2nd Battalion had reached the snow-covered mountain town of Vidiciatico on the night of 2 February. Outposts were manned around the town, and out on either side of the Mt. Belvedere road, beyond Querciola. The road through Querciola runs along a ridge top, connecting two mountain masses and forming sharp watersheds on either side. It is like two domes connected by a ridgepole and roof. On the lower slopes of Monte Grande (1,531 meters), the larger dome, is Vidiciatico. Reaching more than halfway along the ridgepole, and on either side of it, to Querciola, was the 2nd Battalion. Beyond loomed German-held Mt. Belvedere (1,139 meters), the other dome. Running down on either side of the ridge road are deeply eroded draws, containing swift and deep streams and with many sheer rock faces and waterfalls. The "ridgepole" runs more or less to the north from Vidiciatico. At right angles to it, running west from the summit of Belvedere, is another ridge, appearing on the skyline from along the Vidiciatico-Querciola road. This ridge was the German front line, starting up on Belvedere and running down to cross the Querciola road at a little town called Corona, and then on down the slope between deep ravines to Rocca Corneta, a spectacular rock escarpment with a church atop its walls. Further to the left,

the “rock” drops to the river. Across the river the sheer walls of Pizzo di Campiano rise abruptly, a steep mountain ridge, higher than Belvedere. In the lower valley areas, and in the areas above the deep draws, irregularly terraced fields are spotted here and there. At this time, from six inches to four feet or more of snow, depending upon the exposure and height of the slopes, made patrolling arduous. The science of tracking was added to normal patrol work.

The first shot fired directly at the 87th Mountain Infantry came in the little town of Farne, down the “ridgepole” to the left, on the bright morning of 5 February. It was fired at the seventh patrol sent out by the battalion, one officer and ten enlisted men. They were fired at by an undiscovered sniper, and since T/Sgt. FRED R. FRICK was not seriously wounded in the buttock, it might be said that our first casualty was a shot in the pants. The shot came at 1100 and was followed by mortar fire in town, forcing the patrol to withdraw. They were followed by more mortar fire on this trail. FRICK was able to walk, and all were in by 1330.

Feb 5

Another man, S/Sgt. JOSEPH Z. LA LIBERTY, was wounded southwest of Corona when he activated a mine on the early morning of the 7th, but he was able to walk back.

The thirteenth patrol from the 2nd Battalion was the first true “Ski Patrol” of the 87th Mountain Infantry at the front. The one officer and ten enlisted men were on skis and snowshoes when they left at 1130 for the high ground above Vidiciatico. The patrol was uneventful, but confirmed the old 87th argument that on steep terrain, snowshoes slide sideways and are no good, while skis edge in and work well. This fact was noted even at noon when the crust had melted.

On the night of 7 February, a Company G patrol of one officer and fifteen enlisted men left Roncoravecchia early in the evening. Just after 2300, a machine gun, thirty yards distant, opened up with two bursts. Pvt. BEN S. JACKSON threw a grenade, and forty rounds of artillery were adjusted on the position, silencing the gun. From southeast of Pianello, the patrol withdrew under German flares, without casualty. As they withdrew, a shout in German challenged them with, “What is going on down there? Who’s there?”

Another patrol from Companies F and G, three officers and six forward observers on skis, went as far as Corona and discovered mines laid bare by melted snow, under which, buried deep in the ground, were those other mines which were to give us so much trouble later on.

Probably the most successful patrol of the period left the Company G outpost at Roncoravecchia the next night, with Lieutenant OSCAR E. DUTTWEILER and fourteen enlisted men. They climbed the escarpment southeast of Pianello near where they had been fired on by the machine gun the night before. Here they waited until after 0200, watching three of the enemy move into a machine gun position. Following two scouts, Sgt. HERBERT E. STECKMAN and Pvt. BEN S. JACKSON, the patrol leader and the bazooka man, Sgt. LESLIE E. BROWN, had worked along the edge of the cliff. The first scout was able to inch up to within five feet of the emplacement. He slowly raised his Tommy gun into position as a Nazi stood up. He squeezed the trigger. One shot only rang out. The gun jammed. The enemy quickly opened up with four rounds, wounding the bazooka man, BROWN, in the leg. Sgt. BROWN, in spite of his wound, fired his bazooka and got a direct hit. The machine gun fire ceased. Sgt. STECKMAN called for the enemy in the emplacement to surrender. No one appeared from the ruined emplacement. STECKMAN then dumped two hand grenades into the position, silencing those within. A second machine gun opened up from beyond and below the first, and was grenaded and silenced. The patrol then withdrew along the ridge to pick up the wounded bazooka man, and was engaged with machine pistol fire from the north. A grenade was thrown and the firing ceased. The patrol picked up their wounded man, lowered him down the cliff and then, on an improvised stretcher, carried him back to Company G lines—a difficult feat.

Feb 10

On the night of 10 February, a patrol near Polla received automatic weapons fire and, at a distance of fifteen yards, exchanged grenades with the enemy—three each. The enemy grenades landed within ten feet. The patrol suffered one minor casualty: a fragment entered the calf of Pfc. ROBERT H. PFOHL. The enemy then withdrew across a draw and set up their light machine gun against the 87th patrol. After some shots, artillery was adjusted on the machine gun and the position was hit. Enemy casualties were not determined.

A snowshoe ascent of Mt. Grande was made during the day of 12 February for observation. The snow was waist deep; the trip was uneventful.

After several days of routine patrolling, Company G patrols again tackled “DUTTWEILER’s Escarpment” on the 14th. This time it had the strength of a raid, with one officer, thirty-two enlisted men and one artillery observer, plus twenty enlisted men and two officers with .50-caliber machine gun support from Company H. An enemy patrol got behind the raiding party, causing them to lay low until nearly daybreak. Consequently, when at 0550 of the 14th, they met enemy rifle and machine gun fire at fifteen yards from the scouts, and were concentrated upon by four machine guns from atop the escarpment, they were in an unfavorable position. They were unable to score effectively with eight grenades and a bazooka. The enemy positions were well-protected emplacements. German grenades began to come down. Artillery fire was called for and the party withdrew to a creek bed where they were pinned down again by mortar fire. Counter mortar and machine gun fire were called for, and, with daylight already upon them, the party withdrew. Thus ended for the time being the series of patrol actions on the escarpment. Lieutenant DUTTWEILER himself and S/Sgt. ROBERT C. CLUKAY were slightly wounded, but returned to duty within twenty-four hours.

Not all of the patrols have been mentioned, some of them important for the negative information they brought back. The I & R Platoon’s patrols should be mentioned here, if only for their importance in covering the area so that their men could lead the 1st Battalion to their objectives on D-Day.

The 2nd Battalion had been repeatedly shelled in Vidiciatico. For a long time their luck held. Finally, on 17 February at 1600, a direct hit on a Company G outpost caused the first deaths of the regiment in the European Theater. Killed in action were Pvt. BILLY J. THAXTON and Pvt. WARREN F. MAIN. One officer and four enlisted men had been wounded by artillery up to this time.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, while suffering no casualties, had drawn first blood from the enemy. By just a few hours, the 2nd Platoon of Company B had beaten DUTTWEILER’s patrol in hitting their first German.

CUTIGLIANO AREA

As has been noted, the 1st Battalion was delayed in their movement forward. The 3rd Battalion of the 85th, whom they were to relieve at Cutigliano, had scheduled a raid for the night of 3-4 February that Division was anxious to have them stage. Therefore the 1st Battalion did not complete their relief until just before midnight on the 5th, after opening an advance CP at Cutigliano on the 1st. The companies marched at night three or four miles from the detrucking point at la Lima. The relief was without incident.

The raid of the 85th on Mt. La Serra had been unsuccessful, for the flanking forces found themselves under flanking fire from still higher mutually supporting and well-dug bunkers. The 85th had suffered casualties. But the enemy seemed to have been stung into action. Two hours after Company B had occupied the half-dozen stone houses and the outposts of Sestaione, an eight-man patrol was detected entering the position. Outpost No. 1 of the 2nd Platoon chal-

lenged, and when unanswered, opened up with a BAR. At daybreak, a wounded German, hit three times, still lay in the snow in front of the position and became the first Prisoner of War, and the first known enemy shot by the regiment. At the PW cage, he quickly revealed to the integrator his unit: the 2nd Company of the 4th Mountain Battalion. He was part of a thirty-man platoon at Boscolungo.

Two 1st Battalion daylight patrols made no enemy contact, although one of them traced the footprints of a wounded man for a half-mile toward Pianosinatico. Partisans were used on these patrols and proved so valuable that they went with all 1st Battalion patrols from then on.

Company B had at Sestaione a system of four log-and-earth-covered dugouts for the outpost positions. These could be supported by machine gun and rifle fire from the upper windows of the defended houses. The lower windows were sandbagged; the upper one screened over with chicken wire to keep grenades out. The positions were constantly improved with barbed wire, alarms, and trip flares during the daytime. Jerry tested it regularly at night. All four outposts were interconnected with sound-powered telephones, controlled from the company CP. Captain CLARENCE H. SWEDBERG, commanding the company, designed this defense plan to overcome the difficulty presented by the problem of defending the bottom of a mountain canyon.

On the evening of the 6th and 7th, the night following the capture of the prisoner of war, an outguard reported movement on the right flank at 2140. A few moments later, Platoon Sergeant RAY WILSON started small arms fire at a group of enemy in some woods. At the same point as the attack of the night before, the enemy had infiltrated into town and assaulted the buildings with machine pistol fire and grenades. When a flare went up, fifteen enemy could be seen on the ridge to the north. Others were between the buildings, an estimated thirty in all. At 2350, mortar and artillery fire was brought down upon the front. The enemy retreated at 0045. There were no American wounded; but the following morning, traces of blood on the road and in the snow indicated several German casualties.

Positions in the defense were mutually supporting. All outguards were manned before dark. No man moved from his location once the fight had begun. On their second day of combat, these men effectively repulsed an attack, inflicting casualties on the enemy at no cost to themselves.

While this action was going on, Company K was closing on Mt. Caligi, just to the south, to relieve elements of the 85th Infantry. At 0200 Company K had moved up from la Lima to Company C at Piano d'Ontani whose mortars had assisted in the fight. Company K struggled up the icy mountain until 0630.

The tenseness of the front line was sometimes rudely shocked by the Italian natives living as normally as possible right at the elbow of the front-line soldier, and furnishing a comic opera touch. During the day, after Company B's defense and Company K's march, while fighting fervor was at high pitch, the 1st Battalion got into a difficulty with an Italian woman who was in the habit of passing through our lines to milk her cow. The excitement can be imagined—the cow had to be milked—the Italian language had to be coped with—a decision had to be reached. Finally, Major JOHN B. WOODWARD phoned to Regiment and the message came back, "Woman going through our lines to milk cow will have to bring cow back to our side."—end of message.

Darkness came and at 2130, the silence was broken again by the 2nd Platoon of Company B as they exchanged fire of automatic weapons and rifles with an eight- or ten-man enemy patrol, driving them off after a half-hour. After midnight, the enemy was back, harassing the company with fire of burp guns and rifles. Company B remained alert but held their fire. The following night, on the 8th, a four-man patrol was driven off from the same area just before 1900; and the platoon was fired upon by a machine gun. Several rounds of artillery were dropped on the en-

emy; but at one time the patrol had been able to get within 60 yards of the outpost. The patrol came back again just before dawn on the 9th. Late that day, Company C picked up an enemy Italian deserter at its lines, and moved him down to the PW cage for interrogation. He was a willing talker, but knew little except that he was a medic in the San Marco Marine Division. He revealed that he had treated German casualties on 7 February, confirming the belief that casualties had been inflicted by the 2nd Platoon, Company B, on one of the persistent raiding parties.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion was planning a daring raid of battalion strength on Mt. la Serra. The 3rd Battalion was to occupy the 1st Battalion positions. With this in view, Company K pulled back from Mt. Caligi, on being relieved by the 85th Infantry, and moved up with the rest of the battalion during the night of 11-12 February into the Cutigliano-la Lima area, ready to support the 1st when they took off on the night following. Company K was to relieve B, and L was to relieve C. Company I would relieve A in Cutigliano.

During the day, before the move, ten shells dropped in Cutigliano and a patrol had three rounds lobbed at it in the afternoon. The 3rd Battalion CP closed in Cutigliano at 0230, and the regiment thought of itself as being in its last night of peace and quiet before plunging into its first battle. So far, brushes with the enemy had been brief and sketchy, but the planned raid up on to the enemy's tightly held La Serra would initially commit the entire 1st Battalion and a band of Partisans, and might well blood a majority of the battalion. The raiding party, in honor of Lieutenant Colonel WILSON's hometown in Montana, was called "Task Force Kalispell." The raid was to be introduced by a loudspeaker system beaming out an appeal for the enemy to surrender. Good hot food was promised to be awaiting their arrival in the American lines. Wines and other pleasures and comforts were touched on lightly.

At 1205 on 12 February, Brigadier General ROBINSON E. DUFF of Division tapped off all the pressure by informing Regiment that the "Red Plan" was off, by order of Corps. The 1st Battalion was withdrawn at once to San Marcello; the 3rd remaining in their positions. Then, after a few nights absence, as though to test the new company, a six- or eight-man German patrol appeared in the old area of the 2nd Platoon, Company B, now defended by the 2nd Platoon of Company K. The mortar section lit the area with flares, and Company M and the 616th laid down mortar and artillery fire. Two enemy were hit, but none captured. The enemy returned at 0315, possibly to remove their casualties, and another firefight opened. The 3rd Battalion went ahead with the public address plan and the broadcast bore fruit. The next day three Italian deserters came in from Pianosinatico and the San Marco Division.

Patrolling continued around Cutigliano until 1 February. On the 13th, a patrol on La Serra discovered the body of an American soldier, apparently from the last raid of the 85th. On the 14th, a patrol found and led in an RAF sergeant, pilot of a Spitfire shot down behind the lines two weeks previously. He had bailed out successfully, thereby owing his parachute packer 200 lire. The Partisan OSS organization had quickly hidden him and arranged for his passage through our lines. The sergeant was physically exhausted from his three-day trek over the mountainous terrain, and had great admiration for the tireless Partisan guide who climbed so easily and passed between lines at will. He told of a well-organized system at work behind the lines, not only for rescuing Allies, but also for harassing the Germans, and even holding towns for a time. Before a real German attack, the town would fall and no one would be there. The flyer was not only well fed and hidden, but was even entertained at a small dance. With typical British restraint, he spoke disparagingly of his own efforts and escapes, and made it sound rather easy, except for the walking.

On the 14th, five more Italian deserters passed through Company I, with three OSS agents, early in the morning. On the 15th, a rescued American flyer, First Lieutenant WILLIAM C.

TENCH, Thunderbolt pilot, 57th Fighter Group, was followed shortly through the lines by a German deserter, four Free French and about fifty-six Italians. This broke down into thirty-two in civilian clothes, five OSS men, one German prisoner of war and nineteen Italian prisoners of war. Lieutenant TENCH, who spent the night with the regiment, was, like the British pilot, exhausted. He had been shot down in November, and hurt his leg in landing with a damaged parachute. Since then, he had had all kinds of hair-raising close calls under the care of the Partisans. Much of the time he hid in the attic of a house in which German soldiers were quartered. At another time he had ridden a bicycle to town to get pictures taken for his faked Italian passport before the long trip via the "underground railroad" to the American lines. He was overwhelmed with being back safe.

Feb 15

On the night of the 16th, the 3rd Battalion was relieved in the Cutigliano-la Lima area by the 473rd Infantry, Reinforced, and withdrew to Popiglio and Momigno near San Marcello. The curtain rang down on the series of minor skirmishes and major enemy encounters in the snow-covered mountains about Cutigliano.

BELVEDERE OFFENSIVE

(16 FEB — 28 FEB)

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

The focus of attention now shifts from the Cutigliano area to San Marcello where the regimental staff, in Villa Biche, the former home of an Italian admiral, had been working up their part in the Divisional Attack Plan. Lieutenant General LUCIAN K. TRUSCOTT, commanding Fifth Army, accompanied by Major General WILLIS D. CRITTENBERGER, commanding IV Corps, and Major General GEORGE P. HAYS, commanding the 10th Mountain Division, gave a brief address to many of the 1st and 3rd Battalion and staff officers on the 9th of February. He spoke of the coming battle and of his high hopes and confidence in our future.

All kinds of aerial photos and maps of the Mt. Belvedere region were studied and distributed to the battalions. A wax relief map was built up from the map contours of the vital region, modeled, and cast in plaster for battalion distribution. The 37th Quartermaster War Dog Platoon, First Lieutenant ARCHER D. AKERS commanding, arrived one morning and was attached to the regiment, the platoon closing on the night of 16 February, with both scout and messenger dogs. The dogs, largely untried in Italy, had been very successful in the China-Burma-India Theater. The scout dogs worked with patrols at night and “alerted” toward strange patrols or gun positions while a safe distance away. The dog’s handler could intelligently interpret the “alert” as to direction and distance. The messenger dogs functioned by carrying messages forward from Battalion Headquarters to the forward companies during an operation. Unfortunately, the late date of their attachment caused the misuse of the dogs by one battalion during the coming battle.

Operations Memorandum No. 2, detailing the move of the 1st and 3rd Battalions to Vidiciatico for the operation, was delivered on 16 February. First Lieutenant WILLIAM C. MCGUCKIN, liaison officer, was meanwhile making a house-to-house canvass, preparatory for billeting the two battalions upon their arrival at crowded Vidiciatico. Assisted by an Italian-speaking sergeant, he went into all the rooms of each building in town, under the pretense of searching for an escaped soldier. Although the mountain village already overflowed with Italian families who had fled from the demolished front-line houses, billets were found to include every last soldier and the dogs. Copies of Field Order No. 5 were distributed on the night and early morning of 17-18 February, as the 1st Battalion was moving up to Vidiciatico.

The troops of the regiment were to jump off on the night of the 19th, at 2300, from the line of departure below Querciola. The battalions were to “seize, occupy, and defend” initial objectives prior to daylight. They were to drive generally north toward the town of Corona and then split off—the 2nd Battalion turning left toward Rocca Corneta and securing the little towns of Polla and C. Florio, and the 1st Battalion passing through Corona, turning right, moving up toward the summit of Mt. Belvedere and being prepared to relieve 3rd Battalion, 85th, after it had seized that position. The 3rd Battalion, 87th, was to remain in Corps reserve in Vidiciatico.

On the 18th, the night previous to our jump-off, the 1st Battalion, 86th, was to seize the long steep line of mountains starting west of, and running southwest from Rocca Corneta—the nearest of which is Pizzo di Campiano, overlooking the whole prospective battlefield.

On our right, the 85th Regiment would attack coincident with and parallel to us, moving to objectives along the Belvedere ridge to include the highest point, and the summit of Mt. Gorgolesco to the east.

The attack was to be supported by the 10th Mountain Division artillery plus some Corps artillery of 155 howitzers and guns. Tank and Tank Destroyer units would support; and the Air Corps would fly missions in close support, as close as 600 yards, as directed by "Rover Joe."

"The ground occupied will be held at all costs." This direct quote from the field order recalled the capture of Mt. Belvedere in November 1944 when after three days, an enemy counter-attack drove the Americans back disastrously. Three tanks still remained in Corona's ruins from this rout.

Every detail was checked and rechecked for the important movements on succeeding nights of the two battalions to Vidiciatico. The good road into Vidiciatico came from the east, up the Silla River valley, from the Reno River and Highway 64. This route ran parallel to the ridgeline of mountains—all held by the Germans from Mt. Castello to Mt. Belvedere. The whole road could be watched by the enemy from Silla to Vidiciatico, except when screened by the artificial smoke machine sending fog drifting up on the wind. Sometimes, by afternoon, the fog would reach all the way to Vidiciatico. Because of this exposure, troops could not be moved along this road. While jeeps might draw an occasional round or two from Jerry, a 2½-ton truck would bring a concentration. A convoy or a column of troops would have brought his full fury. So the troops must, of necessity, move in on foot over eight miles of back roads that were impassable for 2½-ton trucks.

The staff officers made the trip by jeep, up from the artificially smoked end of the valley for the final time, and opened the forward regimental CP at Vidiciatico at 1645 on 18 February. During the many jeep trips necessary for planning the operation, occasional shell bursts had been observed, but much more alarming were the seemingly stark-mad Brazilian drivers, careening through their fog-shrouded Brazilian Expeditionary Force area around Porretta Terme. The fog seemed more of a menace than the German artillery.

The night of 17-18 February, the 1st Battalion made the grueling march in heavy, natural fog from the truckhead to Vidiciatico, over the mud and ice of the back trail, closing five hours after detrucking, and well before daylight of the 18th. That day, artillery fell in Vidiciatico and in Querciola. The 1st Battalion had its initial casualties in each company, with one death: S/Sgt, WILLIAM C. MERRILL, Company D; and one wounded from Company B, four from Headquarters, the Company C commander, Captain ALFRED C. EDWARDS, and Second Lieutenant GEORGE J. HAYS, son of the division commander, from Company B. Both of the officers returned to duty the same day.

Feb 18

Before daylight on the morning of the 19th, the 3rd Battalion made the long march over the rough trail into Vidiciatico. Pfc. JOE I. RAMIREZ became the first casualty of the 3rd Battalion as more shellfire greeted the battalion.

On the night of the 18th, just north of Querciola, Company C had relieved Company C of the 85th, who had temporarily manned our right outposts to become familiar with the ground over which they must attack. Company E was in position on the left, just south of Case Buio.

Forward reconnaissance was made. In the evening, a party of 2nd Battalion scouts and officers were led by Cpl. BENNETT L. BOGGESS of the I & R Platoon, to a point just below Corona. BOGGESS returned and led a party forward to lay wire. T/5 ROBERT W. PARKER led similar parties out from the 1st Battalion to a point above Corona. The scout dogs, too, had made brief reconnaissance patrols of both sectors.

The 86th Mountain Infantry had begun its advance about 2000 on the 18th, and before dawn had accomplished the remarkable feat of climbing, storming, and occupying the precipitous mountain wall on the left of the 87th with only one man wounded. Ropes and rock climbers had

been used in places, so steep was the ascent. The surprise was complete, and a number of prisoners of war were taken before they had time to offer resistance. This capture, by the 86th, 18 hours prior to the attack by the remainder of the Division, denied vital observation to the Germans, and raised the hopes of the regiment tremendously.

All during the 19th of February, Querciola and Vidiciatico were bursting with troops of the 87th and supporting units, and both towns were shelled lightly. Attached or in support, in addition to the War Dog Platoon, were the 1st Platoon, Company B, 84th Chemical Battalion; the 616th Field Artillery Battalion; Company C, 126th Engineers; the 751st Tank Battalion; the Interrogators of Prisoners of War Team; the Air Corps Rover Joe outfit to give direct air support; and several parties of Partisans.

Feb 19

BATTLE BAPTISM (19 FEB – 20 FEB)

The night of D-Day was clear and cold with both friendly and enemy artillery sounding off at a slightly increased tempo. Company C was already in the assembly area. Company B left Vidiciatico at 2000, marching the three miles to Querciola in column of twos. Company A followed, remaining in reserve in Querciola. By this time, Companies F and G were already in their assembly areas before Case Buio, where Company E was to remain in reserve. The weapons companies, D and H, had attached their machine gun platoons to the two leading rifle companies of respective battalions, and kept the mortars and .50-caliber machine guns under battalion control. All companies crossed the line of departure on time, 2300, and moved off into the cold, clear night, flashing with frequent artillery bursts. The moon was about to rise, and the long bands of blue light overhead reached sharper and sharper back to the searchlights far to the southeast across the Silla Valley.

1st Battalion

By midnight, the 1st Battalion had moved out into some places as far as 700 yards from the line of departure, while the 2nd was 300 yards out. As yet there had been no enemy contact.

Five minutes later, Company B was fired upon, 800 yards out. Two burp guns opened up. Hand grenades were thrown in response, but the company was pinned down by machine gun fire and artillery bursts until after 0300. T/5 ROBERT W. PARKER of the I & R Platoon, who was to guide Company B through the minefields, moved back and forth between the leading scouts while the company was stopped, exposing himself to the fire. Excited bazooka men were neglecting to pull firing pins, and sent back the message through 1st Battalion at 0038 that the ammunition was no good. One of the two scout dogs, which were unadvisedly being used in the actual attack, became too excited while the company was stopped, and whined and barked. Both dogs had to be withdrawn at 0030 while under fire. Meanwhile, Company C, at 0030, was being fired upon while moving slowly through minefields. They were led by Cpl. BENNETT L. BOGGESS, of the I & R Platoon, and Pfc. EDWARD D. STACKWICK, Company C scout. The terrain had been patrolled previously by the I & R Platoon, and also by another pair of scout dogs and their handlers. One dog, Tarzan, handled by T/5 CLIFFORD W. MORTENSEN, had definitely located two gun positions the night before. Both dogs worked successfully with the company on the night of the attack until the first contact with the enemy.

At about 0045, while still in the minefield, BOGGESS and STACKWICK crawled forward, under fire from six burp guns on the company, from the right flank near Corona, and cut the barbed wire entanglements. At 0114, they were still cutting through the barbed wire and could hear company G on their left. The enemy flares from Corona and Belvedere made the progress slow. At about 0200, the 1st Platoon and part of the 2nd, following BOGGESS and STACKWICK, became separated from the rest of the company, and moving over a ridge, spotted four men. A

flare lit up the area, and two Germans could be seen running toward them. Each of the scouts, BOGGESS and STACKWICK, nailed a Nazi before he could get far enough away to reveal the American position. They then threw grenades over the ridge and moved forward. From the brush, a German surrendered to this advance element and told one of the men, who spoke German, of a dugout with five other Germans who wanted to surrender. STACKWICK made over to the bunker, jammed his gun through the port, and three men and a lieutenant came out—hands in the air. The lieutenant requested permission to retrieve his helmet, and the foursome was herded to the rear. BOGGESS moved with his group back 75 yards below the crest of the ridge, from where they held off a small counterattack from the right flank. They fired steadily at a machine pistol until the rest of the company could work up to the ridge and drive the Germans back.

Captain ALRED C. EDWARDS, the company commander, had led Company C into the attack although wounded in the hand earlier in the day while making a reconnaissance. Near Corona, he was struck in the leg by small arms fire, and had to be evacuated from the fight. First Lieutenant JAMES H. PENROSE had also been wounded and evacuated earlier.

At 0300, Company C had reached Corona, but B was still taking casualties from grazing fire from Mt. Belvedere. Artillery fire was planned for the area between Corona and Belvedere. This was called off, for at 0320, Company C was past Corona, and going on up, and B was finally able to move forward. A few minutes later, B and C had gained contact beyond Corona, moving up the slope. Word came in at this point that 3rd Battalion, 85th, on the right, were also advancing and were only 300 yards short of the summit of Belvedere.

Feb 19

By 0430, Companies B and C were on their objectives on Belvedere. Company A was given the task of mopping up Corona, bypassed by C. They reached Corona at 0615 and, engaging at once in a firefight, overcame the resistance—killing seven (counted) Germans and capturing twenty, while suffering one dead and four wounded. Pfc. LEE H. CHEW, of Chinese descent, was shot and killed while leading forward an element of the 2nd Platoon. By dawn, the 1st Battalion estimated thirty-five prisoners of war and twelve or fifteen casualties. Both figures had to be revised upward. Company B, up to the following nightfall, had suffered eleven wounded. Company C—three killed, Pfc. MARVIN E. HINER, Pvt. HERBERT W. DILKES, and Pvt. CHARLES YUPA, and ten wounded. Company D—two dead, Sgt. WILLIAM F. MURPHY and Pfc. FRED FLOYD, and two wounded. Company A—one dead and five wounded.

After daybreak, Company C, up on Belvedere, still had a fight on its hands to secure the ridge above Valpiana. The 2nd Platoon was repelled on its first attempt by heavy fire with some casualties. A small patrol from the 1st Platoon assaulted and neutralized the positions. Several prisoners emerged, hands in the air, and Sgt. WILLIAM F. MURPHY and some others went forward to make them prisoners of war. Then the Nazis pulled their common trick—they suddenly hit the ground and other Nazis behind them began firing. Sgt. MURPHY of Company D was shot and killed—others were wounded. The enemy soldiers were eliminated to a man. Company C took no further prisoners of war.

Company B was counterattacked after daybreak at 0730, and at 0930. They took two prisoners, one wounded, and the attack was over. The 1st Battalion started to receive considerable artillery fire on Belvedere the first morning, but it was neutralized effectively by Rover Joe. Company A stopped some sniping near Corona.

2nd Battalion

On the left, shortly after midnight, the 1st Platoon of Company G veered right to attack enemy positions. East of their objective, the area to the right of Polla, they struck a minefield

shortly after midnight. Ten men were wounded from the 1st and 2nd Squads. The platoon continued forward, overrunning a mortar position between Polla and Corona. By this time, the whole of Company G was under automatic weapons fire from Polla. Here the platoon dug in. Communication with the company had been lost at 0100. At dawn they knocked out a machine gun and four snipers. They remained all day in dug-in positions north of the line Polla-Corona.

On their left, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were also held up by minefields. Four of the company's Partisans were killed by mines. The company was unable to secure Polla until after daybreak. Two squads reached the 2nd Platoon objective, but had to withdraw until dawn because of exposure to friendly fire. At 0330, the 126th Engineers started up to help the company clear a path through minefields before dawn. After daylight, Company G's left elements were hit by enemy reinforcements, but dispersed them and took two prisoners. It wasn't until 1035 that Company G's position, 200 yards west of Polla, was finally confirmed and reported to Regiment.

Company F, on G's left, had had rough going, too. Their first enemy contact came at twenty minutes after midnight, and at 0220, they were pinned down before C. Florio, while Company G floundered in the minefields. At 0324, Company F was still pinned down by mortar fire, but the right platoon was flanking around on C. Florio from which heavy fire was coming. C. Florio was under friendly artillery fire by this time. It was during this flanking movement that First Lieutenant JOHN P. BENSON, JR., directing his platoon under sustained fire across a field to support the flanking unit, was shot and killed.

By 0400, Company F was in position for assault. At daybreak, C. Florio and all objectives were stormed and taken. Company F killed three (counted) Germans and captured fifty-five, losing three killed and nineteen wounded. Those killed were: Pvt. CLARENCE E. CAMPBELL, Sgt. WALTER R. STRUBEL, and Lieutenant BENSON. At 0615, the company was reorganized. Mopping up went on throughout the morning.

For some time after 0400, 2nd Battalion was out of communication with both forward companies. The dog team of Cpl. WILLIAM D. DAVIS and T/5 HERBERT SPENCER, with Rex and Mack, reestablished communications to Company F.

The 2nd Battalion, running into very stiff resistance, had to call on artillery support from the rear, and from the 86th positions up on Pizzo di Campiano to the left, as well as air support, after daylight, on Valle and Marne, just behind their objectives. One diving Thunderbolt dropped its bomb squarely on one of the buildings in Polla, apparently mistaking the village for Marne, about one kilometer to the north. Some Company G men were occupying the very building and were badly battered. Prisoners came in after daybreak in batches of twelve, sixteen, and thirty-five—and finally, the battalion reported fifty-seven prisoners of war coming up from near Rocca Corneta. These prisoners arrived at the regimental CP just as Generals TRUSCOTT, CRITTENBERGER, and HAYS arrived to get first-hand information of the attack. The impression on them was very favorable. Late in the morning Company E, supported by artillery and air, took Pianello and finally captured well-patrolled "DUTTWEILER's Escarpment," swarming all over it without casualty.

Company G had suffered the heaviest of any company in the regiment. By nightfall, seven had been killed: Pfc. LEONARD C. CRISP, Pfc. CAMILLE J. DESCHAIINE, Pfc. FRANCIS E. LOWERY, Pfc. FORREST M. MUELLER, Pfc. BURTON E. PIERCE, Pfc. WILBUR D. REDDING, and Pfc. EDWIN G. VAN AUKEN. Twenty-nine had been wounded. Company H had one man killed, Cpl. JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH, and one wounded.

THE BATTLE'S GAIN

Feb 20

From the morning of the 20th until the unit was relieved a week later, there were no major developments. The positions were steadily improved tactically. The balance of the casualties occurred during the attack and the day of the 20th. By midnight of the 20th, there had been eighteen deaths and ninety-one wounded in the regiment during the 24-hour period. Shellfire took its toll during the following eight days, killing sixteen and wounding forty-four. Only when our planes were in the air were the men sure of a respite from artillery or mortar fire. Counterattacks occurred with decreasing frequency. All were easily beaten back with heavy losses to the enemy and at little cost to ourselves.

Shortly after daybreak, the success of the 87th Mountain Infantry's first battle was becoming as clear as the close-at-hand outline of Mt. Belvedere. All companies had attained their objectives. Over one hundred enemy dead lay among our positions. During the day, 115 prisoners of war moved through our cage. These prisoners, talking freely, revealed the enemy's side of the story to S/Sgt. LEO A. HANDEL of the Interrogators of Prisoners of War Team.

The first prisoners, shaking with cold and shock, came from the 1st Battalion zone, and had no idea what had hit them—so swiftly had the battle swept over them. The enemy main line of resistance, running from Mt. Belvedere to Rocca Corneta, had been manned from east to west by the 6th Company, the 8th Company, the 5th Company, and the 7th Company—all part of the 1044th Regiment, 232nd Division, and reinforced by elements of the 14th Anti-tank Company, also of the 1044th, which had constructed strong points and had set up specially-trained antitank squads equipped with antitank close combat weapons. The companies averaged eighty to a hundred men on 19 February.

The 5th and 6th Companies were virtually wiped out by the first impact of our attack. Most of the men not killed were regrouped—at the Prisoner of War cage. Forty men of the 5th Company and 43 men of the 6th Company were all present and accounted for less than twelve hours after the 87th Mountain Infantry made first battle with the supermen.

The enemy, it was revealed, had committed its first tactical reserves at 0400 of the 20th. One platoon of the 1st Company, 232nd Reconnaissance Battalion, was ordered to counterattack west of Mt. Belvedere. The counterattack was broken up before it got started, and 14 prisoners of war were taken by the 2nd Battalion.

The capture of the company commander of the 6th Company, Lieutenant Kaeser, facilitated the compilation of intelligence. This was the lieutenant captured by the Company C scouts. The lieutenant at first was one of the few captives reluctant to talk, but he talked willingly and gladly when his Red Cross card was about to be marked "deserted." By such a method is the Nazi's own inhuman cruelty turned against itself. Lest the Gestapo punish his family at home for his being declared a deserter, the lieutenant talked eagerly.

It was noticed that all prisoners of war talked freely when questioned. They often asked when first questioned, "Do I have to tell you?" When answered in the affirmative, their qualms vanished. They obeyed blindly as they had been taught to obey. A few general conclusions were gathered from these prisoners of war, captured in February 1945, five and a half years after Germany's sweep into Poland. First, they didn't expect mistreatment as prisoners of war. Most of them did expect Germany to be sterilized or enslaved at the war's end. Some of them, therefore, believed it best to die, for the conviction was general that the war was lost. Still, seventy per cent of the enemy troops are said to be potential deserters who can't desert lest they be either shot by us, shot by a German officer or NCO (all of whom are authorized to shoot on mere suspicion), or finally lest their families be punished. They are all concerned about the danger of recapture and anxious to get safely to America. Many ask at once about citizenship. All prisoners of war seem

to be well informed about current war developments, and to have read avidly our propaganda sheet, "Front Post."

However, in spite of this, the German was still an excellent soldier; his equipment and gear was of the best, and while he ate but once a day, his food kept him going. It made no difference to him that his resistance was senseless. When asked what he thought about the war, he answered dully, "I am not supposed to think. I am a soldier." Most of his responses were dull. About the only conviction frequently expressed was that Americans don't take war seriously—that for the American, "war is a sport."

Unfortunately, it was quite evident that a hopeless German remains just as deadly behind a weapon as one looking forward to victory, for nothing dismays him as he doggedly kills and waits with resignation to be killed or given a chance to surrender.

HOLDING THE GAIN

Rover Joe started operating on the morning of 20 February. At about 0730, the first mission was run against Ca Valle, a village northwest of Polla. He bombed, strafed, and dropped rockets, but the results could not be seen. At 0920, he hit artillery positions at Marne and returned to finish up fifteen minutes later when his bombs dropped too far north. During this first day, two or three bombs were dropped by mistake on Polla.

The front line troops came to love Rover Joe, who operated under the direction of the aerial observation plane called "Horsefly." Jerry was forced to keep his weapons silent while planes were in the air. Typical Rover Joe reports were like this one at 1100: "One bomb near hit—building demolished, remainder of bombs within target area; five or six Germans fleeing from buildings; three or four killed; observed flashes from mortar in another area; will bomb at once." The sight of the diving plane, the falling bombs, or flash of rockets, and the following sound of strafing or the tremendous bomb blast, was a heartening one to the soldier lying in his hole, harassed by artillery. Many a mountain trooper, in a poignant instant, forgave the Air Corps for years of feuding in Denver.

TANKS AND MINES

All during the first morning on Belvedere, the men dug in, consolidated their positions and made readjustments. Occasionally, there was sniper fire, and a few rounds of artillery. Usually it was quiet. At noon, one platoon of medium tanks and one platoon of tank destroyers were on our right flank at Calcinara, ready to move forward to the close defense of front lines against the expected counterattacks. Later, the tank platoon tried to move up the trail on to the high shoulder of Belvedere. The lead tank hit a mine and blew up. The assistant driver was blown clear, and the tank commander was heroically rescued from the burning tank by First Lieutenant MELVIN S. BARRETT of the 126th Engineers (A Company) just before its 75-mm ammunition began exploding. Three crewmembers were killed inside the tank.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, a platoon of medium tanks was supporting our left flank with fire from Cse. Buiio. A platoon of light tanks was in Querciola. A platoon of mediums was in reserve.

The engineer company had been sweeping the road for mines up to Corona since early morning, and had ordered up a Brockway truck with a treadway bridge to a blown-out section of road just below Corona.

The 3rd Battalion, placed in IV Corps reserve one hour after H-Hour, was released to regiment at 1230, and moved out of Vidiciatico shortly after 1400 to go into position between Valpiana (north of Corona) and Polla. As they moved up on either side of the road, the Brockway

truck blew up, 300 yards below the bridge site, killing a passing soldier, but not injuring the driver. The road was to have been cleared here, but at this point large charges had been buried four feet deep, and the area was covered with buried shrapnel, which threw the mine detectors off. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion was being shelled as it moved slowly up the road, and suffered casualties. An American rocket plane, apparently assuming that these were German troops, dove down and fired his rockets, which just missed the road, but fortunately exploded harmlessly. Rover Joe quickly called him off.

The tanks were anxious to get to Corona where they could silence the German artillery coming in from the west. At about 1730, a bulldozer proved that the road was still not free of mines. As the bulldozer moved past the wrecked Brockway, a terrific blast hurled him into the air and over to the side, in front of the truck. The driver, thrown thirty feet into the air, was uninjured, but the dozer was a twisted mass of steel. A deep crater was left in the road. The engineers went back to their probing.

In the evening the road was pronounced cleared, and a daring tank commander was willing to risk running his tank through to Corona. The Tank Platoon commander forbade it. IV Corps then stepped in and ordered two platoons of tanks to Valpiana—beyond Corona—at once. They were sure of a heavy counterattack in the morning, and wanted tanks there to stop it. It was 2300 when the order went through.

The first tank rumbled up to the ruined truck and dozer. In a few tense moments it was past them, on up to the bridge site from which scores of mines had been removed, down into the dry draw and up on to the road again. From there it moved up the road beyond Corona without mishap. A second tank confidently followed, reached the truck and dozer, and blew up. This was after midnight. Less than an hour later, a three-quarter ton weapons carrier of the 3rd Battalion drew up behind the wreckage, found another mine and went up in smoke, injuring its two occupants. The pile of wreckage at this point in the road was tremendous.

Just before three in the morning, the first tank was reported in position at Valpiana with two 75-mm pack howitzers of the Anti-tank Platoon, and two .50-calibers and three bazookas on the left flank. Before dawn, however, these tanks too had to be abandoned after striking a mine between Corona and Valpiana.

The engineers, during the following two days, blasted the road with Bangalore torpedoes, detonating the remaining mines. Ultimately, one section of tanks took up positions along the Corona road, south of Valpiana, and another section moved near Cse. Buio where their fire was most effective. Meanwhile, there were no tanks at Valpiana for the counterattack against Company I the morning of the 21st. But as will be seen, Company I could scarcely have dealt more effectively with the counterattack had it been supported by a 45,000-ton battleship.

COUNTERATTACKS

The 3rd Battalion closed in Corona before dark of the 20th. The battalion CP was established there. Pfc. PIERRE B. ERHARD had been killed and several wounded. Company I moved forward to positions beyond Corona, near Valpiana, relieving Company A, who in turn moved up to the right of Company B on Belvedere, plugging the gap between the right flank and the 85th. Company K moved down to Polla between Corona and Company G, allowing G to form in more depth. Company F remained out on the left beyond C. Florio.

At 1845, Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER ordered commanding officers of the 1st and 3rd Battalions to “walk your positions—check final protective lines, select normal barrages of artillery and primary target areas for mortars, to insure that the fire plan is coordinated and that the de-

fense is tightly buttoned up.” The line companies settled down in their dark foxholes to await the certain enemy counterattacks at first light or sooner.

On the morning of 21 February, the enemy launched counterattacks against almost every front-line company. The 1st Battalion, atop Belvedere, was hit first. At about 0610, Company B was attacked after six enemy had infiltrated into old positions. The enemy hit with a sporadic barrage of fire from machine pistols, snipers, mortars, and 88s. Company fire pinned them down, and five came out—hands up. The sixth opened up with an automatic weapon, causing casualties. By 0730, the action had terminated. Six enemy were killed. Two of our men were wounded.

Feb 21

Meanwhile, Company C had been hit more decisively. After a few rounds of early morning artillery, at about 0630, seventy or eighty Germans moved up on to the nose of Belvedere—four hundred yards above Valpiana. Company C was bitter and determined after being tricked by the German ruse the morning before. They waited silently in their positions until the enemy was within a hundred yards. Not a shot was fired as the enemy moved up. They made targets as big as houses. Suddenly the waiting men opened fire. Eighteen enemy were killed and four wounded. Some of the bodies were hit by more than one man. The final count reported twenty-five enemy dead. There were no prisoners taken by Company C.

The 2nd Battalion put artillery on the German advances coming from Polla towards Companies G and F, and the advances never developed. Later in the day, two prisoners of war, taken by Company F, confirmed that the attacks had been broken up completely by the artillery. However, while T/Sgt. NORMAND W. CONNOLLY of Company G was holding back the fire of his platoon to collect two prisoners of war, a sniper shot and killed him, indoctrinating Company G in Nazi tactics.

The 3rd Battalion had the most hectic time. First, there was considerable shelling before day-break, with casualties. Some of it was friendly, and at least one death resulted from friendly fire. Then, after dawn, enemy mortar concentrations started falling in—raising difficulty with the communications. Artillery and mortar support was limited due to the lack of communication.

Meanwhile, Company K was hit in two places. The company OP (observation post) had been manned all night by S/Sgt. RAYMOND T. SECORD, and S/Sgt. EDMUND D. BENNETT. They spotted a 12-man patrol working up the hill with a machine gun. Artillery was called for but the lines were out. The enemy was within 500 yards of the 3rd Platoon positions. Sgt. BENNETT broke up the spearhead at 0730 by hitting the lead man with a BAR, and the German patrol took cover in a draw below the open slope. Two more of the enemy were killed by the 3rd Platoon while trying to escape down the draw back to the German lines. Pfc. VIRGIL CORNETT patiently waited for the remainder to run the gauntlet—finally getting a shot at two and bringing one down wounded as they dashed for safety. The other was brought down by other fire, and the wounded man was captured, totaling four killed and one wounded and captured, plus a machine gun for the platoon. The 2nd Platoon, too, had gotten into the firefight and added another prisoner of war.

THE HEIMER INCIDENT

I Company’s counterattack was the strangest and the most brilliant too. Pfc. MALFORD C. HEIMER, in his foxhole before dawn, heard noises in the pink stucco house behind his position at Valpiana. Keeping the two blankets wrapped around him, but leaving helmet and rifle on the parapet, he jumped up to tell the fellows in the house to quiet down. The “fellows” were German, and meeting him outside his foxhole, they shoved weapons in HEIMER’s face and took him

prisoner back to the house. HEIMER's buddy, Pvt. JOHN A. O'ROURKE, saw HEIMER being led away, and reached for his rifle, just as four more enemy opened up on him. The squad leader, S/Sgt. THEODORE B. REINERO, also made out the captured HEIMER being led away in the dark. He quickly had the whole squad open fire at a distance of fifty yards, letting HEIMER take his chances. HEIMER made a run for it with the Germans. They barricaded themselves, HEIMER included, in the stone house, HEIMER on the floor in a little hallway. His captors were good to him, offering him cigarettes and making him comfortable, so he went to sleep there on the floor. A sharp firefight soon began. Company and supporting units opened up with M-1s, .50-caliber machine guns, mortars, and 75-mm pack howitzers, pouring everything into the demolished house. Dawn came. There was a good deal of enemy firing from all sides, especially down from the ridge to the east in front of Company C. Burp guns, machine pistols, and German bazookas were coming from several directions. The forward 75-mm was knocked out, injuring Second Lieutenant ROBERT S. KELLAR.

For a while, HEIMER had slept. The Germans had covered him with a raincoat, but the house smashing up around him settled that. Waking, he found his captors had had enough. Two wounded were shouting that they wanted to surrender. Sgt. REINERO killed one enemy making a break for the house as the light increased. He worked his way forward with S/Sgt. CHARLES E. ERNST to the pink house. ERNST took three prisoners, and three more surrendered to him from positions near a haystack. By this time, REINERO had reached the house, ready to blast the inside. HEIMER was yelling for him to hold his fire, and one Kraut appeared disarmed at the doorway, followed by seven or eight others.

Down the road, Pfc. ROBERT DUDLEY and Pfc. JOSEPH POLUNCI had worked their way down to some other houses. With POLUNCI covering, DUDLEY had flushed out somewhere around a dozen more prisoners from the ruined houses. Altogether, 31 prisoners of war were taken, three of them wounded. Seven of the enemy were found killed. Three machine guns were taken, several burp guns, rocket launchers, piles of grenades and ammunition.

All of the 31 prisoners were from the 741st Mountain Infantry. They had marched for seven continuous days from the Po Valley, and had immediately been sent by truck up into the line.

TANK SCARE

In the late afternoon of the 21st, Company I moved small elements into Valpiana and on to the ridge above. A troop column had been observed at various times throughout the afternoon moving south toward Valpiana. This was a column of foot troops with equipment, followed by vehicles, and accompanied by one armored vehicle. The words "armored vehicle" soon became "tanks," and the 3rd Battalion, before long, expected to be hit by a column of tanks. What actually happened was somewhat different.

The column was first sighted shortly before 1300 and again at 1350. It was mistakenly called an armored column instead of a column with armor. Rover Joe's reconnaissance couldn't spot any armored column. At 1600, though, he could find, and did take care of, a column of foot troops, bombing and strafing them. Also at 1605 he destroyed the one armored vehicle in the column. That was all the armor there was. Reports kept coming in from delayed sources, and at 1700, Rover Joe went back to make sure. At 1710, the battalions were receiving the original alert, no final result of Rover Joe's work having come in. By 1725, Rover Joe's mission was complete. Fifteen minutes before that, the 85th declared the road clear of living troops and the vehicles destroyed.

The companies, however, had received a final report that the armored column was only 500 yards away at 1700. However, friendly artillery searching out this column was falling on Com-

panies C and I. The 616th Field Artillery Battalion was notified. The fire was lifted and finally registered in front of Company I at Valpiana, and the threat was dissipated in excess.

ROVER JOE

On the 21st, Rover Joe had been all set to go, but received no target until early afternoon. The 87th targets, numbers 1 and 2, were troop activities and gun positions which were taken care of. Then at 1600, target number 3 appeared. It was the column of foot troops marching south from Castelluccio toward Valpiana. Rover Joe dived in. The first report tersely stated: "(1) Area covered. (2) All bombs on target. (3) Building afire—believe ammunition dump. (4) Strafed enemy vehicles three times, armored vehicle destroyed. (5) Strafed fleeing personnel five times. (6) Also strafed gun positions east—no ack-ack."

Altogether, Rover Joe reported on nine targets during the afternoon of the 21st, all in the area just forward of our positions. All but one target was well covered by the fighter-bombers with bombs, rockets, and strafing. Many direct hits were scored on enemy-occupied buildings.

Night settled with the 85th carrying forward the attack on the right. The 3rd Battalion 86th was passing through 2nd Battalion 85th to attack Mt. della Torraccia at dawn. Torraccia was the last of the initial objectives. On the left, the 10th Anti-tank Battalion and 10th Reconnaissance Troop up on the Mt. Serrasiccia-Pizzo di Campiano ridge had relieved the 86th, who in turn had displaced to the right.

FURTHER CASUALTIES

AT 2200, Major GEORGE A. FELCH was accidentally shot and killed. Major FELCH, commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, was checking on outposts, and was fired at by a rifleman ordered to "shoot at anything moving." The death of Major FELCH was a shock to all the officers and enlisted men of the regiment. Major JOHN C. MCKAY, executive officer, assumed temporary command.

During the twenty-four-hour period, there were a good many casualties largely from artillery. Those killed were: Sgt. CHARLES W. LEVITT of Company I; S/Sgt. JOSEPH A. POIRIER, JR. of Company K; Sgt. PAUL N. FRYE, JR., Pfc. ROBERT M. POST, and Sgt. GEORGE DAY, JR. of Company M.

Artillery was active all night, and during the next morning. No counterattacks occurred, although the 2nd Battalion did allow a two-man, and later, a twelve-man patrol, to advance within a hundred yards and go away, while holding their fire. The 3rd Battalion killed a single enemy.

At 1220 of the 22nd, the regimental commander, Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER, was wounded by a shell fragment in the left knee, just in rear of Company B. Colonel FOWLER had been forward frequently. His orderly, Pvt. NORMAN W. DORSEY, had been wounded on the 20th, and his driver's helmet nicked on the 21st. All members of the regiment were greatly relieved to learn that the colonel's wound was not serious, and his early return expected. By his order, Lieutenant Colonel JOHN F. SCHMELZER took command of the 87th Mountain Infantry.

There were other casualties that day from artillery fire; among them Pvt. THEODORE FRITCHIE of Company G, was killed.

Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS, G-2 of the 10th Mountain Division, took command of the 3rd Battalion, 87th Mountain Infantry, returning to the regiment after more than a year's absence.

BATTLE ACTION CONCLUDED

By February 22, when Colonel FOWLER was wounded, the operation had been concluded in every sense. The objectives were long since consolidated, and excellent defensive positions built.

Feb 22

The strongest and most coordinated counterattack the enemy seemed able to put on—against our air power and superior observation—was withstood on the morning of the 21st and a great percentage of the enemy troops that were involved were killed or captured. The enemy was proven even more unable to counterattack with tanks, for he couldn't move his armor up into position under the watchful eye of Rover Joe. The only effective force the enemy seemed able to bring on our troops was his artillery and mortar fire, and this remained heavy throughout the week.

WIRE MEN

Some mention should be made of the Communications Section for their part in the operation. The wiremen were the kingpins of the communications phase of the action, since most orders, reports, and messages went over the phone. Initially, wire was laid to all companies from battalions, and regiment had two wires to each attacking battalion. Communication between regiment and battalion was usually very good. There were periods on the morning after the attack when communication with the 1st Battalion was not continuous between 0400 and 0800. The combined factors of artillery barrages and a platoon of our tanks kept taking out the lines quicker than the linemen could repair them. Later, after the 3rd Battalion was put into the line, their wire was blown out several times by artillery concentrations, shells twice landing within 25 yards of the switchboard. Sgt. GEORGE DAY, JR. was killed laying wire during this period. Minefield explosions occasionally blew out one of the double lines laid to the 1st or 3rd Battalion. The work of all the linemen was exemplary. Particularly outstanding, under heavy fire, were S/Sgt. KARL K. KIELHOFER and T/5 HERBERT W. STEINGRABER, who were largely responsible for the success of the wire communication.

The radio section was on "stand by" except for the brief times the lines were out. Message Center functioned smoothly, delivering overlays and written messages by jeep and foot under heavy shellfire.

The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, in addition to the guide work and patrols mentioned, manned an OP throughout the operation, searched German dead, and guarded the prisoners of war.

MEDICS

Heroic work was done by the Medical Detachment during the weeklong operation. They suffered more than their share of casualties while aiding wounded men. First Lieutenant WILLIAM H. MILLMAN, while his 3rd Battalion aid station was under heavy shellfire, repeatedly left his shelter to give medical attention, finally being mortally wounded as he rose to give aid during a barrage. Many others could be mentioned, but Pfc. JOSEPH P. PRYCE demonstrated the common spirit of the medics when he insisted on attempting to get to a wounded man even though two other attempts had failed. After being wounded twice, he kept others from making any attempt to reach him for two hours, and when he was finally evacuated to the aid station he demanded that other cases be attended to first.

SITUATION 22 FEBRUARY

During the morning of 22 February, Major General CRITTENBERGER, commanding IV Corps, and Brigadier General CRANE, artillery officer, visited the front and expressed great admiration for the mountain troops. Supplies were, by then, going up the mountain by mule rather than pack board. The enemy dead were being evacuated. That afternoon, Rover Joe had a busy time knocking out tanks and self-propelled guns in front of Companies C and I. Enemy artillery had been very quiet all afternoon. The road up to Corona had been declared open for jeeps and tanks for the final time by the engineers, who had used large quantities of explosives and Bangalore torpedoes to detonate the remaining mines. Several old demolition men, veterans in the Ital-

ian campaign, declared that the mine condition of the Corona road was the equal of anything seen in Italy. One of the few problems remaining was the “rock,” as Rocca Corneta was called, sticking up against the left flank. This had been shelled steadily.

Before 2100 that night, Rocca Corneta was occupied by a party of 27 Partisans and Pfc. EDWARD PALEY, an intelligence scout. He was the only American soldier in the party. The “rock” had been abandoned by the enemy, leaving only trip wires and much equipment, including some American weapons. The church and other buildings atop the fortress-like pile of rock were empty, battered shells from the constant barrage and bombardment.

The German artillery was very heavy through the 23rd and 24th. Those killed were: Pfc. MARVIN H. HOFFMAN of Company F, Pfc. HERBERT G. YARNELL of Company C, Pfc. WILLIAM CAMPBELL, JR. and LOUIE A. ORDAZ of Company I. It wasn't until the 25th that no artillery casualties were suffered. There was, from time to time, some friendly artillery dropping into our area, especially on the 24th, but as far as could be determined, no further casualties were from friendly fire.

Feb 23

PATROL ACTION

Some patrolling was done at night by both sides and on the afternoon of the 23rd, each battalion was ordered by Division to send out daylight patrols to gather information on enemy front-line positions. The patrol from 1st Battalion, led by Second Lieutenant JAMES ANDERSON III, was an interesting one. One thousand yards forward with the lead scout on the ridge of the nose, above and north of Valpiana, burp guns opened up from enemy bunkers both east and west of the nose. One soldier was hit in the shoulder and wounded lightly. The patrol was badly caught in crossfire, but fire was returned and the German in the left bunker was hit and killed. German mortar fire was apparently being directed by telephone by an enemy observer, seen off to the right of an American OP. The patrol was directed by radio to withdraw with the wounded man. The withdrawal was accomplished by covering fire and movement while under rifle, grenade, and mortar fire. Rifle grenades were fired back, but friendly mortar fire was not brought on to the enemy. As the patrol cleared the ridge top, artillery time-fire was called for on the nose. The enemy automatic weapons on the ridge were thereby silenced. A sniper in support at the OP picked off the German on the telephone, silencing their mortars. The patrol, while coming down off the ridge, killed two Germans, and Lieutenant ANDERSON nailed another while he covered the withdrawal. The patrol had finished its withdrawal down the hill and through a draw into the area, when machine gun fire cut down three more members of the patrol. No wounds were serious. All members of the patrol returned. Eight rounds of time-fire brought up the Red Cross flag which the Germans use when they are evacuating their wounded.

At night on 26 February, Second Lieutenant DONALD DWYER led a patrol from the 1st Platoon of Company F from Rocca Corneta, going underneath Pizzo di Campiano to the north, to a point near C. Vigoni. Here, just after a mortar muzzle blast was heard, the second scout, Pvt. WILLIAM E. CHRISTENSEN, saw a German from behind a tree, ten yards away. The German had our first scout, Pfc. PETER NASSAU, in his sights. CHRISTENSEN watched him allow the scout to pass him and then he saw him step out and challenge NASSAU from the rear. The rest of the patrol had not yet reached the road the two scouts were on. The guard moved around and pointed his rifle at NASSAU's chest. CHRISTENSEN circled around behind the German and, holding his own rifle in his right hand, knocked the German's rifle out of his hands with his left. NASSAU, who speaks German, ordered him to raise his hands and keep quiet. In answer to questions, the German revealed that there were 55 or 60 enemy in the rear. The men were on the edge of a lawn, sloping down from town to the road—a poor place, tactically. Just as the lieuten-

Feb 26

ant was coming up to see what the matter was, two more enemy appeared from above and behind the German, and called out in German, "What's up below?"

NASSAU called them over and halted them in German. He told them they were surrounded, to throw away their weapons and come down. Doubtful, they asked, "Who's there, Americans?" NASSAU answered in German in the affirmative and for them to drop their weapons and come down on the double. One dropped his rifle, but the other dropped back behind his companion and fired point-blank at NASSAU with an automatic weapon, stunning the scout and bruising his shoulder. NASSAU fired back with his Tommy gun—the disarmed man was only four or five feet away and was probably hit. A German grenade landed from behind a hedge giving the two scouts time to hit the roadside ditch before it exploded, scratching NASSAU's chin and blowing off both their helmets.

The scouts covered the withdrawal of the patrol with their Tommy guns. More grenades were thrown and heavy fire was directed on the retreating patrol. After they forded the deep, boulder-strewn stream below the "rock," two machine guns opened on them from a ridge. The Germans had rushed the guns cross-country to cut them off; but the patrol, after returning part way for semi-stunned NASSAU, was able to withdraw to friendly lines.

On the night of 26-27 February, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were relieved by elements of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, and withdrew to the town of Vidiciatico for a brief rest and showers. On 27 February Company C suffered more casualties in position near Valpiana and Pfc. JUAN BARRIENTOS was killed by shellfire. The 1st Battalion was relieved and moved to Lizzano that night. Meanwhile, the regimental staff was in Lizzano, preparing the second attack in the region north of Gaggio Montano on the slopes of Mt. Terminale. The whole unit was making ready to move forward beyond Abetaia.

On the 27th, with brief rest, the 3rd Battalion entrucked at 1600 for Malandrone. Here it dug in. Over 1200 rounds of artillery fell during the night, causing some casualties. The men impatiently awaited the rest of the regiment and the jump-off in the second battle of the 87th Mountain Infantry.

Feb 27

MARCH OFFENSIVE AND CONSOLIDATION (1 MAR — 31 MAR)

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

During early March, the 87th Mountain Infantry engaged in its first full-scale daylight battle. With the other elements of the 10th Mountain Division, it jumped off on a three-day offensive on March 3. The smashing success achieved is indicated by the unprecedented bag of prisoners of war. On the first day alone, more prisoners were taken than had ever been taken before on a single day by any unit in the Italian Theater. All objectives were taken far ahead of schedule, and the unit acquitted itself brilliantly.

The Battle of Belvedere in February had been a night attack. All objectives of the 87th were taken before dawn of the 20th of February. From then until the relief at the end of the month, the fighting had been defensive. In contrast, the Battle of Castel d'Aiano was a deadly struggle in the sunlight, from bunker to bunker, hill to hill, objective to objective, for three bloody days. It was accomplished against prepared positions and heavily mined areas, in the roughest kind of terrain and under heavy enemy artillery fire. However, this brilliant, full-scale action should not completely overshadow the unusual accomplishments of Belvedere. Night battle is among the most difficult of battle maneuvers. Night assaults have always presented the most complex problems of warfare. That these problems of confusion, of difficult control, and of units losing themselves, were overcome in February's action deserves the highest tribute.

The March operation to Castel d'Aiano, although of quite a different caliber, depended on the earlier effort in an interesting way. The original enemy line ran along high ground from Riva Ridge, Rocca Corneta, up over Belvedere, and along Gorgolesco Ridge, and continued far back to the northeast along Mt. della Torraccia and Mt. Terminale. Then it swung to the east again over Cimon della Piella and along the ridge to Pietra Colora, Mt. della Croce, and beyond to Highway 64. To oversimplify the strategy, and reduce it to football terms, "Belvedere" had resembled a "quarterback sneak." The 86th Mountain Infantry had first taken the high ridge on the left out of the play, and then the 87th and 85th had, under cover of darkness, plunged through and seized Belvedere. It was planned as a short "line plunge," not as a "touchdown play." And as it developed, successfully penetrating the highly important central position of Belvedere, the enemy expected further thrusts here and pulled back to get set. However, after the 85th and 86th had hit "off tackle" on the right, and had taken Mt. della Torraccia, the old "end around" play was called. The 10th Mountain Division was pulled from the line and swung around the "right end," the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (BEF) holding their former positions at Belvedere. It was not a "power play," but one of speedy movement and deception. It caught the enemy completely off balance; and here the football analogy breaks down, for the enemy was hit in the midst of making a relief.

So large was the hole opened in the enemy line that the proverbial "truck" could have driven through. But again the "thrust" hadn't been planned as a touchdown play. It hadn't been realized that such rapid movement was possible in mountain terrain. The line had been opened wide, the ball was in the clear, but there was no one to go through for down-field "blocking." The fast play was unexpectedly successful. The effort had been to try merely to gain some ground; but it looked as though it could have been a touchdown play itself. Instead, the Division had to be content with the four-mile sweep around the right end to Castel d'Aiano. It was a short gain, but it was recognized and commended as a brilliant one, and the ground was laid for a long sweep into enemy territory at a later date.

Pre-Battle Punishment

The 3rd Battalion bore the brunt of the battle. They led the column of battalions from the line of departure on the first day. Furthermore, they took three days of pounding from enemy artillery before the other battalions arrived. The 3rd Battalion had been relieved from Belvedere on 27 February and had rushed up to the new area. Here they took up defensive positions on the north side of Malandrone Gulch on the southern slopes of the shell-scarred hill, La Serra, after only a few hours for clean-up in Vidiciatico.

Feb 27

The battalion had hardly closed before S/Sgt. ROBERT SMITH of Company I was wounded while making a reconnaissance. A few minutes later, Pfc. WARNER F. LAKEWAY of Company K was killed by artillery in the company area. The attack, originally planned for 1 March, was postponed until the 2nd, and then to the 3rd. Meanwhile, the battalion remained in position absorbing the worst shellfire so far experienced by the regiment. During the three days from the night of the 27th until D-Day, the 3rd Battalion area suffered 25 casualties, nine of whom were deaths.

Even these casualties do not indicate the severity of the shelling. During the night of 28 February-1 March, for instance, over a thousand rounds of artillery and mortar fire fell in the small battalion area. This increased with one-half hour barrages all day of the 1st of March. During some barrages, fifty rounds were counted around one position in two minutes, over 350 rounds in fifteen minutes. During the afternoon hours of 1 March, 1500 rounds pounded onto the battered, stumpy, brown slopes of the 3rd Battalion area. The men could only dig and dig deeper, and their six-foot deep holes did cut down the casualty rate.

Mar 1

Unfortunately, there is no defense against a direct hit. For some, time seems to run out. The highly valued regimental intelligence sergeant, LOREN M. FRANK, was blown up in his foxhole at the regimental OP, along with another man, Pfc. JOHN F. VAN DE PUTTE, at 1600 on the 1st of March. Duties kept others from the safety of foxholes. Sgt. ELMER A. BERLIN, of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, was mortally wounded while leading the Italian mule train to the forward ammunition dump on 28 February. The dead in addition to those mentioned above were: Sgt. JOHN B. BLANCHARD, Pfc. DALE W. DUNHAM, Pfc. THEODORE E. WALL, and Pvt. JAMES H. ROGERS, JR. of Company L; and Pfc. THEODORE W. WENDERS of Company I.

Some mention should be made here of the job done by the Corps Engineers in erecting the Bailey Bridge at Malandrone. The Malandrone River ran just south of the 3rd Battalion position through a deep, narrow gulch between Mt. Castello and La Serra. Crossing here had been a high stone bridge. Its remains lay in the stream. The road running north from Gaggio Montano to Castel d'Aiano was the springboard of attack. It cut through this narrow valley and crossed the river at the rubble heap called Malandrone. Where this old masonry bridge had been blown out, a steep bypass dipped down from the old approach to stream's edge, and crossed on the rubble of ruined buildings scraped down as a roadbed fill. Before the 3rd Battalion arrived, work had started on the Bailey Bridge to eliminate the difficult descent and ascent from the high approaches to the water's edge and back. On 28 February, stringers were across, but five or six shells were thundering into the gulch every two or three minutes. They smashed onto the bridge, bending the stringers and threatening the unfinished bridge. It later developed that the enemy had observation on one of the approaches, and almost on the bridge itself, from the heights above Pietra Colora to the east. All vehicles approaching from Gaggio Montano, seemingly under cover from the north, were pounded unmercifully. In spite of heavy casualties in the construction, the bridge was completed on 2 March, and the long gauntlet down into the gulch and up was thus shortened. The "shorts" of the continual shelling of this bridge were landing in the laps of the 3rd Battalion.

Pre-Battle Situation

Across the stream, the road climbed a series of switchbacks and ran along the valley to the north and northeast into enemy terrain. The narrow ridge of hills running along parallel to the road on its right was the initial objective. The hills started at Cimon della Piella and ended at the side road over to Pietra Colora. These hills, except for one, were in reality one long sharp ridge, for the hills ran into each other in a string of five peaks with narrow saddles separating them. They were labeled "Charlie 1, 2, and 3" and "Easy 1 and 2." The whole ridge was referred to as Mt. della Vedetta, or "Charlie-Easy Ridge." To the west of Charlie 1 was a separate hill, Cimon della Piella, connected by a saddle, but not in line with the ridge. This was called Hill 997. Ideal defensively, the crest of the steep ridge was wooded and irregular with rock escarpments, stone walls, and boulder heaps for defensive positions. The approaches to the crest up the steep sides were open fields broken up with rock outcroppings and walls. Rocky lanes cut into the hillsides offered some cover. Most of the trees bordering the lanes and fields lay shattered and shredded. Many of them were large ones, three feet in girth, chewed off at the stump by the heavy German artillery fire.

The 3rd Battalion 87th, starting northeast, then east, raced right along the German front line as it faced the Brazilian front, rolling it up from Malandrone to Mt. della Croce. The other two battalions penetrated northward behind this rolled-up east-west line, and found a little less resistance as they occupied key hills beyond the side road to Pietra Colora. The 86th on the left side of the road had to break through only a narrow segment of the front line, and they too were in the rear moving along beside our 2nd Battalion with the road between them. When the action was finished, a sizable segment of front line was swept up and a salient was occupied leading north to Castel d'Aiano.

Originally, the column of battalions was to be the 2nd, 1st, and 3rd, with the 2nd moving to the attack through the 3rd, but this was changed and the 3rd Battalion was picked to jump off from the positions they had been occupying for three days. They were to take Hill 997 as the first objective, and then "Charlie 1, 2, and 3" and "Easy 1 and 2." They were then to prepare to set a roadblock north of Pietra Colora on regimental order; and they were also to be prepared to continue the attack northeast or east.

On the right was the 1st Infantry BEF; on the left, the 86th Mountain Infantry. Company H relieved Company M on D-1 prepared to support the attack from M's old positions.

The regiment was supported by the 616th Field Artillery, reinforced by the 175th Field Artillery, and also by the 84th Chemical Battalion, the 76th Medium Tank Destroyers and Medium Tank Battalion. Company C of the 126th Engineers cleared mines from roads and checked assembly areas.

During the night before the attack, the 2nd and 1st Battalions moved up into the assembly areas south of the gulch on the slopes of Mt. Castello. By 0615 the morning of 3 March, the 87th was ready to go. Company L was in position on the left of the narrow sector. Company I, the right flank company of the Division, would follow Company L out at 400 yards. Company K in the area, rear, would lead the attack, passing through L and jumping off across the line of departure. To the south across the river were the 2nd and 1st Battalions waiting in the assembly areas. On the north banks of the stream was the regimental CP, with the OP up on la Serra further to the north, commanding a direct view of the length of ridge "Charlie-Easy," and of the town of Pietra Colora.

Mar 3

FIRST DAY—3 MARCH
3rd Battalion—Mt. della Vedetta

COMPANY K ATTACK

Company K moved forward to within a hundred yards of a group of houses on the hillside south of Stancadora. Supporting artillery worked over these houses and the hills beyond for 15 minutes. At 0700, H-Hour, Company K crossed the line of departure and attacked. Seventeen minutes later, they were followed by Company L. Heavy enemy artillery fire greeted both companies as they moved forward. Company I waited to follow Company L. In accordance with the order, Company K moved straight ahead to the steep hill of Cimon della Piella. The 2nd Platoon was on the left, 3rd on the right. Following them in support was the 1st Platoon of Company M. Tanks started moving up the road on the left as they crossed the line of departure. The company met scattered small arms fire seven minutes later, but by 0730 they were approaching the base of the hill and requested an artillery concentration on it.

Mar 3

Back in the assembly area waited the 3rd Platoon of Company M, ready to move forward with mules to Hill 997 when it should be taken. They would support the battalion's progress along the ridge "Charlie-Easy." Also back there was a "Special Force" of the 2nd Platoon, Company M, plus three .50-caliber machine guns and three 37-mm guns with their crews and mules. This force, under First Lieutenant WILLIAM D. FLOYD, was to move up in support when Hill 997 was taken. The all-important key to the whole attack for the 87th was the initial taking of Hill 997, which all but blocked the narrow regimental zone of attack.

While the 2nd Platoon of Company K moved up along the steep hill along to the road, the 3rd Platoon under Lieutenant CHARLES L. PFEIFFER swung around to the right to flank the hill. They received rifle fire from the farm in the saddle, but were able to pass to the left between it and the hill and up onto the upper slopes. Here, they sent word back prematurely that they were on top. As Captain ROGER EDDY, company commander, reached the open field the platoon was in, it became pinned down by heavy machine gun fire from this farm below.

Lieutenant PFEIFFER, out in front of his men reconnoitering for his platoon position, was hit by small arms fire. He lay unable to move in front of his platoon in an exposed position under machine gun and small arms fire. Pfc. WILLIAM C. MAAS III, and S/Sgt. HARRY SOUTHARD volunteered to make their way out to the wounded platoon leader. The two men succeeded in bringing in Lieutenant PFEIFFER, but MAAS was shot and killed by a sniper just as he had apparently reached safety. Lieutenant PFEIFFER later died of his wounds.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Platoon had gone on up and had nearly reached the summit from the left, led by T/Sgt. TOIVO RANTA. (Sergeant RANTA received his battlefield commission a few days later as a result of his actions on Belvedere in February.) The platoon had been halted, though, on top of the hill just short of the summit. A strongly defended area with open fields of fire forced the men to take cover. S/Sgt. EDMUND D. BENNETT, a squad leader in the 2nd Platoon, seeing that flanking action was impossible, crawled along the side of a stone wall to within thirty yards of the enemy under a barrage of machine gun fire. Three of the enemy, seeing him closing in on their position, surrendered; the others abandoned their machine gun and ran back over the hill. BENNETT, a famous cross-country skier, ran, grabbed up the weapon and chased them. On the crest of the hill, he set up the gun and opened fire, hitting several of the fleeing enemy and forcing eight more to surrender. Although lightly wounded, BENNETT's actions were outstanding throughout the entire attack.

The upper slopes, by 0830, were well spotted with dead Germans, and at least thirty prisoners of war were moving down without escort. In the saddle between Hill 997 and "Charlie 1" more fire from the cluster of farm buildings was holding up elements of Company L following on Company K right. Tracer bullets were shot into a haystack from under which Germans were firing. The haystack flared up, cremating some of the enemy beneath.

Company L was held up at this farmhouse for a considerable time while Company K consolidated on the top of Hill 997. They finally moved past it to the right after knocking out much of its resistance and taking some prisoners. Later in the morning, however, Company K discovered enemy still in the farm buildings, and two squads from the 1st Platoon under First Lieutenant WILLIAM PHILP moved down into the saddle. They killed two and captured three more, then continued up the other side of the saddle onto the west slope of "Charlie 1" from where machine gun and rifle fire was coming across on that part of the company remaining on Hill 997. Companies L and I had moved fast past the action of Company K, and moved up a lane running along the east side of "Charlie-Easy Ridge," bypassing considerable resistance behind the crest on the west side.

The two squads under Lieutenant PHILP were supported by one platoon of Company M and their own weapons from Hill 997 as they moved up "Charlie 1" and took nearly fifty prisoners of war on the hillside. Their casualties were heavy, though. S/Sgt. MAURICE E. AUCOIN, leading one of the squads, was cut down and killed by machine gun fire as they assaulted. Also S/Sgt. GEORGE A. WEMPLE and S/Sgt. RALPH TOWNSEND, another outstanding skier, were seriously wounded during this action. Pfc. RAYMOND E. HATCHMAN distinguished himself in this encounter. When his platoon was fired on, he continued to advance until he personally was fired on. Then, from a covered position, he fired into a building and hurled a grenade, killing three and driving off the rest of the enemy.

T/5 WILLIAM R. CONNER, aid man, supporting these squads, did heroic work. Under the heavy fire, he moved openly about to get aid quickly to the wounded men. He spotted one man lying wounded out in front less than fifty yards from an enemy position. The men with him yelled for him not to go out, but he moved out regardless. Part way out, intense fire drove him to cover momentarily. Then putting his Red Cross flag on a stick, he dashed to the wounded man's side. He stuck the flag in the ground and in full view was giving aid, when he was shot and killed by a German sniper in cold blood and in utter disregard for the Red Cross flag, which the German himself depends on so often.

Sgt. HARRY THOMAS, light machine gun squad leader, was killed while directing his squad's fire from an exposed position during the attack. Also, Pfc. DAN M. WILSON, Pfc. FRED M. PALMER, and Pfc. HAROLD J. PERDUE had been hit fatally as they moved up the rocky slopes. Lieutenant PHILP, moving forward under heavy mortar and small arms fire to reconnoiter, rescued a wounded man under difficult circumstances. Later, Lieutenant PHILP was killed by artillery fire.

Company K finally established contact late in the day with Company L over the ridge. The command post that night was established in the farmhouse between Hill 997 and "Charlie 1."

COMPANY L ATTACK

To go back to the line of departure: the elements of Company L had moved out after Company K under heavy artillery fire. They hit resistance before they reached the slopes of "Charlie," and two men were hit by a burp gun near Stancadora just below the farmhouse in the saddle. They were held up here for nearly an hour, from some time after 0800. It was here they set fire to the haystack with tracers. T/5 JOSEPH W. CARTER displayed great courage when he

moved through mortar and machine gun fire to aid a wounded man lying close to the flaming haystack in front of the platoon. Shortly after 0900, the German Red Cross flag appeared to protect their aid men, but the company still was pinned down by machine gun fire from around the farm buildings. Two machine guns seemed to be firing from the farm buildings. The mortars brought fire and silenced one. Then Pfc. RALPH MATTSON personally took the attack into his own hands. Leaving his covered position, he moved forward alone through the heavy fire, firing his BAR from the hip as he went right up to the machine gun nest. He rushed, silencing it and killing all three Germans behind the gun. This done, he kept right on going, and the inspired platoon took off after him.

Sgt. WILLIAM M. KENNEDY, back at the mortar OP, who had been directing fire on the enemy artillery weapons, was instantly killed by artillery fire. KENNEDY was an invaluable mortar man, having developed a new type of mortar sight. His loss was great.

Pfc. ROBERT L. MACWILLIAMS was killed during the reorganization following this early stage of the attack when a small counterattack developed. MACWILLIAMS had been the 2nd Scout of the 2nd Platoon. He had crawled up and dragged back wounded Pvt. PERRY W. PROUGH under intense fire. He volunteered to get another wounded man, but was ordered not to. Instead, with the squad still pinned down from fire from a building, he threw in a grenade and captured fourteen Germans coming out. A short time later, he was shot in the head with machine gun fire, and killed.

The 1st Platoon of Company L had moved from their position to the east slope in an attempt to flank the machine gun positions. They continued on along the lane traversing the steep eastern slopes. By 0920, they were just north of Merlano on the right flank of "Charlie 1," having bypassed considerable resistance on the west slopes.

By 1000, Company I was following Company L, and groups of prisoners were streaming through them. The 2nd Battalion had moved into the old 3rd Battalion positions, near the line of departure. The 1st Platoon of Company L was on "Charlie 2" by 1030, followed by 2nd Platoon and weapons platoon. They had flanked completely around "Charlie 1" by the lane, and climbed up from the east onto "Charlie 2." Eighteen minutes later, they were on "Charlie 3" looking forward to "Easy." Twenty-three more PWs moved down the road to the battalion area.

No sooner had they gone than firing flared up again from over the ridge and the mortar men had to set up a firing line. T/Sgt. WALTER P. STILLWELL, at the mortar outpost, crawled forward to the ridge on hearing the firing, and watched an enemy lieutenant organizing the counterattack. With S/Sgt. JOHN W. TRIPP, he set up the mortar section defense. STILLWELL himself killed one enemy and shot down three. Then, seeing no help coming for his hard-pressed section, he ran back to bring up elements of Company K and Company E. With the help of men from Company K, the enemy threat was beaten off.

Sergeant JOHN W. TRIPP was wounded early in the action. Although struck in both knees, he continued to coordinate his mortars with the fire of others until the attack was repulsed. He finally had to be evacuated.

Sergeant ARTHUR H. BURGESS, JR. at the outbreak of the attack, rushed forward to aid the exposed outpost. He was crawling along a stone wall to get into position to throw a grenade when he was struck in the head and killed.

Several of the mortar men deserve mention for heroic action during this attack. Pvt. ROY JOHNS exposed himself fearlessly in beating off the attack. Pvt. NEAL C. YORKER left his mortar position as he saw the enemy maneuvering toward his section and helped disperse the attack with his pistol and grenades.

After the counterattack had been repulsed, Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS, battalion commander, reported that the battalion would take "Easy" by noon. Having learned that the 86th Mountain Infantry had secured his left rear, he ordered Company K to move forward, relieve Company L, defend "Charlie," and mop up the area between Hill 997 and "Charlie." He ordered Company L to seize and organize "Easy," and directed that Company I pass through L prepared to continue the attack. By 1100, Captain JOSEPH J. DUNCAN, reported that he had seized "Easy 1 and 2." The prisoners of war were flooding down the road. The entire ridgeline to the Pietra Colora road had been taken. The PWs coming out from their overrun positions were confused and surprised by the attack.

It was forward on objective "Easy" that Pfc. ALLEN F. SCHAUFFLER, runner of the leading platoon, distinguished himself. He went to the aid of a helpless wounded squad leader, S/Sgt. ARTHUR C. DELANEY, who lay in a dangerously exposed area. In the face of intense small arms fire, he treated the wounded man and brought him to safety. Later, he aided another wounded man and refused to leave him during a heavy barrage, remaining until the litter bearers arrived. Throughout the action, he assisted in the treatment and evacuation of the wounded, as well as doing his own duties.

Pfc. WILLIAM WILLIAMSON, JR. deserves recognition. Although painfully wounded, he refused to leave his unit and continued firing at the enemy until he had to be evacuated.

Although running into positions all the way along the ridge top, positions that momentarily held them up, the progress of the company along the crest to its termination above the Pietra Colora road was rapid. By 1130 they were there. All of the initial objectives of the 3rd Battalion had been taken. But the swift progress was built on the many brave deeds of the men who climbed up and moved along that ridge.

The enemy who lived won't forget men like S/Sgt. JOHN R. BERGSTROM, a forward squad leader. He spotted an enemy machine gun in a haystack. Ordering his squad to take positions and prepare to cover him, he crawled carefully up toward the German gun, then with a wild war whoop, he rushed the haystack, killing one and capturing another. Neither will they forget S/Sgt. JAMES C. MOREHOUSE higher up on the ridge. His squad was fired on from a stone wall 700 yards to his front. He led off across the field in a reckless charge, cleared the wall in a leap, and killed the enemy.

Other stratagems were used. Pfc. WILBUR D. GIESE captured three PWs single-handedly by moving far forward above, commanding them in German to surrender. As he moved back with his booty, he was seriously wounded. Pfc. ELMO J. MILLER, although lying helplessly wounded before a house, repeatedly tried to direct fire on an enemy machine gun he had spotted, until finally he was evacuated.

Pfc. SIMON A. PROPPER was fired on and his companion wounded as he advanced toward a building. He refused to leave his companion. Small arms fire was ineffective against the enemy machine gun, so he threw a grenade. The gun was knocked out, and he returned to the squad as the wounded man was being taken care of. He himself was wounded later in the day.

Another rescue of a wounded man was effected during an intense barrage by Sgt. JOSEPH A. CAMPBELL, who had taken over his squad when its leader had been wounded.

Communications became a problem for Company L as it moved rapidly forward on the attack. The wiremen worked under the utmost danger until hit. S/Sgt. HERBERT C. SPAULDING, communications sergeant of Company L, was killed, as was Pvt. GERARD E. O'HARA of Company I, while laying wire. Pfc. JOHN F. JAMES of Company L was seriously wounded while working on wire lines.

T/5 ROBERT H. SUNDELL, a mail clerk, took over and laid wire in the heaviest fire, after the others were gone. In addition, he brought aid to wounded men and assisted the medics. All of these had worked in the open under the heaviest fire, sure of the importance of their jobs, and heedless of their own safety.

Another squad leader, S/Sgt. LAWRENCE J. LA BONTE, was killed during the advance by an artillery tree burst up on the ridge.

SUMMARY

Only a few deeds are recorded; many were unseen. But the few that are recorded establish the temper of the whole action. S/Sgt. JOHN R. BERGSTROM rushing a machine gun in a haystack with a wild war whoop is an unorthodox way to fight. How can you be a "superman" against such a man, or against men who can race 300 yards across a field and jump the stone wall on top of you? Many of the PWs were almost resentful. They didn't like our tactics. One captured sergeant in the PW cage asked indignantly, "You came from the wrong side. How can I be expected to hold my sector if my machine gun is pointing the wrong way?"

Up on that narrow, almost knife-edged ridge, along the tumbled boulders and rock faces, among the battered trees, some fine men fell. Those who fell left a story of accomplishment. Those who remain can be proud to have served with such men.

Company K lost six men in death, and L lost five; each company had twenty men wounded. They had killed many times that number of Germans, and the 87th's PW count by dark that night was 442, most of whom came from the ridge; and there were still more drifting in.

The bridge at Malandrone was blown out again about an hour and a half after H-Hour. Only five tanks had gone over it before it went, but the bypass was still passable down to the water's edge and up. The bridge and the bypass were shelled all day and levied more casualties on the engineers, including the death of the platoon leader, Lt. CHARLES MCKELVEY. A tank was hit and disabled in the bypass, but tanks continued to move up in support. One attempted to climb up to the ridge from the main road on the west, but struck a minefield on the lower slopes. By afternoon one platoon of tanks was able to get up to a supporting position on the east side of the ridge. The bridge was repaired for the final time by 1450.

Remaining Action of the First Day

Before noon of 3 March, the 2nd Battalion was moving forward to the Pietra Colora road at a point to the left of Company L, to attack objective "Item," a low hill northeast of the crossroads. Before they started, S/Sgt. LEO E. MILLER and Pfc. LEWIS S. TRAUTWEIN of Battalion Headquarters and Sgt. HARVEY F. CORN, JR. of Company F were killed by artillery fire. The 1st Battalion had left the assembly area to follow the 2nd. However, at 1145, General HAYS, division commander, ordered the 2nd Battalion to establish a roadblock at the crossroads, later called "Shrapnel Junction," before advancing on "Item." Meanwhile, Company I was ordered to establish a roadblock north of Pietra Colora, on the right, to seal off the other end of this road across the regimental front.

COMPANY I

Company I jumped off at 1315 for the town of Pietra Colora, passing through Company L. The leading platoon, moving south and east of the road across open slopes, was stopped by an Italian civilian who pointed out a minefield in their path. The town, a German command post, was defended by about thirty enemy. The 2nd Platoon in the lead advanced against sniper fire, taking the town and the thirty Germans by 1500. Only one casualty was suffered during the attack—a sergeant was hit in the hand. However, although the company quickly reorganized and

dug in, heavy artillery and mortar fire killed Pfc. ANTHONY S. SCUTO and Pfc. FREDERICK B. STRAUSS, and wounded six. This town, on a high knob, was rapidly taken as a result of an accurate and intense artillery preparation that was closely followed by an assault on the enemy's rear.

By 1400, the 2nd Battalion was ready to jump off from the north end of the ridge "Charlie-Easy" at Mt. della Vedetta. Here, they were later pinned down and suffered casualties as they tried to move forward. Heavy fire was coming from self-propelled guns to the west, and artillery from Crocette di Sotto, a town to the east of Pietra Colora. Both artillery and air support were requested on this town at a little after 1500.

Also at this time a Brazilian patrol was seeking to come up the road to Pietra Colora from Santa Maria Villiana, to the east. They had taken this town just after Company I took Pietra Colora, and were trying to make contact with Company I. However, communications had been cut with Company I since its jump-off. The progress of the company was reported to the Brazilians by First Lieutenant LEON C. WILMOT, the 87th liaison officer, from the OP across the valley. From this position, he had been able to follow the action all day, even to counting the number of prisoners taken. Since Company I couldn't be warned, the Brazilian patrol was not allowed to make contact. Their green uniforms might easily be mistaken for the enemy.

At 1505, General HAYS ordered the 86th to move up promptly on Objectives "George" and "Fox," since the 2nd Battalion couldn't occupy "Item" until the other two were taken. The attack on "Item" was to be coordinated with the advance of the 86th on "Howe." Colonel EARL THOMSON, chief of staff, also ordered tank destroyers to fire on Crocette di Sotto. Three guns were each to lay in 15 rounds.

The 86th had had a difficult time in Iola, and were still cleaning it out at 1530, thus preventing any action at "Fox" and "George." Elements of the 85th, originally scheduled to relieve the 3rd Battalion, all shifted into the 86th sector to hasten them along.

COMPANY E

At 1700, the 2nd Battalion, with Company E leading, moved out to attack "Item." Division ordered at 1730 to "button up" for the night whenever a defensive position was reached. However, Company E had moved out and their wire was cut. The 1st Platoon had stopped southwest of the crossroad near Flizzone, and the 2nd and 3rd Platoons had gone through them, the 2nd leading across the road and into the town of Canevaccia. They entered the town as it grew dark under shellfire from German self-propelled guns.

Communication had been blown out soon after the company had crossed the road. So, after occupation was completed, Captain LE GRAND PENDREY and three men went back and found the breaks. Communication reestablished, the company was able to receive word to withdraw across the road. Their position in Canevaccia was exposed and liable to encirclement during the night, since the units on the left had not moved abreast.

Company E withdrew to Flizzone. They had suffered five casualties, two of them killed, from the self-propelled guns. These two were Pfc. EDMON E. HATHAWAY and Pfc. ALBERT L. SAYER who died firing.

Before they could get down off the ridge in the afternoon, Company F had been plastered with artillery and self-propelled gun fire and had suffered twelve casualties. Two were fatalities: Pvt. WESLEY E. LAHTI, and Pfc. EUGENE C. NORTON. Company F spent the night with Companies E and G near Flizzone.

Situation at the End of the First Day

The situation at the end of the first day of attack was excellent. The 87th had taken all of the ground in its sector up to the Pietra Colora road, including the town itself, and it had established roadblocks on that road. The plans for the second day included the 2nd and 1st Battalions jumping off simultaneously at 0800 and moving parallel to each other out to the north, each taking two of the rolling hills lying before them. The 3rd Battalion meanwhile was to push further to the right (east) and occupy a mountain above Pietra Colora. The 3rd Battalion requested and received permission to move their H-Hour from 0800 to 1000.

The total casualties for the first day of fighting had been 25 killed in action and 80 wounded. The 3rd Battalion, leading, had suffered more than half of these, with 16 killed and 50 wounded.

Word came that night that back at Abetaia, the aid station had been booby-trapped, and had blown up with its occupants. In it, in addition to its staff and patients, were all three of the chaplains of the 87th. Few survived the tremendous blast that hollowed the stone building and knocked out one of its stone walls. Chaplain EDWIN C. GOMKE was one of the few seriously wounded who were gotten out alive. But the universally liked Chaplains HARRY MONTGOMERY and WILLIAM S. CONTINO were both killed. Two of their drivers were wounded, and the 87th medic Pfc. FRANK J. PIAZZA was killed in the same explosion.

SECOND DAY—4 MARCH

1st Battalion—Bacucco

Early in the morning of the 2nd day of the attack, the 1st Battalion started moving forward from near Stancadora. They left at 0530, passed through the 3rd Battalion, Mt. della Vedetta ridge area, and jumped off across the Pietra Colora road at 0800, after a fifteen-minute artillery barrage, just as the 2nd Battalion was crossing to their left.

Mar 4

COMPANY A

Company A was leading with the 1st and 2nd Platoons abreast as they moved toward Mt. Acidola. In the draw south of Acidola, they were hit by heavy mortar and artillery fire. Sgt. EUGENE C. LOUMAN and Pfc. WAVEL P. ELAM were badly hurt here, and soon afterward two scouts from the battalion headquarters company advancing in front of Company A were hit. Pfc. HANS JUNGSTER was only lightly wounded, but Pfc. JOE C. MILLER was killed. MILLER, since the early days of the regiment, had been applauded as the Regimental Cartoonist. With him went a good many—but not all—of those happy “slope dopes” he carried around in his mind and put on paper. Many still remain with friends, and in old copies of the *Blizzard*, and in the back of other people’s minds. No one who ever saw the cartoon could forget poor old “Slopy” in D-Series, hunched over a briskly burning stack of broken skis, cooking a C-ration, resigned to his place in the snowy waste, but making the best of it.

By 0930, Company A had taken Mt. Acidola, and an hour later, the Battalion CP prepared to displace forward to it. A prisoner of war with a secret document was sent back to the regiment at this time.

COMPANY B

Meanwhile Company B, followed by C and D, went through A, and the 2nd Battalion moved by on the left. Company B headed for Bacucco, the objective code-named “Love.” They moved across a wide valley with 2nd Platoon on the left, 1st on the right. From a group of houses half-

way up the hill still 400 yards away, six or seven helmeted Germans emerged holding Italian women before them as shields. They seemed to be looking the situation over, and as the Americans continued to advance, they ran back into the houses, waving white flags. One, however, started to run up the hill. Pfc. GERALD E. MULVANEY at a 400-yard range, raised his M-1, squeezed, and as the single shot sounded, the running figure collapsed. A “bulls-eye” at 400 yards!

Company B moved up and deployed on a ridge. Next, six Germans came out of the houses with cloth caps instead of helmets and moved down to surrender to the 2nd Platoon. They apparently were a mortar squad, but they hadn't fired a shot.

Later, hearing information about some enemy over on the back of the hill, Pfc. PAUL F. SCHILLER and one other man composed a voluntary patrol to creep forward and locate the enemy. SCHILLER came up a gully to the left of the German position, and seeing the German leader just as the German saw SCHILLER, he beat him to the draw and shot him. Four other Germans surrendered quickly. In the strong point were one 81-mm mortar, two machine guns, and some AT grenades. Shortly after noon, all was occupied on Bacucco. Pfc. LUCIEN T. DEETER was killed by artillery.

During the afternoon, the company dug in along the draw northeast of Bacucco. At this time, the 2nd Battalion had not reached their final objective on Hill 926 (Objective “King”) nor Madna di Brasa. These objectives were all taken, however, before 1700, and the 1st Battalion tied in with the 2nd and shifted over to their left near Madna di Brasa.

Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON, commanding the 1st Battalion, when requested by Division to move on to Castel d'Aiano, explained that he was unable to do so, due to lack of supplies and the fatigue of his men. So the attack was postponed until morning.

2nd Battalion—Madna di Brasa

COMPANY E

As the 1st Battalion advanced, the 2nd Battalion had jumped off on the left, closely following a fifteen-minute barrage. Company E, with the 2nd Platoon leading, crossed the road at 0800, 4 March, the second day of the attack. The battalion received heavy artillery and mortar fire as it advanced, and had one killed and four wounded before going 600 yards. The leading company moved to the right of yesterday's route to Canevaccia, but to the left of the 1st Battalion jumping off for Acidola.

They held up at a farmhouse on “Item” 500 yards beyond the road. Mortar fire was coming in at this point, but no small arms fire as yet. Pvt. JAMES P. KENNEY was killed by mortar fire while covering the building for the assault squad. After the house was taken, Lieutenant Colonel EMMETT L. NATIONS, battalion commander, came up to survey the situation.

From the farmhouse on “Item,” the 2nd Platoon advanced directly toward Hill 926 (“King”). The 3rd Platoon flanked around to the right. They were so far to the right that they lost contact across the valley from Hill 926 on Madna di Brasa.

At about 1500, when the 2nd Platoon was pinned down on the slopes of Hill 926, the 1st Platoon was used as a flanking element through the gap between the 2nd and 3rd. The rifle squads of the 1st Platoon moved up the valley followed by a machine gun section. The enemy in position at the head of the valley allowed the rifle squads to go by, and then opened up on the machine gun crew, cutting down S/Sgt. DONALD P. DUNCAN, Pfc. HOWARD WINTER, Pvt. GEORGE E. MITCHELL, and Sgt. CECIL E. NIRIDER. No one was killed. This fusillade of resis-

tance ended the skirmish, for the two squads went up on the hill, captured a mortar crew in position, and drove back the remainder of the defenders.

COMPANY G

Company G, following E, swung over and occupied Madna di Brasa and Road Junction (RJ) K 20 just north, about 1600. They received mortar fire during occupation, and S/Sgt. GEORGE J. BLAKER was killed while digging. Also killed in Company G were: Pfc. HENRY F. ROSE, JR. and Pvt. BRAINERD E. LYNCH.

The 1st Battalion had meanwhile moved out abreast of the 2nd, and passed over Acidola and Bacucco by noon. By the time Company G reached Madna di Brasa, Company B had dug positions that continued a line to the southeast of Madna di Brasa.

COMPANY F

The 1st Platoon of Company F, which had followed E and G in the advance, moved out an hour and a half after the hill was taken to establish outposts on the ridge running out of Natale, while E and G established defensive positions on Hill 926 and K 20 beyond Madna di Brasa. At 0430 on 5 March, one squad of Company F established a roadblock at RJ 813 near Casone. During the morning of the 5th, Lieutenant DONALD DWYER, with half a squad, captured 13 Germans to the left of his roadblock. He had reinforced his roadblock with a machine gun squad from Natale, and then with half a squad, he had walked over to Gualandi on the regimental left boundary. As this patrol approached Gualandi, the men were fired on by snipers. They all took cover, all except Pfc. PAUL STETTNER who braved the fire to continue moving forward, shouting in German to surrender for they were outnumbered. This action drew fire, confused the enemy, and allowed the remainder of the patrol to enter the town and capture 13 Germans.

3rd Battalion—Mt. della Croce

COMPANY I

To return to the morning of 4 March, the second day of the attack, the 3rd Battalion was to jump off for Mt. della Croce at 1000, after a fifteen-minute barrage. The barrage was delayed due to clearance uncertainty with the Brazilians, whose front lines were just below Mt. della Croce. The jump-off was held up until 1100 when they led off, 2nd, 1st, and 3rd Platoons, Company I, in that order. As they moved up, they were fired on at long range by automatic weapons from two houses. The houses were bypassed and mopped up from the rear, all the inmates surrendering. From long range, heavy machine guns supporting the advance from Pietra Colora fired a haystack, and more Germans were driven out and captured. Leading elements climbed a ridge running up to the summit from the left side, and exchanged grenades with the enemy in position on top. After a fifteen-minute firefight, three men surrendered and the resistance was crushed. The company then moved rapidly along the open top of the hill, meeting only sporadic resistance here and there. This initial objective of Mt. della Croce was occupied by 1200.

The final objective, Hill 882, was a knob off to the east on a shoulder of the mountain. The 1st Platoon went through the 2nd to continue the attack supported by heavy weapons on Mt. della Croce. They moved through a minefield, followed by the weapons platoon. Although the entire 1st Platoon passed through the field uneventfully, Sgt. G. C. MANIS, mortar squad leader of the weapons platoon, touched off a mine that blew his foot off, crumpling him up on the ground. Pfc. KENNETH D. PERKINS fearlessly moved out into the minefield and administered to the wounded man. As he turned to leave, he blew off two more mines and was killed. Then another aid man Pfc. ROY K. COMBS, moved into the minefield to try to evacuate MANIS to safety. COMBS suddenly crumpled in another explosion, his leg gone. Pvt. JACK PITTMAN

from the litter team of Company K picked up a length of W-130 wire, and probing his way, moved in to the three forms on the ground. He tied wire around each of the two living men, and they were hauled to safety and evacuated.

The Brazilians made contact from the right flank, and took over and secured positions, allowing Company I to withdraw to Pietra Colora. Company I had suffered no casualties from actual contact with the enemy, except for the mine casualties. Only one man, Pfc. JOSEPH G. HANCE, had been hit; he was killed by our own artillery at 1000 that morning. Company M, in support from Mt. della Vedetta ridge, was hit by artillery. Pfc. FRANCIS A. LA FOUNTAIN was killed. Company I took ten prisoners of war.

The action for the 3rd Battalion was completed, and they moved their CP into the ruined buildings of Pietra Colora.

THIRD DAY—5 MARCH

1st Battalion—Castel d'Aiano

During the afternoon of 5 March, the 87th made its final effort of the offensive, when the 1st Battalion pushed on to Castel d'Aiano and Hill 813. The attack was to begin at 0630, but was delayed to allow the 85th time to move up Mt. della Spe on the right.

Mar 5

By noon, friendly tanks had moved into Castel d'Aiano, were being fired on, and had called for infantry support. The 1st Battalion jumped off across northeast of Madna di Brasa (K 20) at 1400. Company C led off, and as they crossed the ridge and moved down the long open slope into the draw, everything the enemy had opened up on them. Company C headed for Hill 813, a thousand yards north. Company A, following across the road, swung to the right toward Castel d'Aiano.

COMPANY C ATTACK

The trip to Hill 813 was formidable, for 800 yards down the slope was wide open and spotted with well-prepared dugouts. On the hillside, firing up at the two leading platoons of Company C, were light machine guns, burp guns, mortars, rifles and rifle grenades. Upon our heavy return fire the nearer ranks of enemy began to yell "*Kamerad!*" but those behind them still fired. Just before reaching the draw that led to the valley bottom, two PWs were taken. These were fired upon by their own men, and one American was killed as he took the PWs in charge.

First Lieutenant WILLIAM S. RYBERG, with the 1st Platoon, and the company commander, Captain MORLAN W. NELSON, moved around to the left and got into this draw running on down and flanking the positions. The 2nd Platoon, led by Lieutenant JOHN W. HAWK, followed the 1st Platoon down this draw. On the right of the draw was a nose sticking out from Monfenaro. Lieutenant RYBERG, out in front of his platoon, led them onto the nose to flank the position on the hillside. He was instantly killed by machine gun fire. Pfc. HORACE H. RAINEY was killed here too, at about the same time. Pfc. GLENN R. BAILEY, the 2nd Platoon messenger, running across the open field further to the left under heavy fire, was also killed.

A BAR man, Pfc. ELMER T. PERKINS, advancing with the 2nd Platoon, was being fired on by a machine gun. He stood it as long as he could and then jumped up and, standing in plain view, had it out with the German machine gunner, killing him with a hail of fire.

The 2nd Platoon, passing the 1st, continued down to the left of Monfenaro to the mouth of the draw where it came out at the foot of Hill 813. Here they were in full view of the enemy on 813, and a barrage of artillery and heavy machine gun fire pinned them down.

It was now getting toward dusk. Captain NELSON was pinned down at the base of a large tree. The wire had come part way up to him, but the wiremen were also pinned down about a hundred yards away. Counter-battery fire was badly needed. Pfc. ALEXIS POUTIATINE grabbed the wire reel and raced across the open distance for the captain's tree. Machine gun fire followed his course; tracer bullets appeared to pass between his legs. By a miracle, he wasn't hit, and the request for artillery fire was sent back. Two weeks later, while in division reserve at Pietra Colora, POUTIATINE picked up a booby-trapped German bazooka while helping to clear out some buildings and was killed.

Under cover of darkness and the artillery barrage, the company reorganized. Then, with the 2nd and 3rd Platoons abreast, they moved up in the dark and occupied Hill 813, taking six prisoners, but meeting little resistance.

COMPANY A ATTACK

Company A had less trouble taking Castel d'Aiano. Partisans had made arrangements to guide them through the minefields and safely into town. S/Sgt. ABRAHAM J. SANTONI, a rifle squad leader, conducted valuable negotiations with them. He was mortally wounded when struck by a mine after concluding these conferences and while returning with the company commander.

The 2nd Platoon took the first row of houses on the south side. The chief resistance was in a cement factory where about half a platoon of Germans were defending themselves with automatic weapons. When one of them was killed, the rest finally surrendered. After they surrendered, some of them were hit by their own artillery, which started thundering down in the town at about this time.

The 1st Platoon took the east edge of town and Famaticcia. While the platoons were working through town, a heavy artillery barrage south of town cut them off from the command group and the rear. Captain HUGH D. KLEMME, in his command jeep, circled around and drove into town from the east, reestablishing control.

The tanks were ordered back into town to fire back against enemy mountain positions to the right. But heavy shellfire fell on all rifle companies of the battalion all that night and the following day. Company A was moved forward to fill the gap between Company C's position on Hill 813 and Company B's position at Castel d'Aiano. The 3rd Platoon was shifted over as far as Objective "Love" where they linked up with the 2nd Battalion.

In the 1st Battalion, casualties were light during the attack. Company A had two deaths and two wounded; B, one killed and three wounded; C, three killed and two wounded; D, one wounded; and Headquarters Company, one killed and one wounded. However, the battalion continued to suffer some casualties in their foremost position in the northward salient. They were under continuous observation and frequent artillery barrages.

2nd Battalion—In Support

During the day of 5 March, one 37-mm gun was brought up to Casone and used to support the attack of the 1st Battalion on Hill 813 beyond Castel d'Aiano. This gun, and some heavy machine guns, were fired in the afternoon on German troops retreating down the rear slopes of Mt. della Spe. Tragically, First Lieutenant ROBERT B. PFUSCH, of Company E, was mortally wounded on the final day while returning from a reconnaissance across the road east of Casone. He was hit by artillery, evacuated, but succumbed the following day.

This ended the action for the 2nd Battalion. Their losses were light in number compared to the ground they covered. Company E had lost four killed and sixteen wounded; Company F

three killed and ten wounded; Company G three killed and three wounded, while Headquarters Company lost two killed and four wounded.

Conclusions

During the four-day battle, from March 3rd to 6th, the 87th lost in total battle casualties 186 men, 43 of whom died. It cleared the enemy from a mountainous area over 6,000 yards wide. Six hundred German soldiers and officers were captured and driven through to the PW cage during the three-day period. An unknown number of enemy dead, and quantities of enemy armament and equipment were removed from the occupied mountains.

PRISONERS

From the PWs some interesting facts were learned. During the night before the attack, 2-3 March, elements of the 114th Jaeger Division were relieving the 232nd Division. The 721st Regiment of the 114th Jaeger Division was supposed to assume control of the area on the morning of the 3rd, but the 87th Mountain Infantry beat them to it. The German relief was never finished. The 3rd Battalion of the 371st was captured pretty well intact. Into our hands came the battalion commander, a major, six staff officers and the battalion ambulance, complete with driver, aid man, and two wounded Krauts.

The prisoners of the second day were less surprised than those of the first, but a lot more disgruntled. They came largely from the unit relieved the night before. They had been halted as they marched to the rear, turned around and thrown back into line to try to save the situation for the Germans. One prisoner, who believed that German PWs were used as forced labor, complained, "I don't mind being taken prisoner, but I surely hate losing out on my rest."

The units facing us at the end of the period were a mauled lot, and reserves had to be drawn on to stiffen and fill our their lines, in particular the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division. One deserter on March 7th was from this unit, and he had been bitterly disappointed that the attack had stopped where it did. He was hidden in a house waiting for the attack to pass him by so that he could surrender. Since the Americans didn't show up, he came over to them.

The morale seemed to have deteriorated since the previous attack. This is partly due to the pounding they had just taken on this front, and partly due to the news from other fronts. They were well oriented on the situation at home, and they knew the war was lost. The crossing of the Rhine and the fall of Cologne had been a severe blow. One deserter taken was a fiddler from a division band which had been disbanded to furnish more front-line soldiers.

While the average German was still more definitely a potential deserter, the measures to prevent desertion had increased and become more brutal, working mercilessly not only against the family of the deserter, but also against his commanders and associates. Any German sergeant could shoot with authority a suspected deserter.

A sergeant from the elite Mittenwald Battalion, made up of Austrians and Bavarians, said that every man in his company was anxious to desert and would when the chance came. He claimed that when an absence was discovered, the unit would be pulled out of the line or else the whole company would soon be over to desert. Actually, the battalion was pulled out within the next few days.

It was apparent from a study of PW information that rather than the looked-for counterattacks, the enemy had been knocked reeling back off his feet, and his activity was frantic preparation for our expected continued advance. In any event, no counterattacks developed, not even such small-scale ones as the Germans launched against us at Belvedere.

ARTILLERY FIRE

Heavy artillery fire fell on the front line battalions during the following days. At first every day there were casualties. Of those that were fatal, Company A lost Pfc. JAMES CAUDILL and Pfc. LUTHER P. LEWIS on 6 March. Company C lost S/Sgt. LOUIS O. BROWN; Company D, Pfc. WALTER O. FLOWE; and Company E, Pfc. FEDER H. BENJAMIN on the 7th of March. Company H, Second Lieutenant FRANK P. BAKER on the 8th; and Company A, Pfc. JOHN C. MURPHY on the 9th. The casualties tapered off when the fire slackened more and more as the month wore on. In Company F, Pfc. HARRY Y. SCHAEGLER was killed on the 12th; in Company L, Cpl. ALAN H. RINFRET on the 25th; and Company I, Pfc. JAMES F. NEVERGALL on the 26th of March.

The artillery fire was greatly reduced by a counter-battery system set up by Major HALVOR O. EKERN, regimental S-3, and operated under Captain ARTHUR BRODEUR. The gun positions were sighted from various OPs and triangulated in the regimental CP. This accurate information was quickly transmitted to our artillery for immediate counter-battery fire. Enemy artillery and mortar fire noticeably diminished after this system began to function.

The regimental CP, established on the eastern slope of Mt. della Vedetta at Varia di Sotto at 1300 on 4 March, was maintained throughout the rest of the month, with the exception of a brief period north of Mt. Acidola. The battalion positions shifted constantly. The regimental OP established on top of the ridge above the CP was shelled out by friendly artillery, fired from just below. It appeared as though our supporting artillery couldn't get their shells over the hill. After several had crashed into the rocks on either side of the OP, a maddened enlisted man rushed down the hill and "bawled out" the gun crew. They listened, and then fired another round into the hill. Then First Lieutenant DAVID S. ARNOLD raced down the hill to the battery position. The gun crew was apathetic; the officer to see was at breakfast. After the difficulty was explained and supposedly ironed out, another shot was fired. It, too, crashed into the hill. After a few more tries, most of the regimental Headquarters Company had gathered around registering disapproval of the performance. Then, without warning, a shell cleared the hill. The men cheered wildly; the booing ceased. However, the I & R Platoon abandoned their OP, grateful that there had been no casualties.

COMMENDATIONS

The achievement of the whole Division during both the February and March actions was recognized by the following commendations:

a. From Field Marshal ALEXANDER, Supreme Commander, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, to Major General HAYS:

8 MARCH 1945

MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU PERSONALLY AND YOUR DIVISION FOR A VERY WELL PLANNED AND WELL EXECUTED OPERATION. WELL DONE. I AM DELIGHTED AT YOUR SUCCESS.

FIELD MARSHAL ALEXANDER

b. From Lieutenant General MCNARNEY, Commanding MTOUSA:

8 MARCH 1945

MAY I OFFER MY SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION. YOU HAVE SHOWN BY THE SUCCESS OF YOUR FIRST BATTLE TEST OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY WHICH WILL BE A CONSTANT SOURCE OF REAL CONCERN TO OUR ENEMIES. GOOD LUCK AND GOOD HUNTING.

MCNARNEY

c. From Lieutenant General MARK W. CLARK, Commanding 15th Army Group:

7 MARCH 1945

MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION ON THE SUCCESS OF THEIR FIRST MAJOR OPERATION, THE CAPTURE OF MT. BELVEDERE.

YOUR DIVISION, IN ITS INITIAL BATTLES, HAS ACQUITTED ITSELF WITH THE COURAGE AND DARING OF A VETERAN COMBAT UNIT. THIS SPEAKS MORE ELOQUENTLY THAN WORDS OF THE EFFICIENCY OF YOUR PRE-BATTLE TRAINING AND THE SPIRIT OF OFFICERS AND MEN.

THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HAS PROVED ITSELF TO HAVE THE FIGHTING QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL INFANTRY COMBAT. I AM VERY HAPPY TO HAVE THIS DIVISION FIGHTING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH THE OTHER FINE TROOPS IN 15TH ARMY GROUP.

MARK W. CLARK

d. From Lieutenant General L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR., Commanding General Fifth Army:

8 MARCH 1945

UPON THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST FULL SCALE OFFENSIVE OPERATION AGAINST THE ENEMY CARRIED OUT BY THE 10TH DIVISION, I DESIRE TO EXTEND TO EVERY OFFICER AND MAN IN THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION MY SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS ON THE MAGNIFICENT MANNER IN WHICH YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED A VERY DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENT. OVER DIFFICULT TERRAIN AGAINST STRONG OPPOSITION, YOU HAVE SEIZED EVERY OBJECTIVE IN RECORD TIME. YOU HAVE INFLICTED SEVERE LOSSES UPON AT LEAST TWO GERMAN DIVISIONS AND HAVE COMPELLED THE ENEMY TO EMPLOY RESERVE DIVISIONS IN YOUR AREA.

I AM DELIGHTED WITH THE SPLENDID PERFORMANCE OF THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION. YOUR SUCCESS CLEARLY INDICATES CAREFUL AND METICULOUS PLANNING AND EXECUTION. I ESPECIALLY COMMEND THE COMMANDERS AND STAFF OFFICERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE.

THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION IN ITS FIRST OPERATION HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO THE ENTIRE FIFTH ARMY. YOU HAVE SET A HIGH STANDARD AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS IN LEADERSHIP AND COMBAT. YOUR OUTSTANDING SUCCESS IN YOUR FIRST OPERATION AUGURS WELL FOR A BRILLIANT FUTURE. I AM PROUD INDEED TO HAVE THIS DIVISION FIGHTING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH THE VETERAN DIVISIONS OF THE FIFTH ARMY.

L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.

e. From Major General WILLIS D. CRITTENBERGER, Commanding General, IV Corps:

IN THE OPERATION OF 3 MARCH TO 7 MARCH 1945, INCLUSIVE, THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED ON THE BATTLEFIELD ITS RIGHT TO BE CLASSIFIED AS A SPLENDID COMBAT UNIT, NOT ONLY CAPABLE OF UNDERTAKING A SUSTAINED ADVANCE AGAINST A WELL INTRENCHED AND WILY ENEMY DEPLOYED ON RUGGED TERRAIN, BUT EAGER TO DO SO. THE ENEMY ESTIMATE OF "ELITE MOUNTAIN TROOPS," APPLIED BY HIM TO YOUR DIVISION AFTER SHORT BUT BITTER EXPERIENCE, IS A DESERVED COMPLIMENT.

THE SPIRITED ATTACK OF YOUR ELEMENTS, AND THE SMART, ALERT FIGHTING WHICH ALL RANKS DISPLAYED WERE DOMINANT FACTORS IN YOUR SUCCESSFUL PENETRATION OF THE ENEMY'S MAIN LINE OF DEFENSE. HE WAS OVERWHELMED

BY THE RELENTLESS PRESSURE OF YOUR ADVANCE. THE ADROIT SCHEME OF MANEUVER USED BY YOUR BATTALIONS RESULTED IN A LARGE BAG OF PRISONERS OF WAR AND MATERIEL THAT CANNOT BUT HASTEN HIS FINAL DEFEAT. THE FINE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF YOUR TROOPS ALSO CONTRIBUTED IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF THE ATTACK.

AS YOUR VARIOUS UNITS NOW ARE DISPOSED IN FIRM AND CONFIDENT CONTROL OF ALL OBJECTIVES, IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME HEREBY TO COMMEND YOU AND YOUR OFFICERS AND MEN, NOT ONLY FOR A PRECISE AND MASTERLY EXECUTION OF YOUR MISSION, BUT AS WELL FOR THE DASH AND VIGOR THAT NEVER FOR A MOMENT LEFT THE ISSUE IN DOUBT.

WILLIS D. CRITTENBERGER

ACTIVITIES DURING THE REMAINDER OF MARCH

After consolidating the newly won positions, and "sweating out" counterattacks that never came, the battalions were shifted around frequently. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions relieved the 3rd Battalions of the 86th and 85th on the west flank of the Division early on 9 March. Later on the same day, the 1st Battalion 87th was relieved by the 86th in the north sector, and they moved to the left to establish positions around Sassomolare. The following day, the 2nd took these over, and the 1st withdrew to an assembly area at Pietra Colora. The 3rd Battalion was also relieved. Elements of the BEF took over their positions, and they retired to Malandrone.

On the 12th, the 3rd Battalion left for a rest area at Campo Tizzoro, and the 1st Battalion went to the Fifth Army Rest Area at Montecatini, leaving only the 2nd Battalion at the front.

Mar 12

Montecatini, a former mountain resort, was an amazing surprise to the men of the regiment, with night clubs, shows, wine, women, and song; hot water, even rest for those who wished it. It was an unexpected relief to the men from the constant shellfire and the confining existence in a foxhole.

On the 15th, the 1st and 3rd returned to division reserve at Pietra Colora and Malandrone. The following day, the 3rd took over from the 2nd who went into reserve with the 1st to prepare for a stretch at Montecatini, leaving on the 19th. During this period, life behind the lines sometimes became more important than what was going on "out there." Talk shifted to Florence and Rome and Montecatini as leaves and passes were issued. The weather grew more and more pleasant, and the Italian countryside blossomed forth in spring loveliness. Flowers grew between the shell holes, and fruit trees covered their shrapnel-torn branches with fragrant blossoms. Still, shells fell and litter teams sometimes carried friends away across the new grass. The enemy was no different, even though his homeland was burning away behind him. It was still a grim business for the men on the line, but the interludes refreshed the spirit.

SUCCESSFUL PATROL

A patrol from Company I went out the night of 19 March to capture German prisoners in front of their sector. It was one of the most successful patrols ever sent out in the Italian Theater. They brought back one-half of an entire company (23 men) without suffering a casualty, or having either side fire a shot. First Lieutenant ALEXANDER JONES and Sgt. ALEXANDER BEAUCHESNE led the carefully organized patrol. They, with 28 men, were able to send a reinforced squad around to the right rear of a German-occupied town. They crept with the rest of the patrol to within 75 yards of the town without being detected. Then, as a prearranged artillery box-barrage sealed the town off, the reinforced squad supported the balance of the patrol as they moved through town and cleaned the sleepy Germans out of the houses. Fifteen minutes after

Mar 19

the barrage started, the entire patrol was back at the rendezvous with the 23 Germans. The patrol returned uneventfully to the lines.

At the PW cage it came out that the German company commander had left the town just before the attack. One of the PWs, a former actor, did a humorous "take-off" of the German officer's return to find that all of his men had disappeared. All prisoners agreed that he would die for having lost half his company, regardless of the circumstances.

The 2nd Battalion returned to the Pietra Colora area on 23 March, and that night the 1st Battalion relieved the 10th Anti-tank Battalion and the 10th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop on the right flank of the Division without incident at 2040.

On the evening of 27 March, after a 24-hour postponement, the 1st Battalion, 365th Infantry, of the 92nd Division, relieved the 3rd Battalion and came under regimental control in that sector. The 3rd Battalion moved to Campo Tizzoro where a training area had been set up. The next day, in the rain, the 1st Battalion was relieved and moved back to Pietra Colora leaving none of the 87th battalions on the line for the first time since the 2nd of February. However, the 365th operated under the 87th, so the regimental CP was active.

Mar 27

RETURN OF THE COMMANDER

The 3rd Battalion held a parade on the smoothest and flattest field that could be found at Campo Tizzoro. Decorations were presented to officers and enlisted men of the battalion by Brigadier General ROBINSON E. DUFF, the assistant division commander.

The officers and men of the regiment were genuinely delighted to see the regimental commander, Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER, return to duty. Colonel FOWLER made his first appearance at the 3rd Battalion parade. The sun had just broken through the overcast, and the field was damp and very green from the spring rain, and the 92nd Division Band had drawn crowds of Italians to the ceremony. As Colonel FOWLER moved across the field with a slight limp, a murmur of admiration passed through the troops. There was no man there who had been less concerned with his own safety or more concerned for the safety of the men of the 87th, and the men of his command recognized it. He had been away from the regiment five weeks.

The month ended with the native people preparing for Easter, and the soldiers watching with hope in their hearts the tremendous progress of the Allied armies in western Germany.

SPRING OFFENSIVE (1 APRIL — 20 APRIL)

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

The 87th Mountain Infantry spent the first two weeks of April 1945 planning and preparing for their part in the final spring offensive of the Fifth Army in Italy. The days were warm and mild. The fruit trees of the Apennines, many of them torn and shredded by artillery fire during the winter stalemate, were in bloom on the mountainsides. The narrow mountain roads, built for oxcart and foot travel, had been pulverized into dust by the 2½-ton trucks and jeeps coming to the front with supplies. Tanks, tank destroyers, armored artillery, artillery fieldpieces, and heavy equipment of all types stretched to the rear as far as the eye could see. For the soldier resting in the spring sunshine, gathering his gear and cleaning his rifle, it was a reassuring sight, as reassuring as the war news from Europe's other battlefields. It all made the end of the war seem more than a remote possibility.

During the days of preparation there was the never-ending rattle of eleventh hour "zeroing in" of small arms. Men attended flame-thrower schools, or were transported to other areas to watch demonstrations of new weapons. Selected personnel were given practical work in actual minefields. And through all the apparent "peace and quiet" of the lines, maps of unconquered portions of Italy were distributed to the units—even road maps of the Po Valley and beyond. There was more in the air than spring.

The general plan of the 10th Mountain Division's role in breaking through the northern Apennines was made known to higher commanders about 1 April. The mountain division was to spearhead the main Spring Offensive. The enemy was to be driven out of the mountains, and the wide valley of the Po was to be taken away from him. It was hoped that denying him the tremendous productive and fertile valley of the Po would smash his elaborate plans for a defense in the "Redoubt" area of the high Alps. The valley, with its immensely productive fields of wheat, rice, corn, and grain of all kinds, could feed an army in Italy, as well as provide food for the hinterland. The industrial cities in the north produced great quantities of war materiel. The Fifth Army would test the vulnerability of this garden fortress. As the days went by, the big mission was broken down into finer detail for the smaller units.

Apr 1

The month opened with one battalion of the 92nd Division under 87th control on the left flank. The 1st Battalion of the 87th went to Campo Tizzoro for training on the 1st of April. The 3rd Battalion was in division reserve at Pietra Colora. Only the 2nd Battalion was on the line, and it was under control of the 86th in the sector near Castel d'Aiano. Misfortune dogged the 1st Battalion at Campo Tizzoro. While firing on a range on 3 April, a high-tension wire was shot down and fell across the telephone line to the pits. Two men holding phones, Pfc. WILLIAM D. HUFF and PRENTIS F. DAVIDSON, were electrocuted. The next day, two men were wounded by faulty mortar ammunition.

During the two-week period before the jump-off, battalions rotated between the training area, a reserve area, and front-line positions near Castel d'Aiano. On the 4th, the 3rd Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion here and the 2nd moved to Campo Tizzoro after a brief stay at Pietra Colora. Active patrolling was continuous from the front-line companies, and both the Germans and Americans attempted to evacuate civilians from the proposed battle areas.

Several German agents in civilian clothes were caught in the sector, and they reported wide-scale use of specially trained spies. Our own OSS, too, was sending agents regularly into the German lines. Meanwhile, the flood of evacuees coming into our lines greatly complicated the

problem of detecting secret operators. The Germans posted evacuation orders which, translated, read as follows:

“Your district may become a battle area within the next weeks. In order to save your life and your property, it is in your interest to evacuate this district up to the line Semalano di Sopramonte, Righetti, Montetorte, and find safety north of this line. If the evacuation officer agrees with the area selected by the evacuee, he will vouch for a safe evacuation of livestock and property as far as the individual can supply the transportation. The area has to be evacuated by the 5th of April at 1900. Whoever shall be found in this area after that date shall be shot as a spy without challenge. Signed: the Commandant of the German Troop at Rivoca.”

Hundreds of the evacuees, however, sought safety in the south, behind the American lines, instead of in the north. On the 2nd, the 2nd Battalion area near Castel d’Aiano was overrun with milling herds of cattle, pigs, goats, chickens, horses, and donkeys; and with hundreds of Italians with their pitiful collections loaded on all manner of wagons and carts, or being carried on their backs. For the next few days, truckload after truckload of livestock and civilians were shipped to the rear to be handled by AMG.

On 4 April, the 10th Division Field Order No. 4 was delivered to Regiment. The field order drew the picture into sharp focus. Leaves and passes to Rome and Florence were forgotten. Maps showing the progress of the First and Third Armies across Germany became less important than the 1:25,000 map of the terrain north of Mt. della Spe. After diversionary thrusts by the reconstituted 92nd Division over on the west coast, and by the Eighth Army on the east coast, the 10th Mountain Division was to jump off at 0700 on the Mediterranean Theater D-Day. The springboard of the attack was the salient wedge gained in the March offensive, the northernmost tip of which was Mt. della Spe. The gains of the limited offensive of March had a place in the “big picture.”

Apr 4

From Mt. della Spe, the 85th and 87th were to jump off simultaneously. The 85th on the left was to drive to the north and seize the commanding mountains directly ahead of them, and thus secure the left flank of the Division. In the center, the 87th was to make the main drive, hitting north of the town of Torre Iussi, and then turning sharply to the right, seizing a long series of steep, rugged hills that stretched for five miles to the east and northeast. This terrain belt of hills had been selected by the German for his main line of resistance.

On the right, the 86th Mountain Infantry was to follow along inside of the arc formed by the 87th’s turn to the east and mop up the German areas forward of his main line of resistance. Once the 87th had shoved back this line to the east, with the 85th holding on the west, the 86th was to drive into the breakthrough. The 86th action was to be like a football halfback swinging to the right and then cutting back through the big hole opened by the tackle and held open by the guard; then racing down field through the secondary. The 87th would be the charging tackle; the 85th would be the checking guard. The 1st Armored Division was to attack on the right (east) of the 10th Division, moving north along Highway 64.

The difficulties of cracking the initial line cannot be over-emphasized. The first and most obvious difficulty was the terrain. The hills were steeper than any the regiment had fought on. Their sides were lightly wooded with chestnut trees, although in many places were bare, rocky cliffs, outcroppings, and boulders. In places, on the gentler slopes and tops, fields were cleared and small clusters of farm buildings were built in against the mountainsides. Between the mountains were deep, wooded draws with precipitous sides, difficult to cross. The valleys, although cultivated, were gouged out in a deep network of draws with small fields between them. The location and formation of the band of hills was jumbled and without apparent geographical pattern, so that individual hills and locations were difficult to identify.

In addition to the natural terrain obstacle, the other difficulty was loss of surprise. The German, this time, knew what was facing him across the line. At Belvedere, the 86th had amazed him by scaling the cliffs; the 87th and 85th confounded him by attacking in the dark. On della Vedetta in March, the German was still taken aback by the speed and direction of the attack. But what surprise could there be in April? The jump-off salient pointed at his center like an arrow. He knew that the only unit that had been able to punch a hole in his lines all winter was crammed into this foremost salient of their own making. He knew they were mountain troops. He also, rightly or wrongly, believed them to be “hand-picked,” “elite corps,” made up of, to use his own words, “physically superior soldiers, sports personalities, and young men from wealthy or politically significant American families.” (From captured enemy documents describing the 10th Mountain Division.)

Therefore the usual advantage of the mountain attack, surprising an enemy when he depended too heavily on natural obstacles, could not be realized. The enemy expected to be attacked exactly where the attack came. Knowing that rugged terrain had not yet slowed down the mountain troops, he built up a complete defense with elaborate fire plans covering each key high point and draw. He prepared concentrations on the ridges that he occupied, so that if forced to retreat, he could ring immediate fire on the attacking troops when they reached his old positions. He manned his well-prepared positions with the crack 334th Infantry Division. On D-Day he had moved all three of the regiments of this division onto the immediate sector in front of the 10th Division, so that the whole German 334th Division was on the line, and the 94th Division was in reserve. The only surprise felt by the Germans was that our attack was begun in such excellent visibility so late in the morning. It is no wonder that both the 85th and 87th were momentarily stopped in their tracks before some elements had crossed the line of departure.

As the plans for the great spring drive developed, the men thought of their friends who had fallen in February and March. The military cemetery in which they lay had been completed near Florence. On 5 April, nearly a hundred officers and enlisted men of the regiment attended a memorial service for the dead of the 10th Division.

On 6 April the 1st Battalion had moved from Campo Tizzoro to a forward position at Tora, east of Castel d’Aiano. The next day, the 1st and 3rd Battalions, which had been under 86th control, were returned to 87th regimental control. Then, early on the 9th, the 3rd Battalion was relieved by the 85th and went back to Passatore (621229) to remain in reserve. The same night, the battalion from the 92nd Division was relieved on our left by the BEF and their sector passed from our control.

Apr 6

As the days passed in increasing tenseness, the road became dustier, was oiled to cut down the telltale dust, and then the oil was ground into dust again. Enemy agents were caught; a Company D man was wounded by a sentry on the 7th when he didn’t answer the challenge. The “get-away man” of a 1st Battalion patrol was lost on the 8th, but he returned safely in the morning. Some deserters came in. The enemy was observed occasionally and fired on with artillery. Civilians escaping to our lines supplied information on gun emplacements and minefields. Mine-blowing demonstrations were held. Attached British artillery fired several effective missions. The 87th regimental field order was being worked on day and night. Aerial photos, terrain sketches, and intelligence reports were studied.

On the 9th, the 2nd Battalion left Campo Tizzoro for Cargnole, their assembly area, between the 1st Battalion at Tora and the 3rd Battalion at Passatore.

Apr 9

The 87th regimental field order was presented to assembled officers in a small garden plot above Varia di Sotto on 9 April. S/Sgt. PHILIP A. ANDERSON, of the S-3 section, had reproduced, in the freshly plowed earth of the garden, the terrain over which the opening phase of the

battle would be fought. Present were General DUFF, the assistant division commander, Colonel FOWLER, regimental commander, and the battalion commanders.

The 1st Battalion was designated to lead the column of battalions, followed by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Company A, 701st TD Battalion, was to be attached to the 1st Battalion, and Company A, 751st Tank Battalion, to the 2nd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion was to jump off after the 1st Battalion had taken the initial objective, Hill 903, and push on to the northeast on the left of the 1st Battalion. During the first phase, the 3rd Battalion would support the 1st with its heavy weapons, and then move forward in reserve as the 1st and 2nd Battalions occupied the band of hills, and rolled up the German main line of resistance from west to east. The 3rd was also to be ready to assist the other battalions from a forward assembly area on Hill 903. In the second phase, the 86th would drive through these hills to the north and northeast. The 3rd Battalion was to follow the 86th through the "hole" and seize and mop up key terrain on their left. In this phase, tank destroyers would be attached to the 3rd Battalion.

The field order also assigned the two platoons of Company C, 84th Chemical Battalion, in direct support of the leading battalions. The 616th Field Artillery and 1125th Field Artillery (Armored) Battalion had similar missions. Also in support was the Air Corps, with elements under the control of a jeep radio team called "Rover Pete." Company C of the 126th Engineers would support with the principal mission of opening roads for the tanks. The order was clear and direct, and well understood by all parties. D-Day was announced as 12 April; H-Hour was to be 0700.

On following days, flights were arranged for key officers; an engineer mine school on methods of launching the "primacord snake" was held. The troops were cautioned against looting prisoners for watches, money, etc.

On 10 April, administrative details were arranged with supporting units. The liaison men, Rover Pete, reported from the Air Corps.

On 11 April, the regiment moved the CP forward to a farm building at Tora. Division sent out a frantic inquiry about a stray mortar round that landed near the Division CP. It was arranged with Captain LEE E. NEVILLE of the 751st Tank Battalion and Captain PATCH of the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion, that in the first phase of the attack, one platoon of Company A, 751st, would support the 2nd Battalion. Later, the rest of the company would support the 3rd Battalion. Company A, 701st TD Battalion, after supporting the 1st Battalion initially, was to leave one platoon in reserve and support the 3rd Battalion. The terrain was nearly impassable for tanks, so their employment was planned mainly for the later phase when the 3rd Battalion would be heading north along the highway from Tolè. At 1828 word came that the attack was postponed 24 hours.

On 12 April, more details were arranged. The airplane identification panel code was sent out to prevent strafing of friendly troops. To complicate matters, Lieutenant Colonel EMMETT L. NATIONS, commander of the 2nd Battalion, was suffering with a bad fever, and was in danger of being evacuated. On the 12th at 1745, a message came from Division announcing that the attack would begin the next morning. But at 1807, another message announced that the attack was to be postponed another 24 hours to the 14th. Shortly thereafter, Colonel NATIONS was taken to the hospital. Major PAUL TOWNSEND assumed command of the 2nd Battalion.

Apr 12

Meanwhile, for the troops, the waiting had been a nerve-racking strain. The 12th had been overcast. It wasn't a bad day, but effective air support required perfect weather, and the forecaster's report on the afternoon of the 11th had not been satisfactory. The men experienced various reactions to the delay, some impatient, some grateful for a reprieve. There was little to do

since all was in readiness, weapons clean, gear in order. The army term "sweating it out" must have been born for some such anxious period. Those in observation posts watched the shellfire fall on both sides. Several haystacks were fired by tracer and white phosphorus fire. Haystacks seem to have been not only favorite German positions but also very rewarding targets.

The waiting men looked hard at each other these days as though to remember well each face. These men knew from experience how quickly the faces of the dead dim in memory, how blurred the image soon becomes, even though the loved name is repeated over and over. They studied each other gravely. Some optimists still snatched at every radio news report. The attack in Germany was moving rapidly; the Americans were reported but 76 miles from Berlin. More than a few hoped there would be no drive in Italy. Perhaps it would end in time. It was so hopeless for the enemy to fight on. Unfortunately, hopeless Germans made desperate fighters. The enemy was determined to hold Italy's Po Valley, for while it was his, there was a refuge for him in the "Redoubt."

Tora was a half-dozen stone farm buildings huddled together on the steep side of a narrow valley running north and south. The command posts of the regiment and the 1st Battalion were there. To the south waited the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Forward a quarter of a mile at the head of the valley on an east-west ridge was the front. From OPs on this ridge the German line could be studied: Torre Iussi, the little town in a grove of pine trees; to the right, Hill 903, its lower slope scarred where the road skirting it cut into rock and dirt banks of its steep sides; Hill 868; Mt. Pigna; Rocca di Roffeno. All looked peaceful and uninhabited. Only puffs of smoke from our leisurely artillery landing across the valley broke the incongruously peaceful-appearing country. The regimental OP, a stone barn atop Montesinistro, though it stuck up before the German line like a billboard, oddly enough drew no fire. Perhaps its very obviousness was its protection. At any rate, Sgt. BENNETT BOGGESS and T/5 JOHN HAWKINSON of the I & R Platoon, twice shelled from OPs in the March campaign, named this one "Aiming Stake OP," with its white walls and red roofs perched dead center on a hilltop opposite the German OPs.

Directly west, across the narrow valley, and over a sharp ridge, was the CP of the 85th, less than a half mile away. Between the valley sides, barely hidden by the ridge at Montesinistro was jammed the indescribably varied equipment and paraphernalia of attack: hundreds of vehicles—track and wheel; field guns, self-propelled guns, tank guns; stacks of ammunition; crates on crates of rations; small mountains of gas cans. The valley was covered with tentage and dumps, and over the maze of ruts cut in the new grass, the jeeps, 6-by-6s, and heavy engineer trucks crawled back and forth. It was a sobering sight to survey the waiting valley in broad daylight and realize that just over the saddle ahead were the means and the will to obliterate all of this ant-like activity in the entire valley. At night too it was alarming, and "Bedcheck Charlie," the German plane that came over regularly at about 2230, must have spotted some of the many chinks of light shining from tent cracks when men entered and left CPs. However, only occasional shells came in. No real damage was done.

All of the advance planning cannot be related in detail, but the following report is typical: "Three days while awaiting the attack, the A & P Platoon of the 3rd Battalion kept busy bringing ammo to the line under cover of darkness and in getting all gear ready for D-Day. During one of these trips Lieutenant NOEL C. CLAD, platoon leader, was severely bruised when his jeep rolled over on a narrow, treacherous road in pitch darkness. Approximately 500,000 rounds of caliber .30 and .50 MG and 2,400 rounds of 81-mm were hauled to positions overlooking Torre Iussi, Hill 903, and Rocca di Roffeno. The battalion was issued its full basic load, and an additional basic load was placed on a 1½-ton, a ¾-ton, and eight jeeps and trailers. The pioneer tools and demolitions were separated into different-sized kits and placed on four jeeps and trailers. During the

day preceding the attack the platoon developed a mine-breaching apparatus that was very effective. It consisted of 13 strands of primacord attached to three 2.36" rockets, which were wired together with their ignition wire spliced in series. One end of the primacord was staked down and then, from a distance of twenty feet, the rockets were fired by a small battery. The rockets carried the primacord out across the mined area, and then a cap placed in the near end detonated the primacord. It proved able to clear positively a path one and one-half feet wide, and to uncover mines for four feet in width. Twenty mules were obtained as an additional means of transport for ammo and equipment for the platoon."

At 0200 on 13 April, as the 87th men slept, waiting for the jump-off that would end the five and a half year war in Europe, the sad news that shocked the world reached the area by radio. Some soldiers were waked up, others learned in the morning that their Commander-in-Chief, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died.

Apr 13

Friday the 13th was fair. There was some slight haze; clouds passed the sun from time to time, but it was a beautiful, clear day. The reason for the second postponement of the night before could possibly have been an uncertain weather prediction, but there was another factor. Some men still hoped that the "high command" was waiting for developments in Germany. There was an unconfirmed, and untrue, radio report that the Allies were in Berlin that day. Some men were sure that the great offensive had been shifted from Friday the 13th in deference to the age-old superstition that still lingered in the middle of the "enlightened" 20th century.

On the afternoon of the 13th, the hour of attack was set back an hour and a half to 0830 of the 14th. A warning came from Division that no one was to break defilade until positive word was given that the attack was on. The 14th dawned fair and clear. At 0653, another 45-minute delay was called, setting the time for jump-off at 0915. Finally, one last change set H-Hour at 0945. The air preparation was to be from 0830 to 0910, and the artillery and other ground weapons were to fire preparation from 0910 to 0935. The attack was set. "This was it!" After all these delays, the roar of bombs, artillery, and supporting heavy machine guns was convincing proof that the big drive was on.

FIRST DAY—14 APRIL

1st Battalion—Torre Iussi

The Air Corps preparation consisted of four Thunderbolt fighter-bombers at a time, on the front of the Division. For forty minutes they peeled off and dove over the German positions, setting several fires with firebombs, and doing considerable damage to buildings along the mountain line with demolition bombs. They also characteristically dropped a bomb on the CP of the 2nd Battalion at about 0830, and another in the 85th regimental area that set their ammo dump on fire.

Apr 14

The ground support was more effective. Starting promptly at 0910, all the artillery units, from Corps down, fired for 25 minutes. The ground shook, and great billows of dust and smoke clouded over the line of mountains to the north. Both air corps and artillery officers claimed that nothing could live through the preparation. It was a tremendous spectacle, but ten minutes later, as Company B, the leading rifle company, crossed the line of departure, the enemy had crawled out of his deep holes and was waiting in the settling dust, very much alive.

The small arms support was under the control of Company D. The mortar platoon under First Lieutenant THOMAS H. COLLINS was emplaced well behind the line of departure. With this platoon were the attached mortars and machine guns of the 3rd Battalion, nine .50-calibers

from the 616th Field Artillery Battalion, fifteen additional water-cooled .30-calibers, and twenty additional .50-calibers. The 37-mm guns from the 3rd Battalion gun platoon were also used in support. Altogether, more than sixty machine guns were fired under the direction of Company D that morning. The 3rd Battalion guns alone fired 500,000 rounds. One gun fired so continuously that three barrels were burned out. Second Lieutenant DONALD W. HOFFMAN of Company H, attached to Company M during the initial supporting fire, was wounded by shellfire.

COMPANY B—HILL 860

The morning of 14 April, Company B left its rear assembly area at 0500 and marched to the forward assembly area on the reverse slope of Montesinistro, arriving there at 0600. After the two days of postponement, the men were still not certain that today would be the beginning of the offensive, until Thunderbolts came in, bombed and strafed the valley and ridges to the front. There was then no doubt that this was the day. The company commander, Captain CLARENCE H. SWEDBERG, called the platoon leaders and NCOs together once more and gave them the battle plan. Very little resistance was expected the first day, with the devastating preparation of air and artillery promised.

The company left the assembly area at 0910 hours, with two platoons forward, 1st on the right, 2nd on the left, and 3rd in reserve. One machine gun platoon of Company D, under First Lieutenant WILLIAM S. SPINNEY, was attached, and one light machine gun squad was attached to each of the leading platoons. One section of short (stubby) mortars under First Lieutenant OLAN D. PARR was also attached to Company B. The distance from the assembly area to the line of departure was about 1,500 yards over rough terrain. Pfc. WALTER LULUE, a BAR man of the 2nd Platoon, slipped on the steep incline, injuring his ankle so that he had to be evacuated.

Most of the time, while approaching the line of departure the men were under clear observation of the enemy, and they began receiving small arms fire before they actually reached the line of departure.

The 1st Platoon moved out across the LD on time with two squads abreast and one in reserve. As they approached the first group of houses, Pfc. WALTER L. HANEY, 1st Platoon messenger, was hit in the shoulder and foot by sniper fire. Then a thunder of fire smashed into the men and the two leading platoons were pinned down. The Germans threw artillery, mortar, and everything they had into the area. The 2nd Platoon tried to advance to the left, but was caught in the fire and unable to move far. They radioed back for artillery support, but were refused. The men were disillusioned about the effectiveness of the artillery preparation. The town of Torre Iussi had hardly been touched, and the Germans had set up a strong point in their main line of resistance there. With the aid of the bazooka, the 1st Platoon cleaned out the first group of houses by 0950 and took eight prisoners. The 3rd Platoon, which was following, ran into a minefield near the road junction at Serra Sarzana, and S/Sgt. DONALD G. HAIGHT was killed. They selected a new route and caught up with the rest of the company.

The mission of the 1st Platoon was to clear out Torre Iussi only a few yards down the road. They went up the reverse slope of Hill 860 to the left to start the assault from above the town. Here they took five prisoners at 1000. All types of fire hit them, coming from the town and from the narrow valley to the north. S/Sgt. WAYNE C. CLARK and S/Sgt. HARRY M. SHEVCHIK were killed as they moved down to the town and Pfc. GERALD E. MULVANEY, Pfc. HENRY M. LEMMENES, Pfc. LEON BURROWS, and Pfc. JOHN M. GABRI were all wounded by machine gun fire. The rest of the 1st Platoon doggedly moved into the town and flushed out fifteen prisoners. S/Sgt. JACOB R. NUNNEMACHER, who spoke German, asked the prisoners if there were any more Germans in the nearest house. The Krauts said "No." He started into the building, and was immediately shot and killed by a sniper.

While the 1st Platoon was attempting to clean out Torre Iussi, the 2nd Platoon was flanking enemy emplacements to the left on Hill 860. Upon reaching the top of this hill, First Lieutenant HAROLD E. GARFINKEL, Pfc. WAYNE E. HERMON and Pfc. PAUL F. SCHILLER were all killed by machine gun fire. S/Sgt. BETTA FOTAS took a squad of men to wipe this out, but he and Pfc. FRANCISCO L. SANTIESTEBAN were killed and Pfc. ASCENCION L. SIMENTAL and Pfc. JOHN B. MEYERS were wounded. T/Sgt. OSCAR L. CLEMENT assumed command of the 2nd Platoon.

The 3rd Platoon, in reserve, moved to the reverse slope of Hill 860 and dug in waiting. First Sergeant WALTER R. HARD, JR. had been wounded by artillery, and T/Sgt. ERNEST W. DAVIDSON took over his duties. In the attached machine gun platoon from Company D, Pfc. EARNEST B. STOLLER was hit by a sniper on the road, and Pfc. BURLEY F. YOUNG, JR., and Pvt. HAYDEN CLAYCOMB were wounded by mortar fire.

The fifteen remaining men in the 1st Platoon were still trying to clean out Torre Iussi. About 1130, they discovered that they were trapped by machine gun fire inside the enemy main line of resistance, and were unable to move forward or withdraw. Communication was out, and a runner, Pfc. LEWIS A. HOELCHER, volunteered to take a message back to the company. Finally, withdrawing one man at a time, the 1st Platoon got back to the reverse slope of Hill 860 and dug in. Second Lieutenant GILBERT G. HOUSLEY called for 81-mm fire on the buildings but was unable to locate the Company D mortars. Then, finding the forward observer with the company, he learned that the radio was out. A runner was sent back, and 4.2s partially leveled the town. Sgt. THOMAS A. FOLEY was wounded by shrapnel from mortar fire and while being evacuated was killed when a mortar round scored a direct hit on his litter. The squad of light machine guns had tried to give the 1st Platoon covering fire while it was assaulting from Hill 860, but were forced to the reverse slope by shelling which killed Sgt. MARVIN G. HALE and Pfc. JOHN M. WILBUR. Second Lieutenant RAY WILSON, weapons platoon leader, was hit by enemy sniper fire and evacuated. S/Sgt. LLOYD P. WICK took command of the weapons platoon. During the action T/5 ALBERT MANCHIO was killed and the following men wounded: T/Sgt. WOODROW SLONE, T/4 HAMILTON J. ALLEN, Pfc. RODERICK W. BOYLES, Pfc. ROY C. COBB, Pfc. LOYAL F. COLOSKY, Pfc. EMMETT H. DUNKIN, Pfc. NEWT L. DURHAM, Pfc. CHARLES HANSON, Pfc. HELMAR J. HUNT, Pfc. JOHN C. KNEER, Pfc. ADOLPH REINHARDT, Pfc. MELVIN H. WISEMAN, and Pvt. CLELL DOYLE.

It was a tense morning for the regiment. The two previous offensives, with their initial surprises, had started off with great speed and the first objectives taken ahead of schedule. This time the enemy had expected the attack. He was ready, deep in the ground safe from our artillery, and he was ready behind sandbags and stone for our riflemen. By noon, scores of casualties had gone through the 1st Battalion aid station, and the little town of Torre Iussi still held out athwart the regiment's route to its initial objective, Hill 903. From the thick stone-walled buildings in the pines, bullets spit all over the valley, not only holding off Company B, but searching the approach trails and pinning down the rest of the battalion and firing into the flank of the 86th on the right of the 87th. Not only in Company B had casualties been heavy, but also the long column approaching the line of departure had been pounded as the men inched forward on the exposed slopes. Even back over the Montesinistro ridge at the head of the narrow valley, where the heavy weapons had pulled back on the lifting of their supporting fire, shellfire caused casualties.

Back in the regimental CP, Lieutenant Colonel SCHMELZER and Captain ARTHUR BRODEUR were poring over the S-3 operations map, coloring with a red or yellow crayon each advance of the 1st Battalion. For more than two hours the map lay untouched while the ringing

telephones brought bad news, but little good. For a while it looked as though the attack had failed. Company M, out of the fight after its supporting role, was eating rations and congratulating themselves on the lack of counter-battery fire. Without warning, a short concentration of shells came in, killing S/Sgt. WALTER R. HUCKABEE, Sgt. ROBERT W. STROMBERG, and Pfc. MARVIN D. LEDBETTER. Wounded were S/Sgt. ROLAND E. CLARK, Sgt. RAYMOND W. HUGHES, and Pfc. JOE ADAMS, Pfc. DENZEL R. EAREHART, Pfc. LEAROYD A. HOOVER, Pfc. JAMES R. MORECRAFT, Pfc. ARVO SUORSA and Pfc. ROLAND A WEIPERT. Sgt. STROMBERG had just been ordered to leave the battle for Officer Candidate School, but hadn't been reached before he was killed. In this same area, three men from the 37-mm gun crew of the 1st Battalion were wounded: Sgt. WILLIAM F. WILSON, Pfc. OLLIS E. SIKES, and Pfc. DAVID O. CUNNINGHAM. Also, M Company wireman, Pfc. WAYNE H. WILSON, had been wounded by machine gun fire while in the company OP on Mt. della Spe.

The entire area, forward from the Montesinistro ridge to Torre Iussi, was littered with dead and wounded mules, and men hit by machine gun, sniper, mortar or artillery fire, or mines. The continual pounding and the roughness of the steep trails made the evacuation problem hazardous and difficult. The Medical Section of the 1st Battalion lost Pfc. HOWARD MCMILLIAN, Pfc. AREL BAJKAN, and Pfc. RUDOLPH W. HEINS, all killed by artillery fire while lying on the ground tending a wounded man. Pfc. DOUGLAS ATON broke two ribs while bringing in a casualty, and after taking care of the casualty, had to be evacuated himself. Pfc. GENE L. RIGNEY was wounded on Mt. della Spe.

At 1220, Company A was ordered to pass through Company B, take Torre Iussi and seize Hill 903. Company C was to take Mt. Pigna, the original objective for Company A, and Company B would become reserve. Actually, Company A did succeed in taking both of its objectives, Torre Iussi and Hill 903. But an hour and a half after being ordered out, the regiment, not being well informed of the progress being made, directed the 2nd Battalion to jump off at 1355, with two companies abreast bypassing Torre Iussi on the east and capturing Hill 903. This attack was to be coordinated with the 2nd Battalion of the 86th on the right, and was to be supported by two battalions of artillery.

COMPANY A—HILL 903

Company A crossed the line of departure thirty minutes after Company B. As they climbed down the northeastern slopes of Mt. della Spe, they were held up by the tail end of Company B during the fight for Torre Iussi. Company A was pinned down behind Company B and both companies stretched out in one unbroken continuous line along the wagon trail, reaching back almost to the assembly area. Mortar and artillery fire punished the men, and snipers and a machine gun opened up from the high ground to the left front and worked over the column. Many of the men did not dig in, as the column was expected to keep moving, and casualties were heavy under the terrible concentration of 105s, 120s, and mortars. At the sides of the trail, the men found rocky ravines or draws to seek cover in, but these were wooded and tree bursts took their toll. Pfc. MOSE CAREY, still on Mt. della Spe, was hit by artillery and later died of his wounds. The 3rd and 2nd Platoons had led the company, while the 1st and weapons platoons had been further to the rear where the artillery barrages were heavier. They suffered the most casualties.

As the attached 1st machine gun platoon of Company D moved out with Company A, they suffered casualties. The platoon, under First Lieutenant ANTSELM BRADLEY, came under sniper fire from the front when they crossed the road below Mt. della Spe. They moved off of the road just as artillery fire crashed down on them. Pfc. EARL R. BUMGARNER and Pfc. TIMOTHY H. DOUGLAS were wounded.

Some time after 1200, the 2nd Platoon, abreast of the 3rd on the left, moved up on Hill 860 under the artillery and machine gun fire. The 3rd Platoon moved through pinned-down Company B, and was itself pinned down for two hours just short of the town from which elements of Company B had been driven. During this advance the 1st Platoon lay in the ditch along the road and drew fire. An 88 hit a mortar hole in which Pfc. CASPER A. BEHRING was crouching. He was wounded, and First Lieutenant JAMES E. HAWKINS III was hit by flying shrapnel.

The "536" radios were on the same frequency as those of one of the companies of the 86th on the right. Consequently, their use became too confusing, and a messenger, Pfc. RICHARD D. JOHNSTON, was sent back with a message to First Sergeant GILBERT S. BATES. He was shot in the chest, but climbed back onto his feet and continued on for three hundred yards. He delivered the message and then fell dead at the sergeant's feet.

T/Sgt. RAYMOND H. TIGER of the weapons platoon was injured by concussion. In the machine gun section, S/Sgt. WALTER L. MONTGOMERY, Sgt. CECIL T. WILCOX, and Pfc. JAMES A. CONOVER and Pfc. RALPH J. BREWER were all wounded.

Back with the company command group, executive officer First Lieutenant THEOPHILE B. RANGER, S/Sgt. JOSEPH L. SARRI, Pfc. EDGAR J. HATCH, JR. and Pfc. JOSEPH ZANN, were all wounded by artillery. Pfc. BASIL E. DAY was lightly wounded while serving as battalion runner. Also Pfc. JOHN K. BRYANT was hit. In the 1st Platoon, wounded by artillery were: Pfc. CLARENCE J. SEGREST, SR. and Pfc. JAMES E. BENFIELD. Pfc. CARL R. AMASON, of the 2nd Platoon, was hit; and one of the world's finest skiers, Sgt. FRIEDL PFEIFFER, was seriously wounded. Also, Sgt. MARK E. CAUCH was hit in the leg. Pfc. OKEY C. DEAN, while applying first aid to a wounded man, was hit and killed. When the order came for Company A to pass through B at about 1200, Company B had completely withdrawn from the town, but some of its elements were abreast of the town up on Hill 860. As the 3rd Platoon, Company A, entered Torre Iussi, elements of Company F, 86th Infantry, came abreast of them on the right, and went through the east section of town where most of the resistance seemed to be coming from. They cleaned out five machine gunners just beyond the town, killing two and capturing three. Then the 3rd Squad of the 3rd Platoon passed through the town and moved into a draw beyond to establish a base of fire so that the rest of the platoon could cross the valley to Hill 903. The artillery laid in on them and nine of the twelve became casualties as they gave covering fire. Pfc. JESUS M. SALAZAR was killed. S/Sgt. JAMES D. GRAVELLE, Pfc. HENRY A. GREEN, Pfc. WILLIAM C. ALBRIGHT, Pfc. JOHN C. GUINN, Pfc. ALLEN E. LUGINBILL, Pfc. NORMAN G. OLIVER, Pfc. ARTHUR V. RECTOR, and Pfc. PAUL E. WANTULOK were wounded.

T/Sgt. WILLIAM H. WEBB, JR., platoon sergeant of the 2nd Platoon, stood out in the open, guiding his men through the minefields that had to be crossed in the draw beyond Torre Iussi. He was killed by artillery, as was Sgt. LLOYD A. GORMAN. Pfc. WILLIAM B. ADDY was wounded. A little farther on, two more men, Pfc. GRADY L. BREWER and Pfc. JOHN A. ANASTASI, were wounded. The 3rd Platoon captured two more prisoners in the draw. Altogether 14 prisoners were captured in Torre Iussi out of about 35 estimated Germans in the town.

From the draw, the 3rd Platoon led up onto the left shoulder of Hill 903, receiving some machine gun fire from the valley to the north. Pfc. WILLIAM W. GOLDSMITH was wounded by this fire, and Pfc. EARL O. ENG was wounded by artillery. Much of this fire seemed to be coming from the lower slopes of Hill 898, and the company mortars were set up to snipe at it. Captain HUGH D. KLEMME of Company A and Captain JAMES C. KENNETT of Company F met in Torre Iussi and coordinated their attack. The two companies, however, had bottlenecked in the town, and Company F had been held up here and by a steep bank too high to climb unaided. The 3rd Platoon climbed rapidly up the hill and reached the western crest a little ahead of Com-

pany F coming up on its right. Having reached the crest, they swung to the left and out toward a knob to the northwest. Pfc. MICHAEL SAWYER was wounded out here when a bullet glanced off another man's helmet and struck his leg. A machine gun opened up from the knob, and the 3rd Platoon set up a base of fire. The 1st and 2nd Platoons, moving up the hill, went to the top of Hill 903 first and then to the left knob, passing behind the 3rd Platoon. They then flanked around to the right of the machine gun and drove it off the hill. Having taken the knob, the company received mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire from Hill 898 across the valley to the west. They dug in on the knob between 1700 and 1800. Later, Company E, holding Hill 903, tied in with them.

After Torre Iussi was taken, Company B was given the order to dig in on the reverse slope of Hill 860. The enemy artillery concentrations were still coming in and causing casualties. When Company A moved through and headed for Hill 903, Company B followed in a column of platoons, 2nd, 3rd, and 1st. The company was still under mortar and sniper fire. Company B arrived on the reverse slope of Hill 903 at dusk and dug in for the night.

COMPANY C—BATTALION RESERVE

Under the command of Captain MORLAN W. NELSON, Company C crossed the line of departure in battalion reserve. The company was held up behind Company A at the foot of Mt. della Spe's wooded slopes, and remained pinned down there most of the day. Both artillery and mortar fire pounded them throughout the day, starting even before they had left the assembly area. The occasional halting forward movements to keep contact with the company ahead forced the men to keep looking for new cover. At one time, the 3rd Platoon, leading on the hillside, was moving into the cover of a ravine. Some of the men had taken cover in old shell craters on a clay-slide area, when a straight line of shells burst one after the other across the craters, landing full in one of them, killing Sgt. JOSEPH E. STREUMEYER. Behind the 3rd, the 2nd Platoon had reached the foot of Mt. della Spe when a dud struck the side of the trail, followed by a shell that wounded Sgt. MURRY L. LOEFFLER and Pfc. MARTIN W. LUECK, Pfc. FELIX F. CHURCH, Pfc. ALBA D. BARTHOLOMEW, and Pfc. CLIFFORD J. ARCHER. In the weapons platoon, Pfc. JOHN T. KELLY and S/Sgt. JOHN H. ASHCRAFT suffered almost a direct hit, the concussion of which temporarily paralyzed one of them and shocked the other. Pfc. ROBERT W. WINBUSH, a medic who had been running from casualty to casualty throughout the bombardment, took care of both of these men and miraculously remained unhurt.

At about 1600, the company started to move again and got down into the cover of a ravine. At this time, Pfc. PAUL J. BROWN, a BAR man who had insisted on trying to keep up with the company on a badly injured foot, was unable to go further. From the ravine, the 3rd Platoon had to move out into the open in order to watch and become familiar with the route of Company A through the minefields in front of Torre Iussi. They were held up here on a hard, clay hillside, unable to dig in successfully, and kept from advancing by Company A's difficulties with the mines. Trees overhead made the shallow holes they could dig less effective, and tree bursts killed Pfc. CARL H. ORTWEIN and Pfc. ELMER FRISTOE, and wounded Pvt. OWEN J. RICKER. The heavy shellfire seemed to be drawn by the mule trains moving along the trail, and many of the animals were killed. The 3rd Platoon was spread out on this hillside area for nearly three hours. They watched as almost miraculously the shellfire lifted just long enough for Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON, the battalion commander, to travel down the road past them, and then started thundering in again right where he had been. The number of casualties gives no indication of the severity of the shelling. Only the roughness of the terrain saved many lives. Pfc. ROY L. HART, an assistant BAR man, had a shell land practically on top of him, but he crouched in under the overhanging bank of a stream. When the earth settled, he was buried under a foot and

a half of dirt with only the shovel handle sticking from his pack showing his position. When quickly dug out, he was uninjured.

2nd Battalion—Hill 903

COMPANY E

At 1325, when the decision was made to move the 2nd Battalion to the east of Torre Iussi and take the initial regimental objective, Hill 903, Company E was ordered to attack on the right and Company F on the left. Company G was to be in reserve. At that time, as far as was known, the 1st Battalion was still pinned down.

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Company E, with the 1st machine gun platoon of Company H attached, was to lead off. They had been waiting for four hours behind the line of departure and had been under artillery fire. During the morning, Pfc. OTTO KORBAN was hit, and S/Sgt. JOHN L. WIGDAHL had been wounded at 1130. Major PAUL A. TOWNSEND, the acting battalion commander, gave them their orders and they jumped off just before 1400. After being temporarily held up by Company C as they crossed the line of departure, they moved on across the valley in a column of files, with 2nd Platoon leading. Reaching the foot of Hill 903, the 3rd was echeloned to the right rear, with the 1st following the 3rd. The valley was mined, but the company passed through the minefields without difficulty. However, two men, Sgt. ALFRED E. MAHONEY and Pfc. EDWIN P. HADSELL, were injured crossing the rough terrain. Machine guns were attached to the leading platoon, and one mortar squad was with each platoon. At the very southernmost point of the road nearing the base of Hill 903 was a cluster of buildings at Point 750. First Lieutenant RICHARD L. CROOK led his 2nd Platoon around these buildings, and men from the weapons platoon cleared the houses and took 24 prisoners without difficulty. Heavy shellfire fell around the buildings as the company pushed on up the hill, and Pfc. RAYMOND R. LINDSAY and Pfc. EUGENE E. SULLIVAN were wounded as the 2nd Platoon climbed the steep, wooded and rocky slope. There was little resistance except for some small arms and mortar fire coming in from the left, which wounded Pfc. LELAND A. HUFFORD. The gullies and rock outcroppings afforded good cover against this fire. S/Sgt. THADDEUS BENEDICT was wounded by a round of friendly artillery fire further up the hill. As they reached the top they fired at the retreating Germans withdrawing over the hill, and wounded two of them. Twenty prisoners were taken. The company dug in on the reverse slope, and five BARs and two machine guns were sent over the crest onto the forward slope. The mortars were emplaced and the company took positions to cover Company F moving up.

COMPANY F

Company F had moved up late in the morning and dug foxholes just behind the regimental OP. At 1355 they started out for Torre Iussi behind Company E. They moved in a column of files through artillery and sniper fire, led by the 1st Platoon and attached machine guns, followed by the company machine guns, 2nd Platoon, mortars, 3rd Platoon, and a section of heavy machine guns from Company H. As the company approached the road junction at Serra Sarzana, south of Torre Iussi, the leading elements took a footpath short-cut across the fields while the company followed along by the road. T/Sgt. JOHN C. DECKER of the weapons platoon stepped off the trail to check on his men. A *schu* mine blew off his foot. He lay on the side of the trail joking with his men about his foot as they went by, and telling them to do a good job for his sake. The road from here on to Torre Iussi was a grim sight with men and mules scattered. Parts of mules were everywhere. The hardest soldier was shocked by broken and dismembered bodies in his own familiar uniform.

In the attached machine gun platoon of Company H. Pfc. CLARENCE W. LINN, JR. was killed by artillery fire ten minutes after the platoon crossed the line of departure on Mt. della Spe. LINN had been a jeep driver; this was his first day of line duty.

By this time Torre Iussi had been cleaned out by Company A and part of the 86th. On the north edge of town the company reorganized and received orders to continue on to Hill 903. An artillery shell crashed into the company, wounding Pfc. JOHN W. VALENTINE and Pfc. PALMER E. COUILLARD. As the company moved down through the deep draws between Torre Iussi and Hill 903, they were under intense artillery, mortar and long-range machine gun fire. They were to move up the draw to the north and then up Hill 903 on the left of Company E.

First Lieutenant EUGENE CLAWSON, even though the two lead scouts had gone through the marshy draw safely, probed and dug up a large number of mines and put them on the side of the poorly defined trail. He then ordered that four men at a time should cross the exposed field through the mines. Pfc. CLARENCE E. LOCKMAN, the messenger, while guiding four men through, was wounded by artillery. Then Pfc. DENNIS R. HUNTLEY, the lead scout of the 2nd Platoon, took LOCKMAN's place and, leading a group of four, missed the trail and set off a mine, blowing off his foot. HUNTLEY, in order to be with the company for the spring offensive, had gone AWOL from the hospital, where he had been recovering from a wound received at C. Florio on 20 February, and had arrived just a few days before the jump-off. HUNTLEY sat by the trail for 26 hours, cared for by Pfc. GEORGE HIRAK. HIRAK had undertaken alone to clear the minefield and tried vainly to get litter bearers up to where HUNTLEY was lying under small arms and artillery fire. HIRAK finally moved HUNTLEY over to the shelter of a cliff. During his long wait, HUNTLEY pointed out the various mines to the men coming through, and guided the troops by voice while HIRAK taped off the area. Pvt. JAMES K. INGRAM had taken HUNTLEY's place as guide, and another mine destroyed his foot. When HIRAK, of the A & P Platoon, had first arrived, he had probed and cleared the mines out of the trail, and established movement at a 20-yard distance. It was later discovered that there were 3,000 mines in this marshy draw. The enemy had carefully placed them in the hummocks so that a man stepping from hummock to hummock would hit them. HUNTLEY, who had been for 26 hours under spasmodic shelling, was found to have six mines under him when he was moved. Apparently the distribution of his weight in the reclining position was so even that the mines were not detonated.

Company A, preceding Company F through Torre Iussi, was by this time well up the draw and starting up Hill 903 on the left. The weapons platoon of Company F had been emplaced on Hill 860 to fire support for the two assaulting platoons, the 1st and 2nd, as they went up Hill 903. Captain KENNETT boosted every man in the 2nd Platoon up from his knee to his shoulder, and then to the top of a steep bank as they came across a road. A sniper on the shoulder of Hill 903 wounded Pvt. JOHN V. IHLENFELD as the 2nd Platoon moved up. Sgt. JOHN J. LANDER, suffering from shellshock, stayed back with Pfc. JOSEPH E. SADOWSKI who raked the ridge with his BAR. SADOWSKI was then wounded by a sniper from the right.

The 2nd Platoon on the left climbed up the left nose of Hill 903 and into a saddle. They received some fire from Hill 894 beyond Hill 903 as they came over the hill. Sgt. AUSTIN T. CRANOR spotted four Krauts near the top and yelled at them in German to surrender. The Germans waved the American over as if they wished to give up. S/Sgt. LOUIS H. BARGMANN and two men left their cover and started over. As fire opened on them, they dropped and returned fire with a BAR and rifle grenades. Lieutenant CLAWSON and two men flanked around the base of the hill to head the Germans off, but they escaped.

On the other side of the hill, Pfc. WILLARD WILLIAMS and Pfc. MILTON JOHNSON approached the top of the hill on the right, in front of the 1st Platoon, and broke over the crest at an enemy artillery OP, taking the occupants completely by surprise. One Kraut reached for a rifle, but WILLIAMS loaded him up with BAR slugs. The other two, after a glance at their dead com-

rade, threw their hands into the air. In the OP was an artillery radio and firing data chart, which was sent back. Many of the barrage areas were thereby known and avoided.

On top of the hill the company reorganized on the forward slope, actually on the knob to the northeast marked 894. Here they awaited further orders and, at 1800, made contact with Company B, which had followed A up on the left. Company E made contact, too, from the right. As they organized defensively, the 3rd Platoon passed through onto the forward slope and received machine gun fire out there from the valley near Tabole. The area was well dug up with unoccupied German dugouts complete with abandoned weapons.

General DUFF appeared on the hill to confer with the acting battalion commander, Major TOWNSEND, and the company was ordered to take Hill 868 before dark.

COMPANY G—BATTALION RESERVE

Company G was in battalion reserve at the outset. The 1st Platoon under Second Lieutenant STANLEY JAZWINSKI was detached from the company to form a tank combat team riding tanks of the 751st. Shortly after 1330 the company left foxholes behind the LD and followed the leading elements of the battalion across the shell-torn valley to Hill 903. Artillery fire came in on them, but there were no casualties.

COMPANY H—MORTAR PLATOON

The 3rd, or Mortar, Platoon of Company H, in reserve with Company G, moved up in the morning to supporting positions at approximately 1000. The 1st and 2nd Sections emplaced at Calvana southeast of Torre Iussi. There during the day they were frequently pinned down by heavy enemy shellfire.

The 3rd Section remained in a draw to the right of Mt. della Spe from where they fired several missions. Just forward of Mt. della Spe near the cluster of buildings called Serra Sarzana, S/Sgt. ORTON TALBOT was hit and wounded by artillery. Second Lieutenant HAROLD V. STOUT and Pfc. LOUIS W. PETR moved forward with Company F as forward observers. After nightfall, the 3rd Section displaced forward on the southern slope of Hill 903.

2nd Battalion—Hill 868

During the afternoon, information of the enemy was pieced together by the IPW team under S/Sgt. LEO A. HANDEL. It was learned that the 755th Regiment of the 334th Infantry Division was opposing the 87th Infantry. This meant that all three regiments of the enemy division had been thrown into the line. There was now no reserve regiment of the 334th Division, and obviously this situation was based on a desperate confidence of the German command, not only that the Allied thrust would come where it did, and when it did, but also that the German position was strong enough, and their troops good enough to stop the 87th in its tracks.

The enemy that were met on the first day were good. They were young, many of them fanatical. Not many were captured; many more were killed. Many stayed in bypassed positions and fired into our flanks and rear. Eighteen machine gunners on the steep slopes of Hill 898 just north of Torre Iussi fired all day on April 14th and 15th into our passing reserve battalion, service elements, and artillery battalion, even though the 85th occupied the very hill they were concealed on. They finally had to be rooted out man by man. During the afternoon, the IPW team was able to plot mortar and gun positions, CPs, minefields, and profitable artillery targets. They also learned that the 90th Panzer Division was in German reserve.

At 1730, Major TOWNSEND acknowledged an order for the 2nd Battalion to take Mt. Pigna upon the securing of Hill 903, which was reported taken ten minutes earlier. Actually, Company

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A had passed over the main summit of Hill 903 on its way out to the northwestern knob just ahead of Companies E and F, but the 2nd Battalion found the eastern high ground still held by the enemy, and they completed the capture.

Between Hill 903 and Mt. Pigna was Hill 868, which the 86th reportedly took at 1620. Companies F and G jumped off for 868 just after 1900.

COMPANY G—STRADA

At 1913 the company was committed to attack the village of Strada and the south side of Hill 868. They moved down the eastern slope of Hill 903 with the 2nd Platoon on the right and the 3rd Platoon on the left. The weapons platoon and attached heavies under Lieutenant EDWIN H. RICHARDSON were to support the action from a finger of high ground to the southeast of Hill 903. The mortars were set up on the reverse slope of this finger with observation on the crest.

The mortar squad noticed three German dugouts 75 yards up the draw from their position, and moving up to investigate, flushed out a dozen Germans. The company commander, Captain RALPH ALLEN, JR., as his company moved into the attack, established an OP about 200 yards from the town. A sniper opened up, the first shot hitting Captain ALLEN in the shoulder. At the same time the 3rd Platoon, two squads abreast, hurrying to try to take the town before dark, were fired on. Pfc. FREDERICK D. WEIDER and Pvt. ROY J. WALLACE were wounded before the platoon realized it was under fire. The men scrambled for shell holes and a nearby hedge. Some of the fire seemed to be coming from Strada, and some from German positions in the rear already bypassed by Company F on the left. Four of the men were behind a hedge not fifteen yards across the road from the nearest building. They were firing on other buildings in the town when German hand grenades thrown from the house near them drove them off. Instead of running back, they rushed to the cover of the buildings. With their own grenades they drove three prisoners out of the building. These prisoners were questioned as to the location of mines and booby traps in the town, but they either couldn't or wouldn't give any information. As the rest of the platoon rushed up, a German lieutenant fled back over a hill leaving his men to surrender from dugouts surrounding the town. A total of 18 prisoners were taken. All buildings were flushed out. The company reassembled at Strada under command of the wounded captain.

Meanwhile, Company F had been moving up the long, narrow ridge of Hill 868 north of Strada. They had run into difficulty and Captain KENNETT came down to urge Company G to move up on his right. However, the ridge was too narrow to put both companies abreast. Company G echeloned to the right, and Company F was able to move on and take Hill 868. During this action, Company F had been crowded over to the right (east) side of the sharp knife-edge ridge by heavy fire from the valley to their left. This shoved them over onto G's portion of the hill and Battalion ordered Company G back. As Company G followed F up the hill, S/Sgt. ROBERT C. CLUKAY was shot and wounded. CLUKAY, guide of the 3rd Platoon, had caught sight of two Germans coming out of a bypassed dugout. With two other men he went over to take these prisoners and check the dugout. As he moved up, the Germans still hiding in the dugout opened fire and wounded him. All three Germans were dispatched by CLUKAY. This was the third wound for Sgt. CLUKAY in two months. Company G reorganized after dark on the hill, tying in with F on the left, and making contact with the 86th on the right. Captain ALLEN was evacuated at 2200, and First Lieutenant OSCAR E. DUTTWEILER took over the command of the company. Throughout the night and until after daylight the next morning, the company was under intense shellfire. Most of this fire was landing on Company F on the left. No one was hurt in Company G.

COMPANY F—TABOLE

Company F jumped off abreast of G on the right. Machine gun and mortar fire was coming in on Hill 894, a knob on the northeast end of 903. It was coming from the valley to the east as the 1st Platoon moved out on the left and the 3rd on the right. The weapons platoon, as well as First Lieutenant DAVID M. SNYDER's heavy machine gun platoon from Company H, set up on 894 to support the attack across the valley. The platoons moved down south of Tabole, part of the company passing through the town of Strada. The group of buildings called Strada, which Company G had already cleaned out, was passed through without resistance, and the company, now south of their objective, turned left (to the north) and started up the razorback southern arm of Hill 868. By this time the 2nd Platoon which had been following, but which had stayed on higher ground, and had not swung so far south, had reached the hill abreast of the other two platoons and to their left. Therefore the 2nd Platoon, and part of the 1st, was on the left of the razorback ridge while the rest of the company was on the right.

The route of the 2nd Platoon, while direct, had crossed a very steep ravine that had injured Pfc. JOSEPH I. MACTAVISH and Pvt. LEONARD P. GOLDAPSKE. They wouldn't go back until the hill was taken, however, and were with their platoon on the sharp, steep ridge. At this point machine guns opened up from the valley they had just crossed from a point immediately north of Tabole. The 2nd Platoon out on the exposed left face of the ridge was helpless. Pfc. GEORGE J. LAWRENCE was killed, and the platoon leader, First Lieutenant EUGENE H. CLAWSON, was wounded. Also Pfc. HERSCHELL D. KIMBRELL of the 1st Platoon fell, seriously wounded, on the exposed ridge. KIMBRELL was in a very bad spot, and Second Lieutenant FRED R. FRICK unquestionably saved his life by leaving his covered position, going over onto the exposed side of the ridge and carrying KIMBRELL back. It was here that First Lieutenant DONALD DWYER was fingered by fate as a bullet neatly slotted his lieutenant's bar, leaving it for him to wear. So thick was the air with bullets on the left that one of the men reaching up to twist off a stubborn branch interfering with his field of fire had the branch sliced off cleanly in his hand by a passing slug. Lieutenant CLAWSON, six feet four, weighing 240 pounds, couldn't be evacuated until 12 prisoners were sent to carry him down after the hill was taken.

At the same time on the right, the 3rd Platoon received some fire from its right in the area that Company G was expected to be moving into. No one was hit, but the company held up while Captain KENNETT chased down to G, who had taken some prisoners at Strada, and got them moving. Company G, as mentioned, had just lost its captain. Company F, from their advanced position on the flank, assisted G to move up by delivering fire from BARs, bazookas, and antitank grenades against burning buildings holding them up from over on Mt. Pigna. Then Company F continued on up the hill under some sniper and machine gun fire from both sides. Company G was held back, by Battalion order, on the lower slopes near Strada, the hill being too narrow for both companies to go up abreast. As they reached the top of Hill 868, an enemy popped up out of a dugout, and Lieutenant FRICK shot and wounded him. S/Sgt. PAUL STETTNER was brought up to question the prisoner and he disclosed that there were many others over on the forward slope. STETTNER hollered over for them to come out with their hands up. In answer he got a grenade thrown at him. He yelled to them again and fifteen of them came out. At dark, Sgt. ROBERT ARKLANDER and two men reconnoitering positions passed over some dugouts. A head popped out and the sergeant opened fire, bringing out a whole stream of Krauts. Altogether, 35 prisoners were rounded up on the hill that evening.

Since they were under machine gun fire, especially from the northwest, as they organized defensive positions, they dug in on the reverse southeastern slope facing the unknown country to the east. However, some fire came from both directions. They were joined in the evening by the weapons platoon. The soil on the hill was so rocky that digging was difficult. Many of the men had to start several holes before they found a spot free enough of boulders to get down deep.

At 0200 of the 15th, a terrible concentration of artillery fire started falling on the company positions. With short lulls the shells smashed the area throughout the remaining hours of darkness, and until 0800 when it wound up with a 45-minute steady concentration. The fire came from the east—heavy stuff mixed with high velocity 88 fire. Friendly artillery added to the terror of the morning. Because of the rocks, some foxholes were hallow, but so thick was the pattern of fire that most of the deaths were from direct hits killing two or three men in a hole. Killed were: Pfc. ALFRED A. GARNEAU, Pfc. CECIL D. LARGENT, Pfc. ANDREW F. SIMPSON, Pfc. LEWIS M. THOMAS, and Pfc. SIDNEY B. UTTER. Wounded were: S/Sgt. QUINCY W. GINTER and S/Sgt. MARSHALL MORRIS, Sgt. BOYCE E. WILLIAMS, Pfc. JAMES M. BUTTON, Pfc. WILLIAM L. TAYLOR, Pfc. LESLIE L. MUNCTION, Pfc. JAMES H. SORAGHAN, Pfc. GEORGE L. PRICE, JR., Pfc. ARNOLD J. BURCH, JR., Pfc. WILSON G. MACDONALD, Pvt. GEORGE KISSEL, Pvt. NEVIN P. KENDRICK, and Pvt. EARL B. KLINE. Sgt. WILLIAMS and Sgt. MACDONALD refused evacuation until two days later when their wounds had become infected.

T/5 LAURENCE ADAMS and Pfc. GEORGE WARDNER exposed themselves time and again running through the barrage to administer aid to the wounded. Captain KENNETT ran back and forth all night long checking his men, finding the wounded, and encouraging the rest. It was miraculous that he was not hit. He carried one man with both legs broken to the shelter of his own foxhole, and remained outside thereafter. The extraordinary concern shown by Captain KENNETT for his men, and literally complete disregard for his own comfort or danger, created in the men of Company F something akin to a religious devotion toward their leader. It was a tangible factor in all of Company F's activities. The men constantly brought him food and urged him to eat; he seldom thought of it himself. They vainly tried to keep him behind the scouts in attacks and under cover during barrages. As the campaign went on, they became less concerned, as it appeared that some force greater than they protected him.

From the top of Hill 903, after dark, the 2nd Platoon of Company H supported Company F in its attack on Hill 868. Then the 2nd Section remained on Hill 903 for the night, while the 1st Section displaced and dug in on Hill 868. Sgt. RUSSELL F. FICKETT and Pfc. ARTHUR LUCERO were both wounded on Hill 903. At dawn with artillery still coming in, Sgt., WILBUR E. SODERBERG was hit in the hand by an artillery fragment while cutting trees for a roof to his foxhole.

COMPANY E—TABLE

When the battalion moved out with Company F on the left and Company G on the right, E followed G traversing down the southeastern nose of Hill 903. They swung left (north) and came in on the town of Tabole from the right (south), passing behind Company F. They dug in around the little village through which part of F had passed ahead of them. Company F moved on to the east and was working its way up Hill 868 while G was behind in the vicinity of Strada. As darkness settled, the 2nd Battalion was ordered to hold up in their present positions and not to continue on to Mt. Pigna until morning. During the night heavy shellfire passed overhead, mostly landing on Company F. Company E had no casualties, but “sweated it out” all night long.

1st Battalion—Night on Hill 903

COMPANIES A AND B

Back on Hill 903 Company A “buttoned up” for the night. The company organized a reverse-slope defense where the enemy artillery, which was reaching for them, couldn't hit. Mortar fire, however, landed in the area. After receiving the order to hold that position all night, Battalion had ordered Company B to move up to fill in the gap between A and E.

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Company A had established outposts on the forward slopes. These were manned by two-hour shifts. At about 0300, three Germans crawled up the slope. They challenged squad leader Sgt. HOWARD H. BREITMEYER of the 2nd Platoon, as he crossed back over the ridge after checking the outposts. They fired at him with a burp gun. The bullet passed through his belt without wounding him. He lay on the ground listening to a commotion down below in the dark, trying to make out what was going on. The Germans had reached a forward foxhole and dragged Pfc. ROY F. BREITENBACH out of the hole. The other soldier in the same hole, helpless to aid his companion, pretended to be asleep and wasn't noticed. Then as Sgt. BREITMEYER made out the shadowy figures retreating down the hill, he fired and shot one of the Nazis, an SS sergeant major. The other Nazis then shot BREITENBACH in the stomach and fled. S/Sgt. BERTRAM A. BIDWELL went down and pulled the badly wounded BREITENBACH up over the ridge to safety, but he soon died of his wounds. From the body of the German sergeant major the men picked up the German password for the next three days.

At about dark, a machine gun section under section leader Pfc. AMOS P. CROSS was hit on the trail between the knob and Hill 903. CROSS was wounded and Pfc. ANTHONY L. SKOMP was killed. At this same time, acting squad leader Sgt. FRED T. CLARE of the 1st Platoon and S/Sgt. ROY E. LAWSON of the 3rd Platoon were wounded. Another machine gunner, Pfc. HENRY A. GREEN, was also wounded. Brigadier General ROBINSON E. DUFF, arriving on the hill, assisted dressing the machine gunner's wound at the company aid station. He said, "Hell, there are no medics for forty miles."

At dawn, 15 April, Pfc. JAMES A. ALDAHL, who had spent most of the night evacuating wounded, was killed by a shell that hit the crest of the hill. Pfc. JACOB H. BEAL and KENNETH L. GRANT were wounded with him. The men suffered that night because of the lack of water, and had little to eat. Many of the mules of the Italian Alpini Pack units were killed as they went forward with supplies. All through the night enemy mortar rounds came in, but casualties were light. The plan was to jump off at 0700 the next morning, and the battle plan was given. The men had little sleep.

COMPANY C—HILL 860

As darkness neared, the 3rd Platoon weapons, and 2nd Platoon of Company C moved up onto the eastern slope of Hill 860 overlooking Torre Iussi to dig in for the night. Before the jump-off that morning the 1st Platoon had been separated from the company and had moved down with the tanks. The tanks had difficulty with the terrain and drew AP fire as soon as they crossed over the ridge, driving off the men of the platoon and leaving the tanks in the rough terrain unable to move either way. Fortunately, the AP fire drawn by the tanks was less dangerous than the fragmentation the rest of the area was catching, and the 1st Platoon escaped lightly.

However, up on Hill 860 the situation was grim. S/Sgt. MARION F. LAY and Pfc. JOHN B. KEELEY, JR. went down to a house on the edge of Torre Iussi at the bottom of the hill to get some boards to cover their foxholes. An almost direct hit killed LAY and wounded KEELEY. The company, minus the 1st Platoon, was shelled all night in their dugouts on the reverse slope of Hill 860, the weapons platoon down below. One squad of the 3rd Platoon under S/Sgt. WILBUR MORROW was detailed to help the engineers. They spent all night walking and looking for the engineers and never did find them. Meanwhile, artillery shells, including some white phosphorus, landed on the hill all night. Sgt. JACK PEHR was killed as he came out of his foxhole. Also a headquarters lineman, Pfc. RUDOLPH B. WIEBOLDT, was wounded. During the night Lieutenant DONALD FOX came with a patrol from Company A, trying without success to make contact with the 85th on the left. The shelling continued throughout the night. Pfc. PAUL L. THYGESEN and Pfc. GROVER R. MANTOOTH had both been casualties during the day.

COMPANY D

Late in the afternoon the mortars of Company D started to displace to Hill 903, and the battalion OP group established themselves on Hill 860. Here at about 1830, a mortar round killed Second Lieutenant WILLIAM B. BLOCKER, JR., the company forward observer. The mortar platoon spent the night on Hill 903 while the two machine gun platoons remained with the companies to which they had been attached.

Situation at the End of the First Day

By nightfall, the 85th Infantry had “buttoned up” on Hills 909, 913, and 898. The 1st Armored Division had started its attack on Highway 64 late in the afternoon at 1700, and some elements were in Vergato and had gone as far as the railway station. The BEF had jumped off on the left, too, and had taken Montese, the pinnacle town that the 88th had looked at from “Shrapnel Junction” during March.

During the night four air targets were fired. Five planes attacked each target by flares.

The enemy password key for the rest of the month, the enemy radio net sketch, radio frequencies and call signs, were all captured and sent to G-2 before midnight. Also, overlays were distributed to battalions of the enemy’s mortar and artillery barrage and concentration areas taken from captured maps.

SECOND DAY—15 APRIL

At 2055 of 14 April, General HAYS, commanding the Division, ordered the regiment to renew the attack in the morning at 0700 in a coordinated attack with the 85th Mountain Infantry on the left. The 1st Battalion was to jump off to the northeast at the same time the 2nd Battalion was to begin the attack on Mt. Pigna. The attack of both battalions was to be preceded by a 20-minute artillery preparation. Rover Pete was ordered to “plaster” Mt. Pigna before 0700. The 3rd Battalion was to move forward to an assembly area on the south slopes of Hill 903.

2nd Battalion—Mt. Pigna

COMPANY E

Company E jumped off at 0700 leading the battalion to take Mt. Pigna to the northeast. Company F, on Hill 868, was to hold south of Pigna for a time and support this attack of Company E. T/5 ALAN HUNTLEY, a radio operator, was killed, and S/Sgt. GEORGE MARCH of the battalion S-2 section, was wounded by an artillery shell on top of Hill 868. The attached heavy machine guns from Company H prepared supporting fire from around Tabole. Two light machine guns were attached to the leading 3rd Platoon and one to the 1st Platoon which followed right behind them. The mortar squads were attached one to each platoon. As they moved north up the valley toward Santa Lucia, they ran into Company B southeast of the town. Company F held up while E started up Mt. Pigna from the southwest.

The 1st Platoon moved over to the left, coming abreast of the 3rd Platoon as they climbed up the wooded, rocky slopes. They received some machine gun fire from Hill 840 lying southeast of Pigna. Also, snipers fired from Pigna itself. When the 3rd Platoon was just short of the crest, artillery and mortar fire hit them with a terrific barrage. The men were caught out in the open as the accurate barrage came down on the hillcrest just as they swarmed over it. Killed were: S/Sgt. THOMAS O’NEIL, Pfc. HECTOR W. BRUNEAU, acting mortar sergeant, Pfc. FREDDIE DICKENS, Pfc. CHARLES G. STICE, and Pfc. ROBERT A BERGENDORFF. Wounded were:

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First Lieutenant GEORGE J. FOX, S/Sgt. LESTER L. HAMILTON, Sgt. KENNETH E. JOHNSON, Pfc. HARRY R. GILMORE, JR., Pfc. WILLIAM W. SHIEW, Pfc. EDWARD C. OGDEN, Pfc. RAYMOND D. HUCKLEBERRY, Pvt. BILLEY W. HARMON, Pvt. ARTHUR J. HOLLAND, Pvt. WILLIAM J. WOLFE, Pvt. ROBERT O. THOMAS, and T/5 VINCENT B. DOWD of the Medics. Pfc. JOHN A. KASABUSKI was killed by a hand grenade at this same time. As the barrage tapered off to spasmodic firing, fifteen Germans surrendered from positions on top of the hill, and several others fled down the reverse slope. The company dug in and reorganized atop Mt. Pigna.

The battalion attack was to move on to the southeast to Hill 840, while E remained on Mt. Pigna to support the advance of Company F with machine gun and rifle fire.

COMPANY F

At 0900 on 15 April, Company F was ordered to attack the southeast side of Mt. Pigna. This was a smaller peak known as 840. Company E was to attack Pigna on the left, and the attacks were coordinated. The men had had no sleep, nor any water or rations since jumping off the day before. At dawn on Hill 868, the 1st Section of H's attached machine gun platoon was hit by friendly artillery fire. Two artillery observers were killed and six men from the artillery were wounded. They had all been in the same hole with their radio. Moreover, since the radio had been destroyed, there was no way to lift the friendly fire, and the shells continued to come in for 45 minutes. Finally a British artillery observer was able to relay a message and the fire was lifted. Pfc. DELNOE LE FEVERS of Company H was hit twice by this fire while traveling back to Hill 903 for water. Lieutenant DAVID M. SNYDER had a very narrow escape. He left his foxhole, and immediately afterward, while it was occupied by Company F men, a direct hit blew up the foxhole. One of the machine guns was hit by this artillery fire.

As Company F attacked Hill 840 south of Mt. Pigna, the heavy machine gun platoon supported the attack from Hill 868. Company F took off with the 3rd Platoon leading, then the 2nd, and the 1st. The weapons platoon and heavy machine gun section remained on 868 and laid down a curtain of fire on Mt. Pigna and Hill 840 for both attacking companies.

The 3rd Squad of the 3rd Platoon led the company down off Hill 868 and turned left on the road toward Mt. Pigna. They soon started receiving sniper fire. Then the entire platoon, except the leading squad, was pinned down by machine gun fire. First Lieutenant FLOYD E. ALEXANDER, the platoon leader, was hit here but he refused to be evacuated. The 3rd Squad went on through the sniper fire, becoming separated from the company. They started up Pigna, hit a trail and turned to the right to work up the draw between Pigna and Hill 840. Here they came to a bunker and cleared it out, and sent a prisoner to the rear accompanied by one man with a sprained ankle. Starting about halfway up 840 they ran into more sniper fire. Just as Pfc. FRANK S. KOVAR got up to see where the sniper was, another shot cracked from the sniper. KOVAR yelled, "I see him! Let's go! He's right up on the hill!" He pointed and fell over dead. Pfc. DONALD M. MCCOY, JR. was also shot dead. The five men left in the squad were reorganized by squad leader Sgt. STANLEY LESZKO. One of the men, Pfc. BEN F. GUNNELL, had been injured coming down off of 868, but had kept up. One platoon of the 86th appeared on the knob to their right, and with this encouragement, they pushed further up the hill, Sgt. JOHN H. EASTMAN, JR. getting a sniper wound on the way. Then they waited for the 86th, but the men of the 86th were driven back and weren't seen again. S/Sgt. LOUIS H. BARGMANN of the 2nd Platoon made contact with the squad, and they returned to the road to rejoin their platoon. Sgt. BARGMANN and Sgt. LEO SADIN were met by Captain KENNETT who planned the attack using the 1st Platoon to flank around to the right.

Down on the road, Pfc. ROBERT M. KING had been wounded, but the platoons, after waiting for Company E to catch up on their left, were ready to move out. The 2nd Platoon under S/Sgt. LEO SADIN, was receiving heavy mortar fire, wounding Pfc. VINCENT J. MESSINA. They were to move up the hill to the right of where Sgt. LESZKO's squad had been, climbing the southwest crest of Hill 840, and coordinating their attack with the 1st Platoon, flanking around further to the right. This flanking position got the 1st Platoon into a position to make two Germans with rifle grenades helpless and the 2nd Platoon was able to advance and take them prisoner. However, Pfc. TOIVO H. LEINONEN, a scout providing flank security for the platoon, was killed by a machine gun just as he, Sgt. HOWARD E. RUX and S/Sgt. LEO SADIN came over the brow. The two captured Krauts were sent to get the German machine gunners down on the north slope and bring them back. They started down the hill, their hands still in the air. The men of the platoon yelling at them in anger as they left, and the Germans not sure what it was all about, ran faster and faster. It looked as though they were making a break for it. Pvt. STANLEY F. JANOWICZ, Pvt. RENE A. DI GIACOMO, and Sgt. RUX ran down to the flank to cover the pair. They ran into a whole maze of pillboxes and trench systems on a flat, table-like area just short of the top of the mountain. There were Germans hidden under the leaves in the trenches and in pillboxes. JANOWICZ stumbled and fell before one of the pillboxes, and a German lieutenant reached out and shot him with a burp gun. Fortunately, JANOWICZ wasn't too seriously wounded. The German was later dragged out from where he was hiding under a bed in a pillbox. Meanwhile, the two Krauts had done their work well, and they appeared again leading fifteen or twenty prisoners from the various strong points. Other prisoners rounded up more, and a total of 45 were collected by the 2nd Platoon on the left alone.

Second Lieutenant FRED R. FRICK and the 1st Platoon had had no fire on the way up, and they passed by the 2nd Platoon as they cleaned up the pillboxes on the reverse slope tableland. They went over the top of the hill and collected a few prisoners.

Lieutenant FLOYD E. ALEXANDER's 3rd Platoon, after some heavy initial mortar fire, reached the top without a fight, going to the right of the 1st Platoon. They cleaned out dugouts, dragging out Germans all the way to a draw running down to the northeast. Then while the 2nd Platoon still rounded up prisoners on the reverse slope table, the 1st and 3rd were pinned down by machine gun fire from Mt. Sette Croci to the northeast.

Company G cleared off Sette Croci and the company was able to move down the forward slopes. About 60 prisoners had been taken from this one little hilly offshoot of Mt. Pigna, and all manner of supplies and equipment were intact in the elaborate pillboxes.

COMPANY G—MT. SETTE CROCI

Company G, in reserve, moved out at approximately 1000 behind the leading elements of the battalion and followed up the slopes of Pigna. Near the top of the hill, snipers bypassed by Company F opened up on the right. Someone yelled, "Go after those guys. They can't shoot all of us." One squad of the 2nd Platoon was selected to flank to the left of the snipers. They moved up the slope and over. Pvt. DALLAS MCGRAW was wounded by machine gun fire.

Pfc. OLIVER R. HANCOCK took another squad with a bazooka team down a trail to the right, and came up to within fifteen feet of the snipers who were right on the trail. From behind a rock, HANCOCK threw a couple of grenades into some well-concealed and camouflaged dugouts. Another squad went down into a draw further to the right and had come up behind these dugouts. After the grenades exploded, a white flag appeared from the dugouts and five Germans surrendered. Pvt. FRANK J. MALOZZI was wounded at this time.

Reaching the top of Mt. Pigna, the company passed through Company F towards Mt. Sette Croci with the mission of taking this mountain. Before the company crossed the line of departure small arms fire was dusting off the shoulder of the hill they were on, from machine gun emplacements on Mt. Sette Croci. They pushed through this fire, crossing the line of departure at noon, and moved down the forward slope into a draw forty or fifty feet deep. The company filed down the precipitous sides using a narrow, difficult trail. They had been told that the draw was mined. Only two mortar rounds interrupted their progress and they suffered no casualties. Emerging from the draw, they came upon open fields stretching up the hillside to the top of the hill, which was lightly wooded. Second Lieutenant JOSEPH H. SHEPHERD, JR. led the 2nd Platoon up on the left, went over the nose under small arms fire, and cleaned out seven or eight emplacements on the top. The company weapons, meanwhile, had supported this action with overhead fire from the right side of Mt. Pigna. On the right flank, First Lieutenant JACK K. BENNETT led the 3rd Platoon up under the supporting fire to the enemy's left flank. Here Sgt. HERBERT E. STECKMAN's squad took 22 prisoners from off the top right side and forward slope of the mountain. This action was completed rapidly and without casualty.

COMPANY H—MORTAR PLATOON

Company H's 1st and 2nd Mortar Sections moved forward and rejoined the 3rd Section on the southern slope of Hill 903. They dug in here and fired several missions for support. Then around 1400, the platoon displaced forward and into a draw to the left of Mt. Pigna and just beyond Santa Lucia. Here they dug in for the night, firing several missions, and guarding the left flank of the regiment.

2nd Battalion—Hill 807 and Le Coste

COMPANY G

At 1400 Company G pushed north in the battalion lead for Hill 807. This was a result of a sudden change of mission, for the battalion had previously been directed to continue in a more easterly direction to capture Mt. Mantino. This latter mountain had just been assigned to the 86th Mountain Infantry, so the 87th was directed to turn sharply north. Major PAUL TOWNSEND, doing a remarkable job of leading the troops in this complicated terrain, accepted the change with his usual calm confidence. There had not been time to make more than a map reconnaissance. It was impossible to get observation forward. Neither could they learn any information about friendly troops. The extended wire lines were becoming very unreliable. The country ahead was wooded, with patches of small fields, and dissected by networks of deep erosion draws. As the 3rd Platoon led over the difficult terrain, they had to string out in single file in many places in order to get through. Remembering the bypassed resistance they had been running into, they carefully flushed out all dugouts and houses.

At this time the 3rd Battalion, heading east for Mt. Croce, was passing through the northbound 2nd Battalion. Company I, 3rd Battalion, advancing across in front of G, fired into a house and then went on by it. Company G then went up and flushed out a half-dozen prisoners from the house. Between the company and its objective, Hill 807, lay another deep draw. The company machine guns had been left back on Pigna before crossing the first difficult draw. Therefore Company I prepared to support Company G's crossing, and took up positions to give this covering fire. The fire was not needed, as the draw was crossed uneventfully. This maneuver of two battalions crossing each other as they pressed forward in their attacks, and of one company of one battalion pausing in its own attack to support elements of the other battalion attacking in another direction, was one of the most unusual and complicated situations of the campaign. The two battalions were still crossing each other at dark, and by this time dozens of

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prisoners were milling around in the valley amongst them. That no one was lost is a great tribute to the control of the organization.

Once across the draw, Lieutenant OSCAR E. DUTTWEILER and a field artillery forward observer went forward to adjust the artillery preparation on Hill 807. By this time the company machine guns and mortars had moved up and had taken positions to fire support with the artillery. Company E came abreast on the right and started up Hill 807 at about 1830. Then, as Company E reached the start of the steep pitch, Company G jumped off with the 3rd Platoon on the left and the 2nd on the right. The supporting artillery fire was very good. Moving up the hill they took two officers and three enlisted Germans out of the first dugout. One of the officers protested that the American soldiers were not gentlemen for making him keep his hands up. The soldiers were unabashed; the officer kept his hands up. Higher up the hill they fired at a hasty machine gun position on the northeast slope of Le Coste to the left of Hill 807. One squad assaulted the position, surrounding it with fire. A German captain hurled a hand grenade which rolled between Pfc. RUDOLPH MARON's legs. Pfc. JAMES LE ROSSIGNOL shot one German; the other three surrendered. They took three more prisoners from a nearby dugout.

Directly ahead of them was the left shoulder of Hill 807. Still further to the left ran the long, narrow ridge of Le Coste. The 1st Battalion attacked Hill 807. However, Company G could neither hear nor see any sign of activity on Le Coste. Lieutenant SHEPHERD, on the right, went up on Hill 807 toward machine gun fire near the top. He got pinned down by this gun with two squads abreast and one to the rear. They fired four or five grenades of white phosphorus, and then S/Sgt. HERBERT STECKMAN, Pfc. LOVELL O. HARRIS and Pfc. ROBERT D. MOOTZ worked their way up, creeping and crawling, to within ten feet of the gun and opened fire again with white phosphorus grenades. Suddenly another gun on the left flank, over on Le Coste, opened up. It peppered them and the whole of the two leading squads. MOOTZ was fatally wounded; HARRIS was seriously hit. Sgt. RAYMOND C. KLOCKMAN was wounded, also Pfc. JOHN M. BENSON, and Pvt. WILLIAM V. MCKEON. The fire on the hillside was intense. Even those who weren't hit had their packs riddled by machine gun fire. Through this fire Pfc. RALPH LEAVITT dashed up the hill and dragged back the wounded BENSON who was forward on an exposed ridge. The platoon made litters from raincoats, blankets and shelter-halves, and used the recently captured prisoners to carry the wounded to the base of the hill where they were cared for by the weapons platoon.

While the 2nd Platoon was held up on the exposed nose of Hill 807 by fire coming from Le Coste on their left, the 3rd Platoon under Lieutenant JACK BENNETT, tried to advance up on the right nose of Le Coste. They hoped to clean out the machine gun firing on the 2nd Platoon. This machine gun, being on the north reverse slope of Le Coste, was masked from their fire, but had a clear field of fire on Hill 807. As Lieutenant BENNETT's 3rd Platoon reached this mask, they in turn were fired on by snipers from the German reverse (north) slope of Hill 807. When they tried to move further to the left on Le Coste and thus over the ridge, two machine guns opened up with enfilade fire from further west on Le Coste. They now were pinned down by this fire from their left. Pfc. JEROME GREEN volunteered to run back through the fire to Lieutenant DUTTWEILER to explain this situation.

It was rapidly growing dark. Battalion headquarters and Company F had moved up behind Company G. Before GREEN got back, Lieutenant BENNETT was able to withdraw his platoon under cover of darkness. Also at this time, the 1st Battalion was heard far down on the left slope of Le Coste. Company F advanced into the gap between the 1st Battalion and the nose where the 3rd Platoon had been held up, and took this section of Le Coste without trouble, in the dark. Then Company G was able to move up over the crest, with the 3rd Platoon on the right nose of

Le Coste. The open slope on the left end of Hill 807 remained an unoccupied gap between Companies G and E. Contact was made on both sides and fifteen prisoners worked all night carrying wounded back. Artillery fell during the night, but most of the firing was over.

COMPANY E

At about noon, after Company F men had worked their way up and had taken Hill 840 by flanking action, Captain LE GRAND A. PENDREY of Company E walked over to 840 to meet Major PAUL TOWNSEND for further orders. He was instructed to move off of Mt. Pigna and follow Company G in its attack up Mt. Sette Croci to the east. The company reached the top of Mt. Sette Croci without incident, and at 1600 they were ordered to lead the battalion off to the north to Hill 807.

The company moved out, the 2nd Platoon on the right and the 3rd Platoon on the left. They crossed through a deep difficult draw and across the valley and up the wooded slopes of 807. To their left was one platoon of Company G. The section of Hill 807 in front of Company G was an open slope, and while the platoons of Company E moved up through the woods to the top of the hill without difficulty, the platoon of Company G was pinned down on the bare shoulder by machine gun and sniper fire. Sgt. ARTHUR HARRINGTON and Sgt. JOHN DIANI, from the 1st Platoon, moved over under the covering fire of the platoon to assist Company G. As they closed in on a machine gun from the rear, they came under heavy fire. The two sergeants, however, kept on going, and the German machine gunners fled up the hill with their gun. Some enemy snipers further up the hill followed them.

Another platoon of G was pinned down to the left on Le Coste ridge. As darkness fell, Company F moved up still further left on Le Coste allowing G to move forward again. Company E dug in on Hill 807 for the night, but the barren shoulder to the left was unoccupied. Company G occupied the east end of the long Le Coste ridge and the gap between Le Coste and Hill 807. Wire was laid up to 807 during the night that somehow had direct connection with General HAYS. The company was cut in on many Division conversations. They overheard Colonel FOWLER order the 1st Battalion to move onto their objectives with more speed. He said, "The 2nd Battalion is carrying the ball. The 1st Battalion has not even been running interference."

This referred to the fact that the 1st Battalion was thought to have taken all of Le Coste ridge before the attack of the 2nd Battalion on Hill 807. Actually, while E and G fought up 807, the 1st Battalion was fighting for the extreme left end of Le Coste, which was of no assistance to the 2nd Battalion. Fire from Le Coste had held up Company G on 807, and then G, attempting to go up Le Coste, had been pinned down by fire coming from Hill 807. In the absence of the 1st Battalion on the right (eastern) half of Le Coste, Company F after dark had to move up to solve the situation. As will soon become clear, the 1st Battalion was having difficulties of its own.

COMPANY H

The 1st Platoon of Company H, still attached to Company E, crossed over Mt. Pigna and Mt. Sette Croci during the day through frequent shelling. From here they had moved forward to Hill 766 and delivered overhead fire in support of Company E's attack on Hill 807. After dark they displaced and arrived on Hill 807 at 2200. There they dug in for the night. Only a few of the men were able to get rations, and they had no water except what some of the men in desperation had taken from the mud holes. During the day, so great had been the desire for water that in one place water had been drunk from streams that the mules had fouled up. The digging in, so necessary under the constant artillery fire, at times was nearly impossible on the rocky Italian mountaintops. Pfc. JACK M. BROWN, going back for ammunition just before dark, was hit in the leg by shrapnel.

COMPANY F—LE COSTE

At 1700, Company F moved over onto Mt. Sette Croci, and later, at 2100, they were sent to Hill 815 directly north to await further orders. It was a long, difficult march in the dusk for the weary, thirsty troops, down the steep hill, through the draw on an azimuth, and up to the top again, under some artillery and mortar fire.

On their arrival at dark, the company was ordered to take the central section of the long hill, Le Coste. Company G had been, and still was, pinned down on the right end, and F was to pass by G and take the hill, the 1st Battalion being on the west end. The weapons and heavy machine gun section set up on 815. The fire was good and lifted on a red signal as the company took the hill. Ten Germans gave up without resistance. The hill was organized defensively in the order of their coming up, with the 1st on the left, 3rd on the right, and the 2nd in the middle. That night rations and water caught up and were issued to the company.

Early in the day the battalion aid station had moved to Mo. Dozzone, southeast of Mt. Pigna. From here they handled the large number of casualties of the day over a litter haul of three difficult miles. Prisoners were used to carry many of the litters because of the shortage of litter bearers. Two men of the section were wounded near the aid station: T/5 VINCENT B. DOWD and Pfc. EDGAR F. ALLEN.

1st Battalion—Advance to Le Coste

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had jumped off and taken a series of small hills on the way to Le Coste. All of these hills were very exposed on the regiment's left flank. The attack of the 85th on the left had not gotten far. Its right battalion was in fact still on the hills due west of Torre Iussi. Therefore, each of the hills taken by the 1st Battalion on the second day was entirely exposed to the commanding ground to the northwest, supposed to be taken by the 85th as well as the rolling country to the north.

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COMPANY B—HILLS 834 AND 838

Company B moved out at 0700 for Hill 834 with Company A on the left. There was little opposition, and many prisoners were taken. However, enemy sniper fire continually harassed the men. While halted on Hill 834, Sgt. WILLIAM J. BETTENBERG, 3rd Platoon, was killed by a sniper bullet. Company A passed through while B waited on Hill 834. From 834 the company moved to the next objective, Hill 838. Opposition was light, and only occasional artillery and mortar fire was received. The 2nd Platoon cleared out Hill 838 and took many prisoners. Orders were received to dig in and prepare to attack Le Coste. The foxholes had no more than been completed when an artillery concentration came in, and small arms fire combed the area. Second Lieutenant GILBERT G. HOUSLEY, leader of the 1st Platoon, was killed in his foxhole by an 88. Pfc. JAMES C. SERAKOS, Pfc. JOHN J. TOMICH, Pfc. WILLIAM E. WELLS, and Pfc. WALTER DILLER were all killed by 88s. S/Sgt. ALBERT N. FRANK was wounded and evacuated, Sgt. SYLVAN D. WALDRIP taking over the 1st Platoon. Also wounded were Pfc. MAURO R. ALEMAN, Pfc. LAWRENCE A. DE VORE, Pfc. LEONARD R. DYER, Pfc. DONALD F. ELDER, Pfc. ROY E. FERNANDEZ, Pfc. HARRY F. GATES, Pfc. CHARLES E. HULL, Pfc. LESTER A. MANUEL, Pfc. HERBERT B. STOUT, Pfc. JAMES E. TOO HILL, Pfc. VIRGIL H. WASHBURN, Sgt. RALPH L. EDLUND, and S/Sgt. EARL G. SONRICKER.

COMPANY A—HILL 802

Meanwhile Company A was to take Hill 802. They followed as B took Hill 834. Machine gun fire at this time hit them, wounding Pfc. RAYMOND J. CYCHOSZ. Hill 834 was taken in a hurry, and then A moved up over the hill through B. Hill 802 lay directly to the north and a deep

draw separated the two hills. As they crossed down into the draw, they came to a muddy stream, the first water they had seen since they pushed off. The men greedily drank the dirty water.

The 1st and 2nd Platoons abreast attacked up Hill 802, through machine gun and sniper fire coming both from Vedetola to the right front, and from Hill 834 in the left rear. They took the hill with little trouble, receiving fire on top only from a group of houses in the valley to the left rear. Then artillery pounded the top of the hill forcing them back onto the reverse slope. Here, safe from the artillery, they were opened up on from the rear by machine gun and sniper fire that drilled all over the slope. Second Lieutenant OWEN W. FLIGG, JR., the D Company forward observer, was instantly killed. Then the enemy artillery took more elevation and dropped rounds into the trees as the machine gun fire continued to rake the hill. One tree burst killed Pfc. ERIK H. HAMILTON and Pfc. PAUL L. KLEIN, and wounded Pfc. HERBERT B. CLARKE, JR. and DONALD W. BAKER. T/Sgt. MASON B. FLAGG, S/Sgt. WILLIAM A. PRICE, Pfc. LOUIS F. ANDERSON, WILLIAM C. ALBRIGHT, SALVATORE J. TOSCANO, and ALOIS J. HOELLER were all wounded by this combination of fire.

Company B had moved on and left Hill 834 open. It was believed that had they stayed there, this fire from the rear would have been neutralized. Actually, Company B was ordered off to attack Hill 838, but Company C was expected to close in behind B. At 1220 Colonel FOWLER ordered the 1st Battalion to get Company C forward closer behind A and B. Company C at this time was back with the Battalion CP on Hill 903, where their company commander had just been wounded. Fire from the sector of the 85th had slowed their progress through the Torre Iussi minefields in the morning.

Captain KLEMME's messenger, Pfc. HARRY H. DUNN, was killed by this fire on Hill 802, and the mortar sergeant, Sgt. EUGENE C. LOUMAN, was wounded. The 3rd Squad from the 1st Platoon was sent back to occupy and hold Hill 834 to protect the company's rear. As they moved back across the ravine, two men, Pfc. ALFRED R. OAKES and Pfc. WILBUR H. CORNISH, were wounded by artillery. Reaching the top, the squad opened up on the sniper fire and silenced it. Then Lieutenant DONALD FOX led half of his 3rd Platoon down into the valley and assaulted the machine gunners. They were covered by company fire, and advanced directly into the face of the machine gunners for about 500 yards. Pfc. GEORGE B. GREGORY was hit and S/Sgt. WILLIAM A. PRICE also was wounded, but the men kept going down into the grassy valley. Assaulting the positions, they killed six Nazis, took four prisoners, and the rest fled. This was a brilliant maneuver.

COMPANY C—BATTALION RESERVE

Company C was to follow Company A to the northeast from their reserve position on Hill 860. They moved out, led by the 2nd Platoon, then the 3rd, and the weapons platoon. One squad of the 3rd was designated as rear guard security, for the country to the northwest of the regimental left boundary had not been secured. After they passed through Torre Iussi, and as elements were picking their way through the heavily mined draw, sniper fire opened up on them at close range. One observer, T/5 RANDOLPH C. SMITH, from the 616th Field Artillery was killed and another wounded. A little later, First Sergeant LESTER S. ERSLAND was sniped at, the fire throwing dirt into his eyes, blinding him and throwing him off the narrow trail through the mines. As he stumbled off, he tripped a *schu* mine and fell on four others, dying instantly. The majority of the company, by this time, was on Hill 903 occupying the old positions of Company A. They had crossed in two separate groups which joined at this time. Their movement had been covered with BAR fire by Pfc. JOSEH ZIMINSKY who had also covered for part of the

2nd Battalion. Some shellfire had hit the draws during the crossing, in addition to the sniper and mine danger, but no one was hit.

The men who still had some of yesterday's ration left had lunch while waiting orders on the reverse slope of Hill 903. The hillside was quiet and the men moved about in the open, and some of the men sat by their holes. Captain MORLAN NELSON was returning with the order from the forward slope where he had just left Colonel ROSS WILSON. Captain WILLIAM D. CAMPBELL of the 616th Field Artillery was with him. Just as they reached their hole, a single mortar round crashed in. Both captains were wounded, also Pfc. GERALD E. BIRDSONG and Pfc. CHARLES MILAUSKAS. Second Lieutenant JAMES A. ANDERSON III assumed command since First Lieutenant RICHARD C. POWERS, the executive officer, had gone back where the First Sergeant fell to get the company records. At about 1400 the company moved out, dropping down the forward slope and striking the road running up the valley. Some time around 1500 or 1600 they met the 1st Platoon, which had been with the tanks, and First Lieutenant JAMES H. PENROSE took over the company.

COMPANY B—LE COSTE

Company B remained on Hill 838 until the order to attack Le Coste was given at 1445. Corps artillery fired 100 delayed-action 155-mm shells on the north slope to "crater the ground," in addition to the regular preparation. At 1500, the company moved out, 2nd Platoon leading, 3rd and 1st following. The heavy machine guns of Company D and the 37-mm gun platoon of Headquarters Company supported the attack. At the bottom of Hill 838, the 2nd Platoon received enemy machine gun fire from its right front, and the platoon shifted to the right under cover of a wooded knoll, to try to locate the enemy positions near a group of houses. The 1st and 3rd Platoons moved up and took positions on the left of the 2nd. The 3rd Platoon moved on to Le Coste, covered by fire from the 2nd Platoon and the light machine gun section. Pfc. WILLIAM R. ROACH was hit by the heavy mortar fire that began to fall at that time. The mortar fire raked the open draw to be crossed ahead, and also the company's position at the foot of Hill 838.

S/Sgt. JAMES R. FERRIL advanced to the top of the knoll on the right, and was promptly hit in the arm by machine gun fire. By this time the mortar fire was growing heavier, and the 1st Platoon, followed by the command group, crossed the open field to Le Coste on the double. After the 1st Platoon had taken positions on the objective, the 2nd Platoon moved to its left and crossed in the same place. The 3rd Platoon had attempted to clear out the houses down the slope to their right, and S/Sgt. EIVIND JAHR, Pfc. WILLIAM E. CULLEN, Pfc. HAROLD V. WEEDMAN, Pvt. THEODORE WEIDEMAN, Pvt. DALE L. BERTCH, Pvt. EDWARD A. BILLOTTI, Pvt. JAY R. BULTMAN, Pvt. LORA N. HAUGHT, Pvt. DON K. KILLOUGH, Pvt. EUGENE A. RICE, Pvt. KENNETH S. RYMAL and Pvt. LLOYD A. HARRIS were wounded by machine gun fire. Then Captain CLARENCE H. SWEDBERG ordered T/Sgt. OSCAR L. CLEMENT, acting platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon, to take a volunteer group armed with automatic weapons and grenade launchers to clean the houses out. The group returned to report that the enemy had withdrawn.

Seventeen Germans, carrying white flags, came out of a dugout at the foot of Hill 838, walked up to our positions, and surrendered. Second Lieutenant GEORGE B. BOSWELL put them to work as litter teams to evacuate the wounded men of the 3rd Platoon.

After the west end of Le Coste was secured, and foxholes dug on our reverse slope, the 2nd Platoon, at about 1900, was ordered to go back to a group of German aid station buildings on the ridge 200 yards north of 838, and set up defenses for the night, with the 37-mm gun platoon of Headquarters Company. The rest of the company dug in on Le Coste. Holes were dug protecting the buildings, and were manned in shifts until morning.

COMPANY A—LE COSTE

Company A was ordered to attack Le Coste in conjunction with Company B at 1500. It was impossible to be sure which of the many hills to their front was Le Coste, so the company waited for the 15-minute artillery barrage to open up, and with this as identification, moved forward. The reorganized company was cut down to two rifle platoons and a weapons platoon of one machine gun squad and two mortar squads. The 2nd Platoon established a base of fire on Le Coste, covering the assault of the 1st Platoon. They advanced up the hill under machine gun fire from the draw to the left, and against some sniper fire from the left and from the top of the hill. This did not hold them up, and they gained the top of the left end. Cpl. DAVID C. HOYT, with two other men, ran over the crest of the hill, and was shot and killed by fire from bypassed dugouts to the rear. Sgt. GEORGE C. MCCUTCHEN, the acting 1st Platoon sergeant, led four men along the ridge to the right. They ran into four enemy and captured two of them. A BAR man, LEE L. HALL, when artillery started to hit the hill, jumped up to move into a safer position. A shell hit and killed him. Pfc. MELVILLE W. BORDERS, JR., firing with his M-1 at a Kraut one hundred yards away in the bushes, was struck and wounded by a rifle grenade. The same grenade wounded Sgt. FLOYD P. BUTLER. Pfc. BORDERS, who was seriously wounded and in danger of bleeding to death, was saved by Pfc. WELDON STOREY who stayed all night by him changing his tourniquet. The 2nd Platoon, delivering covering fire from the rear for the assault, received heavy artillery fire that burst in the trees above them, as well as some machine gun fire. Pfc. EMIL BIJAK, Pfc. LAZARO BARRERA, Pfc. VERN A. UPTON, and Pfc. MANUEL G. ABASTA, JR. were wounded and lay in this area all night. ABASTA later died of his wounds. The artillery fire became so fierce that the platoon had to move out, firing as they went.

At this time Company B, which was to attack on the right abreast of A, was held up by machine gun fire, and had been able to get only one platoon up onto Le Coste. The 1st Platoon of A had made contact with B. The 2nd Platoon of A was crossing the draw to move up onto the hill when a German counterattack struck them. The platoon rushed into position behind a knife-like ridge. German grenades started dropping over the ridge on the men occupying the reverse slope. Pfc. JOHN R. BENTON, Pfc. LOUIS H. KOSITS, and Pfc. FREDERICK J. HARE were wounded. The platoon was in a bad position because the men were unable to see over the ridge without exposing themselves to the waiting Germans. To regain the initiative, Pfc. ALLEN CURTIS jumped up on one knee and with his BAR fired one whole magazine of ammunition. He killed three of the Germans, and may have hit several others. This aggressive action shoved the counterattack back, but enemy troops could be seen forming for a larger scale assault of the whole hill. It was 1800 and the men were very weary. Their apprehension for their dangerous situation combined with their fatigue and their many casualties put them in low spirits.

Suddenly an artillery shell whistled just over their heads, barely clearing the ridge, and fell on the enemy below. Others followed by the dozens. At first the apprehension of the men grew. These shells were falling too close for comfort. This was no time for a friendly artillery barrage to fall short and disorganize the company. Their fears were unfounded. This was the first of many magnificent close-support "box barrages" to be fired by the British artillery 5.5s at crucial moments when most needed by the troops. As the shells tumbled over right in the box, the scared men took heart, the gloom lifted, and they felt like cheering. Meanwhile Company B had infiltrated across onto Le Coste, one at a time, and had reassembled on the hill. Down the left in the valley was a little town clustered around a church. A machine gun opened up in the tower pinning down the exposed left flank. The artillery barrage shifted over into the valley and the machine gun fire ceased. All of Company B had reorganized on the hill by 2000, and both companies dug in for the night on the western half of Le Coste.

The regimental attack order for the day had assigned the whole ridge to the 1st Battalion. The 2nd Battalion, with the mission changed during the day to seize Hill 807, assumed that the whole of Le Coste would be occupied by the 1st Battalion simultaneously with their occupation of 807. Therefore, when no sign of the 1st Battalion was seen on the eastern end of Le Coste, Company F was sent after dark to seize and occupy the eastern half.

Also wounded on Le Coste during 15 April were Pfc. JOHN D. SMITH, Pfc. TROY R. WINSLETT and Pvt. RONALD V. WILSON. Pfc. FRANK S. LONCKI, a 1st Battalion driver, was wounded by rock fragments from an artillery burst while evacuating wounded from Le Coste.

COMPANY C—BATTALION RESERVE

Company C reached Hill 834 at 1700 and dug in for the night. They were still in battalion reserve with A and B on Le Coste. The 85th Mountain Infantry had made little progress on the left, and Company C had the almost impossible task of being a reserve for the 1st Battalion while being held back nearly a mile to protect the gap between regiments. At dusk, elements of the 3rd Battalion were still passing through on their way up to Mt. Croce where Company K was fighting. Sgt. EDWARD D. STACKWICK, moving his men, glanced around at a man who came up to him. Then he looked again. The light was poor, but the man was a German and Sgt. STACKWICK took him prisoner with his shovel. The digging wasn't pleasant in this area; one man uncovered a buried Kraut, and much worse, another man dug up a *schu* mine. The night was very cold and the men had no blankets, and had had no food or water since jumping off the day before.

COMPANY D

Late in the morning, the mortars displaced forward to a point just south of Mt. Pigna. Here they set up at about noon and fired in support of the attack on Hills 834, 802, and Le Coste. The OP was established on Mt. Pigna in a field of *schu* mines. At dusk the mortars moved forward again to a position between Hills 815 and 838. This entire movement was by hand-carry.

The machine gun platoons had moved along with their respective rifle companies. The 2nd Platoon, moving up Mt. Pigna behind Company B, was hit by artillery fire at about 1600. S/Sgt. JAMES C. WHYTE was killed. At about noon, artillery falling on Hill 812 had wounded Pfc. JAMES A. GILMORE, Pfc. CARL L. DUMPS of the 2nd Platoon, and Pfc. JOSEPH R. HIGDON of the company medics. Also Pfc. LOUIE J. GWATNEY had fallen in the rough terrain while carrying a machine gun and had badly injured his hand. The 1st Platoon, following Company A in their attack on Hill 802, came under frequent shellfire. On 802, Sgt. GUSTAVO E. FELIX and Pvt. JOSEPH S. WARNER were hit by artillery just as the attack was jumping off at about noon. Late in the afternoon at about 1800, while the platoon was digging in on Le Coste, a shell landed in the hole with Pfc. J. B. SPARKS. Miraculously he was not killed, but seriously wounded. The shovel he was using was blown to fragments. Second Lieutenant OWEN W. FLIGG, JR., forward observer with Company B, was killed by machine gun and sniper fire just after the company occupied Hill 838. The company had been forced back from the forward slopes by artillery fire and then was opened up on by snipers from the valley to the rear. In the "stubby" mortar section, which had been switched from B to A during the attack on Le Coste, Pfc. HENRY LEYMAN was killed during the assault.

3rd Battalion—Advance to Mt. Croce

In the morning Colonel FOWLER had ordered that the 3rd Battalion be committed at 1300 to take Le Coste, the long ridge which was later seized and held jointly by the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and Mt. Croce to the east. Earlier, General HAYS had directed that the 3rd be used to assist the 1st if its attack slowed down anywhere. The 3rd Battalion was to come into this attack from

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the south. The 1st Battalion was expected to be still fighting on 802, with Company C protecting the left flank and rear. It was still hoped that tanks could be gotten up for the attack with the 3rd Battalion, and the weary engineers continued their efforts to open the mined and blown roads forward.

However, the 1st Battalion reached 802 and 838 before noon, so it was directed to continue on to Le Coste, and the 3rd Battalion was to remain behind Mt. Pigna in reserve. At 1447 a new mission was given to the 3rd Battalion as a result of a new directive given to Regiment by General HAYS. Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS, commanding 3rd Battalion, had just returned from a reconnaissance of Le Coste to Hill 838, then held by Company B, when the order reached him to "attack Hill 807, if the 2nd Battalion doesn't get there before you do, and continue on to capture Mt. Croce before dark."

After the leading company of the Battalion, Company I, had moved east down the draw from Vedetola to Treviso, killing or capturing 40 of the enemy, and crossing at right angles through the 2nd Battalion already moving north from Mt. Sette Croci, Colonel WORKS met Major PAUL TOWNSEND on Hill 784 and learned that the 2nd Battalion was taking Hill 807. Therefore, at 1800, after his battalion in moving parallel to the front had passed through two other battalions, Colonel WORKS issued the order to seize Mt. Croce further to the east. Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion had done some fighting en route.

COMPANY I—HILLS 815, 784 AND 766

Starting at 0900, Company I led the battalion along the wagon road into Torre Iussi. The 1st Platoon was leading, and as they reached Torre Iussi, they and part of the 2nd Platoon were pinned down by machine gun fire coming from Hill 898 northwest of the town. This hill was presumably occupied by one company of the 85th. However, eighteen Germans with several machine guns were located down on the steep sides of the hill. Even though bypassed the day before, they continued fanatically to fire into the town. Repeated requests to the 85th through regimental headquarters finally brought about their capture. Sgt. ARMANDO CIANCHETTI and Pfc. MORRIS LIEBMAN, both from the 2nd Platoon, took BARs over into a clump of trees. From there they were somewhat able to neutralize the machine gun fire and cover the withdrawal of the pinned-down elements. Sgt. ALEXANDER J. BEAUCHESNE got his 1st Platoon organized under this covering fire, and moved them across through the woods, into the draw, and up onto the road running south around the base of Hill 903. The rest of the company in the rear had not been pinned down, and they led the battalion across the valley about 500 yards southeast of Torre Iussi and came up onto the road south of Hill 903. A few men from the 2nd Platoon and the two men with the BARs still remained in town. Lieutenant ROBERT STEWART went back from the road, rounded these men up, and rejoined the company.

As the various elements of the company reached a point of safety on the road behind the shoulder of the mountain, Lieutenant MAURICE EWING, of the 1st Platoon, directed them up on the steep hillside into dispersed positions. Then he went up the hill with one other man to set up an observation post while the company dug in. Some artillery started dropping in on this area. Lieutenant EWING, although he had left his rifle down below in a foxhole, returned with two frightened prisoners. Also, T/5 EUGENE S. FITZSIMMONS, a company medic, discovered a German in a foxhole nearby. Since as an aid man he was unarmed, he grabbed the German's rifle from him, and ordered him to move up to the company area. The company dropped their packs in this assembly area.

Sgt. BEAUCHESNE captured a prisoner as the company advanced up the saddle east of Hill 903, and the platoon scout, Pfc. LEON STEWART, flushed out two more Germans from a dugout. The objective of the company had been Le Coste, but because of the unexpected progress of the

1st Battalion, the order was changed and the company was ordered to clear the high ground on either side of the draw east of Vedetola by seizing Hills 815, 784, and 766. The company marched down and turned right (east) into the valley north of Mt. Pigna. The 2nd Platoon made their way to Hill 815. They saw a German run into a house halfway up the slope, and covering the house with rifle fire, assaulted it with a squad of men. They threw two grenades into the house, and two Germans came out with their hands in the air. The hill was taken without further incident.

The attached platoon of heavy machine guns was emplaced on the southeast slope of Hill 838 to support the attack of the 3rd Platoon on Hill 784. The platoon moved without difficulty up the hill and occupied it. Then Second Lieutenant CHARLES F. BARNWELL and Pfc. EARL H. STEVENS went down to make a reconnaissance near the town of Seccadella. Sniper fire hit them, killing STEVENS and wounding Lieutenant BARNWELL. Platoon sergeant GEORGE BREEDLOVE took command immediately. He sent three or four men over to seek out the snipers. They killed one and wounded the other. A total of six prisoners were taken from the hill. The 1st Platoon, under Lieutenant EWING, meanwhile had been moving toward Hill 766 further to the south, crossing some rough country and a very deep draw. They reached the objective and moved up the hill without being fired on. On top of the hill they received two rifle grenades, fired at them from a draw to the right side of the hill. No one was hit, and elements of the platoon, working their way down, took ten prisoners from a cave well stocked with ammunition. Their objective was occupied and consolidated by 1700. It then took them two hours, over the rough terrain, to find the rest of the company.

Three men from the 1st Platoon had been lost while returning, and they didn't rejoin the company until the offensive had moved out into the Po Valley. One man found himself in Company B and continued to fight through the action with Company B.

That evening the company waited on Hill 784 from 1900 to 2000 while the rest of the battalion passed through them on their way to attack Mt. Croce. At 2400 the company was moved to the town of Coste on the south slope of Mt. Croce and spent the night there, some in foxholes, others in the houses.

COMPANY K—MT. CROCE

Company K had followed I past Torre Iussi, the town that had proved so costly to the 1st Battalion the day before, and through the valley west of Mt. Pigna. On reaching the battalion assembly area northeast of Pigna at noon, they ran into sniper fire coming from Hill 834, which had already been taken and left behind by the 1st Battalion. Elements from the 3rd Platoon went up and cleaned up the hill taking two prisoners, and bringing down a wounded 1st Battalion man. The company rushed though the own of Vedetola as it was being shelled, and hurried into a deep draw beyond. While moving down this long draw, more shellfire hit them, killing S/Sgt. JOHN C. MARRONE, and wounding Pfc. RODNEY M. VINCENT, both from the 2nd Platoon, and Pfc. DONALD M. MARSHALL of the weapons platoon. Pfc. MARSHALL W. JAMES, Pfc. PHILIP A. SANTASIERO and Pfc. JOHN J. SLIFKA injured themselves falling on the rough terrain.

At 1600 Company K was ordered to take Mt. Croce. Company I had finished taking Hills 815, 784, and 766 by 1700 and was firmly established on 766. Captain ROGER EDDY, the company commander, took the platoon leaders out of a very deep draw and moved up to the left to make a visual reconnaissance. The 1st Platoon was to lead the attack, followed by the 2nd and 3rd. The machine guns were to be attached to the leading platoon, and the mortars were in the rear. While the company waited in the draw they were hit by intense mortar fire.

When the leaders returned, the company moved out into a terrific mortar barrage. S/Sgt. EDWARD LYJAK, and Pfc. LORN W. PHILLIPS and Pfc. CLIFFORD E. MACQUEEN were wounded. They moved through the fire to the main Tolè road, and up the road, not clearing out the buildings as they went. A half-mile from Tolè they turned right at a road junction and started up along the south edge of Hill 807. The 1st Platoon reached the top of the shoulder of Mt. Croce before being opened up on by an enemy light machine gun. The fire came from a house to the right rear below them on the Locari Scuola road. Squad leader S/Sgt. CLAUS SCHROEDER and platoon guide S/Sgt. JOHN J. WELCH were killed as the platoon kept advancing. The platoon leader, Second Lieutenant ROBERT S. BARR, Sgt. CARL P. HUJANEN, Pfc. MARVIN C. LUTZ, Pfc. EDWARD SNYDER, and Pvt. CHARLES W. ADKINS were all killed as the 1st Platoon pushed on up the hill against rifle fire. Pvt. WILLIAM J. SHERRARD, the platoon runner, was wounded. Also Pfc. SEVILLE S. FUNK and Pvt. JACK R. BERGLUND were shot by rifle fire, and Sgt. ROBERT F. ZATREPALEK got a rifle shot in the neck. T/Sgt. ARTHUR O. SCHIMKE of the 1st Platoon, running forward up the hill, took twelve prisoners out of dugouts without firing a shot. Then he moved the platoon on without orders up to Mt. Croce. They had excellent artillery support. Starting at 250 yards distance, the support lifted when the platoon came within 100 yards, under excellent control by "300" radio. Mt. Croce was taken without a shot being fired by the platoon. The company reorganized at 2030 just at dark, the 3rd Platoon on the left, 2nd and then 1st in a defensive position.

During the reorganization, heavy mortar fire killed S/Sgt. WARREN H. SEEBADE, and wounded S/Sgt. THEODORE R. MUENSTER and Pfc. PAUL P. PAONE. Also Pfc. DENZIL WILLIAMS was hit in the ear by shrapnel, and Pfc. WILLIAM R. ROBERTS had to be evacuated because of shellshock. They could see the mortar position only 150 yards away, and fired at it. Five of the enemy mortar men started up the hill toward them, but were driven off by one squad of the 2nd Platoon. Then the company defense was consolidated on the hill, and contact was made by patrol with the 2nd Battalion on the left, on Hill 807. Company L next appeared moving through in a column of twos, and took positions on the right rear on Mt. Croce.

The 1st Platoon was next hit by a counterattack. It was of only about seven-man strength, with two light machine guns, but it caught the men digging in. Two more men of the 1st Platoon were wounded: Acting squad leader Pfc. CLARENCE C. LEVERS, and Pfc. WILLIAM D. FLETCHER, were both hit by hand grenades. The 1st Platoon, by this time, was cut down to 18 men, but with Sgt. JAMES C. TOOMEY of Company M and his heavy machine gun, the enemy was finally repulsed. TOOMEY stuck by his gun as the riflemen withdrew. Alone, he fired furiously at the counterattacking Germans, and then as they spread out he grabbed an M-1 and killed three of them. The riflemen from behind him got two or three, and the rest were driven off. The 18 men of the 1st Platoon were then reinforced by two squads from the 3rd Platoon. At the same time, a squad was requested from Company L.

All night, long-range harassing machine gun fire fell, just enough to keep the men awake. It sounded like the Germans were pulling back, but early in the morning another counterattack struck the 1st Platoon. The Germans attacked with one squad and a machine gun. The 1st Platoon fired a rifle grenade which hit the German machine gunner squarely and wounded his assistant, breaking up the attack. However, Pfc. ROBERT L. WAGNER, Pfc. ARNETT W. MINEAR, and Pfc. JAMES W. ARNOLD were all wounded by hand grenades.

COMPANY L—BATTALION RESERVE

When the battalion moved out at 0900 on the 15th, Company L was in battalion reserve, following K. They marched along the road toward Torre Iussi passing the previous day's carnage of mules and men, turned right before Serra Sarzana, cut across the valley and passed around the

southern edge of 903. They then turned left to the north between Hill 903 and Hill 868, and circled around through the valley north of Mt. Pigna.

As the company approached the houses of Vedetola from the west, they came under machine gun fire, but were able to keep moving. Beyond the village they moved along into a draw, and on through the draw toward Treviso, when artillery fell on them, killing Pfc. GLENN L. CHRYSLER and T/5 MERVIN H. LEWIS. T/Sgt. RAYMOND G. FLYNN, Sgt. CLARENCE E. KENTZ, Pfc. OWEN R. JOHNSTUN, and Pfc. ROBERT J. WILLIAMS were wounded. Pfc. PEDRO L. ISLAS was also wounded, but stayed with the company. They captured four prisoners through here and used them as litter bearers. By 1700 Company I had taken the last of its three hills, and L, echeloned to the right, was following K up Mt. Croce. East of the little town of Coste they captured an enemy CP including two battalion commanders. Then they occupied the high ground to the right rear of Company K on Mt. Croce and dug in for the night. Pfc. WALTER W. HODGE was killed here by artillery. Sgt. NEAL C. YORKER had been hit in the arm by a shell fragment earlier in the evening.

COMPANY M

Company M, using mules instead of jeeps, had three casualties in the morning when hit by mortar fire across the minefield beyond Torre Iussi. Wounded were Pfc. JOHN H. WIGGINS, Pfc. JOHN W. RUIS, and Pfc. HOLLIE BOWERS, all from the 1st Platoon. Later that night on Mt. Croce, Pfc. MOSE KEARSE, a 2nd Platoon machine gunner attached to Company K, was killed by shrapnel. Pfc. J. B. BALLEW, Pfc. JACK ARIAIL, and Pfc. CLOYCE E. COLLIER of the same platoon were wounded at the same time.

In the other section of the same machine gun platoon, which was still attached to Company I, Pfc. VERN E. CROWELL and Pfc. MAYFORD W. LAWRENTZ were wounded at nearly the same time.

In the 1st Platoon, Pfc. JAMES E. COBB was hurt and evacuated, and Second Lieutenant JAMES T. MILLS, the mortar platoon leader, was wounded by shell fragments outside of the company CP. The battalion gun platoon had trouble with the mules which had to be used because of the blown-out narrow mountain roads and the narrow trails through the minefields. The men had trouble keeping the bulky, heavy weapons on the backs of the small Alpine mules. Throughout the push in the mountain phase, the mules remained a problem for the gun crews. They had to be overloaded; they tired easily; and then would lie down in their tracks, rolling off their loads. It was an ordeal in an open valley under observation to get the mule to his feet and repack his load while artillery and mortar fire came in. The gun platoon had difficulty keeping up with the rapid battalion advance.

Wire had to be laid by mules until the advance reached the Po Valley. Many of the mules were killed or maimed, and while the use of mules brought many headaches, it was agreed that they are invaluable for mountain fighting. The only alternative is backpacking.

THIRD DAY—16 APRIL

3rd Battalion—Mosca Ridge

On the afternoon of the 15th, the 2nd Battalion of the 86th Infantry had the mission of seizing Mt. Mantino, while the 3rd Battalion, 87th, was directed to capture Mt. Croce. Both battalions were successful by dark. The 3rd Battalion, 87th, was then directed to continue the attack early the next morning, along the ridge to the east to Mt. Mosca. This attack was to provide a line of

departure for the 86th Infantry to push vigorously through to the northeast. The 86th was expected to cross this LD about 0900. The area between Mt. Mantino and Mt. Croce had not been assigned to any unit. Early on the 16th, Colonel CLARENCE M TOMLINSON, 86th Infantry, reconnoitering beyond Mt. Mantino, was hit in the arm by sniper fire and evacuated. Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT M. COOK, executive officer, replaced him as regimental commander. The attack of the 86th, delayed partly by this change of command, did not cross the LD before 1500. It will be evident that this delay seriously affected the action of the 3rd Battalion, 87th, all during the day, because its left flank was thus left entirely exposed.

COMPANY K—MADNA DI RODIANO

At 0200, the order came in by phone to attack to the east toward Madna di Rodiano at 0600, with K on the left, L on the right, and I in reserve. The attack would run along the ridge that extended about 4,000 yards east to Mt. Mosca.

In the morning, after a 20-minute artillery and mortar barrage, the 3rd Platoon, Company K, led off, followed by the 2nd and 1st. The initial situation was confusing. There was a heavy morning fog, and the LD was under mortar and small arms fire. Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS, making his reconnaissance, had four of his party of seven wounded at the outset, including his K Company runner, Pfc. FRANK S. BISHOP, and Captain WALKER T. WEED II, Battalion S-3. Another one of the group was hit later. At the moment of crossing the line of departure, a 20-man enemy counterattack hit the company from the left. All of the 3rd, one-half of the 2nd Platoon, Lieutenant TOIVO RANTA, and five men of the 1st Squad had crossed. The rest of the platoon stopped. Pvt. FREDERIC L. PALOW was wounded in the legs by machine gun fire. The platoon was split.

Captain ROGER EDDY took the rest of the company way around to the left and then forward. In this way they came around to the rear of the counterattacking Nazis. They shot one and drove back the rest.

The squads crossed the line of departure on their own initiative and rejoined their platoons. One squad with one machine gun was left under First Lieutenant JACK T. BURNETT to guard the rear since the enemy counterattack was not completely broken. The 2nd Platoon passed through the 3rd, and they were ordered to swing to the right and then forward as far as possible. If necessary, they were to join Company L on the right. Then the 3rd Platoon and two squads of the 1st Platoon, plus the heavy machine gun section, went forward along the top of the ridge. On each knob they left a half-squad to prevent the enemy retaking the knobs and following them along the ridge. These squads were under fire all morning, but were successful in their mission. During the morning, the Battalion S-4, First Lieutenant EVERETT J. QUINE, had personally flushed out 25 Germans from a single house, including a major and a captain. The captain gave the complete defense plan of Tolè to the IPW Team.

Although Company K had occupied Mt. Croce at dark the night before, there were considerable pockets of resistance remaining which they had to fight through before crossing the line of departure and heading east. At 0900 in the morning, Lieutenant Colonel HAY, of the 3rd Battalion, 86th, was heard by Company E over their direct wire, complaining to Division that they were receiving fire from Mt. Croce, and that they were sure that there was an enemy observation post there. He said the 3rd Battalion, 87th, had done a poor job of cleaning out. This indicates the misunderstanding that existed about the area between Mt. Mantino and Mt. Croce. This intervening area had not been cleaned out, nor had the 3rd Battalion, 87th, been directed to do so.

At 1100 the company was low on ammunition. They were on a small hill, the last before Madna di Rodiano, the first objective. No physical contact had been made with Company L, or

with the 2nd Platoon of K. To the right front, however, could be heard the sound of firing. Then a mortar barrage fell on them, an exceedingly heavy one. At this point they were ordered forward to join Company L in the attack to the east. Without reconnaissance, in the heavy barrage, a fragmentary order was given and the company moved out. They had thirteen casualties in five minutes. The shells were bursting in the trees. Killed were: Pfc. DAVID H. C. DENNIS, Pfc. ORLON J. YODER, and Pfc. JAMES M. STEVENS. Wounded were: S/Sgt. ERLING O. OMLAND, Sgt. WILLIAM M. GROVES, Pfc. ELMER L. SIMPKINS, Pfc. RAYMOND E. HATCHMAN, Pfc. CALIXTO L. MURO, Pfc. VICTOR PESPENI, Pfc. DONALD J. FRANK, and Pvt. JOHN E. MORO. Pfc. GEORGE ZORICK, the commander's runner, was wounded while running a message. Also Lieutenant BURNETT, who had rejoined the company, was wounded through his helmet, creasing his scalp. Pfc. ORVEL E. WOLF of the attached machine gun platoon from Company M was wounded by artillery while going after ammunition. To go through the mortar fire was suicidal, so the company stopped and moved to the right over the ridge. From here they moved down to Madna di Rodiano without further fire, and there found the 2nd Platoon which, with Company L, had already taken the town and a host of prisoners, 75 men and 4 officers, and an entire aid station.

To go back: the 2nd Platoon, after it swung to the right off of Mt. Croce in the morning leaving the rest of the company, had an interesting action by itself. They crossed over the ridge and dropped down to the town of Capponara. There they ran into Company L in the town. Having been ordered to keep moving, they skirted around the right and south edge of town and worked east on the right of L. Therefore L Company was between this platoon and the rest of K as both companies moved toward Madna di Rodiano along the high ground. The platoon soon came to a group of buildings and flushed out a prisoner. S/Sgt. JOSEPH LEUTHOLD asked the prisoner in German if there were any other Germans in the houses. The prisoner in a loud voice declared that there were no others in the buildings, but as he spoke he slyly pointed to one of the buildings. The sergeant tossed a grenade into this house and eight more Germans came out hands in air.

This was at about 1100. Some shellfire was coming in, but it wasn't bothering them much, as most of it was going down into the valley or hitting Company L further up the ridge. Therefore the platoon was able to move rapidly and reach a point due south of Madna di Rodiano from where a rocky lane ran up into the hilltop town of scattered houses and big shade trees. They moved up the lane.

At the first house a German machine gun was firing west. They tossed in a grenade from behind, and the platoon sergeant, T/Sgt. PHILIP THURSTON, took two prisoners. From here looking up the lane they saw six or eight Nazis running out of the front door of the church. The church was on the west side of the lane so that the door was away from the forces of Company L fighting toward the church rear. The leading 2nd Squad opened fire and killed three, the rest fleeing back into the church. This sudden fire from the southern flank must have thrown panic into the Germans, who until then had been beating back Company L's successive attacks from the west. As the platoon waited, a German medic came from the church and said he had a wounded man inside. Wary of trickery, and covered by the platoon, Lieutenant TOIVO RANTA, S/Sgt. EDMUND D. BENNETT, Pvt. CARL MORELLI and Pvt. MICHAEL KARPEN moved cautiously to the church. Lieutenant RANTA stood at the front door, covered by the others, and shoved his rifle in—ordering anyone inside to come out. Out filed 67 Nazis and two horses. Inside were six more wounded in a small anteroom. The building was a combination arsenal and aid station. A wagon outside flew a Red Cross flag. The horses had pulled the wagon down filled with wounded, and back filled with ammunition. By this time it was noon, and the last units of Company L, and the 12 men, remnants of the 2nd Platoon, arrived from the west. One of

the 12 was fatally shot by a sniper. The squad went to locate the sniper without success. Some mortar fire came in at this time too, wounding one L Company man and hitting some prisoners. After all-around security had been set up, the rest of Company K arrived.

COMPANY L—"BANZAI RIDGE"

Through the morning fog Company L, too, ran into small arms fire, both automatic and rifle, and had to fight their way to the line of departure near Coste. The area was one of small, wooded knolls, confusingly broken up, and the fire coming from three sides through the fog added to the confusion. Before they left Mt. Croce, Pfc. HARRY E. HESKELL was wounded. Later, a machine gun section leader, S/Sgt. ALLEN C. STROMER, was killed by a machine gun, as was Pfc. ROBERT P. REICHE. Some mortar fire started crashing into the area too. Sgt. KENNETH RAFFETY, of M Company, a squad leader in the 1st Platoon, was fatally wounded while supporting the attack. The 1st Platoon, leading to the line of departure, had its platoon leader, Second Lieutenant WILLIAM J. WOLFGRAM, killed by machine gun fire, and the platoon, as it reached the LD at 0630, had been cut down to nineteen men. Killed with Lieutenant WOLFGRAM was Pvt. CHARLES H. REYNOLDS, JR. by the same machine gun. Pfc. SAM GALLEGOS was killed by a sniper. Also at this time Pfc. LYNN R. BURTON was hit in the arm and leg by machine gun fire and Pfc. JOHN F. KAZMIERCZAK was hit in the mouth. Pfc. THOMAS H. WARD, Pfc. HENRY A. GREINKE, Pfc. SAMUEL G. TORRICE, and S/Sgt. ALVIN C. SMART were hit by mortar shrapnel during this same advance. Cpl. HENRY B. SMITH of Headquarters Company, who was an acting squad leader for the 1st Platoon, was also hit by machine gun fire.

At the same time, lending uncertainty to the situation, Company K was fending off a counterattack on the left. In spite of this precarious position, the battalion commander, Colonel WORKS, urged the companies on, believing the 86th Infantry on his right (south) to be waiting for him to clear the ridge, so that they might cut across his rear, driving north and then northeast to work out along the ridge nearly parallel to his on the left.

Actually the 86th didn't cross until 1500, six hours after schedule, and the German occupation of this ridge throughout the day, armed as they were with direct-fire, high-velocity weapons, cost the 3rd Battalion dearly. Because of the nature of the rough terrain and the fog, neither of which permitted a view, and because the enemy had to be fought back from the line of departure, reconnaissance of the usual nature was impossible. Company L was ordered to "advance by leaps and bounds as the situation permitted." Colonel WORKS' party, trying to make a reconnaissance, was under aimed fire and lost three of its seven men, plus a fourth later on.

The 2nd Platoon passed through the remnants of the 1st on the LD and moved out on the right side of the ridgeline. Company K was over the crest on the left where fire was so heavy that their 2nd Platoon was sent on a flanking mission over onto the south side of the ridge with Company L. In order not to intermingle with L, this platoon flanked wide and way around to the right of L, so that K, less one platoon, was on the left of Company L, and the one platoon of K was on the right, farther down the slope. This platoon moved fast and Company L could see them a little ahead and down to their right, work fifteen Krauts out of a house.

As the 2nd Platoon of L moved along the ridge, a heavy artillery concentration was landing harmlessly in the valley to the right. They cleared a stone house and haystack, killing two snipers and taking three prisoners. They moved rapidly through the swirling fog toward the company objective of Madna di Rodiano. The weapons platoon received most of the enemy fire. Pfc. HEINZ KATZMANN, an acting squad leader for the mortars, was hit by artillery while directing fire. He refused to be evacuated and kept on for two days.

Pfc. ROBERT W. GUSTAFSON, wounded and ordered out of action, first directed his squad into a fine German dugout as shells came in the area with increasing fury. GUSTAFSON, waiting until all others were inside, found there was no room for him, and although they called him in, he yelled back that he would "sweat it out" on the ground. Three artillery shells landed almost on him, and an unselfish man died.

The 2nd Platoon, meanwhile under no fire, stopped to reorganize in defilade below the last ridge before their objective. One squad was missing and out of contact. The remaining two squads formed as skirmishers and attacked the ridge frontally. As they neared the crest, the fog was lifting, but all opposition seemed to have ceased when, without warning, a fanatical Nazi officer opened fire point-blank with a burp gun. He was in a shallow foxhole in front of a large bunker. A BAR man and two riflemen dispatched him quickly, and the squads charged up, grenaded the bunker and captured fifteen surprised enemy.

Unfortunately, this maneuver must have attracted enemy observers, for as soon as the prisoners had been disarmed and sent toward the rear out of the line of fire, a concentrated barrage of 81-mm mortar fire laid in on the ridge where the squads were reorganizing, and machine guns opened up on them. There was no cover. The squads scrambled back down off the ridge. Pfc. BERNIE C. GAY and Pfc. HERALD W. MUNDORFF were wounded by rifle grenades, and Pfc. JAMES E. HALL by mortar fire. It was now some time after 1000, and from this time until Madna di Rodiano was taken was as desperate a period as any the 87th experienced. Pfc. FRANCIS P. GALLES, serving as battalion runner, was sent back from the battalion CP to order Company I forward. He was hit in both knees by machine gun fire back in the Locari Scuola area.

Back at the foot of the ridge, four of the men of the 2nd Platoon, led by Sgt. STANLEY J. SLUSARK, worked up unobserved to the forward slope of the ridge where there was some concealment. There the barrage pinned them down. The rest of the platoon, at the first lull, tried desperately to reach them. As they crossed the skyline in their charge, the barrage laid in again and beat them back. Pfc. EDWARD B. SAWYER was seriously wounded by shrapnel, Pfc. WILLIAM WILLIAMSON by machine gun fire and Pfc. THOMAS C. MCGUIRE by mortar fire.

Back at the bottom of the hill they were joined by the missing squad. They attacked again with this added strength. For the third time they were forced back. Pfc. STEVE SINCEK was seriously wounded by machine gun fire. While reorganizing for the third time, Sgt. SLUSARK, one of the four pinned down on the forward slope, came crawling around the side of the ridge. He had been seriously wounded, shot through the hip, and had dragged himself back to give the position of his three buddies, who were holding off a large group of enemy riflemen. The platoon was desperate. The radio had been shot out of the radioman's hands, so the platoon had no contact with the company.

It was decided by Lieutenant JOHN H. GRAHAM, the platoon leader, to make a "Banzai charge" through a slight saddle to the left, and to reach the forward slope by this route regardless of the cost. By the time the enemy saw the new tactic and had adjusted fire, the charging men were high on the ridge. They charged on, trying to get below the line of grazing fire across the ridge. They hit a draw and were rejoined by the three who had been pinned down. One man, Pfc. DANIEL CALLINAN, had his head creased, and Pfc. ALLEN F. SCHAUFFLER was seriously hit in the neck attempting to bring the wounded man over to the platoon. Wounded in this final assault were: Pfc. RUSSELL PINKERTON hit by rifle fire in the chest, Pfc. MICHAEL SAVINO hit by shrapnel, S/Sgt. JOSEPH A., CAMPBELL hit twice by machine gun fire, and Lieutenant GRAHAM injured when thrown to the ground by a shell bursting near him. Pfc. EAGAN L. FOSTER was killed by machine gun fire.

The platoon, with but twelve out of forty left, now went on to take their objective. They fought their way into the little village of Madna di Rodiano. The 3rd Platoon was charging up at about the same time. Here they saw German prisoners emerging from the church. Unbeknown to them, the 2nd Platoon of Company K had come in on the extreme right flank from the valley to the south, and captured the 67 Krauts now coming out of the church, followed by the two horses. Outside was the first-aid wagon the enemy had used under a Red Cross flag to haul up ammunition. However, the heroic fight of Company L for the ridge had made this entry possible.

In town another of the heroic twelve was cut down as Pfc. LEE R. NORRIS was shot in the stomach by a sniper and died in a German medic's arms. Then Pfc. FRED J. WAHL was wounded by mortar fire as he marshaled the prisoners after the attack was over. This fire hit prisoners as well.

The 3rd Platoon, following the 2nd in the attack, came under heavy fire. Pfc. VERNON J. CARTNER was wounded by mortar fire, and during the attack at the church Pfc. MICHAEL NICOSIA and Pfc. HOMER P. JUMP, JR. were killed by machine gun fire. Pfc. PAUL T. PUSKARICH was fatally wounded. Pfc. JOHN G. NIX and Pfc. HILARY A. NEWTON of the 1st Platoon were wounded in the same action.

To the men of Company L, the hill will always be known as "Banzai Ridge." The pitiful sight of helpless wounded and smashed dead comrades will never be forgotten by the survivors of that charge.

COMPANY K—HILL 787

Just after arrival at about noon, Company K reorganized and prepared to capture the last hill before Mt. Mosca, Hill 787. K on the left was to take the nearer hill overlooking the town from which there was, even at the moment, machine gun fire. Under artillery support, Hill 787 was taken without casualties. The 2nd Platoon on the right grenaded an enemy dugout and took five prisoners.

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Then they reorganized, using enemy dugouts for defense. At this time they again came under intense friendly artillery fire. It was stopped by a "300" radio message. That was at 1500.

During the afternoon, Company I, which had moved onto Mt. Mosca, complained about a rifleman shooting into their rear from a little grassy knoll, Hill 779, in front of Company K's position on 787. Captain EDDY, to make sure, sent the whole 3rd Platoon and part of the 2nd. Pfc. ROBERT TURNER, the scout out ahead, sighted a German at a dugout entrance surrounded by several others. He immediately opened fire, shooting from the hip, and killed two of the Germans. Then one of his bullets must have struck a large German *Panzerfaust* charge, for a third German blew up. Eight prisoners were then collected and sent back.

Late in the day, Company K, with the rest of the battalion, was relieved by infantry of the 1st Armored Division, and withdrew to Rodiano, south of Madna di Rodiano. Their ammunition was 80 percent expended. The men had no water, no food, and were close to exhaustion.

COMPANY L—HILL 765

Captain JOSEPH J. DUNCAN, while reorganizing Company L by the church at Madna di Rodiano, was ordered on to Mt. Mosca. Company K was still on the left and both companies jumped off at 1330 after a thirty-minute artillery preparation which was to lift at 400 yards and then lift on call. The 3rd Platoon, under First Lieutenant WILLARD W. DORA, led off. From a house on Hill 765, beyond and above the church, machine gun fire had caused many of the casualties in the assault of the church. Lieutenant DORA led his platoon forward so fast up the wooded hill that they were caught by their own artillery fire. S/Sgt. CHARLES E. HOGUE and

Pfc. BRUCE E. BERENDS were wounded by enemy fire, but Lieutenant DORA and Pfc. CHARLES R. MEISER, JR., lying down near each other as DORA looked at his map, were killed by one of their own artillery shells, and Sgt. WILLIAM CONGER was lightly wounded. Pfc. JOSE VASQUEZ, sent to contact the 2nd Platoon, was hit by the same fire. However, the hill was quickly assaulted and seventeen prisoners were taken. Here on 765 and 787 they were ordered to dig in behind Company K. The company had only about eighty men left.

Meanwhile, Company I, which at about noon had been ordered to move forward from reserve near Mt. Croce, with the objective of attacking Hills 765 and 787 from the south, had arrived and was ordered on to take Mt. Mosca.

COMPANY I—MT. MOSCA

Back at dawn, while K and L were moving to the line of departure, Company I moved up onto Mt. Croce and remained in battalion reserve during the attack along the ridge to Madna di Rodiano. The 2nd Platoon took positions on the left, and the 3rd Platoon on the right. A morning fog hung heavily over the mountain, cutting visibility down to a few yards. The company tried to dig foxholes in the hard, rocky ground as some sniper fire was directed at them. Next, a heavy concentration of 120-mm artillery fire landed in the company area. An assistant squad leader in the 2nd Platoon, Sgt. ORVAL R. MCDANIEL, was killed, and S/Sgt. THEODORE B. REINERO, of the 1st Platoon, Pfc. THEODORE G. HOOPLE, Pfc. ANTHONY J. BABICH, Pfc. JACOB C. LOWERY, and Pfc. STEVEN J. MOTYKA, were all wounded. The company moved over to the right to a position in some cover.

Captain ADRIAN RIORDAN, the company commander, moved forward to make a reconnaissance through the fog. The high ground was open with brushy knobs and little trees here and there. He met Captain EDDY of Company K, and they were pinned down for a time by automatic fire.

The machine gun section was out on a point to the right front. Sgt. EDWARD R. CRIST and Pfc. OSCAR B. SATHERS moved forward from this section, went over the ridge and down the hill about twenty yards to the front. Here they came upon three Germans in a dugout, and opened fire on them with M-1s. The Nazis ran off in the fog, and it was not known whether they were hit or not. Then two others ran from the dugout and were fired upon as they disappeared. The two men entered the dugout, a large permanent installation, and found extensive wiring and equipment, which indicated that it had been an artillery observation post. Simultaneously with the occupation of this position, the artillery fire, which had been continuously landing on the hill, ceased.

Before the two men could complete their examination of the dugout they were called back. The company was moving forward at battalion command to close up behind Company L. Pfc. HANS MOSER, JR. was wounded by a tree burst as they started out. Captain RIORDAN, finding the battalion commander, Colonel WORKS, at his OP, had the two objectives Hill 787 and Mt. Mosca, pointed out to him. By this time the fog had lifted.

Shortly after noon the company moved along the southern traverse of the long ridge and contacted Company K, which had already taken the first objective, Hill 787. Here they set up their own machine guns and the attached heavies and their 60-mm mortars on the south slopes of Hill 787 in order to join the artillery preparation planned to fall on Hill 779, on the east knoll of 787, and on Mt. Mosca. Although the initial objective could not be seen, they moved out over the hill, down into a deep ravine and up the far side without being fired on. They reorganized southwest of the knoll, 3rd Platoon on the right, 1st on the left. More artillery was called for on Mt. Mosca. The "300" radio was working well and the company "536s" were functioning very

well. As they moved up, the 3rd Platoon hit a group of houses on the side of another knoll, Hill 761. Here they engaged in a short fight against automatic weapons (not machine guns). Under the platoon fire, two men were designated to move up to the houses, and then the whole 3rd Squad was sent up after them. Twenty-six Germans were flushed out of these houses and captured.

Meanwhile the 1st Platoon had pushed out into the exposed north end of the knoll where they took two more prisoners. Here on top, however, automatic pistol and machine gun fire, coming from Hill 779, cut into the platoon's left flank. Most of the men were safe in the woods to the right, but Lieutenant MAURICE EWING and six men were out on the open knoll. EWING yelled to his men to make a dash up over to the woods, and jumping to his feet reached safety himself. The six men behind him, seeing the bullets pepper the open hillside all around them, froze to the ground. EWING continued to yell to them, and Captain RIORDAN commanded, "Get off that hillside before you are all killed!" Pfc. JOHN D. SPRENG had been fatally wounded as the fire opened up. T/5 BARTON C. MORRISON, the company medic, ran to his aid. As he dressed the dying man's wound, he was hit in the leg, and running over a few yards, he lay flat on the ground. There more machine gun fire struck him. He was mortally wounded. The other four men got over the hill.

Then the company cut south of the exposed knoll and swung back on the east slope, then across the saddle and up onto Mt. Mosca. The 3rd Platoon went around to the right flank, and a light machine gun was sent forward. All but the very top of Mt. Mosca over to the northwest was occupied. As they cleaned up this area, enemy were driven out of holes all over the slope. Five were killed and about twelve taken prisoner from the wooded northern slope. After the company was on top of their objective, one German, completely outfitted in full field equipment, and carrying a heavy pack and rifle, marched up the hill toward them as though he had just reached the front. As he hove in sight, the company, being otherwise unengaged at the time, opened fire in unison with all weapons. Fire engulfed him, tearing off his equipment and breaking his rifle in three pieces, but the astonished young soldier emerged from the barrage unharmed, threw his hands into the air and surrendered.

As the company reorganized, two or three men moved over onto the exposed eastern slope to investigate. As soon as they appeared over the ridge, accurate artillery fire dropped on them. Pfc. DENZEL C. CARRICO was wounded and the other two men withdrew. In the reorganization, the 2nd Platoon was sent back onto the south slope of the grassy knoll, Hill 761, to take positions with the heavy machine guns. Here they dug in under some artillery fire and some sniping fire still coming in from Hill 779 in the rear. A sniper wounded S/Sgt. EDWARD H. VITALIUS of the 1st Platoon. Company K was radioed to clear out this enemy pocket. They sent a platoon and captured about 16 Germans.

Pfc. VITO ACCIARITO was wounded by a mortar shell. Then three short rounds of friendly artillery struck Mt. Mosca, wounding T/Sgt. ALEXANDER J. BEAUCHESNE. During the rest of the afternoon, and until relieved after dark, the company continued to be subjected to enemy artillery fire. Pfc. LUTHER E. DOANE, JR. and Pfc., HOMER H. LOWE were killed from the 2nd Platoon. Pfc. ROY D. TAYLOR of the 3rd Platoon was wounded. In the 1st Platoon, Pfc. HARRY R. ARCADO was slightly wounded by shellfire, and Pfc. MALFORD C. HEIMER was more seriously wounded. Sgt. BRADFORD ROUSSEAU had been occupying a foxhole with the 1st Platoon when a member of the 3rd Platoon ran up and accidentally stabbed him with a bayonet, thinking him a German. Pfc. HERMAN A. FREYER, JR., Pfc. AUGUST J. KAPUSTA, and Pfc. JOSEPH FRIEDMAN of the weapons platoon were wounded by artillery. Early in the day, the battalion runner from Company I, Pfc. JAMES A. BAKER, had been wounded while with Colonel

WORKS' reconnaissance party. Pfc. CECIL C. FLOWERS was wounded while carrying a litter with the medics.

Elements of the 11th Armored Infantry Battalion (1st Armored Division), which relieved Company I after dark, received several casualties as the shellfire continued. Company I withdrew to the town of Rodiano for the night with the rest of the battalion.

OTHER CASUALTIES

During the afternoon the advance 2nd Battalion aid station was hit and suffered six killed and nine wounded. Killed from the 2nd Battalion were Pfc. RAYMOND V. DE SORCY, Pfc. WILLIAM G. MILLER, Pvt. SAMUEL L. IRVIN, and Pvt. GEORGE SMITH, JR. Two men from Company F, sent back to Service Company to help evacuate wounded, were hit here: Pvt. BENJAMIN KASEN and Pvt. GEORGE E. SLAUGHTER. S/Sgt. RICHARD A. ROCKER of Battalion Headquarters was wounded lightly during the day near Vedetola beyond which the battalion headquarters spent the night.

2nd Battalion—North to Baccuchi

While the 3rd Battalion swung wide the gate along the German line to Mt. Mosca so that the 86th Infantry could drive through, the 2nd Battalion was assigned the mission of buttressing the flank of the open door. Company F was to punch north from Le Coste to the town of Torre. Company G was to follow tanks through Tolè on the main road north, and Company E was to mop up Mt. Croce and drive to San Trinita beyond Tolè on the same road, and finally Company F would leapfrog beyond Baccuchi.

COMPANY F—TORRE

Torre was directly north and down hill from Company F. At daylight on the 16th, looking out through the heavy morning haze, they found the knob on the northernmost slope of their hill was organized with some well-dug positions. An observer on the extreme left of the company adjusted assault mortars at two Krauts at a 100-yard range. A BAR opened up on two other Krauts crawling up a ditch, and killed one of them. Then the 2nd Platoon, with S/Sgt. LOUIS H. BARGMANN leading, jumped off, squads abreast, and overran the positions. To their surprise, instead of a handful, thirty prisoners were taken.

The weapons platoon, the 2nd Platoon of heavy machine guns of Company H, and four tanks moved up on the knob to support the attack on Torre. The 2nd Platoon led off. On the left flank S/Sgt. RUDOLPH W. KONIECZNY led a bazooka team of Pfc. THEODORE F. AUBREY and Pfc. JOE DUNN, KONIECZNY as usual toting his powerful BAR. The sergeant got so far ahead that the rest of the men were running trying to keep up with him. He was first to Torre, which was entered without resistance at 0900.

Artillery then started landing in town, wounding Pvt. JAMES C. IASSOGNA and Sgt. KERMIT T. GOODMONSON, and the platoon pulled back to the knob on Le Coste. At 1100 the company moved off of Le Coste, marching to Mt. Croce, arriving there and digging in at 1600. At about dusk (2030) the company left for Baccuchi over rough terrain, but without being fired on, followed by the 2nd Platoon of Company A. They dug in again at 2400.

COMPANY G—TOLÈ

First Lieutenant GORDON A. ANDERSON, the executive officer, had assumed command of Company G the evening before as soon as he caught up with it. Also during this evening the 1st Platoon, with one platoon of tanks and one of TDs, caught up with the company. In the morning

of the Mt. Mosca attack, Company G, led by the 1st Platoon, the tanks and TDs, was given the mission to take, secure, and defend Tolè. They moved up the main road toward Tolè at 1015.

The road had not been previously checked for mines, but sixteen men of the 1st Platoon rode two tanks right down into town under the command of Second Lieutenant STANLEY F. JAZWINSKI. The company following had dismounted a mile short of town and within sight of the leading elements, when long-range machine gun fire opened up on them from beyond the town. The tanks fired back, hitting some scattered houses in the area from which the fire was coming. Meanwhile in the town, JAZWINSKI's sixteen men had jumped off the tanks and worked their way through town clearing out the houses without resistance. The rest of the company followed them into town, and almost at once heavy shellfire dropped on them. The town became a cloud of dust, flying masonry and tile. Many men were hit, including Sgt. PETE BRITO, Pfc. RALPH E. NANNINGA of the 2nd Platoon, and Pfc. HENRY J. SHAW and Pvt. ROBERT J. KNOWLES of the 3rd Platoon.

After this shelling eased off, the 1st Platoon moved into the far end of town. There they found a big headquarters of the enemy abandoned only five minutes before. Italian civilians told them a general had left just before they arrived. An elaborate German kitchen was found, potatoes all peeled, the day's menu laid out on the table, and beside the menu a piece of bread and jam with one bite gone. As the rest of the company secured the town under intense shellfire, the 1st Platoon with the tanks and TDs advanced another mile beyond the town. From near the town of Baccuchi they observed Germans on their left on a hill. The tanks fired six 76-mm shells into Baccuchi and into machine gun positions on the left. Then the 1st Squad of the platoon was ordered into town. Machine gun fire opened up on the leading scout, Pfc. FRANK MOON. The entire squad, by creeping and crawling, crossed an open field and then rushed for thirty yards to the cover of a sunken road. Pvt. ALBERT F. GROEGER hit the ground after dashing across the field and was fatally wounded as he lay stretched out on the ground. The platoon was then ordered to withdraw since it was discovered that they were 300 yards beyond their assigned objective.

Pfc. ROGER COREY directed tank fire on suspected German positions on two hills to cover the platoon withdrawal. Then Sgt. WILLIAM MCGOWAN made it back and ordered two tanks to move forward into a field to cover the evacuation of the fatally wounded GROEGER. This field was very exposed, but Lieutenant FOX, the tank commander, was one of the few aggressive tank men the regiment had experience with. Under the direction of Sgt. MCGOWAN and Sgt. FRANCIS J. DUFFIN, Lieutenant FOX moved his tanks out and covered the withdrawal of the men. One tanker was wounded. This action took place at 1300, and shortly thereafter the platoon and tanks were back in Tolè and the defense of the town was set up.

The 3rd Platoon had followed the tanks out and were dug in along the road. As the tanks and the 1st Platoon withdrew, they remained in position out there. Friendly aircraft searching out enemy tanks dove and strafed the road, wounding T/Sgt. GEORGE E. KEARNS of the 3rd Platoon. After the first plane dove and fired, the men displayed panels and shot up two yellow flares. The second plane dove, but seeing the panels did not fire.

Tolè was shelled throughout the afternoon and evening. Artillery fire wounded Sgt. PETE BRITO for the second time, and Pfc. EDWARD M. SCHUSTER, while bringing six prisoners from the right. BRITO's wound was treated by a captured German medic.

At 2200 Company G moved out on order to take Hill 687. On their way, led by the 2nd Platoon, the company went through Baccuchi, clearing the buildings along the way. On the far side of town Lieutenant JOSEPH H. SHEPHERD and his scout were fired on. Then the 3rd Platoon, moving up on the right, had its lead group with Lieutenant JACK K. BENNETT fired on as they

came abreast of the 2nd Platoon. The tanks had left to refuel, but after a brief holdup, both platoons moved forward in the dark and found the positions on the hill unoccupied. Company F occupied the hill to the northeast, but there was a gap between the companies in which Company F took 60 prisoners the next morning. The objective was secured at 2300 and the company dug in for the night. During the entire day's action 73 prisoners had been taken, and the company had suffered eleven casualties. Other men wounded in Tolè by artillery fire were: Second Lieutenant EVERET E. NORCROSS, JR., Pfc. ANTHONY S. KOWALSKI, Pfc. MICHAEL LAGUNA, Pfc. MILFORD E. MILLER, and Pvt. WILLIAM P. RIDGEL.

COMPANY E—S. TRINITA

As Company E went east along the ridgeline to mop up Mt. Croce, with the 1st machine gun platoon of Company H attached, they found no opposition, but the draw they had to go through was blanketed with mortar and artillery fire. On Mt. Croce, from which the 3rd Battalion had jumped off at 0620, were Colonel FOWLER, and Lieutenant Colonel NATIONS, who had come back from the hospital the evening before to resume command of the 2nd Battalion. It was desired that Company E attack to the north to take Baccuchi and San Trinita, two clusters of buildings directly north on the road from Tolè, now held by Company G. Having little ammunition, the company was unable to move out immediately. They sent back for ammunition, and while waiting on Mt. Croce watched three unidentified tanks moving away on the Tolè-Baccuchi road. They also could make out individual soldiers near the tanks. They were eager to open fire on these targets, but did not dare on the possibility that they might be friendly. The targets moved out of range.

At about 1400, the ammunition having arrived, the company moved off down the forward slopes of Mt. Croce and passed through Torrello. The 2nd Platoon led, followed by the 1st and 3rd Platoons. On the way down, while moving through a draw, Pfc. CHARLES L. DOUGLAS of the 1st Platoon was wounded by mortar fire. Upon reaching Baccuchi, the company ran into one platoon of Company L of the 86th Infantry, who were pinned down and had suffered casualties by flank fire coming from San Trinita. Presumably this fire was from the tanks previously seen withdrawing. The company requested tank support. Some tank destroyers were already in the vicinity, and others moved up under Captain PATCH. Lieutenant RICHARD L. CROOK's 2nd Platoon, which had been in the lead and which was consequently pinned down, was to attack on the left and the 1st on the right, both to be supported by the TDs.

As they jumped off at 1800, tank fire was still coming in from the north, wounding Lieutenant CROOK. After advancing some distance, Pfc. HARRY S. HART, also of the 2nd Platoon, was hit. Before they reached San Trinita, two friendly planes dove on the attacking company and strafed. Then they roared on, dropped bombs and strafed San Trinita before making their turn and coming back. On the first run no one was hit, although one man's bayonet was sheared off. Yellow smoke signals were immediately set off to mark the company as friendly troops, but by the time the plane had completed their strafing run and made their turn and circled back, the smoke was completely expended. Sgt. JACK HEPFER of the 2nd Platoon, who had determinedly lugged the colored phosphorescent identification panels, hastily spread them out, and the planes pulled out of their dive without firing.

The company got excellent tank destroyer support, Captain PATCH being very aggressive, and moved easily into San Trinita, taking eight prisoners. The wounded HART was taken back, and the company dug in at San Trinita for the night. In the abandoned German dugouts, candles were still burning, and the hungry men found cheese, bread, and German whiskey. Ironically, their first rations since the jump-off reached them that evening. Heavy artillery, mortar, and

sniper fire hit the town during the night, and the Germans were still so close to the town that they could be heard talking.

COMPANY H—MORTARS

Supporting the attack of Company G on Tolè, the 3rd Section of Company H at 0800 displaced near the battalion and company CP at buildings between Hills 838 and 815. From here several missions were fired on Tolè. At about 1000, the 1st and 2nd Sections moved up and joined the 3rd. At 1500 the whole platoon moved to the vicinity of the battalion and company CP at the village of Coste. They fired several missions at San Trinita and Tolè in support of the main attack. They spent the night here.

1st Battalion—Le Coste Ridge

COMPANY B

Company B remained in its positions on Le Coste until 1700 on the 16th, when the 2nd Platoon was ordered to go to the battalion CP several hundred yards to the east to act as security. Just after having completed digging foxholes near the CP, under sporadic enemy mortar fire, the platoon was ordered to move out and rejoin the company.

Apr 16

Retaining positions on Le Coste, the company was then spread out thinly on a defensive line running east along a road south of Tolè. The positions ran from left to right, 1st, 3rd, and 2nd, with the weapons attached to rifle platoons. Company C was on Hill 807 to the east, and A was on Le Coste to the left. The 2nd Platoon found abandoned German foxholes to occupy for the remainder of the night. At 2400 several replacements joined the company. Throughout the night and the next morning, the road and ridgeline along which the company was stretched, received shelling from heavy guns, but there were no casualties.

COMPANY A

Company A stayed on Le Coste throughout the day. After B extended over to the road junction at Tolè, Company A moved over to join with B. Replacements arrived, but the company lost more of their valuable men through shellfire. S/Sgt. BERTRAM A. BIDWELL, Sgt. HOWARD H. BREITMEYER, Pfc. HERBERT F. HOLMGREN, Pfc. MICHAEL A. GUERRA and Pfc. WILLIAM H. APLIN were all wounded.

On the morning of 16 April, Company C moved out to Le Coste and relieved Company F. First Lieutenant ROBERT F. BOYER was in command, having rejoined the company during the night after his recovery from a previous wound. In the evening, at 2200, the company moved to the east again. They took positions on Mt. Croce at 2300, the 1st Platoon stopping on Hill 807 just south of Tolè, which was in the hands of Company G.

Situation at the End of the Third Day

By the night of 16-17 April the biggest task of the 87th had been accomplished. The enemy main line had been broken. The secondary line shown on captured enemy maps had been penetrated by 86th and 87th units in front of San Trinita. The prisoner bag was swelling steadily, the 3rd Battalion alone taking more than 200 during the 16th.

On the 15th, Regiment had established a forward CP at 750 south of Hill 903. Consisting only of the S-2 and S-3 sections, it was able to move quickly, jumping three times within eighteen hours on the 17th in an effort to keep in close contact with the battalions. The regimental wire section worked ceaselessly to keep all three battalions tied in to these changing locations.

During the night of the 16th, the 10th Anti-tank Battalion prepared to relieve the 1st Battalion, 87th, and free them for further advance to attack Mt. Serra through the 2nd Battalion not later than 1500 on the 17th.

Information from IPW indicated that enemy defending companies were down to about 45 men. However, they had received orders for the morning to “hold to the last man.” General HAYS gave the information that a column of enemy tanks was approaching along the road to Tolè.

It was learned from a captured German officer that the Mt. Mosca attack had achieved some surprise on the 3rd day, for the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 94th German Division defending the ridge, had expected to be attacked from the southeast by the 1st Armored elements that had taken Vergato. The opening of the road from Vergato to Tolè, announced during the night, reduced the difficult and hazardous use of the narrow mountain trails. Units of the 1st Armored Division were given priority on this road, and it soon became clogged with armored vehicles so that regimental supply and evacuation were much delayed.

FOURTH DAY—17 APRIL

At 0910 of the 17th, General HAYS visited the CP and told Colonel FOWLER that the “break-through” had been accomplished and that the 87th must “keep pushing and exploit the break-through.” At 0925 all three battalion commanders were ordered to alert their units and be ready to move fast. The regiment was ordered to push toward Mt. Serra and Mt. Prospero.

By 1200 noon, Major General HAYS was awaiting an answer to his call to Lieutenant General LUCIAN K. TRUSCOTT, commanding general of the Fifth Army, as to how far north he could push the Division.

2nd Battalion—Mt. Serra

COMPANY F—THE COOKS' PATROL

Before their attack on Mt. Serra, Company F had a surprising action. On the night before, during darkness, Captain JAMES C. KENNETT and Lieutenant DONALD M. DWYER walked out on reconnaissance of their new position. After walking a short distance, they found themselves almost surrounded by German voices, but it was too dark to see anything. They returned and silently moved the 1st Platoon, now down to twenty-one men, and two machine guns out to take up positions where they had heard the voices. They reinforced the platoon with mortar men who were used as riflemen. At this time the 2nd Platoon had only sixteen men left, and the 3rd but twenty-two. Sgt. GERALD O. HALVERSON had broken some ribs while diving into a fox-hole and had been evacuated.

Apr 17

At dawn, the 1st Platoon found themselves, in their forward positions, right on the edge of a minefield and barbed wire entanglements, and only 100 yards from the German positions. The Germans started toward the company, apparently innocent of their presence, and the forward platoon opened up. S/Sgt. WILBUR WRIGHT of the mortar section hit two with his carbine. The volley of fire from the close range surprised the advancing Germans and they dropped all their weapons, except one machine gun they were carrying, and ran back. A sniper started firing from the left, and S/Sgt. RUDOLPH W. KONIECZNY went off alone, promptly killed the sniper and reported back. Sgt. KONIECZNY, who was AWOL from the hospital where he had been convalescing from his previous wound, was piling up a large score of personal victims.

Then Sgt. WRIGHT asked for volunteers for a patrol to investigate the German strength in front of the leading platoon. The mess sergeant, S/Sgt. BAYNE HILL, and the cooks, T/4 VERNE HARTENSTEIN, and T/5 CHARLES DOLSON, and mortar men Sgt. MICHAEL DE BAGGIS, Pfc. PALMER E. COUILLARD, already once wounded, and Pfc. EUGENE BURNS, all volunteered for the mission. S/Sgt. PAUL STETTNER went along with a "536" radio and as interpreter. WRIGHT led them carefully around the German flank to the right rear. From here they could make out a series of trenches that completely covered the company's positions. The patrol had outflanked the Germans without being seen, and Sgt. WRIGHT was able to crawl to the end of the trench and watch the heads of the enemy in a dugout 25 yards away. After getting a good firing position he yelled at them in English to surrender. A Nazi warrant officer answered with a burst from his automatic pistol. WRIGHT pulled his carbine trigger and killed the warrant officer. That "broke the ice," and with the officer dead, 52 Germans marched out of the dugout and surrendered to WRIGHT and his cooks and mortar men. Sgt. STETTNER called five more from another dugout. Then the platoon went through the dugouts, finding no less than ten machine guns, many other automatic weapons, grenades, rifles, and all kinds of ammunition. The elaborate bunkers had excellent camouflage, with wire netting, and were steel-shuttered and seemingly impregnable.

COMPANY F—"BLOODY RIDGE"

At 0930 the company received orders to attack to the north and seize Mt. Serra. The 1st Battalion was to go through to San Prospero. The battle for Mt. Serra, or "Bloody Ridge" as it was to be called, was the grimmest that Company F was to encounter. The ridge itself was one of the least imposing of the long list of hills and mountains captured by the regiment, but its defenders put up probably the most determined resistance encountered by the 87th. The day had started off smoothly for Company F, with over fifty prisoners and an elaborate fortification system taken without a casualty, but the rest of the day was rough and bitter.

The company started out with the 2nd Platoon of machine guns from Company H attached. The 3rd Platoon with one section of heavy machine guns led on the right. The 2nd Platoon was slightly echeloned to the left on the other side of the road with the second section of "heavies," and the mortars, and the 1st Platoon followed the 2nd. As the platoons moved up toward the series of three low knobs bending to the right and forming Mt. Serra, the men had to run to keep up with the five supporting tanks. The 3rd Platoon to the right was fired upon from the first knoll, which was to the left of the road bend. A squad leader of this platoon, S/Sgt. OLE B. DALLEN, lost his arm when struck by a *Panzerfaust* charge, and the platoon guide, S/Sgt. JAMES P. RYAN, and Pfc. RANDOLPH HABURNE were killed by *Panzerfaust* charges. Pfc. ROBERT A. CARLSON was hit here too.

As the 3rd Platoon men threw themselves to the ground, the 2nd Platoon broke into a run to rush the knoll where the fire was coming from. Fire from further left killed Pfc. FLOYD H. LUNSFORD, the scout for flank security, and wounded Pfc. WILLIAM M. SCANLON, Pfc. RENE A. DI GIACOMO, and Sgt. ARTHUR J. COFFEY. The 1st Platoon rushed down after the 2nd. They were to flank to the left if the 2nd were pinned down. Pfc. TONEY A. KNUTSEN and Pvt. GEORGE C. SLIGER were wounded. At this time, two sections of machine guns were on each side of the road, one on the left with the 2nd Platoon, and the other with the 3rd. One of the tanks remained two or three hundred yards in the rear. As the men on the left came up the knoll, the Germans were still there. They had no intention of retreating. One man from Company H killed six Krauts with his carbine. Sgt. DAVID BURT killed one with his pistol. Many were killed from a distance of three or four yards. Pfc. JOSEPH MCNEALUS came over the hill face-to-face with a Nazi. Joe pulled the trigger faster. Two machine gunners from Company H, Sgt.

BERNARD D. RUTERBORIES and Pfc. JAMES GILLIES, JR. set their gun up over a foxhole; a German stuck his head up from underneath and surrendered. The 2nd Platoon of Company H fought up forward with the riflemen, the 2nd Section fighting savagely on the first knoll. The action was so furious that it was remarkable that the platoon was able to keep together and well organized.

However, the 2nd Platoon, in spite of the desperate fighting on the knoll, managed to establish a base of fire, using German foxholes and the defilade of a sunken road, and the help of the heavy machine gunners on the knoll. Not that they had cleared the knoll in the usual sense, for it was being fired on from every side, and the tanks were drawing all kinds of fire. But the platoon and attached gun were nevertheless able to deliver a terrific volume of fire—both light and heavy machine guns being right up on the line. Pfc. HUGH B. GIVENS was shell-shocked here and evacuated.

On the way up, Sgt. KONIECZNY went off on another one of his frequent solo missions to clear out a bunker. He was never seen alive again, and the details of his death are not known. Later, members of the company found his helmet near two German bunkers, but couldn't locate the body. It was found later, some distance away at the foot of the hill. Sgt. KONIECZNY had just been promoted to Technical Sergeant, but he never heard the news. With the death of KONIECZNY, the 87th lost one of its oldest and most colorful members. From his exploits on skis at Mt. Rainier to the two BARs he managed to fire simultaneously in the Apennines, KONIECZNY's exploits were legendary. He might have been safe in a hospital bed from his previous wound; but no hospital could hold him when his outfit was jumping off.

Under the covering fire of the 2nd Platoon, Lieutenant FLOYD E. ALEXANDER led the 3rd Platoon, and the attached heavy machine gun section forward to the group of buildings on the second knoll under severe artillery fire. Pfc. ANDREW KEREKES was injured on the movement. One tank stayed back by the first knoll and three went on with the 3rd Platoon. Pfc. ROBERT H. MCCAIG was wounded at noon by artillery at the houses. From the houses Lieutenant ALEXANDER pushed on with only sixteen men toward the third knoll.

Heavy fire pinned them down 100 yards beyond the houses, and the tanks were ordered on to support them. Two of them moved up, followed by the third. The platoon moved on another 250 yards and gained a hold on the objective, the third knoll. Here Pfc. WILLIAM E. FISHER was wounded and Pfc. HOWARD KUMPULA seriously injured his leg. Since the tanks' aeriels were shot away, communication with one another was impossible. One tank started to swing its turret around to fire at a knocked-out German tank, now occupied by our machine gunners. The men couldn't make the tankers hear to stop them, so machine gunner Pfc. GORDON E. SUNDSTROM jumped up on the tank, which was drawing machine gun fire from front and both sides. He stopped the tank from firing and miraculously was not hit. Captain KENNETT, too, climbed up on the tanks as bullets rang against their steel armor, to point out targets. The tanks started to withdraw in spite of Captain KENNETT climbing up on their hulls and issuing direct orders to stay. A tracer bullet struck the rear end of one tank and fired up the blankets and gear lashed on the outside. The crew leaped out, abandoning the undamaged tank. The other two tanks retreated behind the buildings, leaving the remnants of the 3rd Platoon forward on the third knoll without tank support, and drawing high-velocity fire onto the buildings in which the supporting machine guns were located.

Some men of Company H were hit, and Pfc. MORRIS J. KRIEGER of Company F was killed. After the heavy machine gun section had set up in a house and fired five long bursts, six rounds from a German self-propelled gun crashed into the building, knocking out one of the guns. The men came under terrific fire. Some time about 1400 the machine guns were running low on am-

munition. The three heavies alone fired 9,000 rounds during the attack, and the .50-caliber fired another 1,000.

Pfc. ROBERT A. MOTHERWELL volunteered to go back from the forward position and get some ammunition from the carriers. On the way to the rear he was hit in the leg by a sniper. He went on in spite of his wound. As he came forward within shouting distance of the guns, he was hit again, by artillery, and couldn't go any further. He was able to yell to the men, and they came and got the ammunition.

Due to lack of ammunition, however, and the scant number of men left, Lieutenant ALEXANDER bitterly brought his squad-sized platoon back to the shelter of the houses on the second knoll. High-velocity fire, attracted by the tanks, was whizzing in at the houses, tearing the roofs and striking one heavy machine gun. Also mortar fire was falling in the area, one direct hit killing Pfc. FRED J. ANETSBERGER and seriously wounding Pfc. HANSON A. COOK from Company H in their machine gun dugout. ANETSBERGER had killed seven Nazis before his death. Other Company H men were hit and knocked about. The heavy machine guns took an aggressive front-line part in the action. Sgt. DONALD B. WALES, while taking his gun out of action, was knocked off his feet, stunned and wounded. He was able to walk back, and he took with him some F Company casualties. A British 5.5 artillery observer and his radio operator were both killed. Sgt. FORREST RYAN, a machine gunner, was in a foxhole with his second gunner. He had his hand on the other man's knee when a piece of shrapnel penetrated the hand. The second gunner, thus saved from a wound in his knee, cried out in annoyance, "Son of a gun, I'm cheated out of a million-dollar wound!"

Throughout the action Captain KENNETT ran back and forth all over the area. He tried desperately to keep the tanks up with Lieutenant ALEXANDER to support his men. When their aeri-als were shot away, he recklessly climbed up on the bullet-splattered tanks to point out enemy machine gun targets. When the luggage and gear lashed on the rear of one tank had been set on fire, and the tank abandoned by the crew in panic, Captain KENNETT ran up and unlashed the five-gallon can for the water that his men so badly needed. Then he ran around among the men with water and ammunition, inspiring them by his lack of concern for himself. So hot had been the firing and scarce the water, that one machine gun crew, when their gun went dry, passed a can from foxhole to foxhole to collect urine. This they poured into the machine gun water jacket.

At about 1500, the foxhole on the first knoll, used as a CP, received a direct hit. Killed was Pfc. THOMAS I. MALLOY, and fatally wounded were Second Lieutenant MELO VUKOVICH and Second Lieutenant CLARENCE K. MUSICK. Wounded were First Lieutenant HAROLD F. ROSSI, 1st Sgt. ALEX MILLER, and Pfc. MARIO S. CALCAGNO, and three men from artillery. Pfc. LESTER L. ALLISON of Company H was killed by the same hit, and a sergeant of H Company was wounded in the legs.

Immediately afterwards, S/Sgt. NELSON COCHRANE, Sgt. DAVID BURT, Sgt. MELINKOVITCH, Sgt. WILBUR WRIGHT, and Pfc. STANLEY GOSNAY organized the men around the CP, cut trees and prepared litters, and carried the casualties down to the aid station under intense shellfire. Pfc. JULIUS G. SUSTARIC was wounded in the chest by a sniper as he helped evacuate the wounded. He crawled for about 250 yards to near the aid station, where he lost consciousness and was picked up and taken to the aid station. The wiremen, Sgt. THOMAS CORRIGAN, Pfc. JACOB BOYCE and Pfc. JOHN POWERS were just reaching the CP, and they helped evacuate the wounded.

By 1700 the company finally received the order issued by Battalion much earlier to stay back in place and let Company E pass through. There were less than eighty men left in the company.

Before Company E passed through, some TDs came up and did some good. Then an old tank officer ran out on the field and organized the tanks and led up some new ones, which supported Company E. When E passed through, they were well supported by Company F, Company H, and the tanks.

Four hundred and fifty Germans were captured on the hill. One of them remarked in good English, "Well, this wasn't as easy a one to take as the others have been, was it?" Few Nazi comments are so close to the truth. Company F, with less than 100 men, had been attacking a well-fortified hill defended by 500 Germans. Odds of five-to-one against the attacking force is not even mentioned in the books.

COMPANY E—MT. SERRA

In the morning Colonel NATIONS arrived at San Trinita to go over the situation with Captain PENDREY. Company E was to the right of F on Hill 693, ready to attack Mt. Serra. Company E waited in place during the attack. Artillery and mortar fire started falling on the buildings at San Trinita, killing a radio operator from the 84th Chemical Warfare Service. Lieutenant GORDON ANDERSON effectively returned fire with his chemical mortars. Colonel ROSS WILSON, commanding the 1st Battalion, arrived at about noon to make a reconnaissance in preparation for his battalion to tie in its attack on San Prospero. The 1st Battalion had been slow to move its companies from the defensive positions along the Le Coste ridge until properly relieved by the 85th Infantry, and the companies weren't yet past Tolè.

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The 1st machine gun platoon of Company H, attached to Company E, had supported the attack of Company F on Mt. Serra. Their guns at San Trinita ran out of ammunition at about 1400. They had fired 9,000 rounds from three .30-calibers, and 1,000 rounds from the .50s. More ammunition was gotten up to them 45 minutes later. German medics were observed most of the day, apparently bringing up ammunition. They never took back a casualty, although there were six of them running to German positions all day long under Red Cross flag immunity. Both the 1st and 2nd Battalions had CPs in the San Trinita church, and Colonel WILSON finally ordered fire from the platoon on the bogus medics.

At 1600 Company E was ordered to pass through F at 1700 to take the final objective on Mt. Serra. They jumped off at 1710, moving along to the right of the ridge under its cover on the reverse slope from enemy fire. There, on the right of the road, the supporting tanks ran into a German minefield. The clearing of these mines momentarily held up the attack, but they soon caught up. An excellent artillery preparation and effective supporting fire from Company H was laid down. The 2nd machine gun platoon fired support for Company E, as they had with F. Four of the tanks that had supported F joined the tanks and TDs with E. As soon as the company, flanking around F, came abreast, the leading 3rd Platoon built up a base of fire with one squad. Another squad flanked around to the right. By well-executed fire and movement the squads and platoons advanced from commanding ground to commanding ground.

Beyond the second knob the 3rd Platoon remained in supporting positions and the 1st Platoon then advanced in the same manner and seized the third and last knob. In the 3rd Platoon Pvt. RALPH HUBBARD was killed and Pfc. BERNARD V. GILLARD was wounded by sniper fire. The 2nd Platoon, in reserve between the second and third knolls, had many casualties from artillery, some after the hill was taken. Wounded were: S/Sgt. CLIFFORD A. NOBLE, Sgt. THEODORE M. BRINK, Pfc. EDWARD J. PRICE and Pfc. OTIS H. NIBLETT.

From the weapons platoon S/Sgt. JOSEPH E. LONGPRE, Pfc. FRANCIS J. MCCABE, Pfc. WILLIAM F. TILLMAN, and Pfc. FREDERIC G. KINSON from company headquarters, were wounded. GILLARD had been the lead scout for the 3rd Platoon. He was hit on the side of his

head by sniper fire and painfully wounded. After throwing his hand grenades, he crawled back to the machine guns and lay on the ground by them directing their fire to targets he had seen. The two machine gun squad leaders, Sgt. FRANCIS J. BLAIS and Sgt. HENRY C. CHASE, had their machine guns right behind the scout. From there they engaged targets of opportunity and built up tremendous bases of fire as the squads flanked forward. At times they had to be held back lest they pass the scouts. Sgt. BLAIS was alone with his machine gun at the end of the action. Pfc. ROBERT H. LATHROP was killed while bringing up ammunition for BLAIS' gun, and BLAIS started to get a litter for LATHROP as he died.

More than 25 of the enemy were killed and 150 prisoners were taken. Lieutenant JOHN J. DOHERTY, crawling up to one dugout, threw in several grenades and fired into it. Seventeen prisoners walked out. DOHERTY, weapons platoon leader, was up in the front action throughout, directing machine gun fire.

Early in the battle, a BAR team, advancing around the right, took 25 prisoners, including one high-ranking officer. This team, acting First Sergeant OWEN W. THOMPSON and Pfc. TOBIAS BAUER, went after some Germans waving a white flag, pointed out to them by tankers. When they came in sight, one of the Germans was setting up a machine gun. They killed him instantly, and the others surrendered. Sgt. BURTON BATCHELLER moved some of the 1st Platoon onto the exposed forward slope to fire on enemy at San Prospero to support the 1st Battalion attack.

The company reorganized and dug in. The 2nd Platoon of H, under Lieutenant EDWIN H. RICHARDSON, moved out with them. They stayed on Mt. Serra all night under some light mortar fire. Pfc. JOHN LYONS was hit, not seriously, and did not report to the medics until the next day. The company had received six replacements on the 15th and ten on the 16th. They stayed on Mt. Serra throughout the next day.

1st Battalion—San Prospero

COMPANY C

Company C was pulled back to an assembly area south of Mt. Croce in the morning. They were told that the 2nd Battalion would take Mt. Serra and the 1st Battalion would move through them to San Prospero. At 1300 the company moved to the forward assembly area behind two companies of the 2nd Battalion near San Trinita, where the company leaders were given an orientation. Shortly after jumping off, the 3rd Platoon on the left and the 1st on the right crossed over the ridge and started down the long open forward slope that stretched out more than 1,000 yards to the north. Here the terrain was more gentle, with more rolling, grassy hills than the terrain of the opening days of the offensive. The attack had broken through the rugged wall of rocky, wooded mountains from Hill 903 to Mt. Mosca. However, some of the roughest terrain ever fought over still remained.

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As the 3rd Platoon moved down, Company F was still fighting bitterly for Mt. Serra on the left, and C came into machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire as they came abreast. They were able to keep moving until two or three hundred yards from the houses beyond La Ca. Here a machine gun opened up on the platoon after allowing the scouts, runner, platoon leader, and four men of the 3rd Squad to go by. The platoon lay flat in the tall grass unable to move. Only those men without packs were safe as the bullets mowed across the grass tops. Pfc. MANFRED BUTLER was fatally hit in the neck by machine gun fire, and Pfc. ROBERT N. GANZ, JR. was wounded as his rifle grenade was detonated. T/Sgt. DONALD E. MIRON and S/Sgt. GEORGE L. MYER were both hit in the hand as artillery started coming in as soon as the platoon hit the ground. Pvt. RICHARD W. HAWK was also wounded by artillery.

Fire from mortars and Company D's heavy machine guns, as well as rifle grenades, were put on the enemy machine gun positions, but it didn't stop the gun. The reason was discovered later. The gun was being traversed and fired by a system of ropes and pulleys ingeniously controlled from a deep safe dugout a little way off. All the elements of the platoon, except the one squad pinned down before the gun, were able to swing further to the right. The 1st Platoon was able to move forward and take the buildings, although in doing so T/5 BILL PORTOLOS was wounded in the leg. The company command group, supposedly following the 1st Platoon on the right, suddenly found itself following a single squad that had gotten way off to the right. They moved up toward La Ca. By this time, the pinned-down squad, by crawling through the grass and by individual dashes, had extricated itself, and the 1st Platoon had withdrawn to the rearmost group of houses where the entire company reorganized. Pvt. EVERETT L. JONES had been wounded, and Pvt. WILLIAM E. HEMSTREET had been killed during the action.

It was decided to circle around to the right, down into and along an old creek bed. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons were to make a combat reconnaissance up to the town. They moved without difficulty to a point below and to the right of town in the creek bed. Here they had excellent support from the tanks, which had been reorganized and taken over on Mt. Serra by a tank officer with a more aggressive spirit. The tanks came rolling right down the main road to San Prospero atop the ridge, banging away at the town. Excellent support also came from 105s and 75s, and British 5.5s. Under cover of this barrage in the late afternoon the 2nd Platoon on the left went up a steep side road into town, while the 3rd in defilade filed up a traversing trail into the east edge of town. The rest of the company followed the 2nd up the road in a column of twos. The Germans, expecting to be attacked from the west, were stunned as they were caught pouring out of basements to man positions. Sixty-four prisoners were taken, and another twenty-seven the next morning.

A sniper in the church hit machine gunner Sgt. DAN T. BENNER of the weapons platoon and Pvt. JESSE N. BAIRD. BENNER was slightly wounded by fragments from his own grenade, which was shattered, but not exploded, by the sniper's bullet. The 3rd Platoon got into a house with an Italian family in it. They claimed no Germans had been there for three or four months. From the basement the soldiers dragged out a German medical captain and twelve men, three of them wounded.

On the west side of town another machine gun was found rigged up with ropes and pulleys to be fired from a dugout. On this side of town too, at dusk, Lieutenant JOHN W. HAWK and the 2nd Platoon was fired on. Two BAR men, Pfc. WILLIAM THOMAS and Pfc. ROBERT E. DE WICK, dropped to the road and crawled along the bank to where they could fire into the house. They threw in grenades and fired rifle grenades. During lulls in the firing they could hear the Germans talking inside. They set the building on fire, but the Germans got away in the dark, abandoning three machine guns.

During the evening one of the strangest incidents of the campaign took place. Sixty of the prisoners with five guards were sent down the ridge road that ran back to the south to our rear. It was getting dark as they started out, and the lead guard soon picked up tank tracks in the dirt road and followed them. Unfortunately, the tracks had been made by German tanks and shortly made a sharp turn off to the west and northwest. Mile after mile the column followed the road that wound its way deep into Kraut territory. They passed a couple of stray Krauts, but it was dark and apparently no one was sure who the other party was. In any case, the Krauts didn't challenge and the guards with the sixty prisoners allowed the armed Krauts to go along the road, possibly thinking them deserters.

A little further on they met an unmistakable German mule train, which they captured, making the driver a prisoner and driving off the mules. It finally began to dawn on them that they had taken the wrong road. They turned around and started back. After returning about a half-mile, they were fired upon by a German machine gun to the right of the road at a close range of ten to fifteen yards. The burst of fire hit a good many of the prisoners. The lead guard, Pfc. WILLIAM THOMAS, scrambled up onto the bank and emptied his pistol into the machine gun position, seven rounds point-blank from the edge of the hole. Then, since the column had scattered or lay dead on the road, and since they were still deep in German territory, THOMAS and another guard made their way directly back to the company. The company wrote the prisoners off as lost.

However, Pfc. ALLEN BRILL and Pfc. GLENN DORCHEUS, after the firing abruptly ended, reorganized and rounded up the prisoners, both the well and the wounded, and got them back on the road. The enemy medical officer, previously mentioned, and several German aid men patched the wounds. Thirty-eight were mustered to start back to the lines, some of the wounded being carried. A short distance below San Prospero, BRILL, marching in the rear, was tapped on the shoulder by an armed German sentry and spoken to in German. BRILL swung around, disarmed the surprised Nazi, and shoved him into the column without breaking the column's cadence. They came back through the lines with 39 prisoners. Of the sixty they started with, they felt sure that ten or twelve were killed on the road by the short-range machine gun burst.

Throughout the night Company C, in San Prospero, could clearly hear large numbers of German horse-drawn vehicles moving out to the north. Unfortunately, artillery communication was out, and the tanks were unable to get up the steep road into town to bring direct fire on the fleeing enemy. A fine opportunity was missed.

With the daylight of 18 April, Germans were uncovered all over the company area. Men out looking for eggs from the friendly Italians had *Tedeschi* pointed out to them. One group brought

back nine, five of whom were wounded. Another man climbed out of his foxhole to relieve himself at dawn, and stopped, as he looked down onto two Germans in the next foxhole. Later in the morning a deserter directed the men to a house where they interrupted ten Germans in various stages of shaving, cleaning weapons, washing and sleeping. They were perfectly willing to come, but first they demanded time to wash and pack. After a rather indelicate American command from Pfc. WALTER HOFFMAN of company headquarters, they hustled out unwashed and unpacked. Altogether, twenty-seven prisoners were collected in the morning.

HOFFMAN was then sent out with two men and a BAR to get seven other Germans who were reported to be willing to surrender. However, when they were spotted, they were armed and working their way carefully up a draw toward them. A brief firefight followed. Although the Germans waved a white flag, they returned the fire. Two of them were hit and the other five were chased but without success. By the time they returned, the company, having been relieved by Company F, had pulled out at about 1400. The company spent the night of 18-19 April east of Merlano under occasional heavy artillery fire.

COMPANY D

Company D moved up on mules for the attack on San Prospero. The mortar platoon got lost while Lieutenant THOMAS H. COLLINS and Captain J. DUANE VANCE made their reconnaissance. As they were going through Tolè they caught one of the terrific barrages laid on the little town. Quick action on the part of T/Sgt. RUDOLPH WUOTILA saved the platoon from casualties. As the barrage was moving up the main road toward them, he led the platoon off onto a trail, and joined the command group south of San Prospero. Lieutenant KENNETH W. ALPERT, company executive officer, received word by radio to rush two jeeps of ammunition to a point south of San Prospero. Supply sergeant HARRY HINSLEY, delivering the ammunition, stopped the jeeps as he hit the barrage at Tolè, and the men came under sniper fire as they sought cover. He moved forward alone and got six prisoners from a building just beyond Tolè. Then he raced on with his jeeps and reached the designated point ahead of the battalion. He sat waiting with the jeeps loaded with ammunition until the battalion arrived. Over on his left rear, the 2nd Battalion was attacking Mt. Serra.

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COMPANIES A AND B

At approximately 1030, the 1st Battalion was ordered to move out to an assembly area in the rear of Mt. Croce. Then the battalion, with Company C leading, moved almost due north behind the 2nd Battalion to a position on the reverse slope of a gently sloping ridge just south of San Trinita. Here they were able to get "wonderful cool water." Companies A and B remained there for 24 hours while Company C took San Prospero. During the afternoon and evening, a twenty-man detail from Company B manhandled a re-supply of ammunition all the way up into San Prospero from San Trinita.

At Bortolani, where the aid station was shelled on the morning of the 18th, five scout observers of the 1st Battalion S-2 section were withdrawing from the battalion OP to rejoin the companies for the march to Merlano. As they sat in the shelter of a stone house, a shell clipped the roof corner and exploded in midair. Wounded were: Pfc. WALTER S. BOURNE, Pfc. LEWIS J. FLETCHER, Pfc. DONALD H. HENDERSON, Pfc. WALTER LAUBER, and Pfc. ROBERT A. VON NEUMANN. Five other men were wounded and one killed by the same freak burst.

3rd Battalion—Mop-up to C. Costa

In the morning, while Company F prepared to attack Mt. Serra, the 3rd Battalion moved north, three companies abreast, past Madna di Rodiano to mop up the valley beyond. Around and in Madna di Rodiano were dozens of dead, both Nazis and American. Twenty German bod-

ies were counted in one building alone, and there were many of ours out in the woods nearby. The high ground by the town will always be hallowed ground for men of the 87th, where so many 3rd Battalion men had died the day before. The 3rd Battalion had completed the breakthrough, and other units had already started the fast drive for the valley of the Po. Already the 86th had moved across the threshold and were well out on the ever-diminishing hills to the north. The 1st Armored units were expected to move out too, along the road through Tolè and down into the valley of the Samoggia River.

The companies crossed the valley abreast almost without incident. The day was extremely warm and the march long. A good many men dropped out from heat exhaustion. Two prisoners were picked up in the valley and another one was taken from an artillery position. They offered no resistance. One hastily laid minefield was discovered and dug up. Lieutenant RUSSELL M. MCJURY, suffering from sickness, left Company I and was wounded at the aid station. Sgt. KENNETH D. ARMSTRONG of Company K was wounded by a single round of artillery. Early in the afternoon the company closed and dug in at the battalion area around the town of C. Costa. Here the terrain was more open, the gently rolling fields cut up by stonewalled lanes, and with only occasional trees. The battalion could see heavy artillery barrages landing on the roads in the Tolè area to their left where the roads were jammed with tanks and trucks heading north.

Around the town were many abandoned artillery pieces. A little distance away, one was still firing into the battalion area. Captain JOSEPH J. DUNCAN sent a patrol with Lieutenant WALTER P. STILLWELL, JR. to locate it and knock it out. Captain DUNCAN himself, his runner, Pfc. WALTER F. SMITH, JR., Lieutenant HARRISON H. KING from Company M, and Pfc. ALBERT E. SORIA, the radio man, crawled up to watch from a very exposed OP in order to give the patrol what support it might need. Their position must have been observed, for a shell struck the rock ledge just above their heads, killing Captain DUNCAN and Pfc. SMITH, and fatally wounding Lieutenant KING. Captain DUNCAN's death removed a brilliant and inspiring leader from our ranks; his continual regard for his men's welfare and his repeated personal heroism won not merely the respect, but the love, of his men and associates. His loss was greatly mourned by all, even at a time when there were so many fine men to mourn for. Lieutenant WILBUR S. SHEETS assumed command of L Company. The battalion remained in place for the night.

Situation at the End of the Fourth Day

For the fifth day it was planned for the 86th and 87th to continue the attack. The 85th was ordered to prepare to push past the 87th and through the 86th to spearhead the continuing drive north toward the valley of the Po. The left boundary of the Division's advance was defined as the Samoggia River, and the 87th was assigned to hold and mop up the left part of the Division Zone. In accordance with this directive, the 2nd Battalion was ordered to hold open the doorway from Tolè to San Prospero so that the 1st Armored Division could move through and get abreast of the 10th Mountain Division by moving rapidly past San Prospero to the main road on the west bank of the Samoggia River. For the past four days, the left flank of the 87th had been exposed, and all looked forward to the comparative security to be provided by the "tankers" working abreast of the regiment. This rosy prospect never fully materialized. The other two battalions of the regiment were directed to move rapidly north in the assigned zone and mop up the few pockets of resistance that might still remain. This mopping up, however, was not to delay the forward movement of the leading elements. They were to bypass the resistance and push on.

FIFTH DAY—18 APRIL

This was the beginning of the pursuit following the breakthrough. These phases cannot immediately be recognized by the troops of a regiment. The division commander, General HAYS, undoubtedly recognized it, and tried to instill into all his troops the urgency of bypassing resistance and continually driving ahead—something like Farragut’s “Damn the torpedoes! Go ahead!”

Information of the enemy was increasingly vague. No one knew where he could go with safety, or where he would meet a stubborn, fanatical enemy. Units began to operate with greater distances between them; control by radio became the normal means of communication; GIs began to realize why they had been required to make 25-mile hikes in Texas. Officers remarked, “They never taught us this at Benning!” Those who referred to their field manuals to learn what should be done during a “pursuit” were disappointed to find just one short paragraph of generalities. Later, as the campaign unfolded, these officers realized that no one could foresee the variety of fantastic incidents that make up “the big picture.”

3rd Battalion—Savigno

In the morning, the 3rd Battalion was ordered to mop up the area to the north as far as the Samoggia River. Company K moved out at 0800 with L on the right, and marched up onto an open ridge to the north without resistance. At 1100 the company reached the high ground overlooking Savigno down on the river. Colonel FOWLER arrived and directed that a company go down into the valley to clean out the town and seize the bridge just beyond. Nothing was known of the enemy situation in the town. The 2nd Platoon of Company K was sent straight into town, while the rest of the company made a wide flank on the left with the mission of attempting to join the 1st Armored Division tank elements moving down the valley toward the town. The 2nd Platoon moved rapidly and entered the town.

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An Italian civilian had declared that there was no enemy in the town, but the streets were ominously deserted. There were no cheering people to welcome them. The 3rd Squad moved directly down the main street. The 2nd Squad swung around to the right of town to meet them on the far side. Lieutenant TOIVO O. RANTA, the platoon leader, followed the 1st Squad. There was some scattered sniper fire, but they moved rapidly through the buildings finding only one dead German. They found the road junction at the end of town to be mined, and as the squads reached this point they were opened up on by a machine gun from across the river. The 3rd Squad holed up in a convenient building to cover the 2nd Squad which had joined them from the right, and which now moved out again to the right toward the bridge. The road to the bridge ran parallel to the river, and was up on a fill affording cover from the machine gun for the squad moving on its right. After they were sufficiently far down the river from the machine gun, the going on the right became impossible, and they crossed the road through a hole in the thick hedgerow. As the first man popped through the hole out onto the field by the river, two machine guns directly across the river from them opened up at a range of 150 to 200 yards. It was a set-up for a machine gunner. An ideal range, and the ten men popping into an open field. The men claim that an American with a BAR couldn’t have missed getting all of them. No one was hit by the initial bursts, and the men lay flat on the field “sweating it out.”

Captain ROGER EDDY, at about the same time, came under fire from one of the guns firing from a house just across the river. One at a time, since the hole was only large enough for one, each man jumped up, ran, and dove through the hole, scrambling across the road. Each time the machine guns fired. No evasive action was possible, for there was but one hole as plain as a

bulls-eye, and every man in the field went through it with bullets zinging around him. No one was hit. For such a target some of the men would have changed sides!

Captain EDDY decided this was a job for the TDs or tanks, and radioed for armored support. The 1st Armored unit had been stopped way up the river. The battalion commander instructed them to wait where they were for the TDs to arrive to support them. One TD soon appeared and fired six rounds into houses across the river. Then the TD started up a side road into town. It blew a mine in the road and was disabled, although no one was hurt.

Meanwhile, the 1st Armored elements had been approaching from up the river, and their first tank arrived in town at just about the time the TD hit the mine. As the medium tank cruised about the town, the 2nd Platoon withdrew. The company was then ordered up onto the high ground to continue the advance. The company climbed back, and bivouacked with Company D near Merlano for the night.

COMPANY L—SAVIGNO

In the morning L moved out on the right of K down into the valley of the Samoggia River. Part of Company K went through the town of Savigno and came under intense machine gun fire from across the river. Later, Company L, heading for the bridge, received some fire which killed Pfc. RICHARD B. NOCITRA and wounded Sgt. RUSSELL W. BERG. After one TD and one tank of the 1st Armored Division arrived and relieved Company K, part of a platoon of Company L moved out and dug in along the river bank, while two rifle squads of the 2nd Platoon, with bazookas, and one section of light machine guns went across the river to guard the bridge. The rest of the company dug in to the rear of the town in a field.

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After the tank had come and gone through the town, foot elements came in and were opened up on, and pinned down, by a machine gun sniper.

At 2330 Company L was ordered by radio to pull out and up onto the hill overlooking the town and bridge. It took the rest of the night to collect all of the men from the scattered positions across the river, and to lead them back up the hill.

COMPANY I—BATTALION RESERVE

Company I remained throughout the day in battalion reserve, while K and L mopped up Savigno on the bank of the Samoggia River. Company I moved up beyond Mt. Nonascoso. They were then ordered to assemble near Mongiorgio. As they approached this town they ran into elements of the 1st Battalion, so they holed up in the fields east of Mongiorgio. The company encountered no artillery, which was a glorious experience for the men.

1st Battalion—Merlano

COMPANY A—MOP UP

Company A moved out to the battalion assembly area, behind the 2nd Battalion, at San Trinita, on the morning of the 18th. There they waited from 1000 to 1200. They were then given the mission of mopping up along the Division left flank from San Trinita to Merlano. As they moved along the gently rolling ridgeline, some German 88 fire wounded Pfc. MAX B. KUHLMAN, and two brand new replacements, Cpl JOHN H. HAYWORTH and Pvt. JOHN R. FORBES, JR. They entered the town of Merlano with scouts and point forward. The leading elements expected to be fired on at any moment. Cautiously moving into the main street, they were surprised to come upon Captain TOM STEWART of Battalion Headquarters, shaving himself in the street. He and Lieutenant DARROCK CROOKES and Cpl. OLIVER ANDREWS, JR. had entered the town in advance of everyone else.

At 1700 orders were received to attack Mongiorgio. Company B, supported by TDs, was to attack around the right. Company A was to attack directly. Mongiorgio was the first of several riverside towns to be encountered by the regiment. It was built high on a commanding pinnacle, walled in and surrounded by cliffs like a medieval fortress. As Company A reached the second of a series of deep draws which ran from a ridgeline down towards the river on their left, they received sniper and automatic weapons fire coming up the draw from across the river. They swung to their right behind Company B. Here artillery fire hit them and they couldn't move. They dug in. This was heavy-caliber shellfire, many of them delayed-action 170s or 210s that threatened to dig them right out of their foxholes. The company moved to a new area, and received shellfire there too. They moved three times in succession trying to evade these shells which dug huge craters. Lieutenant DONALD FOX was wounded by clods of dirt that struck him in the face as they reached their new area. Although half-blinded by blood, he refused aid until he had the men in position. Also wounded in the company were: S/Sgt. GEORGE C. MCCUTCHEN, Pfc. JOE FLORES, Pfc. DONALD A. HAYNES, and Pfc. BURTON C. NEUMEYER. Two men from another company nearby were killed in the area, and a tank was knocked out. At 2000, the message came that the attack was delayed till morning, and the company was to dig in for the night.

COMPANY B—SULMONTE

Around noon of the 18th, Company B began a march. It did not end until they reached Sulmonte that night. Passing along the ridges on the other side of the valley east of San Prospero, the company moved unopposed through hilly country to a ridge overlooking Mongiorgio and Sulmonte. By then it was late afternoon. At 1800 Companies A and B were ordered to attack Mongiorgio, passing through a battalion of the 86th Infantry to do so. The attack was to be made with six tanks, with the 2nd Platoon on the left of the road and the 1st on the right. However, only five tanks jumped off with the company. They advanced in good formation across level, grassy country, but one of the tanks pushed on ahead of the company up the road. When it had almost reached Sulmonte, and was for the moment backing and filling, trying to make a right-angle turn, it was directly hit by a round from a German TD and knocked out.

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At almost the same time, the flat open ridge along which Company B was advancing was swept by grazing machine gun fire from the direction of Mongiorgio. The 2nd Platoon, fortunately, had joined the 1st on the right side of the road, and the company advanced by rushes in the direction of Sulmonte. At the same time, heavy shells began to drop right in, and the whole company raced for cover under the protection of the steep reverse slope of Sulmonte. Pfc. ANDREW R. SISENSTEIN and Pfc. AUSTIN C. WHEELER were wounded. Together with a company from the 86th Infantry, they dug in there for the night. The Germans were throwing some very heavy shells, but they all cleared the ridge. There were no casualties, but very little sleep. Company C, as has been noted, bivouacked near Merlano.

COMPANY D

Company D reached the vicinity of Mongiorgio late in the afternoon behind Companies A and B. The mortar platoon had 900 rounds of ammunition ready. One section of Lieutenant ANTSELM R. BRADLEY's 1st Platoon was attached to each of the attacking companies. Lieutenant WILLIAM S. SPINNEY's 2nd Platoon was kept in general support. From behind the line of departure, east of Mongiorgio, the mortar platoon was not able to reach the town, so they moved forward 600 yards, putting them beyond the line of departure. It developed that an enemy sniper outpost lay between the line of departure and the mortars. The 37-mm pack howitzers of the battalion fired at these enemy dugouts, and Lieutenant SPINNEY's heavy machine guns chased the enemy as they fled from the dugouts down the hill on the left hand side. This hap-

pened at about 1800. The mortars were able to register on Mongiorgio and on the enemy reverse slope. When the attack was called off until morning, the men spent the night in position.

2nd Battalion—Mop Up to San Prospero

Companies E and F rested in position. Company G at 1100 moved out on a mop-up operation, going over onto the forward slope and working north on the high ground parallel to the Samoggia River as far north as San Prospero. One platoon from Company H was attached for this operation. They met no opposition, and spent the night in San Prospero, previously taken by the 1st Battalion.

During the morning, the 1st Platoon of H stayed in place receiving a complete ration and water. The Italians came back to their houses from their hiding places in the woods, and furnished the men with wash water. Their packs caught up with them, as well as the new supply of ammunition, some cigarettes, and socks. At approximately 1300 they moved out with Company E to San Prospero. On the way Pfc. ERNEST C. HAMPTON was wounded by artillery. However, he was so far forward that he didn't report back to the aid station, but continued on, finally reporting back the next day with some prisoners. The 2nd Platoon of Company H remained in the same area throughout the day while other units passed through. Some artillery fire fell on the area. Lieutenant DAVID SNYDER was stricken ill and had to be evacuated. One replacement was received.

All sections of the mortar platoon remained in the same areas throughout the day and night. Several missions were fired and a heavy artillery barrage was received late in the morning at C. Bacucchi. This barrage killed Cpl. ANDREW E. DALTON, JR.

Two men of 2nd Battalion Headquarters were wounded during the day. T/Sgt. HARRY COOPER, delivering ammunition to Company F, was hit near Bortolani by shell fragments while lying in a ditch by his jeep. Pfc. BARNEY JABLOWSKI, while removing the dead in the same area, was hit and wounded. Two others from another unit were killed.

SIXTH DAY—19 APRIL

Colonel FOWLER issued the following order at 0010 on the 19th of April:

"10th Mt Div will continue attack at 0800 on 19 April with the 85th Mt Inf on the right, 87th Mt Inf on the left. The 87th will jump off from present front lines near Merlano at 0800 with 1st Battalion on the left and 3rd on the right. The 1st Battalion with Co A 751st Tank Battalion and Co A 701st Tank (1 platoon) attached, will attack left guiding on the river and mop up in zone. The 3rd Battalion, with 1 platoon of TDs attached, will attack from line now held by 3rd Battalion front line units. It is to advance rapidly and capture the high ground in zone overlooking the Po Valley keeping contact with the 1st Battalion. (This directive to maintain contact later proved impractical, and was revoked.) The 2nd Battalion in regimental reserve is to follow the 3rd Battalion at 1,000 yards. The 616th FA Battalion reinforced by the 604th is in direct support. Company C 84th Chemical Battalion priority to the 3rd Battalion. Patrols to front will return before 0730 with information as to whether enemy positions are occupied. If not, advance will be made without artillery preparation. If occupied, artillery preparation will last fifteen minutes from 0745. Display panels along line of departure for one hour starting 0630. The 86th Mt Inf will assist by fire until passed through."

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During this day the troops began the series of long movements which carried them across the Po and to the Alps. The regimental CP moved three times to keep up, and the regimental commander spent most of the day visiting his battalion commanders.

1st Battalion—Mongiorgio

At approximately 0800 on the 19th of April, Companies A and B resumed the attack on Mongiorgio. An urgently requested air mission had not been flown. Company B was still on the right of A, with a platoon of tanks on the road on the right of B.

COMPANY B

Company B moved out in a column of platoons, 1st, 2nd, weapons, and 3rd, with the heavy machine guns of D giving support fire. The company moved out in good order some 400 yards, when the German machine gunners in Mongiorgio opened up, pinning the company down for several minutes. Meanwhile, the lead tank ahead and to the right opened up on the church steeple in Mongiorgio which was thought to have a machine gun in it. The tanker scored about half a dozen hits on the tower.

The 1st Platoon was attempting to advance when Pfc. ERVIN A. HARMON was hit in the head by machine gun fire. A few minutes later, our tanks began to receive direct fire from Tiger tanks across the wide valley to our left. Pfc. PETER A. PANTSARI and Pfc. ZALE R. RUBINS were instantly killed by a direct hit from this fire, and Pfc. EDWARD F. ELEPHANT was wounded in the hand and evacuated. Three of the tanks were knocked out by this time, but the fourth tank kept moving on down the road into town, firing both its machine guns and 76s as it went.

While the tank was moving into town, the 1st and 2nd Platoons shifted to the right to take advantage of cover, and moved by rushes up into the village. Several prisoners were taken, but many Krauts pulled out to positions to the north. The 2nd Platoon manned positions in the buildings to repel a counterattack, while the 1st Platoon under Sgt. SYLVAN D. WALDRIP moved out in front of the buildings with elements of Company A. Several more prisoners gave themselves up, and one small group, told to move to the rear, took off down the hill. All were killed as they ran away. During the battle T/5 MARLIN A. PERKINS was killed and the following wounded: Pfc. FORREST I. BASS, Pfc. ROY E. GAROUTTE, Pfc. FRANK J. HERZIG, JR., and Pvt. RALPH H. BARNARD.

COMPANY A

Company A was to move out at 0800 with tanks, with Company B on the right. The line of departure was near the road junction at Sulmonte. From here the exposed road ran directly along the ridge-top and through the gate into town. The tanks didn't arrive in time, but the two companies moved out abreast. Half an hour later, the tanks arrived and moved up the road abreast of A and on its right. The tanks silenced machine gun fire which had initially opened up on the attacking elements, but all four were eventually knocked out.

The company entered the town and took the first group of houses surrounding the church without difficulty. Beyond the church was an open clearing and another group of houses. As the men started across this clearing, the enemy opened up from the houses beyond. Pfc. GROVER P. WOODS and Sgt. EDWIN R. GORDON were killed, and Pfc. ARTHUR M. CROSS and Pfc. FORREST A. BARTHOLD were wounded. The attack was halted and the Germans counterattacked. First Sergeant GILBERT S. BATES killed six of the enemy with his Tommy gun, but German grenades and mortar fire struck the church and the surrounding area, and the weary men of the company started to retreat. S/Sgt. JOSEPH C. FARRELL was killed, and Pfc. STEPHEN O.

STEPHEN O. ROSE, Pvt. GEORGE F. HUMBURGER, Pfc. EARL MASTERSON, and T/5 CHARLES T. MCNERNEY were wounded by machine gun fire. The machine gun section had started the day with twelve men and ended with only one. During the day they had three different section leaders.

Then, guns of the British 178th Medium Lowland Artillery, with observation from Merlano, laid in on the German-occupied group of houses with a perfect pinpoint barrage. The tiles few high in the air as the German-occupied houses were zeroed in. The counterattack died and Mongiorgio was taken.

Company C had swung onto the right to take the town of C. Lezza and the high ground above it to the north of Mongiorgio. Company B was ordered to withdraw, and A was to remain in Mongiorgio. From the town they watched the 1st Armored units moving down the valley across the river. Germans in bunkers, organized in antitank teams, were holding up their progress. They would blow the tracks, stopping the tank, and then lay a sticky charge against the tank, blowing it up. As the crews fled from the burning tanks, they were being captured. Three tanks were burned this way. Captain HUGH KLEMME called for concentrated "time fire" from the 616th Field Artillery, and put his company mortars, the attached 81s from Company D, and the "stubby" mortars on the German bunkers. Then as the enemy were driven out of their holes, the company opened up on them with machine gun and M-1 fire.

After dark, some 88 fire came into the town. One round slammed in the doorway of the building the machine gun section was in. Pvt. SIDNEY W. BENNETT was killed and six men were wounded: Pfc. WILLIAM B. ADDY, Pfc. RUBEN CLEMENTS, who lost an arm and a leg, Pvt. JOSEPH J. FITZPATRICK, Pvt. JOHN A. BERGMAN, Pvt. EDWARD D. FLACZYNSKI, and also S/Sgt. DOUGLAS A. MINNERLY of the 2nd Platoon. Pfc. MOSES A. BROOKS was slightly wounded. On their way back, S/Sgt. LAWRENCE E. HOTALING and Pfc. EDWIN W. STANKE captured one German officer and two enlisted men who had been wounded in the morning.

COMPANY B—MARCH TO C. SILVESTRI

About noon, Company B was ordered to withdraw to Sulmonte, leaving A to hold Mongiorgio. The company soon found that the move was not for a rest. Colonel FOWLER, the regimental commander, came up and asked Lieutenant DONIPHAN CARTER if they were ready to attack again, and just as C-rations were being issued, the first meal that day, the company was ordered to move again to the north. Most of the men still had had nothing to eat all day. The attack formation was organized as 1st Platoon, weapons platoon, 3rd Platoon on the right, and the 2nd Platoon on the left. After advancing several hundred yards, they left the rolling, grassy hills, and were confronted with a desolate, heart-breaking series of knife-edge, bare, clay hills. By this time they could see men of Company K on il Poggio and hear firing from that direction.

The 2nd Platoon on the left, struggling up and down across the transverse series of ridges, couldn't keep up, and after thirty minutes was forced to fall in behind the rest of the company which was parading in single file across the skyline along the ridge to the right. The 2nd Platoon lost several men from exhaustion and heat as it proceeded. The 1st Platoon and the command group reached il Poggio first, and Sgt. HARRY V. MCCLINTICK took a small group to clear a house of snipers. Company K had already moved out for C. Silvestri. After a halt for breath, the company moved down into a deep valley in the direction of C. Silvestri. Sniper fire, which had bothered the company all afternoon, finally took effect. Pfc. ROBERT J. LA BOMBARD was shot through the head.

After another couple of miles of rugged terrain, the company moved up to C. Silvestri where some Company K men left to guard the rear were holed up in houses and barns, receiving occa-

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sional mortar and machine gun fire from the rise ahead. Company B started to dig in below the buildings, but before holes could be finished, a concentration of mortar fire came in and killed and wounded many men. Those killed were: Sgt. SYLVAN D. WALDRIP, T/4 PAUL T. WILSON, Cpl. EDWARD O. WOZENCRAFT, Pfc. ROBERT L. STANGER, Pfc. EDWARD J. KOSA, and Pfc. ROBERT W. GRABOWSKY. Wounded were: First Lieutenant JOHN S. GYLES, Sgt. WALTER MIILU, T/Sgt. RAY S. DOTY, Pfc. EDGAR D. BOYER, JR., Pfc. KAYWOOD C. SNOOK, Pfc. DALE R. WOLD, Pfc. VERNON E. CAMPBELL, Pfc. TOM B. CHAPLIN, Pfc. ATTILIO L. DEINI, Pfc. JACK P. DICKINSON, Pvt. ARLAN A. HINESLEY, Pvt. JAMES C. JOHNS, Pfc. HARRIS P. STEED, Pfc. STERLING E. RED EAGLE, Pfc. CLIFFORD L. JOHNSON, Pfc. THEODORE KANELL, Pfc. HENRY P. MARTIN, JR., Pfc. WAYNE L. NICHOLS, and Pvt. JOSEPH J. BECKMANN. German medics captured by Company K were used to evacuate many of these casualties. Others wounded were Pfc. FRANK J. NEMEC, Pfc. HARMON W. WARD, JR., and Pfc. JAMES A. RANDOLPH.

About 1900 Company B began to dig in a defensive position 100 yards north of the farm buildings in a vineyard, with the 1st Platoon on the left, 2nd in the center, and 3rd on the right. There was no action during the night.

COMPANY D

When the attack on Mongiorgio was resumed the following day, the mortars fired 500 rounds before the artillery got registered on the town. The 1st Platoon, moving with the attack, suffered no casualties, and after the town was taken they fired across the Samoggia River to assist the 1st Armored units moving up along the road. The “stubby” mortar section under Lieutenant OLAN D. PARR moved forward with Company A and assisted in this fire across the river. Pfc. CECIL S. OVERTON from this section was wounded.

During the action from Torre Iussi to Mongiorgio, every one of the fifteen men and one officer in the “stubby” mortar section was at least scratched, although only two were lost: Pfc. HENRY LEYMAN, who was killed on 14 April at Le Coste, and Pfc. CECIL OVERTON, seriously wounded on 19 April. Pfc. EDWARD B. COSETTE was wounded on 15 April, and S/Sgt. ROGER W. HARLOW at Mongiorgio on 19 April should have been evacuated, but refused.

The mortar platoon was ordered forward toward Mongiorgio, and the mortars were in the act of displacing when a counterattack developed in the town. They quickly set up and were ready to fire, but the counterattack was broken up by British artillery. The mortars were then ordered up to il Poggio. Pfc. JACK GOLDBERG, radioman for the mortar platoon forward observer attached to Company A, was fatally wounded by artillery fire.

COMPANY C—VENERANO

On 19 April Company C, in battalion reserve near Merlano, marched to Sulmonte, arriving at 1300. Some artillery continued to come in as they marched, and they brought some small arms fire on Sulmonte as they approached, erroneously thinking the fire over to the left on Mongiorgio was coming from there. Companies A and B had spent the night at Sulmonte before resuming the attack on Mongiorgio. So all the company found at Sulmonte was Pfc. WALTER HOFFMAN, the company headquarters man, who had made his way up there alone looking for them.

Company B had by this time pulled back from Mongiorgio, leaving A holding the town. Company C was given as an objective the village of Venerano and the steep hill beside it. This turned out to be C's grimmest battle. In early afternoon, the 2nd Platoon jumped off on the left and the 3rd on the right. They were supported by five medium tanks. The 3rd Platoon moved down a draw skirting the edge of a heavily wooded hill on its right. To the left were open rolling fields sloping down to the south. Across these fields the 2nd Platoon was advancing. The 3rd

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Squad of the 3rd Platoon and attached machine gun squad had already swung to the right (north) around the west edge of the wooded hill, and hit a trail leading up to the steep hill objective, when the 2nd Squad behind them was opened up on by cross-firing machine guns and rifle fire. The squad dumped itself instantly into the ditch running along beside them only to find that another machine gun was adjusted to fire up the ditch. Pvt. JOHN L. HEICHEL was killed, and Pfc. GILBERT R. ERICKSON, Pfc. DAVID A. BLEICH, Pfc. PAUL W. ZURCHER and Pvt. DONALD C. HOGUE were wounded. The squad leader, Sgt. EARL A. FOLSE called back after the first shots, "Is anyone hit?" There was another burst of machine gun bullets, and he was silent. Later he was found hit a dozen times.

Calls for medics brought more fire. The squad was helpless; a slight movement of the weeds and fire would cut the weeds down. The acting platoon sergeant, S/Sgt. CASIMIR POVELAITES, finally made a break for it during a lull. He reached the bend around which the leading squad had disappeared, and threw himself into some old German dugouts there. Although he had called back his intentions, no one followed. After waiting ten minutes, he raced 150 yards across to a group of houses on the company left, and there contacted the 2nd Platoon whose 2nd Squad, accompanied by the inevitable Pfc. WALTER HOFFMAN from company headquarters, had reached the building and then were pinned down in it. The rest of the 2nd Platoon was pinned in another house further back up the hill.

The 2nd Platoon was not much better off than the 3rd. Lieutenant JOHN W. HAWK had held his platoon at a hillcrest as they had moved down, while the 2nd Squad under S/Sgt. VERNON STONE moved down under the platoon's covering fire to investigate the two groups of houses. This accomplished without incident, the whole platoon followed down toward the 2nd Squad, which was by this time in the further of the houses down the hill. Then the machine gun crossfire opened up, spraying the whole area. Machine gunner Pfc. HOWARD R. NORLIN was killed instantly. Lieutenant HAWK and his runner, and the leading elements of the 3rd Squad were caught midway between the houses and made a break for it back up the hill to the first house. The rest of the platoon was able to move further to the left and climb the hill in defilade, and then under cover of the house, join the platoon leader in the first house.

For two hours they were "holed up" in the two houses: the 2nd Squad in the lower house where they had been joined by POVELAITES; the rest of the platoon in the first house. They tried to set up men in windows to pick up the machine guns, but rifle grenades and artillery drove them away.

Meanwhile Lieutenant ROBERT F. BOYER, the company commander, had run down to the place where the tanks had stopped—some 300 yards short of the battle. He ordered the tanks to move in against the machine guns. One tanker told him that the platoon leader of the tanks had been wounded in the arm and evacuated. Lieutenant BOYER finally found the platoon sergeant, but he would not take over command. He said the road was too narrow. When ordered to find a new route down, he declared it couldn't be done. However, he never left his tank. Finally BOYER ordered him to at least move up onto the ridge, behind which he was then in defilade, and fire from there into the houses down where the firing was coming from. He then declared he couldn't risk the expensive equipment. In exasperation, Lieutenant BOYER then ordered him to "get the hell out of here." Even this they did not do, but sat where they were for an hour, and then withdrew to some houses far to the rear.

Sgt. POVELAITES, from the lower of the two houses occupied by the 2nd Platoon, yelled up the hill to Lieutenant HAWK, who had the radio, for tanks. Other tanks were sent and they lumbered along the lower road 300 or 400 yards below POVELAITES and the 2nd Squad. He couldn't move out of the house to show them where he was, or where the enemy was, and so

they moved right on by. Next, Sgt. POVELAITES thought he could fire at some buildings where the German machine guns probably were, if he had some antitank grenades; so he yelled up to Lieutenant HAWK for some. A twelve-year-old Italian boy agreed to carry them down from the upper to the lower house, and he arrived safely with six antitank grenades, four fragmentation grenades with adapters, three grenade launchers and blanks. However, intervening trees made the effectiveness of the fire uncertain, so the youngster returned with a message to Lieutenant HAWK as to where the fire was probably coming from.

Back with the elements of the 3rd Platoon pinned in the ditch by the woods, the situation was not good. An enemy grenade hurled from the woods bounced off of Pfc. VENAR RIDDLE's back and rolled away. Rifle grenades started coming in, and worst of all, enemy artillery falling in the woods had set the woods on fire. Three men made a break. They had heard Sgt. POVELAITES directing them to run for the houses. When they got to their feet, however, they started straight down the hill for the houses the Germans were in. They saw some Germans down there, but at first mistook them for friendly troops. They were within fifty yards when they noticed the German uniform. Seeing their mistake, they turned and ran for the other house to the left, where the sergeant was. The Germans then fired, hitting Pfc. ARNOLD E. RIIPPA in the back of the neck. They all kept going, however, and made the house. RIIPPA was taken to the cellar and treated, and the Italians, huddled in the cellar for safety, fortified him with wine. The men were able to give the exact machine gun positions. After this, Lieutenant HAWK rushed the balance of the platoon, one man at a time, down to a stream bed, and the whole platoon assembled at the lower house.

Back in the ditch, the 1st Squad of the 3rd Platoon, behind the 2nd Squad, was able to withdraw from the ditch with some of the 2nd Squad's wounded. Acting squad leader Sgt. GROVER C. HUBLEY, Pfc. PHILLIP MCBRIDE and a couple of other men crawled and dragged the wounded back to cover, and then carried them to the trucks. The fire had been continuous. Pfc. DAVID A. BLEICH, for example, had been hit three or four times. Every time he moved he drew fire. Finally they threw him bandages, and the enemy, apparently recognizing the bandages, stopped firing at him, even though he commenced to move a great deal while dressing his own wounds.

At about 1800, Lieutenant HAWK and the 2nd Platoon, noticing the firing had been quiet for fifteen minutes, moved out of their house in squad column down the trail toward the German houses. They drew no fire and found the houses empty. The machine guns were gone, but two sandbagged positions at the upstairs windows, and great piles of brass indicated where they had been. After setting up a temporary defense there, they moved on to their objective at 1900. The remnants of the 3rd Platoon, too, were able to move on from the ditch.

While these actions had been going on, the leading 3rd Squad of the 3rd Platoon, with its leader, Lieutenant WILLIAM HACKETT, had kept going early in the afternoon when the rest of their platoon had been pinned in the ditch behind them. Following around the bend to the right between the wooded hill and their steep objective, they cut to the left off of the trail into a thickly wooded draw, and up the slope behind the town onto their objective. One low hill between them and the objective was skirted. Sgt. STEPHEN SCULLEN's machine gun was placed there to fire short bursts at an enemy machine gun position spotted on the objective. His neutralizing fire was effective, and the seventeen men climbed right up onto the objective and over onto the forward slope overlooking the river road far below. Suddenly fire opened up on them from houses along the road, catching them out on the forward slope. The men dove into old German positions. At this point, a German lieutenant appeared out of the woods on the hill with a fully loaded machine gun. He quickly dropped it over the bank, surrendering himself to Lieutenant

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HACKETT. Pfc. RICHARD ZIMMERMAN picked up the gun and fired it down the hill at the Germans. Enemy fire still pinned the squad to their holes. It was impossible to get back behind the hill. The German officer was put on the hillside, and told to tell the others in the houses below to surrender. He refused, but the enemy stopped firing when they saw he was a German. During this lull in the firing, the squad was able to withdraw from the exposed slope. They then got Sgt. SCULLEN and his gun down a vertical cliff, the only way down from his position without exposing himself, and set up an OP on the hill. Another German officer walked up to surrender, hands in the air. He contributed the disquieting information that twenty more Germans were expected to relieve them at any moment. So Lieutenant HACKETT worked his men back up onto the hilltop. This time in order to keep in cover, they climbed trees that grew against the cliff, and stepped off onto the top. One man was left to guard the prisoners. Pfc. FRED E. ZARLENGO, noticing a white flag down at the enemy positions, went down onto the forward slope to wave the "would-be" prisoners up. He was instantly killed. Lieutenant HACKETT then set up a 500-yard defense with fifteen men. About an hour later, at 1830, the 1st Platoon arrived.

While both platoons were pinned down, the 1st Platoon in support under Lieutenant JAMES H. PENROSE had been swung around to the right of the wooded hill to approach the town and hill from the north. Company headquarters, the mortars, and the 1st Squad of the 3rd Platoon followed. They came under machine gun fire while still half a mile east of the objective, and had to advance one man at a time until they reached a draw that gave good cover. They were held up there as they approached a house, when a machine gun opened up on Lieutenant PENROSE, S/Sgt. GERALD GILMAN, and the two scouts out in front of the platoon. A BAR was quickly set up in the rear, and covered the withdrawal of the four men. The platoon then worked their way further to the left under some sniper fire from C. Lezza to the north, but got into another draw leading down to the objective. They were hollered at by HACKETT's men up on the objective who spotted them at this time, just as they came under some scattered artillery fire. They were able to work down the draw and join HACKETT's men on the reverse slope of the objective and secure his precarious defense. Lieutenant HAWK's 2nd Platoon and the rest of the 3rd Platoon arrived at about 1900, completing the assembly of the company.

Lieutenant HAWK proposed almost immediately that he go clean out C. Lezza, the town just to the north that had been firing on the 1st Platoon earlier. He collected eight volunteers, and Lieutenant WILLIAM SPINNEY with two others from Company D. They had support from SPINNEY's heavy 30s, and the company mortars under Lieutenant JAMES ANDERSON, besides artillery support. A radioman from Company D was hit in the shoulder before they moved out. Then at dusk they started down to the objective. At first they went too far to the right, and as they came back over a knob, they were fired on by long-range machine guns. They returned fire with the heavy 30s, catching the Germans as they raced to man their positions around the town. They charged the hill, shooting from the hip, and moved up to the buildings, some from the south and some from the east.

While Sgt. MURRY L. LOEFFLER and his squad were flushing out a barn, five Germans ran out past Pfc. OLLEN E. HINES and Lieutenant HAWK. One stopped and surrendered, but the others ran down the road. HAWK threw down his rifle, and grabbing HINES' grenades, as well as his own, chased them, throwing grenades as he ran. HINES shot one in the back, two dropped from the grenades, and then HINES hit the remaining one. While Lieutenant HAWK was looking around for his dropped rifle, HINES noticed two Germans standing behind a brush pile with rifles at "port arms." They wouldn't throw down their rifles, but just stood there. HINES started around the pile after them, clockwise. They ran around to where he had been. He stopped; so did they. Then he ran suddenly counterclockwise, but they were off before he got there, looking back at him across the brush pile. Round and round they ran, around the brush pile, until they

finally had had enough and gave up. Still they carried their rifles until HINES smashed them out of their hands.

That was not the end of this strange town, however. HAWK and HINES entered another house and found four Krauts in one room and four more in the next, accompanied by a beautiful Italian girl. The rest of the squad had also collected more prisoners, and as the group stood around between the houses with their captives, a burp gun was fired into their midst from a hole in a loft nearby. Also a machine gun opened up 100 to 150 yards away. Some confusion resulted, but the prisoners were hastily collected and everyone got off the hill and back to the company. The final count was thirteen prisoners, eight of whom were German officers.

3rd Battalion—Advance to Mt. Avezzano

COMPANY K—C. IL POGGIO

At 0600 of the 19th, the 3rd Battalion had started moving out, with Company K leading, to mop up the left flank as the Division continued to exploit the breakthrough to the north. The line of departure was a point southeast of the pinnacle town of Mongiorgio, which the 1st Battalion would take in a renewal of the previous day's attack. The terrain changed suddenly from rolling hills to eroded, sharp, knife-edges of clay separated by deep, narrow, wooded draws. The company's first objective was il Poggio. It was on a high pinnacle from which knife-edged ridges and eroded draws radiated down hill. The draws dead-ended against the sheer cliffs below the houses. The knife-edge ridge was the only approach from the south. To the north, on the German side, the approaches were easier.

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Captain ROGER EDDY held the company up behind Company L of the 86th, while he joined the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel WORKS, in his OP near Badia di Sopra to examine il Poggio. The OP received mortar fire while the reconnaissance was made. Pfc. ROBERT E. CAMPBELL was killed. Wounded were Pvt. STUART S. FISHER, the company runner, T/Sgt. ARTHUR O. SCHIMKE, the 1st Platoon sergeant, Pfc. ROBERT F. TURNER, and several men from the 86th. Colonel FOWLER arrived at this time to order the advance to continue at once, and to bypass the buildings, which apparently were accurately registered for enemy mortar fire.

No one could be seen on il Poggio, so it was decided to send a three-man patrol up the exposed knife-edge ridge to investigate the buildings and talk with the Italians who might be there. Sgt. JOHN E. GALLAGHER led the patrol. After they disappeared down into the steep valley, it took them an hour and a half to get over the difficult terrain to where they came within sight again. From there they were watched moving easily along the exposed ridge to within 100 yards of the houses on top. Suddenly a machine gun fired on them, and lead scout Pfc. ANDREW BATTILORO toppled off the narrow trail and rolled over and over down 300 yards into a draw. The other men escaped down along the ridge and returned to the company with valuable information on the lay of the land and the enemy positions.

The platoon leaders were then oriented, and the TDs, heavy machine guns, and artillery were ordered to bring fire for the attack. While the company made the difficult march to the hill, the supporting fire from the TDs and artillery leveled the houses and neutralized the known enemy positions. During this barrage a German medic appeared, braving the artillery fire, and started down the steep bank towards BATTILORO. As he walked steadily towards the house slowly waving his flag, the artillery and TD fire lifted long enough for him to pass, and then resumed fire as he descended the hill. He reached BATTILORO, apparently administered first aid, and then climbed the hill, re-crossing the artillery-beaten zone and disappearing over the ridge. When he reappeared leading three German litter bearers, the fire lifted again and they descended the hill and picked up our wounded man. BATTILORO, having been hit three times by the en-

emy machine gun, must have died on the litter, because the German medics left him and returned to the other side of the crest. Every supporting weapon of the 3rd battalion had been trained on those aid men, and the itching finger of just one trigger-happy gunner could have blasted these brave Krauts into Valhalla. Whether their motive was to stop the heavy fire on their positions, to capture a PW for interrogation, or to relieve the suffering of a wounded man, their valor proved that the German was still a courageous and disciplined soldier, capable of continued determined resistance.

The weather was exceedingly warm, making the difficult climb and descent from draw to draw doubly fatiguing. Seven men of the 2nd Platoon were lost due to heat exhaustion. After moving slowly over the ridge, the 2nd Platoon went rapidly along the exposed knife-edge against no fire. They moved up under excellent close-support artillery and machine gun fire, and swarmed over the hill, driving forty Germans off, and taking twenty-five prisoners. Sgt. EVERT L. NYLUND, JR. was killed by rifle fire, the only casualty in the 2nd Platoon. The 3rd Platoon, meanwhile, had been sent on a flanking move by a much longer route to the right, and they didn't arrive on the hill until later. Captain EDDY sent for the 1st Platoon and weapons to come up to organize defense. As they moved up, they came under intense mortar fire. Pfc. HOWARD C. THOMPSON, as he walked the narrow knife-edge, had a shell land next to him. He was hit by shrapnel, and blasted off the ridge by concussion, rolling over and over down 200 yards to the bottom. When he was finally evacuated many hours later, he was both wounded and shell-shocked, but miraculously very much alive.

After the 1st Platoon reached the hill, one squad and part of the 2nd Platoon came under rifle fire from the left front. Then from the OP in the house, six Germans could be seen crawling up the hill to counterattack. A few men from both platoons were far down on the forward slope, cut off and unable to move because of the fire. Fire was becoming more and more intense on the hill. These men remained pinned down throughout the ensuing counterattack. At this juncture, the company was glad to have the 3rd Platoon arrive, minus Pfc. NATHAN GARBER who had been injured, and six men who had dropped out from heat exhaustion. Just as they were gotten into position, a German tank appeared in the valley approaching the hill. Then two or three hundred German troops were observed moving off to the north on a secondary road to the east of the Samoggia River. Captain EDDY adjusted artillery fire on the fleeing enemy column (although his own position was none too secure) and broke it up into confusion. By this time the house was drawing all kinds of fire from machine guns, snipers, and mortars. Sgt. EDMUND D. BENNETT, watching the counterattack, was wounded in the back of the neck when a bullet came through the brick wall and struck him. Then the tank fired two rounds, one into the house. The whole company scrambled back off of the hill, some taking cover behind the house, all in confusion and some panic.

At the time the tank opened up, the prisoners stood lined up outside of the house with two guards. When everyone started racing down the hill, the prisoners tried to escape. One of the guards shot them all.

Captain EDDY and his officers and NCOs calmed the men and moved them back up onto the hill. For some unknown reason the tank did not fire again. Company K was then ordered on to its next objective, C. Silvestri. Before leaving, an effort was made to recall the men who were still pinned down by sniper and machine gun fire, far down on the forward slope. Covering fire was built up, and one by one the men made a break for it. Although they were called by name, two men never came: T/4 STEVE TOBIS and Pfc. CASIMIR F. JILKA. Their bodies were recovered later far down on the slope where the fire had gotten them.

The company moved off, leaving Sgt. PORTER SULLIVAN with eight men and a machine gun to hold the hill against enemy counterattacks. The company left them with grave misgivings. The sergeant was without communication; the "536" radios were long since gone. He was instructed to rejoin the company on his own initiative, or when the company reached its next objective, C. Silvestri. Before long, trouble developed on the hill. Six Germans marched up the hill unarmed and waving a white flag. Behind them, attempting to remain concealed, could be discerned ten armed Germans with machine guns. SULLIVAN's squad opened fire. Sgt. HERVEY BLACKBURN alone got five of the Germans with his M-1, and the attack stopped right there. However, the squad was under fire as long as they were on the hill. Why the tank never fired again, no one will ever know.

COMPANY K—C. SILVESTRI

The 3rd Platoon led the attack on C. Silvestri, another ridge-top cluster of buildings. Half-way to the ridge-top, a German light machine gun opened up from the right front, and the leading elements returned the fire. At this time Company I was on K's right, and the men of Company I started a great shouting and hollering that Company K was firing into their leading men. Fire ceased abruptly. Amidst great confusion, it was finally agreed between the companies that the positions of Company I were farther to the right than where Company K's fire was falling, so the firing was resumed. Then an effective mortar barrage started in on Company K. Sgt. FELIX DUNBAR, with his great speed, set up his mortars in the rear of the leading 3rd Platoon and put counter-mortar fire on the enemy mortars.

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Unknown to Captain EDDY, Lieutenant EDWARD BINDER, leader of the 3rd Platoon, had sent T/Sgt. HARRY SOUTHARD with a patrol of five men to flank to the right, and get the machine gun that was still firing and holding up the 3rd Platoon. They were also to clear out the group of houses below the top of the hill. When Captain EDDY reached the pinned-down 3rd Platoon, he decided to send the 2nd and 1st Platoons on the same mission. So after sending one squad of the 2nd Platoon, under Pfc. CLARENCE J. FEY, the acting squad leader, off to the left flank, he followed the rest of the 2nd Platoon to the right, and ordered the 1st to follow him. The 2nd Platoon, under Lieutenant TOIVO RANTA, moved off to the right through a grove of trees under sporadic mortar fire. Then they started up the hill.

Sgt. SOUTHARD, ahead, had gotten up to the town, cleaned it out and, running on to the rear, had taken two prisoners. The machine gun was driven out but it was set up again a hundred yards further up the ridge. S/Sgt. HERMAN S. AUSTIN was killed by a rifleman in a fox-hole on top of the hill. This rifleman then ran down the right side of the slope where some of the 2nd Platoon from the ridge could look down on him. They yelled at him and he seemed to freeze, still holding his rifle at "port." Sgt. ROBERT MANCHESTER drew a bead and shot him. Sgt. SOUTHARD and his men, and men from the 2nd Platoon, crawled on up the hill after the newly placed machine gun. Pfc. JACK PEHRSON of the 2nd Platoon got up close and threw a hand grenade into the German position. They ran back off the hill.

Lieutenant RANTA and his 2nd Platoon then moved up and went over the hill under intermittent mortar fire. Lieutenant RANTA came back, reported the hill taken, and himself wounded. An enemy machine gun, firing from the valley to the right front between Companies K and I, was silenced by some heavy enemy artillery which landed right on it.

The 1st Squad of the 2nd Platoon that had moved off to the left had its leader, Pfc. CLARENCE J. FEY wounded by machine gun fire. Pvt. GARALD J. MORICAL of the 3rd Platoon was shot in the hand. Pfc. DENZIL WILLIAMS, already wounded once on Mt. Croce, was evacuated from the 2nd Platoon from exhaustion and shellshock. Sgt. SULLIVAN's squad, trying to rejoin the company, had reached the buildings near C. Silvestri when an unlucky shell

struck, wounding Sgt. ROBERT F. HUNT, Pfc. LEVI R. MCGOUGH, Pfc. JACOB MANDELMAN, Pfc. WILLIAM E. THOMPSON, and Pfc. ROBERT C. CLARKE.

On the hill, Sgt. SOUTHARD and Sgt. PHILIP THURSTON of the 2nd Platoon were organizing the position for defense. Sgt. ROBERT MANCHESTER had brought the 1st Platoon abreast on the right, only lower on the hillside. Captain EDDY ordered him back to the grove of trees to dig in for support. The captain moved to the hilltop to complete organization. The 3rd Platoon had no ammunition, the 2nd had little, the 1st had a little more. The men were near exhaustion. They were without water, and had marched and fought over fourteen miles of the most incredibly difficult terrain in extremely warm weather. They had had little sleep the night before, a K-ration for two days, had been under fire almost continuously, and had fought three battles. They had fought on with many of their leaders casualties, at a frantic pace, under fragmentary orders and considerable confusion. Many of the men had dropped from exhaustion, but one group of "old 87th" men never fell out until they were shot. Men like Pfc. OLAF HATLEN and Pfc. WILLIAM WENTWORTH were old men, thirty-nine and forty. At Camp Swift they were told they couldn't make it; but they made it. They made the 87th an unbelievable machine of endurance and drive. They were the old mountain men that were left, and the old mountain men were the "guts" of the regiment.

At 1800 Captain EDDY, still busy reorganizing, received orders to continue the attack. He radioed his answer back to the battalion commander, "Will be glad to support you with our bare hands."

The company pulled off the hill and continued north. They had marched fourteen miles, but went on another six. The company medics were with them, as the company medics always are, and the infantrymen loved them for it. But the tankers weren't there, nor the artillery, nor the combat engineers, nor any of the other combat arms. This was an Infantry show.

Down off the hill they found Company B, and K went into a column of twos. They left the wounded Lieutenant RANTA on the hill with Company B, very much against his will. Sgt. THURSTON took over the 2nd Platoon. Then the company marched on, taking it slowly to give some other units time to get into the lead. After three miles, Lieutenant LARRY J. JENSEN and Supply Sergeant HENRY O. ALBRO re-supplied the company with ammunition, water, and the usual hot rumor.

The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS, was met at Monte San Pietro. He reported that Company L had already taken off. Company K then followed Company I in support, following the attack as it got dark. The company moved through some artillery fire, and finally dug in on Palzo Musico below the houses, weary and only too glad to halt and sleep.

COMPANY I—MT. AVEZZANO

That morning, the 19th, Company I had been ordered to go around the right flank of the 1st Battalion, to pass through one battalion of the 86th Mountain Infantry, and then to march forward and attack Monte San Pietro. After a visual reconnaissance, a fragmentary order, and a short route reconnaissance, Captain ADRIAN I. RIORDAN moved the company out, 2nd Platoon leading, with the light machine guns just behind, followed by the 3rd and 1st Platoons. The mortars, as was customary in Company I, followed the second rifle platoon. Supported by TDs and tanks, the company moved up onto Hill 262 and flushed out the two houses on top. The only fire they received was sniper fire from great range.

After reorganization, they moved on toward their objective again, this time with the 3rd Platoon on the right and the 2nd on the left, and with the machine guns in position between the two platoons. The mortars too were emplaced, and an artillery concentration was put in a ravine 600

yards forward. As the platoon moved forward, the artillery was lifted and placed on Monte San Pietro, on the high hill to their front.

The terrain had changed again from the rolling hills and ridges to sharp, clay, knife-edge spines and deep erosion slots. Many of the slopes were nearly sheer, and there was constant danger of the men falling. Pfc. LEON STEWART, marching on a bad ankle, fell and rolled down a precipitous hillside, seriously injuring his back. Pfc. BILL L. BISHOP also fell while carrying a BAR and broke his hand. The 2nd Platoon going forward received some fire from the left front. The 60-mm mortars attempted to lay on this fire, but the range was too great. The mortars were moved forward into a draw on the right flank, and more sniper fire commenced from the left rear. Scattered rounds of artillery dropped all over the company area. Another man, Pfc. GUINTER A. KRAUSE, fell and rolled down a bank breaking his ribs, and Pfc. JAMES "Scrap Iron" LOWDON fell and hurt his knee.

Very little resistance was found in Monte San Pietro. About four enemy were seen, only one of whom was determined to resist. He was killed and the others fled as the 2nd Platoon arrived in town. Two other Germans were captured. The usual German artillery barrage hit town as soon as the company moved in. Pfc. EDWARD J. LAFFERTY, Pfc. LONNIE I. ROSS, and Pfc. RICHARD H. HOUSEMAN, were wounded. The artillery ceased abruptly, and Company L started to pass through about 1600.

Company I was then ordered to continue on to its objective, Mt. Avezzano, the last high ground before the Po Valley. They pulled up abreast and on the left of Company L at Palzo Musico. The 1st Platoon was on the left and the 3rd on the right. Germans were seen over on the left flank, but the men were not allowed to fire at them. Then machine gun and other automatic weapons fire started coming from the left rear, and S/Sgt. JOHN R. BURGESS and Pfc. LEONARD K. MUMAW were wounded. Fire was returned, and the 2nd Platoon, caught in the open, was pinned down for about fifteen minutes. Sgt. MELVIN W. BEAMAN injured his ankle and had to be evacuated.

Before the 2nd Platoon could extricate itself, the 1st and 3rd jumped off in the attack. They moved down the steep forward slope of Palzo Musico and crossed the road in the deep valley. As they started up the long steep sides of Mt. Avezzano, they were fired on from the left rear. Sgt. LAWRENCE H. SAGE was hit by this grazing fire and tumbled down the hill, badly injuring his knee. It was 0100 before the sergeant could be evacuated.

While the 1st and 3rd Platoons were moving up the hill, the weapons platoon, still on Palzo Musico to the right of where the company was crossing, saw three or four Germans below run out of the woods into the road. They were not fired on, and forty or fifty Germans followed. Pfc. OSCAR B. SATHERS opened fire with his machine gun. The Germans were crowded on the road about 700 yards away, around the bend to the right of the place where the company had crossed. After the first burst, SATHERS paused for fire adjustment. His observer gave him no fire correction; none was needed. SATHERS lay on the trigger for the longest burst he had ever fired. It was the proverbial "machine gunner's dream." After a while he raised his head from the sight and watched his tracers hose onto the crowded road. Then he poured bullets into the clump of woods into which some of the Germans had fled. For SATHERS, these few minutes were the height of the campaign. Seldom does a machine gunner have such a target.

The rest of the company followed the 1st and 3rd Platoons on up to the top of Mt. Avezzano without resistance. Four prisoners were drafted to lug up the heavy machine guns. On top of the ridge the men reorganized and dug in defensive positions for the night. The high ground commanded the remaining low hills and fields between them and the valley of the Po.

During the night the Germans came back up the road between Mt. Avezzano and Palzo Musico, and from time to time were driven away as they tried to bury mines. Up on the hill three figures approached SATHER's machine gun in the pitch dark. They walked so assuredly that they were within fifteen yards of him before the distinctive curve of their helmets identified them as Germans. By that time they were too close for machine gun fire, so he yelled at them. All three dropped their rifles, one fled and two surrendered. One of the prisoners was a lieutenant.

COMPANY L—MT. AVEZZANO

At noon, Company L was committed from reserve to the battalion right flank, the men following Company I at 1,000 yards. The 3rd Battalion passed the 1st Battalion as it still fought for Mongiorgio at the left. Later, the company followed I past K fighting for C. Silvestri on their left.

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The terrain the town marched through this day had changed sharply from the rolling ridges of the day before. The entire region as it spread to the north, sloping down to the Po Valley from the 900-meter hills of the first day, had gone through three major terrain changes. The first terrain area, a band of mountains from Torre Iussi east to Mt. Mosca, was a region of steep rugged slopes, largely wooded with chestnut trees and scrubby growth, and spotted with rock outcroppings and with some rolling fields atop the hills. The valleys between these hill masses were jumbled, rolling fields, dissected by networks of deep, eroded draws, usually wooded. Beyond this mountainous band, which had constituted the German line, was an area of high open and gently rolling ridge masses with rounded knolls, and only occasional patches of trees. The edges of the ridge masses, however, were torn away by erosion, and especially on the Samoggia River side there were series of ridge spines and draws running steeply down to the river valley. In the third area, this last condition became general; the entire region was cut up into nothing but deep, steep draws and sharp precipitous knife-edge ridges, often so steep as to be bare of all vegetation.

After Company I took Monte San Pietro, Company L passed through them with the mission of taking Mt. Avezzano before dark. At about 1600 they were ordered to take the Ca de Sarti ridge, then Palzo Musico, on their way to Mt. Avezzano. The order was changed. Ca de Sarti was to be bypassed. The company was spread out over a long distance, back over the eroded draws and knife-edge ridges. The day was hot; the men were close to exhaustion. They had had little or no sleep, no water since the night before, and no food. While they were assembling, Lieutenant WILBUR S. SHEETS and Sgt. LEWIS HAUGE made a reconnaissance up along the Ca de Sarti ridge, but the ridge was unoccupied. Thereupon they returned and brought the company up at about 1630. Colonel WORKS came up and ordered them on to Palzo Musico to prepare for the attack on Mt. Avezzano.

COMPANY L was led by a twelve-man patrol under S/Sgt. WILLIAM CONGER from the 3rd Platoon. They were to clean out the houses at C. Sassoli, and they became the company point, firing at Germans down off the ridge to their right, as they moved along to Palzo Musico. Here the company was fired on from houses in the valley to the rear. The company returned the fire and the enemy ceased firing. Pfc. FRANCIS I. NORTHRUP was injured on the way up.

Company I pulled up abreast on the left rear where one of their platoons was pinned down by machine gun fire from the left, just as both companies were jumping off at 1900.

The jump-off stopped just as it started, at the sight of many German troops pouring down into the narrow valley to the road junction right at Company L's feet. There were motorcycles, horse-drawn vehicles, field pieces, command cars, and foot elements. The steep north face of Palzo Musico dropped down to the dirt highway leading off to the east. Mt. Avezzano rose

steeply just across the road. The valley was just a V-slot, and through it poured the German column. Every weapon available in the rifle company and attached machine gun section opened up. The volume of fire represented the full potential of the infantry: bazookas, rifles, mortars, machine guns, and rifle grenades. The Germans never knew what hit them.

From 1900 to 1920, before this action was finished, the artillery preparation for the attack was fired. Company I was still getting some machine gun fire on the left, and Company L held up until 1930, waiting for Company I to come abreast. Then Company L flanked around to the right with all three platoons. Two officers and thirty-six men, the leading echelon, took the steep hill without difficulty, consolidated their positions with Company I, and start digging in at 2100. The 2nd Battalion was expected to be on the right occupying that part of the long ridge. In their absence Company L moved over and spread their positions along the ridge to the east.

During the night they were attacked from the rear and a brief firefight developed. S/Sgt. DONALD FLYNN then recognized the platoon attacking up the hill as part of the 2nd Battalion, 85th Mountain Infantry, and yelled out the "Cease fire!" order.

COMPANY M—MT. AVEZZANO

As the weapons company moved across the line of departure and up onto Sulmonte, they were hit by mortar fire. S/Sgt. WILLIAM I. ERIKSON, Pfc. JAMES A. NEVES, and Pvt. DONALD G. JENNINGS were all wounded here. The company was supported effectively with 81-mm mortars, although under German fire during much of the day. The machine gun platoons followed the attacking rifle companies during the long, difficult day. One machine gunner of the 2nd Platoon, Pfc. PALMER W. HORTON, was killed by shrapnel as his squad displaced through the deep draw below Monte San Pietro.

OTHER CASUALTIES

Third Battalion Headquarters Company had casualties during the day. Pfc. HANSEL R. WILLIAMS, while driving for ammunition in his truck, was seriously wounded by automatic fire back near Madna di Rodiano. Pfc. GEORGE T. DAVIS, just back from a replacement depot, was killed by shellfire that night in a big monastery where the company spent the night.

2nd Battalion—Monte San Pietro

In the morning, the 2nd Battalion had assembled at San Trinita and entrucked. They rode along the ridge-top past Merlano to the end of the road. Then they marched, Company E leading, toward the regimental objective of Pradalbino.

COMPANY E

The immediate objective of the company was C. Marchese. They passed Mongiorgio on their left while the 1st Battalion was still fighting for the pinnacle town. In the afternoon, they bypassed il Poggio and C. Silvestri, both taken by Company K. A little beyond, in the vicinity of Castello, Captain LE GRAND PENDREY was joined by Colonel DAVID FOWLER and Lieutenant Colonel EMMETT L. NATIONS. Just then, artillery fire fell on the company, killing Pfc. LEO T. HANDWERK.

Toward evening they marched off for Mt. Avezzano, but it had been taken by the 3rd Battalion, who did not wait for them. One platoon of Company E was to occupy Hill 302, southeast of Mt. Avezzano, and the rest of the company was to assemble behind the 3rd Battalion on Mt. Avezzano. As they marched down into the draw beyond Monte San Pietro, with the 1st Platoon leading, the point was opened up on by sniper fire. The firing came from both sides of the deep narrow draw but no one was hit. As the leading men scrambled to get out of the confined area,

Pfc. SAMUEL F. ONSTOTT, a BAR man, was wounded. The whole battalion was held up behind the 1st Platoon. Lieutenant SYDNEY ALLISON, the platoon leader, made contact with Colonel NATIONS by "300" radio, and when unsuccessful in locating the snipers, was ordered to bypass the area. It was now between 2300 and 2400. As the platoon climbed up out of the draw, a motorcycle could be heard moving away; presumably the snipers had made their escape. The 1st Platoon moved on to Hill 302, while the rest of the battalion, including the remainder of Company E, moved up onto the hillside around C. Sassoli, where they dug in for the night. Some artillery fire fell around C. Sassoli during darkness.

COMPANY F

Company F entrucked early in the morning and rode to a point east of Merlano. They were to move to the left of the 3rd Battalion toward the regimental objective, Pradalbino. Actually, the 2nd Battalion marched in single file much of the time behind and to the right of the 3rd Battalion, thus avoiding the extremely rough canyons and razorback ridges over which the 3rd Battalion fought. Company F marched behind E without resistance, except for occasional mortar bursts, all afternoon and evening, reaching Monte San Pietro at 2300. From here they moved down the draw and spent the night under some mortar fire at C. Sassoli.

COMPANY H

In the morning, the 1st machine gun platoon of Company H left with Company E from San Prospero for the entrucking point. Light artillery fire was coming in on them. They moved by truck to a point east of Merlano. From there on foot they marched to within five kilometers of Monte San Pietro. They marched again at 1600 and were caught in a draw by heavy artillery fire from the left flank. They dug in here until after dark, then marched over to C. Vigo and dug in for the night. Here they received some light artillery fire.

The 2nd Platoon moved forward the same as the 1st, by carrier to Merlano, then by marching to positions from which to support the attack of Company F on Monte San Pietro. However, Company I had already captured the town. The platoon moved forward through elements of the 3rd Battalion, finally halting for the night at 2400. The 1st Section was lost, but continued on towards its objective, halting for the night at 0200. They had gotten lost when they encountered enemy fire. They had to withdraw and then proceed along a new route. They were alone out in enemy territory.

The mortar platoon moved to Merlano the same as the first two platoons. At about 1500 they marched to Stulla from where several missions were fired at Monte San Pietro. At 1700 the 2nd Section moved out, followed at intervals by the 1st and 3rd Sections. After an hour's marching they dug in near the battalion OP for the night. The 1st and 3rd Sections were about one mile to the rear.

Situation at the End of the Sixth Day

During the afternoon of the 19th, the 85th Mountain Infantry, having moved through the 86th and along the road to the Po Valley, reported running into little or no opposition. Their battalions were reporting positions further and further out toward the end of the hills. Finally, some reports had them in the valley. Actually, by nightfall, the 3rd Battalion on Mt. Avezzano, after fighting all day over the tortuous terrain, was farther north than the 85th Mountain Infantry.

SEVENTH DAY—20 APRIL

At 0100, the Field Order for the 20th read:

1. Elements of 10th Div will enter the Po Valley tomorrow (the 20th) to cut the highways west of Bologna.
 2. 87th Mt Inf will continue mission of mopping up previously designated areas.
 3. 2d Bn 87th will advance north to Pradalbino and continue north mopping up on a broad front to a position south of the main road (Highway No. 9) through Crepellano. There they will establish a defensive position in the hills in division reserve.
- 3d Battalion in present area, rest.
 1st Battalion in present position, await orders to be issued before noon.
 616 FA Bn direct support 87th Mt Inf, priority to 2d Bn.
 Co C, 84th Chem Bn, direct support 2d Bn with one platoon. One platoon in position for possible employment with 1st Bn.
 2d Bn to jump off not later than 200800.
 Maintain wire to all battalions to insure rapid information, and orders if situation changes radically.

The 10th Mountain Division was going to move out of the mountains!

2nd Battalion—To the Valley

COMPANY G—TOMBA

Company G was given the mission of capturing the town of Tomba and clearing the ridge beyond to protect the battalion advance on their right. The company moved out at 0645, 3rd Platoon leading. Small arms fire held up the 3rd Platoon, and the 2nd Platoon passed through and took the right part of town. The 1st Platoon, meanwhile, pushed up and took the section of town left of the road. Machine guns and mortars gave excellent overhead fire on the ridge from positions where they were receiving heavy artillery and mortar fire from the enemy.

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After part of the town was taken, one squad of the 1st Platoon moved over onto the forward slope. They promptly received machine gun and sniper fire. Pfc. HARRY F. MARKSON was killed by a sniper. Cpl. ROBERT J. MCBRIDE was wounded between two houses on the forward slope. Enemy crossfire cut back and forth across the hill. The 2nd Platoon worked their way around to the right and cleared out one machine gun nest, killing two and taking one prisoner. This allowed the 1st Platoon to go through the town. However, Pfc. LEO A. WHITE, Pfc. ROBERT F. O'NEILL, Pvt. RUDOLPH O. MARON and Pvt. CHESTER J. SAVICKAS were wounded in the town. The 1st Platoon in town captured four Germans and killed several others.

During the afternoon in Tomba, the company experienced the heaviest shelling they had endured. It was not only concentrated, but of a very heavy caliber. Many of the men weren't actually wounded, but were shaken up and dazed by the shock of the concussion. Lieutenant GORDON A. ANDERSON was knocked down and suffered internal injuries, although he remained with the company. During the fire, Sgt. RAYMOND STRAIT, from Battalion S-4, and a driver came speeding up in two jeeps and went on past the company and way out in front to the west of the hill. There were bullets whistling around them as they turned the jeeps around. One jeep was hit in the radiator and abandoned. They brought the other one in.

Meanwhile, General HAYS arrived at the regimental CP. The Division was breaking into the valley, and the 87th was to disengage and move down. At about 1500 the company received orders to disengage from the enemy and bypass to the valley. This was accomplished under heavy artillery fire. A covering force of Lieutenant DUTTWEILER and six men was left behind. Lieutenant DUTTWEILER and T/Sgt. CHARLES THORNE, after the company had gone, raced out

through the heavy fire, started the damaged jeep, and drove it back to safety. The covering force rejoined the company in the battalion assembly area without mishap. At dark they marched behind the battalion to the last high ground on the edge of the Po Valley. Here they helped set up a perimeter defense around the battalion area at 2200.

The 2nd Section of the 2nd Platoon of Company H gave supporting fire to Company G in its attack on Tomba. They fired from positions near the battalion OP. The 1st Section also gave supporting fire from the flank. Enemy mortar and artillery fire was heavy. The platoon displaced forward at about 1200, and moved on until they reached the edge of the Po Valley at 2100. Here they bivouacked for the night. During the day the tired men were liberally treated to wine by welcoming Italians. At their bivouac area, the whole 2nd Platoon and part of Company F were treated to a feast of bread, cheese, wine, milk and coffee by the grateful Italians. The Italians gave them their beds, while the family went out to the dugouts. Many of the men slept in clean sheets for the first time since longer than they could remember.

COMPANY E—C. MARCHESE

In the morning the battalion was to move around to the left of Mt. Avezzano toward Pradalbino. Company E, with the 3rd Platoon leading, went over Palzo Musico, dropped down the steep northern side, and crossed the creek and the road. Moving to the north, they traversed along the western slopes of Mt. Avezzano, going over the crest, and ran into long-range machine gun fire. The slope was exposed, and they moved down into a draw east of Tomba. There they were fired on from close range, killing Pfc. GORDON D. ERICKSON, and wounding Pvt. ROBIN E. HOOD of the 2nd Platoon, Pfc. MICHAEL A. HUSSLI of the 3rd Platoon, Pvt. FRANCIS P. DESMOND and Pvt. RAYMOND SCHMIDT. Meanwhile, the 1st Platoon, moving down the valley from Hill 302, where they had spent the night, went up onto Mt. Avezzano. The platoon leader, Lieutenant SIDNEY ALLISON, made contact with Captain ADRIAN RIORDAN of Company I. The whole company, with the exception of one squad of the 3rd Platoon, withdrew from the west side of Avezzano around to the south, and went up Mt. Avezzano in defilade. There they followed the 1st Platoon down the forward slopes of Avezzano and rejoined the lone squad before their objective, C. Marchese. They were to attack C. Marchese as Company F attacked Pradalbino. On Mt. Avezzano, Pfc. RICHARD G. SCHROEDER, Pfc. MILLARD R. SMITH, Pvt. ELBERT E. THOMAS and Pvt. BOWNE P. TAGGART had been wounded by artillery at about noon.

Enemy had been observed moving around in C. Marchese all morning long. As the company closed in on the town, they awaited the promised artillery preparation. Only five artillery rounds were thrown into the town. The company was able to move in close to the town without being detected. On signal they opened fire with a volley of all weapons, catching the Krauts by surprise and killing and wounding many. Machine gun and sniper fire was returned. Then, still waiting for the promised eight-minute artillery barrage, they were told by radio that it had already been fired; the five rounds was it. Unable to launch an attack successfully without some kind of preparatory fire, the company waited and shortly received the order to disengage and withdraw. Pradalbino had already been taken by Company F; C. Marchese no longer needed to be captured or occupied. At 1800 they reached Pradalbino and organized with the battalion for the further advance to start at 1830. They moved out with Company E on the right, F on the left, heading for the valley of the Po. Company F was ordered to establish a roadblock at Muffa, but ran into enemy fire that held them up. Company E reached C. Fazzuolo by 2030 and tied in with Company F for the night.

The 1st Platoon of Company H took off behind Company E at 0700 for C. Marchese under moderate fire of snipers and self-propelled guns. They delivered overhead fire on C. Sartorana.

At about 1700 they moved on to the north again, marching until 2300. S/Sgt. HAROLD D. ROSE and Pfc. STEPHEN A. FORRESTER were wounded by a single artillery shell along with four Company E men near Mt. Avezzano. They spent the night on the last slopes before the valley of the Po.

COMPANY F—PRADALBINO

Company F went over Palzo Musico. Then they crossed the road and climbed up the ridge running east from Mt. Avezzano. They passed to the right of Company I occupying Avezzano and went down the slope past Company E which at this time, 1300, was pinned down to their left at C. Marchese. With the 3rd Platoon leading, the company moved up and occupied the first building at Poggiolo without resistance. Then the 1st Platoon went through the 3rd and took the next two buildings. The 2nd Platoon in turn leapfrogged on to Pradalbino with only some sniper fire from the left to worry their advance.

At 1600, after an hour and a half at Pradalbino, they were ordered to move out into the valley of the Po to establish a roadblock at Muffa. They moved out with the 3rd Platoon leading. Late in the afternoon, Lieutenant FLOYD ALEXANDER and his scouts had crossed over a ridge, when the rest of the platoon behind them were fired upon by a machine gun from their left front. The 3rd Platoon was unable to follow ALEXANDER, but Captain JAMES KENNETT led them down into a gully and crawled away from the exposed ridge through an erosion draw. Lieutenant ALEXANDER and his two scouts went on to the previously designated company rallying point. The company officers brought up the rest of the company by another route around to the right, and although this too came under fire, they got to the rallying point and rejoined Lieutenant ALEXANDER and Captain KENNETT and the 3rd Platoon. The two "300" radio operators were unable to move during the day because they drew fire every time they tried to move in the open daylight. The entire company was not able to reassemble until after dark. From the high ground could be seen the enemy retreating out of the mountains. Out on the plain, columns of 10th Division troops were visible.

They were unable that night to get all the way to Muffa, but spent the night at a villa on the edge of the Po Valley where they picked up an English-speaking prisoner who had been unable to keep up with the retreating Germans.

COMPANY H—MORTARS

The 1st Section moved out at 1000 and went by truck to the former battalion CP east of Mt. Avezzano. From there they hand-carried forward to Buca where they rejoined the 2nd Section. Then the 3rd Section arrived at 1400 and the platoon was reassembled. After firing several missions, the 2nd Section displaced by hand-carry to Pradalbino and dug in for the night. The other two sections displaced on carriers to the former location of the battalion aid station and spent the night there.

1st Battalion—To the Valley

COMPANY C

That morning after Company C's fight for Venerano, Lieutenant RICHARD C. POWERS took five men for a mop-up patrol back up to C. Lezza where Lieutenant JOHN HAWK had been the night before. Here they captured four more prisoners and a great many weapons, including four machine guns. They blew up a quantity of German hand grenades, and then moved out on patrol a mile beyond and returned. All they discovered was the remains of a jeep, which had apparently struck a mine. Beside it were the remains of a German captain, an American captain

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from the 81st Reconnaissance Squadron, and an Italian woman and baby. All had apparently been killed instantly.

Back at Venerano, eight or ten more Germans wandered in during the morning and surrendered. At 1300 the company marched east to Stulla, the regimental CP, where they entrucked and rode to a point southeast of La Fornace. At 1630 they started marching to the Po Valley. As they marched along in a column of twos, they passed diagonally through Company F of the 85th, who were pinned down for the moment. Sniper fire opened up and Company C hit the ground. After twenty minutes, the company continued on through. Some heavy artillery fell and then later, as they moved along a ridge, the leading 1st Platoon came under fire of a machine gun. They rushed across a 150-yard opening and set up a base of fire for the rest of the company. Lieutenant Colonel ROSS WILSON, the battalion commander, arrived at this time with a tank, himself acting as a first scout. The tank fired at a building in which the gun seemed to be located, and the company was able to move on down into the valley, arriving near Crespellano at 2000. After some confusion as to directions, they took up defensive positions and set up roadblocks from C. Bosco to Portazza. During the day Pfc. HERBERT J. BRYAN and Pfc. JOHN J. PONZIO had been injured.

The two TDs that were to support the roadblock couldn't be located, so Sgt. GERALD T. GILMAN and five men went out to find them. It was midnight, but the moon was very bright. They found track marks near a bomb crater in the road, and then almost ran into a German sentry. The sentry fired at once, wounding Cpl. EDWARD H. MERRILL and Pfc. ARTHUR E. DUNFEE seriously, and Pvt. WESLEY E. HARRIS lightly. The squad, including MERRILL, fled behind nearby buildings. However, DUNFEE couldn't be rescued since he lay wounded right in front of the sentry. Other weapons opened up on the squad as they worked through back yards back to the road, supporting the wounded MERRILL and HARRIS. DUNFEE was later picked up by another unit and was reported from an evacuation hospital. When they returned, the TD had been found and was already in position.

During the night, three prisoners made a break for freedom. One was shot at once, and another thereupon surrendered. Then this one again made a break for it and was shot. A machine gun cut down the third one.

Earlier in the evening, a group searching houses around the CP broke into one that wouldn't open up. The Italians inside then set up wine, bread, and cheese in the kitchen for the men. The soldiers were in and out of this house eating and drinking all through the evening. Some of them were seated around the table at midnight when a knock sounded at the door. Two Germans walked in. There was a wild scramble for arms as the Germans fled. Both were killed.

COMPANY A

Company A entrucked in the late afternoon to a point near La Fornace. After detrucking, they were ordered to bypass all small arms fire, and to march across the Modena-Bologna road, Highway 9, and to establish a roadblock at Calcara in the Po Valley. They marched out in the battalion column towards the north. During the afternoon they ran into the rear of the 85th 2nd Battalion, who were pinned down and engaging in a firefight. They followed Company C around, and went through the 85th skirmish line in a column of twos. They were fired on by snipers after going about 300 yards. Still in column they "double timed" around to the right and ducked behind some buildings and around behind a hill. At dark they reached the valley. Here both platoons soon became lost in the unfamiliar flatland. They held up, and Captain HUGH KLEMME reoriented himself and the company leaders in a farmhouse. Then, joined by supporting tanks, they moved along the road in the dark and dropped off each of the platoons for roadblocks. At midnight, they closed in on Calcara and made contact with the 86th Infantry. Around

the battalion CP they captured fifteen prisoners. During the evening, Pfc. REX A. BROCKETT had been wounded in the leg by machine gun fire.

COMPANY B

Company B pulled out of C. Silvestri at noon on the 20th and marched to Stulla, where they entrucked to a point near La Fornace. At 1600 the battalion started marching towards the Po Valley, in column of twos, a file on each side of the road, and a steady stream of TDs, armored artillery, and other traffic moved along between. Just before dusk the company came out into the flat of the valley, and after passing through a company of the 86th, continued marching until 0100, when they took up positions around buildings housing the battalion CP.

3rd Battalion—To the Valley

COMPANY L

Company L stayed in place during the morning of the 20th, receiving some artillery and mortar fire without casualty. At 1330 rations arrived. The men had had only one K-ration meal during the last day and a half.

The whole battalion was scheduled to rest all day of the 20th. However, elements of the Division were pushing out into the valley. Company A of the 86th Mountain Infantry had already cut the Modena-Bologna road. Therefore the entire regiment was ordered out of the hills with the least possible delay, bypassing resistance as much as possible.

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At 1645, Company L led the battalion down a draw beyond Avezzano. At 1830 they bumped into the 1st Battalion who were engaged in a brisk firefight up on the ridge to the right. Lieutenant SHEETS went up to see what the situation was, and on his return met Colonel WORKS, the battalion commander, who ordered them to keep moving forward in the draw. As they pushed on, they ran into some sniper fire, and collected four prisoners. Further on, at 1900, a patrol was sent to investigate some houses up on the ridge. There S/Sgt. JAMES C. MOREHOUSE, Pfc. FRANCIS J. EDWARDS and Pvt. FRANK G. DE JULIO were wounded, possibly by friendly fire. EDWARDS and DE JULIO had just joined the company at 1500 that afternoon, so their combat time with Company L amounted to three and one-half hours.

Reaching a point near the valley, as the company marched on through the draw, they ran into a machine gun firing from around a bend. The company was pinned down, and a patrol was being formed to knock out the gun, when Lieutenant Colonel ROSS WILSON, commander of the 1st Battalion, rolled up in a TD. Four other TDs followed, and they drove out the machine gun. Company L continued to lead the battalion down the draw and out into the valley, elements of the 1st Battalion on their right and slightly ahead of them all the way.

COMPANY I

Company I had stayed in place until late in the afternoon. Just after noon a sniper with a machine pistol fired from the flank on the house used as a company CP. S/Sgt. WILFORD A. BAUER took a squad out to try to locate the sniper. Before he had gone twenty yards from the CP he was hit twice and seriously wounded. The firing cased before the sniper could be located.

In the afternoon the company was ordered to march forward with the battalion to a point southeast of Crespellano. The Germans had been routed from the mountains, and the drive across the Po Valley had begun.

COMPANY K

When the battalion was ordered to march, bypassing resistance, to the valley of the Po, Company K marched in the battalion column, Company L leading, with the 1st Battalion on their right. Company L had some minor action which delayed the column, but K was not committed. For the first day since the 14th, the men of the company didn't have to leave wounded comrades by the wayside. Company K marched over Mt. Avezzano and followed a draw north all the way to the valley, bivouacking around Martignone.

COMPANY M

Company M enjoyed a morning of loafing around in the sunshine. A group of men showed up, and two of them surprised the soldiers by speaking real "United States." They were Air Corps men who had bailed out over that territory and had been living with the Partisans. As far as they were concerned, the day we arrived was V-E day for them.

Most of the company had spent the night near the foot of the mountain, and in the late afternoon went to the top by jeep, and then took off on foot again down over the north slope and along the creek bed through dense underbrush. They spent the night on the edge of the valley near Ca Nova.

Situation at the End of the Seventh Day

After dark, the whole 3rd Battalion set up a perimeter defense on the last gentle slope of San Martino, near Martignone, and the men dug in for the night. The 2nd Battalion "buttoned up" on the last slopes further west, while the 1st Battalion spent the night out on the strangely flat valley. Those men of the regiment who were still alive had reached their goal—the valley of the Po. For months they had fought through the mountains. During this time, except for a few who had gone on pass to Rome or Florence, no one had ever seen flat terrain. Now, in the dark, they were resting on the edge of that unreal-looking expanse of green carpet they had glimpsed the past two days, and had thought about since the beginning of the campaign. The 10th Mountain Division had truly broken through, even as General HAYS had declared the morning after Captain JOSEPH J. DUNCAN's death, the 18th, the same day they moved down on Savigno. There had been much fighting since then, however, and it had been difficult to recognize any breakthrough. Now it was realized that the mountain fighters had opened the way through the mountains, a way for the tanks and vehicles to pass through out into their own element—the easy flatlands.

That was the night of the 20th, yet the 21st was to be for the 3rd Battalion perhaps the greatest fighting day of its career. The regiment was not to stop at the edge of the plain, but to march on foot across the valley, abreast and to the left of the 86th Mountain infantry. The 3rd Battalion, in reserve on the 20th, drew the assignment of leading. Their objective was a bridge north of Bastiglia across the Secchia River. It was thirty miles away. Thirty miles straight north into enemy territory with nothing out on their left, not even a friendly mountain to climb on to see what was coming at them.

PO VALLEY TO LAKE GARDA (21 APRIL — 2 MAY)

EIGHTH DAY—21 APRIL

Field Order No. 12 came in by telephone from Division at 0400 the morning of the 21st. The Division was to advance in a wedge formation to seize and hold the Bomporto Bridge over the Panaro River. The 86th Mountain Infantry was to lead in the center, with the 85th echeloned to the right and the 87th to the left. The spearhead unit was to be known as "Task Force Duff." It included, in addition to the 86th, a platoon of TDs, a company of tanks, and a company of the 126th Engineers.

In accordance with this order, the 87th column on the left was to be made up of the 3d Battalion and one platoon of TDs as advance guard, followed by Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the 1st Battalion, with TDs interspersed, and the 2nd Battalion marching in the rear to protect the left flank and rear of the Division. Even a march cadence was indicated: 104 steps per minute with a fifteen-minute break the first hour, and ten minutes per hour thereafter, so that the troops would not become exhausted by too rapid marching. The initial point (IP) for the march was the canal at the town of Calcara at 0800. The objective was twenty-five miles from the IP, just beyond the town of Bastiglia. All troops were instructed to bypass resistance. The mission was to get deep into the enemy territory, and behind the German forces.

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3rd Battalion—March to Bastiglia

COMPANY K—PROVVIDENZA ROADBLOCK

Company K loaded in trucks at 0700 and reached the IP at Calcara by 0800. The men had no chow, but they forded the canal by the blown bridge on time, and marched off into the unknown valley behind the reinforced 2nd Platoon. The leading element under the command of Lieutenant ROBERT S. KELLAR was point for the whole regimental combat team. The 86th combat team was moving parallel to them on the right, and the 85th still farther to the right, but the Division was spearheading in the flat, green valley, pushing into the unknown. Every mile gained would make their position less secure.

The 2nd Platoon, marching in staggered column, was led by two scouts and a jeep and supported from the rear by three TDs. The platoon moved in a generally westward direction to Madna della Provvidenza, a mile and a half from Calcara, without incident. The 2nd Platoon by 0930 had gotten halfway through town, and the leading jeep and flanking scouts were 250 yards beyond town when the scouts were fired on from a house 150 yards to the front. The TDs immediately broke from the rear and pulled in behind houses. The jeep was knocked out, and Lieutenant KELLAR was wounded by machine gun fire. Then Pvt. JOHN G. VASILIADES was hit by rifle grenade fragments as the leading squad started to move to the right flank. All three squads were pinned down by a wave of rifle grenades. Two Germans then jumped through the hedge not five yards from the disabled jeep, and set up a machine gun in a ditch. The 2nd Platoon had started to withdraw from under the fire and were 25 yards back. Sgt. PHILIP THURSTON in the ditch shot one of the Germans, but the other got the gun set up and opened fire. He commenced spraying the area with lead. He fired right down the ditch he was in and killed Pvt. JOHN CAMILLO and wounded Pvt. JAMES A. MIEHL who were in front and behind Sgt. THURSTON flat in the ditch. All the while, rifle grenades were landing all the way back to town. These killed Pfc. HAROLD R. GOULD, and wounded Sgt. MAX HOROWITZ, Pfc. PHILIP A. STREHLOU, and Pvt. LOUIS G. CAPUTO, and slightly wounded Pfc. DONALD D. JUDD. T/5 HERBERT W.

A. SPAULDING was killed by machine gun fire. Somehow Sgt. THURSTON got out of the ditch and back to town. Here he reorganized, and breaking his way into some buildings, got the men off the streets and set up a defense. Pvt. STREHLOU, although wounded, was able to walk back and give an account of the situation to Captain EDDY and Colonel WORKS. The colonel ordered the reluctant TD crews forward under threat of courts-martial.

A wide flanking movement to the left (west) was ordered for the 3rd Platoon at this time. Then feeling that this was not the most effective plan, the 1st Platoon with attached machine guns was pushed up to the left of the road in the field, and the 3rd rerouted onto the right side of the road to advance on the double, and attack the houses from which the fire was coming. Two prisoners picked up in town revealed that there were 110 Nazis at the houses who intended to resist to the death.

The platoons advanced rapidly, and by fire and movement, delivered heavy fire on the German position. New rifle fire from the right rear of the 3rd Platoon killed T/5 WILLIAM L. HAMILTON, and wounded S/Sgt. ANDREW O. FAULKNER and Pvt. EDWARD CICHORSKI, but the platoon continued under the heavy fire. Pfc. WILLIAM WENTWORTH was killed by rifle fire.

Then one TD inched up to where the middle squad of the 2nd Platoon had originally been. Prisoners started popping up from the roadside after first throwing their pistols out in front of them. Half of the 3rd Platoon, swinging wide, ran all the way around and closed in on the German rear. Then they killed Germans when they ran right up to an enemy mortar squad in action. They captured fifteen prisoners, including the German commanding officer who declared that the rest of his company wished to surrender. The platoons were ordered to cease fire, and the officer entered the buildings and brought out the rest of his company. The complete prisoner bag was 65 officers and men, a complete German company either killed or captured. The TDs guarded the prisoners while the company reorganized.

Company I had bypassed Company K at about 1030, and later when Company I became engaged in a firefight, Company L went by and took the lead at about 1500. Company K marched all the rest of the day following Company L. When Company L was held up at dusk at the bridge near Navicello, K was in between the action there and the disastrous bombs dropped on the tail of the column by a German bomber. The spirits of the weary men were greatly improved by the cheering populace so generous with their wine, bread, cheese, onions and embraces. To the plodding infantryman, this rapid, easy movement, even though on foot, through welcoming throngs was an incredible experience.

COMPANY I—TANKS AT MANZOLINO

Company I was shuttled by trucks to the IP at Calcara right after K. Here they detrucked and forded the canal. When Company K hit the roadblock about five miles from Calcara, and was committed in a firefight, Company I was ordered to move cross-country on an azimuth of 340 degrees to bypass this resistance. They were supported by TDs. They soon ran into heavy fire coming from a hedgerow 200 yards away. All three rifle platoons were pinned down, but the 3rd Platoon managed to pass through the others and flank around to the left. Then the 2nd Squad of the 3rd Platoon was sent forward to drive some snipers from a house. When the company was originally pinned down, the TDs, instead of neutralizing the enemy small arms fire with their guns, backed up about 200 yards. They refused to go ahead. Then they followed the 3rd Platoon in their flanking movement to the left, and were ordered to fire into the house before the 2nd Squad advanced. They wouldn't fire. Then as the squad approached the building, without TD fire, the TDs opened up over their heads, knocking the men to the ground with the blast. The enemy fled from the building, leaving a burning barn behind them. Italians appeared from

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hiding places and, in great alarm and agitation, jabbered in Italian about saving the “bambinos” in the burning barn. In some danger to themselves, a few men broke in through the flames, and a litter of little pigs raced out of the barn into the arms of the joyful Italians. These were their “bambinos,” and the grateful natives rewarded the soldiers with wine.

The company continued on slowly, the TDs having difficulty with mud in the ditches. They were ordered to stay up with the lead platoon and Lieutenant ROBERT P. STEWART was put in one of the vehicles to better control them. One became stuck in a ditch and another stayed back to pull it out, so that the company reached Highway 9 with only one TD. This was ordered to fire down the road at enemy machine guns that were pouring fire up the road. The TD fired two rounds of 76, and warmed up his machine gun with some fire, and the company was able to cross the road in a series of rushes. Beyond this main highway from Modena to Bologna ran the railroad embankment. A German machine gun crew was set up just over the embankment and threatened to hold up the company. Pfc. ROY D. TAYLOR on his own initiative charged over the railroad tracks, and shooting from the hip, wounded the three members of the crew, and captured the machine gun.

The TDs having caught up, the company continued their advance to Manzolino. They picked up occasional prisoners, but ran into no opposition. With the 3rd Platoon leading, the company was passing to the left of Manzolino still moving on the azimuth. Abreast of the town, they reached a canal which the TDs couldn't cross. They then turned right to go through the town where there were several bridges. In the distance, three German tanks had been seen running parallel to them and disappearing into the town ahead of them. The 3rd Platoon, followed by the 2nd, then the TDs, and the 1st, entered Manzolino. A hundred yards beyond the town, the squad leader of the leading squad, Sgt. CHESTER SUGIERSKI, noticed a swirl of dust rising from behind a building down the road ahead of the column. He turned and yelled back down the column, “Tanks!”

The men hit the ditches on the roadside, and the TDs wheeled around and rolled back to town. The nose of the tank slowly emerged from behind the building at the head of the road bend. Its gun fired before it had cleared the building enough to point down the road, and the first round landed harmlessly to the right of the troops in the field. Poking its nose out a little further, the next round hit the last building on the edge of town right amidst the troops. Pfc. WILLIAM “Steering Wheel” PALMER was lightly wounded in the leg. He refused evacuation, and the fragment was still in his leg two months later.

The 1st and 3rd Squads of the 3rd Platoon, out ahead of the company, were pinned helplessly in the ditch before the tanks. Pfc. JOHNNY GRANTHAM was wounded here. With complete disregard for his own safety, Pfc. GEORGE E. CABEZUT rose up from the ditch and fired three rifle grenades right at the tank. Pfc. JOHN E. DUDA fired a single grenade in the same manner. Then the tank depressed its muzzle and fired back point blank at these two brave men. CABEZUT was instantly killed, and DUDA seriously wounded by the tank which was straddling the very ditch they were in. Another tank came out from behind the houses, and six or eight rounds smashed down the road. Pfc. ROY L. MCBRIDE was fatally wounded, and GEORGE CABEZUT's brother, Pfc. CLARENCE H. CABEZUT, was wounded. Also S/Sgt. GORDON C. JOHNSON, Sgt. JOHN J. MURPHY, JR., Pfc. ROY D. TAYLOR, Pfc. JAMES D. MAMARCHEV, and Pfc. WILLARD H. MILLS, all from the 3rd Platoon. In the weapons platoon, Pfc. GEORGE D. TOUNG was wounded.

Sgt. CHESTER SUGIERSKI of the 1st Squad and Sgt. FRED BURCH of the 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, opened fire from the ditch with rifles. From behind them, machine guns and bazookas joined in, and a hail of fire bounced off the two tanks. Then the leading tank moved down the

road towards the riflemen of the 3rd Platoon, and they ducked back and flattened out in the ditch. A light tank across the canal moved up from their left, crossed the bridge right beside them, and moved up the road a few feet from their heads as they lay in the ditch. After it had passed, they resumed fire and all three tanks moved off as small arms peppered their steel sides. The TDs never fired a shot!

The wounded TAYLOR, during the engagement, helped drag back the more seriously wounded, under fire. Sgt. BURCH and Sgt. SUGIERSKI carried back two other wounded men from the ditch. The TDs, which had withdrawn 400 yards from the enemy, crept up 200 yards. The "536" radios were not working at this time. Captain RIORDAN stood by the TDs and yelled at them to fire. They claimed they couldn't see. After the three tanks had withdrawn down the road, enemy small arms fire cracked around the last house where the wounded had been collected. A "*paisan*" was shot through the heart just as he stepped out of the doorway. T/5 JACK PITTMAN got the wounded to a place of safety behind the house, and a medical jeep raced through the town to the house and evacuated the wounded under heavy fire.

Colonel WORKS ordered elements of the 1st Platoon in town to move into the fields to the right. The TDs were ordered with them; two went and one stayed behind the town. Out ahead of the 1st Platoon, Lieutenant MAURICE EWING, Sgt. RALPH MASSEY, Pfc. TED MILLER, Pfc. ROBERT M. DUDLEY, and Pfc. EDWARD W. VAN ROMER moved off 100 yards looking for a ditch, just as an enemy tank drove up to not more than 100 yards from them. It fired and nicked the barrel of the first TD. The crew fled. The second TD refused to fire because it would "disclose their position," they said. This crew fled also. Then the enemy tank shot at the handful of men hiding in the shallow ditch with Lieutenant EWING. The shells hit the bank beyond the ditch. The men worked down the ditch into a creek and lay in the water. Pfc. TED MILLER, a company cook, begged for hand grenades with which to rush and attack the tank. The rest of the squad refused to give them to him. Then the company opened up on the tank from town, and rifle and small arms fire hammered its armor plating. Although the tank was completely undamaged, the Nazi crew abandoned the tank and ran off into the woods. The TD crews, who had fled from their armor, ran amongst the riflemen asking for a bazooka with which to engage the tank. Before the tank crew had fled, Pfc. WILLARD M. NICHOLS, JR. borrowed a rifle with an antitank grenade device and, running out into the field, fired two shots at the tank. NICHOLS had been wounded on Mt. Mosca, but had refused evacuation. (He finally had to go to the hospital when wounded again on 27 April.) Altogether, seven tanks had been sighted from the town that day, but the German tanks seemed to be as non-aggressive as our own tank destroyers. Eight Germans were captured in the action.

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The order came from the battalion commander to "pull out and bypass." Company L had passed by both K and I, and was leading to the north. Company I moved in behind and K followed, all in route march, along the road.

Just before dark, while Company L was held up as they "hounded" a retreating field artillery battalion at a bridge, the column was bombed. As the plane initially passed over, the machine guns started to open up on it. Then it was identified as an American A-20. Someone yelled, "Cease firing!" A smoke grenade was thrown for identification, and it is possible that some of the men rose up from their hastily chosen positions in the roadside and fields. In any case, the plane came in low as the firing ceased and dropped four bombs, killing fourteen men in the battalion and wounding thirty. In Company I, Cpl. SOLON R. LINDSEY, Pfc. JOHN LOWATTI, Pfc. CARL C. PRATER, and Pfc. JOSEPH M. MARTINEZ were killed. Wounded were S/Sgt. PAUL E. KEMP, S/Sgt. GEORGE V. GEISS, Pfc. ROBERT W. LAKE, Pfc. JAMES H. MORRIS, Pfc.

EDWARD E. MARTNICK, and Pfc. MELVIN R. TULLBURG. The plane was an American plane, but later it was learned that it was a captured one with a German pilot and German bombs.

COMPANY L—ON TO BASTIGLIA

Company L was given only fifteen minutes notice before the weary men were out on the road marching and shuttling the five miles to the IP at Calcara. Captain EDWARD N. HATHAWAY, having reported to Regiment the previous afternoon, took command at daylight. The company forded the canal by the blown bridge some time after 0800. The company was in battalion reserve. Company K struck the roadblock at 0930 and fought at Madna della Provvidenza. Then Company I took the lead and fought up to Manzolino, where they met the seven enemy tanks. At 1500, Company L bypassed Company I. For four hours Company L led the battalion unopposed. Their weary spirits picked up under the excitement of their rapid progress through village after village of cheering people who plied the “liberators” with wine, cheese, bread, onions, and even flowers.

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At 1900 the company was approaching the bridge at Navicello when they came upon an unsuspecting column of a retreating German field artillery battalion. They were marching, and had packhorses with them. The TDs were pulled up and pounded their column. One enemy horse-drawn vehicle was blown up by TD fire. Then at twilight, as the head of the column reached the bridge, machine gun and rifle fire hit them, but some men rushed on across the bridge before it could be blown. The TDs followed across and fired into more of the retreating artillerymen. Another column of horse-drawn German vehicles was sighted coming toward the bridge from the right rear. The 1st Platoon got into position and fired down the road, assisted by TDs. Fifty German artillerymen were killed here by the TDs, machine gun and rifle fire. The head of our own column was pinned down by friendly supporting machine gun fire where the road turned right just beyond the bridge.

While the head of the column was held up by this action, tragedy struck further back near Bagazzano. Just at dusk the enemy-piloted American bomber roared over the column, came back and bombed the column as the men lay scattered in the ditches and fields. Of the fourteen deaths and thirty wounded, Company L lost Pfc. RAFAEL BALDOR, JR., Pfc. FRANK J. LUIF, and T/5 MICHAEL G. NENNIG. Wounded were S/Sgt. KENNETH G. SHANER, Sgt. LEWIS HAUGE, and Pfc. ALBERT E. SORIA.

At 2100 the column pushed on again from the bridge. In the dark they passed dead Germans, horses, oxen, and all kinds of abandoned and destroyed equipment and guns. Down the road, as the moon rose, a round from a TD fired a haystack where some Germans were seen to run and hide. They were burned to death.

3rd Battalion—Battle of Bastiglia

COMPANY L

Company L was still leading the battalion as they reached the southern edge of Bastiglia at 2330. At the bridge crossing into the center of town they could see groups of Germans walking around in the square, and standing around in groups talking. Some of them just across the bridge waved amicably to the Americans. Individual German soldiers kept pedaling by on bicycles, clearly believing themselves miles from the front lines. At first they were mistaken for friendly Partisans because of their nonchalance. But in the moonlight the lead scout recognized the uniform of the Nazis. He yelled to them, ordering them across the bridge with their hands up. The nearest group standing in front of a building, the same way a group gathers outside a corner drug store in the United States, took this command with good humor. They laughed and

talked among themselves as though it were a joke. Finally one of them yelled in alarm, "Americans!"

A pistol shot rang out. Colonel WORKS, up with the scout leading the battalion, thought he hit one of the surprised Nazis. Then the scouts returned the German rifle fire. Pfc. ROBERT C. DILLON, a BAR man and one of the lead scouts, was wounded by the German fire. Lieutenant EARNEST W. RICKENBACKER, who had joined the company that morning, led his 1st Platoon forward to the bridge. They took positions in the woods across the road from the canal. He stood by the south end of the bridge firing his pistol into the Germans now scurrying around across the canal. His pistol jammed just as two Germans from behind him started to run by him to cross the bridge into the town. As they went by, he snatched the rifle away from one, and raising it quickly, shot the fleeing German in the back.

Next the bazookas were called up, and the TDs pushed across the bridge, pausing on the far side. Two Krauts on a bicycle came riding up the road from the east. Thirty-five yards away in the moonlight they were fired on. They fell off the bike, and one came up and leaned against a TD as though it were German. He was shot through the neck by RICKENBACKER. The Germans had been driven back from the canal, and Lieutenant GUY B. BLOOD's 3rd Platoon passed through the 1st, which by now was badly scattered in the woods south of the canal. Company M firing their machine guns through the woods had scattered and pinned them. The 3rd Platoon sent squads up either side of the buildings, and they were met beyond the square by a moving German personnel carrier. It turned north up the street, was fired on, but kept going. Another personnel carrier followed towing a field piece, and another personnel carrier followed it. The TDs opened up from the square, smashing round after round head on into the vehicles, spewing the flaming occupants out onto the road, and lighting up their own side street. The TDs next moved up to the far edge of town, and from there fired out into houses suspected of covering the German machine guns. After a few minutes of this, a highly excited Italian ran up stark naked except for a flaring coat. Six rounds had gone screaming through his bedroom. As an innocent bystander, that was enough for him, and he had gotten out of bed in some alarm.

The TD then withdrew back to the square. Here some confusion had developed. Seven enemy came in from the left and surrendered. Then some unit in the rear started pouring fire into the square over the heads of the men of the 3rd Platoon. The captured Krauts scattered under this fire as Lieutenant BLOOD fired after them with his carbine. Colonel WORKS ordered Company L on out of town, and Lieutenant BLOOD got his leading squad out 250 to 300 yards. Here he was fired on again by machine gun fire from a house across the field to the left. The TD was called up. As it got into position behind the leading squad close up against a building, a *Panzerfaust* bulls-eyed it twice. Captain EDWARD N. HATHAWAY, who had assumed command that very morning, was leaning against the TD when it was hit, and the blow sent him reeling back just as a shutter fell off the house and struck him on the head. He was half-stunned, but he continued to run the company. The *Panzerfausts* started pounding in. Pfc. RAYMOND W. BIGGS and Pfc. EMIL J. SMERCAK were wounded and two others were less seriously hit. The squad withdrew under BAR covering fire back to the north edge of town.

Back in town there was great confusion. Fire was still coming from the rear in increasing volume. Captain HATHAWAY was trying to organize a platoon combat team to push on through the opposition, when Colonel WORKS ordered a skirmish line to be built up. Companies K and I were by this time up in town too, and everyone was shooting all over, from the rear as well as the front.

It was now about 0300, and the men had culminated their long drive through the mountains with more than twenty hours of continuous marching and fighting over 25 miles of flatland.

Their great fatigue had been staved off somewhat during the day by the excitement of the throngs of happy Italians. Many were kept going by the plentiful *vino*, but all were reaching a stage of complete physical exhaustion. Sometimes men would fire, and only the sound of their own piece going off would snap them back to consciousness.

Colonel WORKS was everywhere urging the staggering men forward. The battle swayed back and forth through the town, a volley of *Panzerfausts* driving back the soldiers in a mad wave. Then the TDs firing blindly back as the soldiers moved out again. At one time Colonel WORKS, as the TDs were withdrawing against his direct command, in sheer anger tore off his helmet and hurled it against the TD, which thereupon went forward again. The Germans were still thick inside the town, but apparently badly disorganized. Many times Germans would be upstairs and Americans down, firing up through the ceilings. Why there were not more American casualties, even from friendly fire, no one will ever know. For sheer volume of fire in a small confined area, Bastiglia between 0030 and 0300 was a place of terror.

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At 0300 Company I was preparing to bypass the town and strike on to the bridge over the Secchia River, the regimental objective, two miles beyond the town. At this time, Lieutenant Colonel WORKS radioed to the regimental commander, Colonel FOWLER, "Are reorganized and pushing on to objective." The order came back for him to "dispose your troops for defense, and rest."

Company L was withdrawn at 0400. At this time casualties seemed to be heavy; soldiers lay around in the gutters and against buildings in the grotesque positions of the dead. They were not dead, but deep in the sleep of exhaustion. The company re-crossed the canal and bivouacked at about 0430. Two 88-mm guns with half-tracks had been captured, and two and a half truck-loads of German dead were carted away by the Italians in the morning. Our casualties had been extremely light. Besides the three wounded mentioned from Company L, one man from Battalion Headquarters was wounded: S/Sgt. THEODORE C. MERRITT. That was all compared with the mounds of German dead. S/Sgt. MERRITT, mess sergeant of Headquarters Company, had tired of the inactivity of the rear area and had joined each company as it fought during the day. In anger he single-handedly tackled an enemy strong point, but was stopped and finally wounded by the same round that shook up Captain HATHAWAY.

COMPANY K

Some time after midnight, Company K entered Bastiglia behind Company L. The men's exhaustion, staved off all day by the stimulation of the triumphant march, was now claiming them. Many were in a half stupor from sheer fatigue. A few had kept themselves going on *vino*, and their torpor may have been aided by this, but most of the men were just "bushed" from the long, continuous, day-after-day struggle topped by this final 25-mile march. Consequently, the wild confusion in the square was no more than could be expected. The battle-massed lines swayed back and forth like the battle lines of ancient Persia. When a German bazooka fired, everyone surged to the rear; then they pushed forward again firing wildly in all directions. The TDs tried to hide behind the infantry, but the infantry were in too flighty a mood to be hid behind. Every time a TD scurried to the rear, twenty-five infantry men piled on top of it, "If you are leaving, so are we!"

Some of the officers ran around trying to organize the men in the flashing darkness. A mortar man, asked why he wasn't firing his carbine, handed his mortar to the officer saying, "Here, hold this." He fired a few shots to windward, and then took his mortar back.

Another man sitting on the curb firing his rifle into the air was asked what he was doing. "Making a helluva lot of noise, like everyone else," he answered, and squeezed the trigger again for emphasis.

Prisoners, enemy, and Italian civilians moved in and out of the dark buildings with the soldiers, all in equal confusion. Captain EDDY went to sleep while receiving an order. Piles of grotesque bodies, seemingly dead, in the gutters and against the walls, were in reality sleeping men. Only the sound of their own firing kept others conscious. Yet the firepower was terrible for the Germans, who were surrendering in wild confusion. One German surrendered to an American sergeant, and then seeing the sergeant unarmed, went back into the building and got his own rifle and handed it to him.

At 0400 the troops were ordered back out of Bastiglia and bivouacked south of the canal. They rested most of the next day.

COMPANY I

At midnight, Companies I and K joined L in the furious battle for Bastiglia. During the four hours of wild firing, the near-exhausted men were kept in some semblance of organization by the fine efforts of Lieutenant ALEXANDER JONES, the company executive officer. Pfc. ATWELL G. AUSTIN was deafened by German bazooka fire. Although they suffered no other casualties, Company I, during the long struggle between the confused and sometimes drunken Germans and the weary and often sleeping Americans, was swept back and forth in the crowded square with the rest of the battalion. Due to excellent control amidst the confusion, they were able to withdraw around 0330, when ordered to bypass and swing around the right flank to the north of town. They were moving forward west of town toward the regimental objective, the bridge over the Secchia, when Regiment ordered the advance halted and the men to rest. Company I spent the rest of the night in defensive positions on the west side of town.

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COMPANY M

Early in the morning Company M moved on vehicles out into the flatland behind the rifle companies of the leading 3rd Battalion. Here began a new type of warfare for the men, a warfare of movement and excitement. Company M opened the shooting by missing a ford across a canal near Calcara and finding itself alone in a firefight with enemy snipers. It was no place for a heavy weapons company, so they got out as fast as they could. This wasn't easy because of the cross-crossing pattern of drainage ditches, which blocked the progress of the vehicles. Dashing about with machine guns lashed on the hoods of jeeps was reminiscent of gang fights during Prohibition—and it was that kind of fighting. The *paisans* tried to tell the men where the *Tedeschi* were, but were not of much help, as they were scattered in small groups on all sides.

An extremely attractive *signorina* showed up in one of the farmyards in which the men were "Kraut hunting." For the moment, the war was forgotten, and from the assemblage of GIs, it looked like "mail call." This was fairly typical of occurrences throughout the Po campaign. One moment the men would be basking in the role of "liberator" with *vino* glasses and the local populace applauding them, and the next moment they would be jerked back to reality by the sound of firing ahead at a roadblock.

After that little episode, Company M rejoined the battalion in the column and took off again. The battalion went on again against scattered, but often stubborn, resistance, zigzagging across fields and through farmyards. They crossed Highway 9 and went on to Manzolino, where they hit heavy resistance and tangled with German tanks. Sgt. JAMES TOOMEY put a tank out of action here by the tremendous volume of fire from his .30-caliber machine gun.

After the firefight at Manzolino, the battalion quickly reorganized and soon was on the road again. The weary rifle soldiers plodded on and looked with envy on Company M with its jeeps. However, the frequent cries of "Machine guns forward!" showed how necessary the transportation was in this "blitz" type of warfare.

Approaching the Panaro River, the column was attacked by an enemy plane near Bagazzano. The .30-caliber machine guns and some .50-calibers opened up on it, but the plane was able to lay its bombs and fly off. Killed was the splendid company executive officer, First Lieutenant WILLIAM D. FLOYD, who had been with the company since the early days of the first year at Camp Hale.

Shortly afterward, the head of the column was engaged in a sharp firefight at the bridge. This was still intact, although prepared for demolition. There were teller mines lying on the surface. Wiping out the resistance here, the company continued on to the town of Bastiglia, reaching there after dark and taking an active part in the hectic battle in the square.

OTHER CASUALTIES

The gun platoon of 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company felt the tragic bombing at Bagazzano keenly. Five men were instantly killed: Sgt. WID R. CORN, Pfc. GEORGE H. HEYDENREICH, Pfc. EUGENE J. PIOTROWSKI, Pfc. SAMUEL H. STONER, and Pfc. WAYNE WILLIAMS. Pfc. OSCAR W. HEMMER was fatally wounded. These men were moving their gun into position when the plane came over. They made a dash for cover, but one bomb landed right on them. Wounded were: Sgt. WILLIAM H. FRICKE*, Sgt. MERLE D. MEREDITH, and Pfc. EMIL M. MATAYA.

In Bastiglia that night, the mess sergeant, S/Sgt. THEODORE C. MERRITT, in anger tackled single-handedly an enemy strong point. He was stopped when wounded by an enemy bazooka shell.

During the morning, two drivers, Pfc. JOHN WILLIS and Pfc. ALEX GUSKO, were missing with their 2½-ton trucks. With them was an American serving as an officer in the British army, Lieutenant GLENN. They disappeared during the shuttle movement to Calcara. Their story was revealed later by WILLIS [see page 135], but GUSKO was killed that morning.

1st Battalion—To Bastiglia

The long march into the valley was largely uneventful for the 1st Battalion, as far as fighting went. They worked cross-country two or three miles behind the leading 3rd Battalion, with Companies A and C searching out the houses of the cheering Italians and picking up scattered prisoners. But the 3rd Battalion was moving faster ahead of them, so the 1st Battalion was swung back on the road into the triumphant column.

Like the rest of the columns, they captured startled Germans who blundered into their ranks. Once, after dark, on the bridge at Navicello, they had a bazooka round thrown at them, and a high-velocity shell whizzed down the road between their files, but throughout the day they were hit by nothing but flowers, cheese, bread, onions, and the omnipresent wine.

Near midnight, on the 21st, the column was held up south of Bastiglia. The 3rd Battalion, which had led all day, had started the four-hour struggle for the town. Company D had just crossed some railroad tracks, turned sharply right, and elements of the company were resting beside the little railroad station a hundred yards or so from the crossing. There was the sound of occasional firing up ahead, interspersed with short periods of silence, and now and then maneu-

* Sgt. WILLIAM H. FRICKE died of these wounds in a military hospital in Pennsylvania on July 14, 1946.

vering tanks could be heard in the darkness. A bright moon offered some visibility, and all was quiet around the railroad station. Off in the distance, the shrill-piping noise of a European train became increasingly louder. The men, resting in vehicles along the roadside, listened idly as the insistent whistling came closer and closer. A train on the battlefield was an incredible thought, yet they couldn't think of anything else it could be. As the whistle got louder and louder, they questioned each other in wonder. The long convoy of vehicles streamed back across the tracks for miles behind them. With whistle still shrilling, the little freight train came clicking up the track, passing neatly between two vehicles at the crossing and on to the station. Someone opened fire from near the station, and the train ground to a stop. Most of the men in the convoy, however, were too surprised to take any action, only diving into the ditches as short bursts of automatic fire came from the train. Then the whole column opened up on the train from both sides of the crossing. Figures could be seen jumping from the train trying to escape. Lieutenant KENNETH W. ALPERT killed one German, and Lieutenant ANTSELM R. BRADLEY another, before they had gotten more than a few feet. The two-man Italian train crew immediately surrendered. First Lieutenant GEORGE F. EARLE, in the little station where the Italians were questioned, found all in order: tickets were in the racks; change box in the cash drawer; the rubber stamps of Fascist officialdom were each in place; and a telephone rang incessantly. The Italians claimed a train was due in the station at any moment, and the phone was ringing to locate the stalled train. Back at the crossing, the convoy had literally been cut in two by the rear end of the train, stationary on the tracks. Then the rear four boxcars were uncoupled, and a crowd of soldiers rolled them back down the tracks to clear the road.

The noise of fire from Bastiglia had swollen into a great crescendo by this time, but the telephone in the little station seemed louder and continued to ring, unconcerned with the battle nearby. Even after the telephone was pulled out from the wall, it continued to ring insistently, until the railroad bridge a mile to the east blew into the air, taking the wires with it. This really unimportant incident with the train, whose boxcars and flatcars were loaded with garden loam, grain, and a small amount of ammunition, appealed to the men's fancy because it was so incongruous. The story of "the train" became a more important topic than many of the vital battles fought during the offensive.

2nd Battalion—March Across the Valley

At dawn of the 21st, the 2nd Battalion marched down into the Po Valley in column of companies to Calcara, with Bastiglia 25 miles further away. Because of the uncertainty of the situation in front, Lieutenant Colonel JOHN SCHMELZER, regimental executive, held the battalion beyond Calcara until he received word that the leading 3rd Battalion was making good progress. When Company E moved out, the company on a front of four to five hundred yards, they flushed eleven Germans from one dugout. Acting Sergeant ARMAND LEVESQUE, while rounding up these prisoners, noticed one arrogant Nazi who still felt himself to be a superman and expected treatment accordingly. The Nazi made a break for freedom, and the sergeant shot him through the leg.

At about 1930 the lead scouts were fired on by machine guns. The 3rd Platoon built up a line of fire with rifles, machine guns, BARs, and bazookas. They advanced under this fire, and were even supported by the mortars. The enemy machine gun was knocked out; two Germans were killed, two wounded, and the rest fled. Italians revealed that 15 Germans had just fled from the right front. Captain LE GRAND PENDREY moved over onto the right with Sgt. ANDREW GARIHAN's squad and pursued the enemy by the use of machine guns and the company mortars. These two actions were the first use of Company E mortars. Still moving on an azimuth of 340 degrees, the company hit their crossroads objective right on the nose. The company reas-

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sembled on the road, and in a battalion column followed the 3rd and 1st Battalions—marching all night to Bastiglia. After daybreak, the company dug in around houses south of Bastiglia, and took some much-needed rest.

Company F's part in the drive was simply a long 32-mile march. Only the excitement of the cheering "liberated" Italian people, and their gifts of *vino* kept the weary soldiers going. Occasionally there was shellfire, sniper fire, and frequently fighting nearby, but mostly it was straight marching for mile after mile down the road, first by day, then all night to a point south of Bastiglia.

At dawn Company G had marched into the Po Valley and set up a roadblock at Muffa. They were relieved there by the 10th Anti-tank Battalion at 1200, and began the forced march following the rest of the regiment, which lasted all night. Pfc. TURIDDU F. CARTAINO was wounded by artillery at Fossa Vecchia, just beyond Calcara.

Company H's machine guns were attached to rifle companies. The mortar platoon followed the battalion in the long march, reaching the battalion bivouac area at 0600 on 22 April.

Situation at the End of the Eighth Day

On the morning of the 22nd of April back at Fifth Army headquarters, a general addressing the Army staff at the daily orientation meeting indicated the big spotlighted situation map behind him and said: "Gentlemen, this morning the Armored Division has lost ground in the mountains; while on the other hand, the Mountain Infantry is racing across the valley!"

NINTH DAY—22 APRIL

The Division plan for the 22nd was to move by all available motors and by marching, on one road to the Po River near San Benedetto Po. Task Force DUFF was to lead early in the morning, to be followed by the 1st Battalion, 87th, in trucks. Then two battalions of the 85th were to march. The 616th FA battalion was to furnish all its available trucks to haul the 2nd Battalion and the 3rd Battalion, 87th, in a shuttle movement, and then close at the Po with its own guns and personnel.

1st Battalion—To the Po River

On the 22nd, the 1st Battalion followed Task Force DUFF in trucks and shared in the celebrations the long column received in every town. Frequently the confusion of the enemy was demonstrated when some of their elements blundered into the battalion column. As Company D, well back in the column, approached the bridge beyond Bastiglia, two German trucks came in from a right fork and surrendered in bewilderment. Immediately afterward, three more trucks appeared across the bridge coming straight toward the Americans. The men in the near vehicles jumped out and yelled to the Germans to surrender. The surprised enemy poured from their vehicles and opened fire with machine guns and burp guns from behind an embankment. Then, as the size of the American column became apparent to them, they surrendered.

The battalion arrived on the south bank of the Po River by midnight. An enemy bombing plane worked over them in the night, but did no damage to their positions around the Battalion CP set up in a farmhouse. In the morning there was some leisure for heating C-rations and cleaning up. On the way to the river the night before, one squad of Company A had been left with a platoon of B to establish a roadblock south of San Benedetto Po.

2nd Battalion—To the Po River

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Meanwhile, tragedy struck Company G. This company, last in the column, had arrived at Bastiglia at 0830 of the 22nd, after marching a distance of 32 miles during the twenty-four hour period. They rested south of town. About 1400, as the men were finishing their C-rations and preparing to load on trucks for the shuttle movement to the Po, four heavy German shells screamed in about the Company CP. The third round hit the corner of the CP building, striking a crowd of men coming out of the house into the courtyard. Killed and wounded lay all over the courtyard. Second Lieutenant STANLEY F. JAZWINSKI was killed, and also Pfc. MELVIN BERNSTEIN, Pvt. CHARLIE I. GREEN and Pvt. ALFRED C. MCDONALD. Pvt. LAWRENCE E. MCARDLE died of his wounds, and two company medics, litter bearers Pfc. ROY G. GAY and T/5 HAROLD S. HARRIS, were killed. Also Pfc. PAUL J. BUCHANAN, a litter bearer of Company E, was killed.

Wounded were: Second Lieutenant RUDOLPH L. MARKER, S/Sgt. ROGER B. COREY, S/Sgt. MAGNE MALMIN, Sgt. WILLIAM M. KENNEDY, JR., Sgt. WILLIAM F. MCGOWAN, T/4 JAMES T. MITCHELL, Pfc. GILBERT H. CYR, Pfc. MAURICE I. DASHEVSKY, Pfc. CALVIN DE BUHR, Pfc. FRANCESCO DE CLARY, Pfc. FRANK ESOLA, Pfc. ROBERT C. GREGORY, Pfc. JOSEPH G. LAMIRANDE, Pfc. LEONARD D. MCATEE, Pfc. LENIN PELLEGRINO, Pfc. GILBERT W. PYLE, Pfc. VIRGIL L. RESLER, and Pfc. RAYMOND M. WIETOR. Two Company G medics were wounded: Pfc. FRANCIS G. GIRARD and Pfc. CALVIN L. LONGSTRETH.

At 1600, the 2nd Battalion entrucked at Bastiglia and rode until nearly sunset. Then they marched until early in the morning to a position 500 yards from the Po River. Some of the battalion elements were able to ride all the way. They drove or marched past the wreckage of the retreating army, lit up at night by burning buildings, vehicles, and exploding ammunition dumps. The prisoners marched to the rear in long columns.

Company E moved to Gorgo, to the left of the divisional position on the south bank of the Po. The rest of the battalion spent the night in foxholes between Gorgo and the river. That night Lieutenant FLOYD E. ALEXANDER of Company F, with a squad and a half of the 3rd Platoon, and a machine gun, were sent out to clear out and guard the left flank at the bend where the river flowed north. He wasn't able to find the battalion again until two days later, the day after the crossing. During the day of the crossing, 23 April, S/Sgt. JOHN E. LANCE was wounded. Before ALEXANDER's men left the south bank, they picked up \$2,000 of German paper money, part of a fabulous amount that had been blown out of a dugout by shellfire.

3rd Battalion—To the Po River

The battalion was alerted to move out at 0800 on the 22nd, but the tired troops were called back five minutes after they started to assemble, because Task Force DUFF had not been able to cross the Secchia River as early as planned. They were alerted again at 1330, and finally began the march at 1700. The battalion column, across the Secchia, stopped for a supper break at Limidi and then marched on toward Carpi.

The men's spirits soared, as the celebrating civilians rose to even greater heights of enthusiasm than the day before, ringing bells, bedecking the soldiers with flowers, embracing and cheering them on. At every house and hamlet, the people ran out with glasses and bottles, white or red *vino*, and sometimes champagne or sparkling burgundy. There were baskets of bread, cheeses, onions, and milk. It was an unforgettable day for the infantryman, whose normal, grim hardships are neither seen nor recognized. Although many accepted the demonstration with the ironic thought that Mussolini's armies might have received the same welcome a few years before, and perhaps the German armies even more recently, nevertheless an occasional sight would touch the heart. Granting the extravagant emotion of these people, the soldiers could appreciate

welcome. The middle-aged man who was leaping up and down in a frenzy, with tears streaming down his cheeks, as the troops passed by hour after hour, and who was still at it well on to midnight, must have been at the very least *pleased* to see the Americans. “He must’ve won a pool on the day we’d arrive,” was the laconic remark of a passing GI. Company M traded cigarettes for bicycles, and a good many German trucks and little Fiats were commandeered.

At 2000, trucks returned from the shuttle of the 2nd Battalion, and the 3rd Battalion loaded thirty-five to forty men on a truck. The trucks roared off in the dust without lights at twenty-five to forty miles per hour. The road was a narrow ribbon of Allied territory, stretching mile after mile deeper into German terrain. All day Task Force DUFF had led the column; however, there was nothing but enemy on either side of the long procession of men and vehicles. Step off the road and one was in Kraut land. Occasionally a stray burp gun would fire toward the road to emphasize this, but mostly the enemy hugged their dugouts for the night and surrendered quietly in the morning. Or else they tapped a driver’s shoulder when the column halted and were searched and waved to the rear. Columns and small groups of prisoners, either with or without Partisan guards, were strung along the road all evening headed south. One group of prisoners even caught the festive spirit, and cheered with their Italian guards as the American soldiers passed.

Situation at the End of the Ninth Day

The march of the 10th Mountain Division on the 22nd, and far into the small hours of the 23rd, brought the infantry of the Division about 35 miles deeper into enemy territory—to the south bank of the Po River.

Brigadier General DUFF, in command of the Task Force, was seriously wounded at San Benedetto Po as he moved on foot to warn a tank crew of mines in the road.

Before daylight of the 23rd, all of the 87th was in position—all very tired: 1st Battalion on the bank of the Po; 2nd Battalion a few hundred yards south near Gorgo; and the 3rd south of the railroad at San Benedetto Po. Early in the morning, Colonel DAVID M. FOWLER, trying to find out what was expected of the 87th during the day, found General HAYS at the Division CP, located within a half-mile of the river. Having reported the locations of the battalions, Colonel FOWLER was told that the 1st Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON would prepare to cross the river about noon; the 2nd Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel EMMETT L. NATIONS should mop up the area around Gorgo; and the 3rd Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS should establish roadblocks south of San Benedetto Po to protect the Division rear. Colonel FOWLER then visited each battalion commander in turn and gave these instructions.

TENTH DAY—23 APRIL

At 1130, General HAYS called Colonel FOWLER to the Division CP and said, “Fowler, the 87th Infantry has the honor of crossing the Po—at 1200. You will establish a bridgehead, first here, then expand to here, and finally here (drawing bold strokes on an overlay). The 85th on the right will support by fire. Tank destroyers, tanks, and the 1125th Field Artillery Battalion (Armored) will support you. Division artillery hasn’t closed. It will support as soon as it arrives. No air support is available until 1330.” In the few remaining minutes, Colonel NATIONS was informed personally, but Colonel WORKS was making reconnaissance for roadblocks, as previously instructed, and his battalion began the march to the river under the executive officer, Major JOHN C. MCKAY. (Colonel WORKS, with his reconnaissance party in two jeeps, received the

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surrender of a large busload of German soldiers—sixty-five in all—and turned them over to the 86th PW cage.)

The crossing of the Po is probably unique in the degree to which preparation for the move was sacrificed in favor of speed. A more detailed study of the river and the enemy situation would have disclosed that enemy antiaircraft artillery west of the river bend would be able to enfilade the positions of the troops waiting on the south bank, as well as the actual crossing of the river. A crossing further east would lessen the effectiveness of this fire. Another important advantage of a lower crossing would have been the avoidance of the crossing of the Mincio River just beyond. The bridges over this deep tributary were vital to the continued advance of the Division.

No study of aerial photos had been made in the regiment. The only reconnaissance was a quick “look-see” from the southern end of the German barge crossing. The enemy situation across on the north bank, overprinted on a G-2 map, was received too late for study. Artillery was rushed into position as it arrived from Bomporto, but no customary, heavy preparation fires were possible. Air support for the initial crossing was completely absent. The air groups were in the stage of moving to forward fields to be within range, and all of their communication equipment was on the move. Finally, there was no bridging equipment immediately available, no powered boats, nor any kind of amphibious vehicle. There was not even a satisfactory telephone cable heavy enough to withstand the broad stream’s current. Therefore during the crossing there were only the unreliable radio messages in code from north to south bank. Maps were not issued in time to be pasted together. The regimental overlays were dashed off in about ten minutes.

General HAYS had first conceived of the possibility of an early crossing the night before. At 1800 of the 22nd, an engineer lieutenant was sent hastily to the rear to see what boats he could get from IV Corps headquarters south of Bomporto. He returned at 0600 of the 23rd with fifty assault boats on five 2½ ton trucks.

General HAYS was standing on the peaceful riverbank at 0830 when word reached him that the boats had arrived five miles away. Fifteen minutes later he made his decision. The river would be crossed without delay. He suggested 0930, but Lieutenant Colonel JOHN R. PARKER, commander of the 126th Mountain Engineer Battalion, declared that 1030 was the earliest the boats could be on the riverbank with engineer crews ready to paddle across.

1st Battalion—Crossing the Po

Colonel WILSON received the orders at 0930, and at 1015 Company A was ordered to “be at the river in ten minutes.” However, the boats were still arriving at the river at 1030; there had not been time for everyone to be ready. H-Hour was changed to 1200 noon. The south bank of the river was low and flat, but three high banks or dikes ran along parallel to the river, fifty to a hundred yards apart. The main blacktopped road ran perpendicular on an embankment of the same height as the dikes, and stopped at an old ferry landing on the river’s edge. Initially, all of the troops of the 87th and their supporting weapons were on the left of this main road to the ferry landing. A battalion of the 85th was in position on the right (east) of this main road, to add their firepower to support the crossing of the 87th.

As the five trucks carrying the fifty boats came down the road, in full view from the surrounding countryside, the first three were directed to the left by the S-3 of the 126th Engineers. They moved along the top of the river dike for about 300 yards, just as enemy artillery fire began cracking into a grove of trees ahead of them, to the west of our troops. This was mostly 20-mm AA flak, the first sign of enemy activity noted all that quiet morning. Four of the machine guns of Company D were set up along the second dike just to the left of the road, and their six 81-mm

mortars were back of the last dike, not far from the house occupied by the 1st Battalion CP. The 3rd Battalion of the 85th had a similar set-up, with their weapons on the right side of the road. The only fire up until 1030 had been their mortars registering on the north bank. The last two trucks turned to the right off of the road and left their twenty boats east of the road, downstream from the others, and supposedly in reserve.

The engineers then withdrew behind the dikes to reorganize. Each boat was to have a two-man crew. Every ten boats had a platoon to man them and an officer in charge. There were enough engineers so that each crew theoretically would have to make but three crossings. Actually it didn't work out that way at all.

The 1125th Armored Field Artillery had ten of its 105s just behind the 1st Battalion CP building. Eight more were in position 7,000 yards further south. British 178th Lowland Medium Royal Artillery of the 7th AGRA had twelve of its 5.5s in position near Zovo. Four tank destroyers had moved up to the dikes the night before and two more TDs moved up on their left at 1115.

COMPANY A—FIRST ACROSS

Up behind the banks in the assembly area to the left of B, Company A received the order as their two TDs moved up. At 1130, the enemy 20-mm and 88-mm fire, high-explosive as well as time-fire, walked down the dikes toward the waiting troops. This fire was harassing but not serious.

Although at the time it was difficult to locate where this enemy fire was coming from, it later developed that the Germans had two crescents of 20-mm "ack-ack" consisting of six dual mounts and four quadruple mounts 2,500 yards due west. The river curved sharply south of the left of the troops, upstream from the old ferry landing, and the enemy positions were across the river where they formerly protected, against air attack, their own pontoon bridge demolished the previous night after the Germans had retreated across it. Close to the AA batteries was an 88 in a built-up position. Four other 88s were nearby to complete the battery. To the northwest, at Giordane, five more 88s were in the yard of a house, but these five were all in AA positions, and were masked from the river by trees. Beyond Giordane, on the south bank of the Mincio Canal were six more dual-mount 20-mm guns.

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As Company A was about to move to the boats at seven minutes before noon, the first bad barrage of concentrated "ack-ack" began cracking over the troops. After five minutes, it let up and Company A moved forward at two minutes past noon. Company D had got its other four machine guns, under Lieutenant WILLIAM SPINNEY, up on the left of Company A just as they moved off. Three guns pointed due west to protect the left flank, and the fourth joined Lieutenant ANTSELM BRADLEY's four guns to traverse 1,000 yards west from the ferry landing. East of the landing were the eight guns of the 85th.

The company objective on the north shore was the group of houses called Gassole up the river to the left. The 1st and 3rd Platoons were to make up the leading wave of four boats.

These two platoons, now only forty-eight men, moved into boats under the barrage, but free from small arms fire. For the first time, the men were ordered to fix bayonets. The furthest boat upstream was in command of Lieutenant WILFERD L. PHILLIPSEN of the 3rd Platoon. This boat was the first to touch shore, and T/Sgt. GEORGE W. HURT of this boat is reportedly the first man across the Po River. The men of this first wave were the first Allied soldiers to fight their way across the great river. Others had crossed the Po. Prisoners had been escorted across; fliers had dropped behind; and Partisans had sneaked over from time to time; but Sergeant HURT changed the map when he and the others scrambled out of the first boat. They crossed officially. Hitler himself was probably notified that American infantrymen were across the Po on

the 23rd of April. And where the Mountain Infantry has reached, there no enemy has ever held forth again. The footprints of the men of the 87th, on the sandbars and up the grassy north bank of the Po, were that day marked on the maps of the world.

Sgt. HAROLD M. CREGER of the 3rd Platoon, in the second boat downstream, with Sgt. ALVIN C. HANEY, took charge when the engineers seemed helpless to control the paddling. He commanded silence and counted cadence, keeping the men's spirits up and their fright down, as fire burst over the river. Someone called the crossing a longer trip than crossing the Atlantic.

The third boat, commanded by Second Lieutenant JAMES H. STEWART, of the 1st Platoon, was the second boat across, and its men were the first over the steep bank. The fourth boat downstream, commanded by Sgt. WILLIAM F. WHITEHEAD, carried the remainder of the 1st Platoon. This boat struck a sandbar which held them up. Three boats of Company B were moving on the right, and one touched shore before the fourth boat of Company A got in. The north shore landings were treacherous. The current, sweeping around the big bend at the left in a clockwise direction, raced along the north bank, scouring out channels and piling up sandbars. The boats were swept to broadside landings by the current, and several men stepped into deep water off of the sandbars. Pfc. CLIFFORD G. ABNEY, JR. held his radio over his head to keep it dry, even though he dropped momentarily into water over his head.

The three boats of the second wave carrying the command group, some weapons men, and seven men of the 2nd Platoon, hit the water before the first wave had landed. By this time, fire was heavy on the south bank, and the men were glad to leave. Some automatic fire started dusting the beach from across to the right, and some sniper fire came from Gassole. Lieutenant BRADLEY of Company D, spotting the enemy machine gun at some buildings down to the right, manned one of his own guns and neutralized it. Then a TD, following his tracers, pumped in a couple of rounds, which smashed the house.

Captain HUGH KLEMME led the first boatload of fourteen men in the second wave. In the center boat was S/Sgt. JAMES A. GUNSALLUS and his 2nd Mortar Squad of only six men. On the right, Sgt. EDGAR BREWSTER's boat carried the 3rd Mortar Squad, while the 1st Squad remained back with the 2nd Platoon, where they had been firing in support of the first wave. Sgt. BREWSTER, determined to keep his boat from drifting downstream, pointed it partly into the current, and crossed from the right to the left of the other two boats.

The third wave of S/Sgt. ANTON MASTALER's 1st Mortar Squad, and men from the 2nd Platoon, crossed with the leading wave of Company C under considerable fire.

Once across, the company moved 300 yards inland against scattered sniper fire, and swung to the right and collected against the Fossa Bolognina canal dike. As the riflemen passed the empty German bunkers along the dike, a figure in an American uniform ran out with his hands up. His story is one of the most amazing of the war.

THE JOHN WILLIS STORY

The regiment, during its three months in combat, has the unique record of no man lost to the enemy as a prisoner.* The two men still officially listed as "missing in action" both disappeared during tremendous artillery barrages when not in direct contact with the enemy. Unquestionably, their bodies were buried with the "unidentified."

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* The 87th Regiment did lose one man captured by the enemy: Pfc. George J. Syries of 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company. He was captured on April 21, 1945 and returned to the Division in May after the hostilities were over.

The closer this enviable record came to being broken was on the first morning in the Po Valley, the 21st of April. On that morning Pfc. JOHN WILLIS, a 3rd Battalion Headquarters driver, was captured. His experience gives some sidelight on the German situation at that crucial period of the offensive. Crucial it was, because there is as yet no very good reason known why the still very strong German forces could not have smashed in and cut our greatly over-extended supply lines.

WILLIS had been driving in the shuttle movement on the morning of the 21st, taking the 3rd Battalion from the mountains to the IP five miles away at Calcara. He had just unloaded men of Company K from his 2½-ton truck and was returning for a load of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion. With him was a Lieutenant GLENN, an American serving with the 8th Indian Infantry Division, who had stopped in with friends in the 87th as an unofficial observer during the offensive. Officially he had been on his way to the United States. Behind WILLIS and Lieutenant GLENN was another 2½-ton truck driven by Pfc. ALEX GUSKO. The two trucks were bowling along the easy roads, easy after the mountain roads they were used to, when a hand grenade arced out and went off against the side of WILLIS' truck. WILLIS leaped from his still-moving truck into the road. GUSKO's truck then struck him and knocked him across the road into a ditch.

Lieutenant GLENN had jumped at the same time as WILLIS and made the ditch. The ditch was about 75 feet long on the edge of an open grassy field. GUSKO crawled to one end, WILLIS to the other, and Lieutenant GLENN stayed in the middle. They were pinned down by six or seven hand grenades hurled their way, one of which killed GUSKO. The only weapon they had was a useless carbine GLENN had broken as he leaped from the truck. After a few minutes, the Germans closed in on them with an MP, and Lieutenant GLENN climbed up out of the ditch with his hands up. He ordered WILLIS out and they were taken prisoner. They were patted down for weapons, but not searched by the men. An English-speaking NCO then ordered them to march over to a German 88 position about a quarter of a mile from the road. From here a German general, also English-speaking, gave them both a ride to headquarters on the back of his motorcycle. The general said he had lived in California for fifteen years!

The German Headquarters was in a very elaborate villa. The guards, as they gave their Hitler salutes to the general, were very tired-looking, and their clothing, while neat and clean, was unpressed. The prisoners were taken inside and into a room with three intelligence officers. Italian servants moved about the building, and the staff seemed to be living comfortably, if not in traditional Prussian opulence. After the contents of their pockets were dumped on the central table, they were sent to a yard in the rear and left there unguarded for three hours. Finally they were called back and questioned pleasantly by the English-speaking officers. WILLIS refused to reveal any information. Even had he been willing, there seemed to be little he knew that they didn't. They rattled off the names of all the units of the Division, all the regimental and battalion commanders' names, and the dates of activation of the three regiments. They were only in error in the case of the commander of the 3rd Battalion, in which they still named Major GEORGE A. FELCH, who was killed in action 21 February 1945 on Mt. Belvedere. What they seemed to want to learn was something about the regiment's armor. They asked WILLIS where he was born, how many trucks and mules there were in the regiment, and a day-by-day record of moves. He told them nothing. Still they remained pleasant and returned all but two articles from his pockets. They kept his knife, and of all things, his draft induction notice, or famous "Greetings from the President" letter which for some reason he had with him. They told him this would go on permanent file in the German military records.

He was dismissed, and after another hour in the yard, he was separated permanently from Lieutenant GLENN, and taken by motorcycle by back roads to the next town. There he was put in with thirty other Americans. The American prisoners were in good shape, although they had been marching thirty kilometers a day. The guards were exhausted. They had to march too, and then some of them had to stay awake while the prisoners slept. They were sleepy and bitter.

That night, they marched from Castelfranco north for 53 kilometers to Gorgo on the south bank of the Po River. They marched for fourteen hours, and left Castelfranco only three hours before it was captured.

At Gorgo they were shut up in a theater, fed well on rice, bread, and horsemeat, and only suffered from want of water. Only twice a day would the guards risk going outdoors to bring them water. The reason was the constant strafing by American planes. During the daylight no German dared show himself, but at night the retreating columns stretched for miles. There were few motor vehicles, but the horses seemed to be numberless.

Sunday night the 22nd, at 2300, the 87th Infantry, unknown to WILLIS, was about a mile away at San Benedetto Po when the prisoner column was rushed across the German pontoon bridge north of Gorgo. Just around the bend, the 87th would make the first crossing of the river at noon the next day. A few minutes after the prisoners left Gorgo, the town was taken by elements of the 10th Division. WILLIS all this time was watching for his chance to escape. A prisoner had tried the night before, but was brought back by a big 150-pound black dog, which had been trained to search out or chase any American who made a break for freedom. After crossing the Po, WILLIS decided to take the first opportunity to get away. After marching two or three miles parallel to the river where it flowed north, a plane roared over in the moonlight strafing the road. (This may have been the same German plane that bombed our troops on the other side of the river.) In any case, the column scattered into the ditches, and WILLIS crawled under a pile of brush and lay there. Finally the prisoners were collected on the road and marched off again. No real effort was made to find him. Not even the black dog seemed to notice his absence.

At 0400 he heard the pontoon bridge blow, and crawling out of the brush, he started across the fields for the river. Against the shore he found a large, heavy boat, and shoved off in it with a board to paddle with. As he worked his cumbersome craft out into the broad river, the current caught it. Although he struggled desperately, he couldn't make any headway. The boat just drifted down around the bend and swung him back against the north shore. Finally he gave up and climbed the bank opposite the old ferry landing, where the 87th was to cross come noontime. He found one of the many large dugouts there along the north bank, and finding it empty—to his great relief—holed up at dawn.

At about noon, the sporadic mortar fire landing on the north shore intensified, and the German airbursts started cracking over his head. Outside his hole, ten feet away, was a German soldier firing a machine pistol toward the river. WILLIS couldn't tell what was going on outside, but he expected the German would duck into the dugout at any moment. Although unarmed, he would be ready for him. He held his steel helmet in his hands ready to smash it into the German's face, kick him in the groin, and hammer him off his feet. Instead, the German suddenly fled across the fields. Then seeing American GIs advancing abreast of his dugout, WILLIS came out with hands in the air. It was Company A, and the men seeing a soldier in an American uniform surrendering from an enemy dugout, were of a mood to shoot him on the spot. Someone yelled, "He's an American! Don't shoot!"

Captain KLEMME restrained the men and got up to WILLIS, who was quite shaky from his experience.

“What outfit are you from?” Captain KLEMME was suspicious of a German trick.

“87th,” WILLIS answered.

This seemed too pat to be true, and the men all remembered G-2 warnings about American-speaking Germans trained in our ways to drop behind our lines and spread confusion. Captain KLEMME was openly suspicious. “What company?”

“Headquarters, 3rd Battalion.”

“Yeah? Who’s CO of K Company?”

WILLIS looked around at the desperate faces and realized he was at that moment, just as he had thought himself safe, in as ticklish a spot as he had been throughout his experience. He became tense. He couldn’t think. K Company became just a name. Then just as Captain KLEMME was turning away to leave him to the fate of spies, it came to him.

“Captain EDDY, “ he shouted.

“How about L Company?”

“Captain DUNCAN.”

Captain DUNCAN had been killed six days before, but KLEMME was satisfied.

“Hand the man a rifle, and let’s go,” ordered the captain, and WILLIS was back in the outfit.

Aside from being the only escaped prisoner taken from the 87th, WILLIS could claim another distinction. The 87th was the first Allied unit to cross the Po River. The first man to step ashore from the first boat in the crossing is a hard matter to determine, in the eager scramble to get out of the boat and behind some cover. Sgt. GEORGE HURT, who was wounded a few minutes later, was among the first two or three, and the men in the first boat concede him the honor. However, Pfc. JOHN WILLIS went across twelve hours earlier. It would be hard to deny that he is the first man of the first Allied unit to set foot on the north bank of the Po River.

Some days later, Lieutenant GLENN, who because he was an officer was moved separately, was given his freedom. He expressed the hope that his captors be as well treated when they became captured.

COMPANY A—TO THE MINCIO

Sgt. GEORGE W. HURT, the first man across, was shot from the rear by a sniper in a bypassed emplacement as the company continued inland. Pfc. CLARENCE M. MINOR, Pfc. WIL-LIE E. AILSTOCK, JR., and Pvt. ROBERT L. BAKER were also wounded near Gassole. The company was reorganized by 1500. Across the canal were the battery of 88s and the six 20-mm guns at Giordane, but they couldn’t engage the company behind the high dike. A patrol making a reconnaissance bypassed the positions, and the Germans blew up the 88s and dumped the barrels of the 20-mm guns into the canal.

The company took up positions for the night along the dike and tied in with Company C on the left. The next day they expanded their positions, and Pfc. ARTHUR ABRUZZO had to be evacuated with an injury.

COMPANY B—ROADBLOCK, SAN BENEDETTO PO

During the early morning of the 23rd, the 1st Platoon of Company B did some firing. The platoon had been left with one squad of Company A, and a TD from the 701st, to set up a roadblock south of San Benedetto Po. A large German half-track and a personnel carrier towing a large gun moved up to a position within fifty yards of the roadblock at about 2030. They

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stopped and stayed there. Our troops didn't know whether they were German or friendly, so after half an hour S/Sgt. HARRY MCCLINTICK and Pfc. VAN L. OFFICER, a BAR man, went down the roadside. First they spotted two horses, and then they clearly recognized the German half-track, and ran in alarm. Pfc. OFFICER stopped and fired his BAR at the big parked vehicle, while MCCLINTICK ran to the TD. The TD next opened up with three rounds. Just previous to MCCLINTICK's arrival at the TD, an American jeep stopped and two soldiers declared they were souvenir hunting. The TD crew warned them not to go down toward the suspicious vehicles, but they went anyway. When MCCLINTICK arrived on the double, without having seen the jeep, the TD opened fire. One of the three shots knocked the jeep off the road, and the German vehicles were demolished. Then the TD fired beyond the front vehicles at some German-occupied Fiats and trucks, and knocked them all out. MCCLINTICK, not satisfied, ran back a thousand yards and got some chemical mortars to fire four rounds. Next he located three light tanks and brought them up to the corner. They fired .50-caliber machine guns into the charred mess. In the morning there were many dead Germans along the road, with two dead American souvenir hunters from another regiment.

COMPANY B—THE PO AND THE MINCIO

When Company B moved up to the river late in the morning, they dug in, expecting to stay there for five hours. The 3rd Platoon took positions on the right, next to the road to the ferry landing, and the 2nd on the left, with the weapons platoon between them. The weapons were to fire at all visible targets.

Pfc. THOMAS BRODEUR, with an assault mortar on the right, fired fifteen rounds at an enemy-occupied house across at Nobis. Another company mortar fired eighteen rounds at bunkers. The machine guns didn't fire, although the heavies of Company D fired overhead as the rifle platoons ran forward to the boats.

The airbursts from "flak" had broken out behind the machine guns, and when the 2nd Platoon reached the boats the engineer crew had disappeared. The platoon carried its three boats to the water. The 3rd Squad of ten men under S/Sgt. JULIUS C. ECKHOFF hit the water furthest upstream; then the 2nd Squad of eight under Sgt. MARIO P. BELLETTI; then the 1st Squad of seven under S/Sgt. ERNEST BOUCHARD. These twenty-five men were all that were left of the 2nd Platoon. As they stormed ashore across from the ferry landing, with machine gun and mortar fire hitting their boats, the 2nd Squad, first ashore, took three prisoners behind the bank. Their boats without engineer crews were swept downstream as soon as the men jumped ashore. The platoon moved inland, guiding on Company A for 700 yards, and then swinging east to some drainage ditches.

The 3rd Platoon following landed at Cbianca and moved inland. They had had engineer crews to carry the boats to the water's edge and help row them to the far side. As the platoon crossed over the dike, T/5 THOMAS S. ROWE, a company aid man, was wounded. The platoon was pinned down on the left side of the road by fire coming from the dike and tower in Governolo. Killed here were Pfc. JOHN P. DELGADO and Pfc. EUGENE H. BAGNESKI. Wounded were Second Lieutenant GEORGE B. BOSWELL, Sgt. EARL D. ALLEN, Pfc. JOSEPH KUBALIK, Pfc. BRUNO J. WANDREI, Pfc. PAUL W. HARRIS, Pfc. LOUIS A. FULLER, JR., and Pfc. WILLIAM H. VOOTS.

The platoon withdrew back to the left and found the 2nd Platoon at the drainage ditches. Both platoons then advanced to Poziencella by moving up the ditch. Pfc. ARVIL W. CARTER was shot in the ankle here about 250 yards north of the river.

The command group and the weapons platoon crossed in five boats to finish up the company crossing. One man, Pfc. ELMER T. PEARSON, couldn't find room in a boat as it was shoving off, so he was told to wait for another company. "No, I'm coming," he yelled, and running into the water, he hung to the stern of the boat and allowed himself to be towed across. This is probably some kind of a first in crossing the Po, too. No one has come forward to dispute the claim. One boat of Company B moved exceptionally fast. The ten men paddling were all experienced, and Lieutenant NORMAN D. GLICKMAN and an engineer counted cadence as the craft came across like a racing shell, nearly catching up with the wave ahead. In spite of the heavy fire over the river, no one of the company was actually wounded on the water.

Late in the afternoon the company was reorganized and moved up to the bank of the Mincio River where they dug in for the night.

COMPANY C—IN SUPPORT

On the morning of the 23rd, Company C had been ordered to support Companies A and B as they crossed. The company moved up to the bank and took up firing positions at about 1130. There was some sniper fire, and Pfc. KENNETH G. COUTURE was hit taking a message to Lieutenant RICHARD C. POWERS. Seven or eight minutes before H-Hour, the first German barrage opened up, starting on the south bank, but to the left of the crossing area. Then it moved down, as Companies A and B were loading on boats, to the banks where C and D were in position. The foxholes were little protection against the heavy concentration of airbursts overhead. Pfc. CHESTER W. VEST was fatally hit; wounded were Sgt. EDWARD D. STACKWICK, Pfc. HOMER A. MATSON, Pfc. HENRY J. MASCIARELLI, Pfc. HENRY G. DESKE, Pfc. EDWARD L. CARAWAY, Pfc. SHERMAN C. JENSEN, Pfc. ROBERT J. LOSBERGER, Pfc. ELMER W. FREEMAN, Pfc. HOLBERT G. DOBBINS, Pfc. SAM PRAVATO, Pfc. STANLEY J. KACZMARCZYK, Pfc. ALFRED G. SMITH, and Pfc. JOSEPH J. ZIMINSKY. Pfc. SYLVESTER J. LEPPEK of the mortars was killed, and Pfc. LARRY KOLKKA mortally wounded. A total of three were killed and thirteen wounded on the south banks supporting the crossing.

Then they loaded into boats and crossed with the first elements of the 2nd Battalion. The barrage shifted to the river, and Lieutenant JAMES ANDERSON was hit lightly under the arm, one of the two casualties of the regiment while in the boats.

The weapons platoon, as they loaded into boats, received machine gun fire and scattered. They tried to load the boat twice, and twice they were driven out. Then a machine gun of Company D silenced the enemy gun, and they crossed. Ten men of this platoon had a rough crossing, for the flak was now adjusting to burst over the river. An 88 shell exploded in the water under the boat, almost tipping it over. They moved inland with part of Company H, and then seeing a big gap on their right, headed east in a skirmish line. A strange sight they were, ten men with one M-1, one mortar, one machine gun, a few pistols and carbines under the command of Sgt. STEPHEN SCULLEN.

Company Headquarters crossed in the boat with Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON, battalion commander. They came under sniper fire, one man's rifle was hit in his hands, but Colonel WILSON kept the spirits up by stroking the boat to the tune of "The 87th's Best by Far" as only the Colonel can sing it. This was by far the noisiest, if not the fastest boat, to cross that day.

From the boats, the company moved 300 yards inland where they ran into the rear of Company B and were held up. Pfc. KENNETH F. CLARK was injured as he hit his own M-1 diving for a foxhole. They were fired on by sniper fire, which killed Pfc. WILLIAM F. STEYERT. The company dug in. Later they moved north reaching the dike at 1700. They filled in the gap between Companies A and B and set up strong points. The 3rd Platoon moved into houses on the

left, and captured three prisoners, making a total of twelve for the company. The Germans were obviously in a very confused state. At one time three Germans idly watched the column of troops from a distance as they repaired wire. They made no effort to conceal themselves, apparently not realizing the column was American.

Sgt. POVELAITES, and two men with a BAR, set up a covering position upstairs in a house to protect a bridge over the canal at Governolo. He was excitedly called upstairs by the BAR man who pointed out two Germans approaching the bridge on a motorcycle. Instead of firing, the man gave the weapon to the sergeant. By the time POVELAITES got the BAR to his shoulder and the sights lined up, the Germans were off on the motorcycle and had disappeared behind some small buildings and under the bridge. The sergeant waited for them to come back up to the road, and carefully squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened; the safety was on. He snapped it off, aimed again and squeezed. The gun clicked and jammed, filled with sand from the Po River. He worked on it furiously, and raised it to his shoulder again just in time to see the Germans, now back on their motorcycle, disappear from view. While the enraged sergeant dressed down the BAR man, ordering him to clean his weapon, the building lurched and quivered as the bridge blew up. Fortunately, it was not of vital importance, because there was another bridge nearby.

COMPANY D—FIRING SUPPORT

During the morning of the 23rd, when the sudden decision was made to cross the river at noon, a company OP was set up on the dike, and orders were issued to fire on anything that moved on the other side of the river. With one company of heavy weapons of the 85th on their right, Company D fired at suspicious areas on the north shore. Lieutenant ANTSELM BRADLEY spotted two enemy OPs and one machine gun nest in his scope, and engaged them with fire. Lieutenant WILLIAM SPINNEY's machine guns of the 2nd Platoon were ordered to support the rifle companies in the crossing, while Lieutenant BRADLEY with his platoon was to make the crossing with Company C. To control the supporting fire, nine people were in the vicinity of the OP, various forward observers, runners, and radio operators. As the first barrage opened up on the south bank, seven minutes before the initial rifle companies pushed across the river at noon, five of the nine were hit. Second Lieutenant OLAN D. PARR, the forward observer with Company B, Second Lieutenant LEONARD P. LANDRY, JR., the observer with the mortar platoon, Pfc. THOMAS J. BURK, Pfc. MONROE W. CANTOR, Pfc. RAYMOND N. CARINI, Pfc. BENJAMIN E. GIBSON, Pfc. JAMES J. JOHNSON, Pfc. JOHN W. KING, Pfc. RAMON B. MELENDEZ, Pfc. JAMES T. PENDEGRIST, Pvt. CHARLES H. BRYSON and Pvt. CLAUD H. FORBUS were all wounded by this barrage of airbursts, 88s, and mortar fire. Pfc. LOUIS M. DORSEY was killed, and Pfc. WOLFRED S. SUTHERBURG was mortally wounded at this same time.

DORSEY, a wireman, when the wire to the OP was knocked out during the barrage, climbed out of the hole saying, "I'll lay 'er till they hit me." A few seconds later, he was dead. The other wireman, Pfc. JOHN HEADDEN, who with DORSEY had heroically laid wire throughout the campaign, seemed to bear a charmed life. Repairing the wire, he exposed himself throughout the fire.

Lieutenant LANDRY had just rejoined the company a few days before, recovered from a previous wound. This time he was wounded in the hand and back, but he refused to be evacuated until he had moved the mortars forward and started them across the river.

First Sergeant FRANKLIN C. JONES, throughout the entire barrage was never in his foxhole, but was out keeping control of the company.

Lieutenant BRADLEY, having successfully crossed the river with his platoon, collected a group of disorganized Company A riflemen, and forming them into a small combat team, drove

north to the canal. The balance of Company D crossed without casualty in the second and third waves, and rejoined the battalion in the defensive area along the canal. During the early crossings made by the 1st Battalion, most of the enemy fire was on the south bank. No one was hit on the river, and no one in Company D on the north bank. While the crossings were in progress, Lieutenant KENNETH W. ALPERT, company executive officer, received a message to bring up ammunition and to ferry it across the river. He drove up to the river's edge with a jeep loaded with ammunition, looking for the ferry. This was at 1400, and as the area was under considerable shellfire, he was sent away by the general's aide.

In the battalion headquarters group, S/Sgt. HOLLISTER KENT, operations sergeant, was wounded just as they climbed down the bank of the dike on the north side of the Po. Colonel FOWLER, seeing his shattered left arm, made some comment of sympathy, and Sgt. KENT replied, "Don't worry about me, Colonel. I'm all right." T/Sgt. ROLF KING, Battalion Sergeant Major, was in the same ditch with KENT when he was hit.

T/4 FRANK C. WHITMOYER, first cook with the 1st Battalion Headquarters Company, was wounded by airbursts while hauling ammunition on the south bank of the Po.

2nd Battalion—Crossing and Bagnolo San Vito

COMPANY F—BICYCLE TRAGEDY

Company F, hurriedly assembling 500 yards south of the river, came under the first heavy "ack-ack" barrage of the south bank. T/4 JOHN S. OSTROSKI was wounded before the company moved to the bank. At 1300 the men moved into the boats, took paddles, and crossed uneventfully. On the north side about thirty eager Italian civilians helped the men up the steep banks.

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After assembling on the north shore, they moved off for the town of Bagnolo San Vito to the left (west). They headed directly for the town, Captain JAMES C. KENNETT as usual out in front leading his men. He came to a canal and, without detouring to use the bridges which were situated a considerable distance in either direction, he waded in up to his shoulders and up the other bank, his whole company following.

The town was to be attacked with Company E on the right. However, Captain KENNETT, with a squad and a half of the 3rd Platoon and a machine gun, went ahead to "feel out" the town. Pfc. GORDON SUNDSTROM, a machine gunner, brought his gun to fire on a sniper in a courtyard. A German deserter had declared that fifteen Germans were in there with an assault gun and *furst* charges. They were there, too. SUNDSTROM killed one, and fifteen surrendered. Pfc. SUNDSTROM and Sgt. DAVID BURT, the machine gun section leader, went on up with the machine gun, collecting prisoners as they went. They finally had to wait for some support after collecting ten prisoners.

In the town, the company reorganized and at 1500 started mopping up the houses in town. Sgt. MERLIN K. SOINEY, Pfc. HARRY HENKENSIEFKEN, and four other men, picked up several prisoners as they worked through the town. Finally HENKENSIEFKEN alone entered a German CP; four Germans surrendered. In the CP were all kinds of supplies, including radios, telephones, and 200 rifles. While he was in the building, he heard the sound of a motor vehicle, and knowing that there were no Allied vehicles north of the Po, he rushed to the window to see a whole truckload of Germans go by. Soon after, an American plane zoomed, strafing the road, and HENKENSIEFKEN decided to move back to the company.

Shortly after 1500 the company was ordered to establish a roadblock on the far end of town. Sgt. LEO O. SADIN and five men from the 1st Platoon moved up to the last building on the right

of the intersection, where the main east-west road through town turned sharply to the left (south) and another road joined it from the right (north). Here they organized in the building to cover the roads without having actual contact with the enemy. They had caught glimpses of enemy moving far down the road to the south.

Here one of the most tragic episodes of the campaign occurred. Captain KENNETT rode up to the roadblock on a bicycle. With him, on another captured bike, was Pfc. CLIFFORD E. SPINDEN. Captain KENNETT had always been fond of bicycles. On Belvedere, he and the late RUDOLPH KONIECZNY had ridden bicycles all over the area down near Rocca Corneta under enemy observation. In March, near Castel d'Aiano, he had found enough bicycles to mount the whole weapons platoon, and he led them as they all rode down the hill back to the company on forty-eight bicycles. Even on Kiska Island in 1943 he had managed to capture some Jap bicycles. So he was quite elated to discover bicycles in Bagnolo San Vito.

Some time after 1600, Captain KENNETT had been ordered to send a strong combat patrol to clean out enemy flak guns southeast of Bagnolo San Vito. With this in mind, the captain decided to run out to the edge of town on his bike and look the situation over. He left machine gunner SUNDSTROM and Sgt. BURT on the main street of town, indicating he was just going to the corner where the roadblock was set up in the old German CP. As he left, he told them, "See you in a few minutes."

At the roadblock they warned him against going down the road, but he continued on. Two hundred yards ahead, the road crossed a wide drainage ditch. After he passed, two Germans, lying on the right-hand side of the road by the ditch, fired, hitting the captain in the back and in the head, and wounding SPINDEN in the arm. SPINDEN jumped into a roadside ditch as the captain lay in the road, and made his way back.

SUNDSTROM and BURT heard the firing, and someone from the roadblock ran into the building yelling, "The captain's in trouble!" They took a machine gun and set it up in a house on the roadside fifty yards short of the captain. Some burp gun fire was coming down the road from a distance. Then they crawled, with pistols only, down the left-hand side of the road out to the drainage ditch, and called to the captain.

Back from the house Pfc. BROMEO MOGA spotted one of the two Nazis and opened fire. Enraged, he emptied a whole magazine of BAR ammunition into one of the Germans. The remaining German then came up onto the road. The two Americans halted him. They ordered him to bring the captain over to them in the ditch. The German refused, repeating over and over, "*Nein. Nein. Finito.*" SUNDSTROM captured the German with his bare hands.

An Italian came down the road in a Fiat. From the ditch they halted him and told him to "pick up the captain." He nodded complete understanding and drove off. Shortly afterwards an Italian Fascist captain came crawling up the ditch. Apparently it was he whom the man in the car thought of as "the captain," and he had gone off and told him to report up there by the road. If so, the Fascist made an error in crawling up to the rendezvous, for the alert BAR cut him down.

They brought Captain KENNETT's body back to town, and the whole company was shocked and angered. It seemed incredible that, after the infernos of blood and fire he had walked through without harm, he should be instantly killed without warning on a peaceful warm afternoon, while the whole company in town were congratulating themselves on the crossing of the Po and the easy taking of the village. He died as he had lived, far out in front of his company, making a reconnaissance that he wouldn't ask another to do. As always, he was completely unconcerned with possible personal danger. Never was any company commander better loved by his command.

In the saddened town, surprised Krauts were collected here and there right through the next day. That afternoon, four Germans walked along a path into town, and sat down in a restaurant before anyone got to them to make the capture.

Lieutenant DONALD M. DWYER took over the company, completed the reorganization, and set up defenses. Before dark, the men engaged in quite a bit of "Kraut shooting" as German columns passed southwest of the town, affording the Americans an unequalled chance to sit comfortably in buildings and take "pot shots." Occasionally there was some enemy fire, but very little. At dusk, a sniper hit Pfc. WILLIAM GENTRY in the foot, the only additional casualty.

That night seven Germans infiltrated the town. Pfc. BENJAMIN MEYER told them to halt. They ran for it and MEYER wounded one. One ran away, but six ran into a house where they treated the wounded man. MEYER tried to get them to surrender. They agreed, but wouldn't come out of the house. They finally emerged under MEYER's order and threat, but they carried their weapons and made a break for freedom. They ran around the corner right into the arms of the 3rd Squad of the 2nd Platoon. There were three officers, one private, and a medic.

Later in the evening, a heavy machine gun under Sgt. JOSEPH MELINKOVICH opened fire on an enemy dragging an AA gun across a road 300 yards away. The gun was abandoned and used by our troops later on.

COMPANY E

Shortly after 1300 Company E, following F, moved to the south bank of the Po River from the assembly area to make a crossing. They crossed during a comparatively quiet period. Most of the fire was flak further up the river. Reorganizing on the north bank, the company swung to the northwest with Company F on its left. Their objective was the town of Bagnolo San Vito. On their way across the fields, the 3rd Platoon on the right was attracted to a house by Italians excitedly calling to them. There were 25 Germans in the house. Five of them tried to get away. One was killed and two were wounded. The rest sat in a room inside until they were ordered out and made prisoners. One German was seen setting up a machine gun. The men yelled to him, but he paid no attention, and was promptly killed.

The Germans were obviously confused by the appearance of the American column. One soldier on a bike was ordered to halt, but paying no attention, was killed. Elements of the platoon saw five men down a road carrying a machine gun towards them. One of the men waved, but when fired on, the men surrendered. Then the company captured a truck with a 20-mm "ack-ack" gun. The truck was loaded with new equipment. They entered the town of Bagnolo San Vito to the right of, and slightly to the rear of, Company F and established defensive positions in the right section of town. Company G, with only sixteen men, followed them into town.

S/Sgt. CHARLES STUBBS, with a half-squad, was detailed to hold a bridge to the left rear of town. While he waited there, thirty Germans, led by a major, approached the bridge. Assuming that the Germans were surrendering, two men went down the road to bring them in. A machine gun opened fire and drove them to cover in the ditch. The whole group was pinned down around the bridge. Pfc. G. B. PAYNE, firing his BAR, covered their withdrawal to cover. A full squad was then sent up to reinforce the men at the bridge. A little antitank fire came in, and some airbursts cracked overhead, but 35 Germans surrendered. The company spent the night in town and from time to time during the night, Germans surrendered to them.

COMPANY G

Shortly after 1300, the company assembled on the south bank of the Po and, under some airbursts which caused considerable confusion in the company, paddled the engineer boats across

the broad river. Most of the fire was falling over the south bank. There was so little fire over the river that four boats of Italian natives were out directing the boats across, and women and children lined the north bank pulling the men up the steep dike. Most of the boats grounded on a sandbar near the north shore.

At the same instant airbursts cracked close overhead. The men plunged into the shallow water and splashed for the shore. Close to the bank the current ran swiftly, and the shallow sandbar suddenly dropped off to an unknown depth. Ten men fell into the water and had to swim for their lives, many with their packs on. Pfc. ZOLTAN MOLNAR dove in and pulled Cpl. WILBUR L. PULLEY out of the water after he became exhausted. MOLNAR attempted to return and save another man, but he was too exhausted himself. Pvt. CARLTON HALE was injured in the water; after he got ashore he had to be evacuated. Pfc. NYERAY O. MATHEWS was struck and wounded in the head just as he fell into the water. Many of the men thought he was drowning and tried to save him, but it was afterwards confirmed that he had been killed by the shell fragment.

On the north bank of the Po, Lieutenant OSCAR E. DUTTWEILER, with a mortar section, one machine gun squad, and one squad of the 1st Platoon, moved inland and south of the 2nd Battalion assembly area. Lieutenant JACK K. BENNETT followed with part of the 3rd Platoon and part of Company H. The rest of the company, with elements of Companies E, F, and H, arrived at dusk and moved into a defensive position at Bagnolo San Vito, already taken by Companies F and E. While walking along the canal with these latter elements, Major PAUL A. TOWNSEND, 2nd Battalion executive officer, saw fifteen or twenty Italians across the canal, wildly signaling them to go back. Before they could take any action, five high-velocity shells slammed in, catching the men out in the open. They withdrew rapidly to the highway leading to Bagnolo San Vito, and rushed to the town with the alarming news that the battalion left flank was in danger of being "rolled up." No such counterattack developed, but a large group of bypassed enemy surrendered during the night by negotiations through Italians, and entered Bagnolo San Vito as prisoners at about 2100.

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COMPANY H

While Company H was still south of the river, S/Sgt. DONALD O. JASORKA was wounded by an airburst. The 1st Platoon crossed the Po in the early afternoon following some heavy mortar and high velocity fire. On the north bank near Villa Correggio, Pfc. EDWARD J. RINGLEIN was killed by shrapnel, and Pfc. LONNIE L. DAVIS, JR. was wounded by an airburst. Two men from Company G were saved from drowning by Pfc. DANIEL COLEY. They were two of the group of ten who, wading ashore from the boats stuck on the sandbar, had fallen into deep water and had to swim for their lives. COLEY dragged two of them out by himself. The platoon lost contact on the north bank with Company E, but they helped organize lost elements of Companies G and E, and moved inland and set up a defense at Bagnolo San Vito. The guns were set up defensively, and S/Sgt. HAROLD V. BRADLEY brought in twenty prisoners.

The 2nd Platoon crossed the river in assault boats under heavy mortar and AA fire following Company F. They pushed inward with Company F, and against moderate small arms fire, they occupied Bagnolo San Vito. In the town they set up a roadblock and prepared to repulse a threatened counterattack. All-around defense was established for the night.

The 1st Section of the mortar platoon at 0900 displaced forward to a point 300 yards from the Po. The 2nd and 3rd Sections moved forward and started crossing the river at approximately 1245 under heavy airbursts. The 1st Section then crossed at 1300. The platoon was reassembled after crossing, moving to a point near Bagnolo San Vito and receiving some sniper fire en route. They fired one mission, which caused twenty-five Germans to surrender. S/Sgt. JOHN M.

O'BRIEN was wounded by shrapnel on the south bank of the Po while he was acting as a forward observer with the 1st Battalion.

3rd Battalion—Crossing Governolo

COMPANY L

Company L was the first of the 3rd Battalion to cross the Po. They left their bivouac area south of San Benedetto Po at 1200, just as the 1st Battalion began making the crossing. After some delay, due to elements of both the 85th and 86th Regiments blocking the road, the company reached the battalion assembly area and swung into the field on the left of the main road about a quarter of a mile from the river. There, in already-dug foxholes, they "sweated out" a heavily concentrated barrage of flak, high-velocity shellfire, and mortars. The company was ordered to "get across the river." However, during the heavy barrage, the engineers had stopped and sought shelter on the north shore, and all but three of the boats were on the far side. These boats were carried to the water during a short lull, loaded with the 3rd Platoon, and rowed across with very little engineer assistance. Then the barrage commenced again with renewed fury, and everyone on the south bank took cover. An engineer lieutenant refused to do anything about getting boats back under the heavy flak concentrations that splashed the smooth river. The 88 and mortar fire digging up the field where the men waited on the south bank was actually more dangerous than crossing. Second Lieutenant WALTER P. STILLWELL, JR., T/4 ANTHONY C. CRISAFULLI, Pfc. EDWARD H. BILODEAU, Pfc. MICHAEL J. FEDORKO, Pfc. VERNE W. STAMER, and Pvt. EDWIN N. EGY were wounded.

Lieutenant Colonel WORKS and his battalion munitions officer, Lieutenant NOEL C. CLAD, ran up and down the banks looking for boats. CLAD finally found one, and taking some men from battalion headquarters, and a few men from Company L, crossed to bring some boats back. Meanwhile the first three boats had been sent back by Company L men, two men to a boat. Two of these had drifted downstream on the return, so they were just to the right of the ferry landing. The other was probably the one Lieutenant CLAD had found above the landing. Then during a furious barrage, no crossings were made for nearly an hour. When it let up, Colonel WORKS broke over the bank with two squads of Company L's 1st Platoon, and went toward the two boats. First Lieutenant GEORGE F. EARLE, regimental liaison officer, met Colonel WORKS at the boats. He was trying to cross to find Colonel FOWLER who had crossed about 1300, and had lost both radio and telephone communication with the regimental CP south of the Po. Lieutenant EARLE had just previously been buried to his neck in a foxhole by an 88 which landed a foot from the edge and stunned him. Colonel WORKS ordered him to get the engineers out of the dugouts on the far side, and bring the boats back. Three times the two boats were loaded, and three times the squads and the two officers raced up the beach and lay flat under the ferry landing. Time bursts kept cracking overhead five minutes at a time. Finally they crouched in the boats and pushed off at about 1500.

On the far side, all seemed deserted. A few mortar rounds were coming in close to the bank, but there was no fire inland, and the squads moved in with the 3rd Platoon 500 yards inland where they had dug in to await orders. The engineers were urged out of a large dugout, and the boats were brought back further downstream. The rest of the company came over in dribbles. There were no casualties on the water.

As the 2nd Platoon crossed further downstream, Brigadier General DAVID L. RUFFNER, who took over the duties of assistant division commander after General DUFF was wounded the previous night, had ordered them to move north to the bridge at Governolo. They moved up to the Mincio River, and as they approached the bridge, came under sniper fire. They pulled back.

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Colonel FOWLER arrived on the scene at that time and arranged for a flanking maneuver to the left, in conjunction with an attack on Governolo by Company K, and for L to hold the bridge. It took thirty minutes to reorganize, and in that time they were joined by the weapons platoon and some of the 1st Platoon. Then, as they moved to the left, the 3rd Platoon found them. They set up defensive positions behind the bank near the bridge with Company B, which was already there. Lieutenant EARNEST W. RICKENBACKER, Captain EDWARD N. HATHAWAY and Pfc. EDWARD G. HINSHAW went up onto the dike to observe the bridge. They wanted to fire the mortars at the bridge, but the commander of Company B claimed his men were on the bridge, and told them not to fire. Then machine gun fire opened up from the bridge, killing HINSHAW, and slightly wounding RICKENBACKER. They then hit the bridge with mortars.

After an hour and a half here, the company was ordered by Colonel WORKS to follow Company K, which had already taken Governolo, and Company I, and were going out to take the three towns beyond. At dark they moved out, expecting to swing right from the battalion column to take the first town, and there to set up a roadblock until relieved by Company B. In the dark they moved along the canal. When they reached a side road they heard armored vehicles and the sound of Germans shouting. While they were moving toward the town, two Germans came down the road toward them. Sergeant FLYNN challenged them and told them to surrender. With hands up they halted, but thought he was "kidding." Since they didn't obey, he fired. They threw up their hands but dove for the ditch at the same time. One was wounded and Lieutenant GUY B. BLOOD killed the other. The wounded man had fired back with his pistol.

Then a plane started following the road up and down. After the plane left, they entered the town, which offered no resistance. There they were relieved by a unit of the 85th, and spent the night.

COMPANY K

Company K started moving up for the Po crossing shortly after twelve noon, and after some delay reached the assembly area to the left of the road. There they "sweated out" a heavy barrage, and after a long wait crossed the main north-south road and prepared to embark across the river a quarter of a mile below the ferry landing at about 1530. After the 2nd Platoon had started across, the heavy flak barrage, which had held up the crossings earlier, broke out again. Although most of it was cracking farther upstream, Sgt. PHILIP THURSTON was slightly wounded on the bank. He stayed with the company. The men crossed as they happened into boats, pretty much without organization and with little help from the engineers. On the north side Captain EDDY met Colonel FOWLER. The colonel had been on the north side for more than two hours, his only communication with the south bank was through battalion radio sets when he chanced to meet a headquarters group. His own telephone wires had been swept away by the current, and his radio had been destroyed on the south bank. Colonel FOWLER pointed to Governolo and asked Captain EDDY if he thought the company could take it. Captain EDDY, without hesitation, replied, "We will take the town."

They organized quickly and moved out, 1st Platoon leading, 2nd following, and went north to the Mincio canal. The 2nd Platoon crossed the deep canal on a few canal boats they scouted up, their second river crossing of the day. They were fired on by a sniper, who only succeeded in hitting an Italian civilian. The 1st Platoon followed the 2nd across the canal, as the 2nd went in and took the town without resistance. They captured two prisoners, and a good many enemy fled from the town. Quite a few Lugers and machine carbines were taken as souvenirs.

At about dusk, the company marched to the north and established a roadblock at C. San Martino. The mortar section set up under Sgt. PORTER SULLIVAN and fired at an enemy

demolition squad trying to destroy a dike. Sgt. CLARENCE ADAMS' machine gun section joined the mortars.

COMPANY I

Company I, the last rifle company of the regiment to cross, moved down to the right of K. They entered boats and crossed further downstream than any of the previous crossings. There they encountered very little of the flak that had been hitting the river upstream, and landed on the far shore without difficulty. Moving inland, echeloned to the right behind Company K, they were ordered to seize the east side of Governolo, while Company K occupied the west wide. The jubilant *paisans*, with the boats used to ferry Company K across, piloted Company I across the canal. The only danger they encountered was when they overloaded the heavy weapons platoon into a boat, which almost sank. From Governolo they were ordered to the next town to the northeast, which they reached after dark. They could hear armored vehicles moving to their front, but the vehicles didn't enter the town. There they were relieved by one company of the 85th, and pulled back to Governolo, where they spent the night.

COMPANY M

When the reconnaissance party of Company M reached the banks of the river, the 1st Battalion was already in the process of crossing. The enemy was raking the area with airbursts of flak, and some heavy stuff started falling near the road and back to the regimental CP. The situation looked bad. Despite the heavy shelling, however, the assault boats manned by the engineers and the infantrymen were steadily making their way across, and reports from the other side stated that resistance was light.

Apr 23

Company M moved up to an assembly area near the regimental CP, and prepared to cross. The loading point had gradually shifted downstream, due to the drifting of the boats, and the shelling here was not quite so heavy. Nevertheless, a couple of airbursts overhead made the men speed up the paddling considerably. The company was fortunate, however, and reached the far bank without casualty.

Once across, the men didn't waste time in moving into and clearing the town of Governolo. Scattered sniper fire was the only resistance, except for an unsuccessful attempt by the Germans or Fascists to blow a bridge by exploding teller mines. The company spent the night in and around Governolo. S/Sgt. ROGER W. KOHLENBERGER, radio chief of the 3rd Battalion, was injured and had to be evacuated from south of the Po.

Medical Detachments

The medics deserve more mention than they ever get in this or any other account. Only the front line infantryman fully appreciates the medics. For both litter bearers and company aid men, the work is both backbreaking and heartbreaking. The medic is called most when things are the worst. Under the heavy concentrations of fire south of the Po on 23 April, the medics lost four men, but their skill and their rapid response to the frequent calls under fire surely saved many lives.

In the 1st Battalion Section, T/5 THOMAS S. ROWE was found with a rifle bullet in his leg, giving aid to another wounded man. After much persuasion, this outstanding medic and brave soldier was evacuated.

Pfc. HAROLD J. GAGNON was slightly wounded by shrapnel near Camatta south of the Po.

In the 3rd Battalion Section, Pfc. GEORGE E. UHRON and Pfc. THOMAS W. YANTIS were hit by shrapnel during the afternoon while evacuating wounded.

T/5 THEODORE H. SCHULT, a litter bearer from the 3rd Battalion, and Sgt. RALPH MYERS, a litter bearer of the 10th Medical Battalion, were called up to evacuate a casualty from a dugout under intense enemy artillery fire. The wounded soldier, once outside with the litter men, realized the danger involved and leaped suddenly from the litter and ran back into the dugout. SCHULT and MYERS then went to look for other wounded. Both were later hit by artillery fire, but refused evacuation.

ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH DAYS—24-25 APRIL

North Bank of Po

COMPANY I—LEFT FLANK

The following morning, 24 April, Company I was given the mission of making a limited objective attack on the regimental left flank. The main purpose was to look for and knock out anti-aircraft guns which had been firing on the crossing. The limit of their advance was the general line: San Giacomo Po to the extreme left flank of the 2nd Battalion. They marched across the regimental area in the late morning, and made contact with the left flank of the 2nd Battalion. Then moving along to the right of the dike, through the fields and farmyards, they approached a group of buildings east of il Gazzo. En route they had picked up two prisoners. Machine gun fire opened up on them from the houses, and mortar rounds dropped in from over the dike to the right. Sgt. EDWARD J. MYERS, T/5 BRUNO GUIDO, and Pfc. DANIEL T. WALSH were hit by machine gun fire. Sgt. JOHN W. HAINES III, with the machine gun section, moved boldly forward to an exposed position to try to locate the fire. He was killed by a mortar round.

Apr 24

Regiment was unable to contact Company I by radio, and desiring to fire an air mission to support them, sent the Rover Pete jeep with Lieutenant GEORGE EARLE, liaison officer, up to the firing line. From there by radio they ordered a strafing mission for the Air Corps. The mission was refused by Air Corps headquarters unless Rover Pete could contact an officer on the front lines who would verify the friendly troop clearance from the target. Rover Pete, at that moment sitting in his jeep in the front line, in a trembling voice quavered back over the radio, "But, sir, I am in the front lines." The startled answer came back, "You are where?" "I am in the front lines."

The mission was hastily accepted and four fighter-bombers strafed the church steeple from which the AA batteries had observation on the river and the gun positions near San Giacomo Po. Then the Rover Pete jeep was driven up past the riflemen. The three wounded men were loaded onto its hood, and the jeep turned around and bumped back across the fields.

On the appearance of the jeep, the firing ceased. Possibly the enemy mistook it for armor, or at least assumed that with American vehicles already across the river it was time to retreat. The jeep drove into the aid station carrying two prisoners, three wounded men, the two Air Corps men, a regimental radio operator, and the liaison officer. Meanwhile a patrol had been sent over the dike to the left to locate the mortar positions. No further artillery or air missions could be fired until the patrol came back. Pfc. JOSEPH J. DE MULLING volunteered to climb the dike and search for the patrol through the wooded fields on the far side. He spotted a tree OP wired for operation. As he lay prone observing the dug-in positions along a nearby dike, 25 Germans came into view about 75 yards away for night occupation of the position. Waiting until two Krauts aligned themselves with him, he squeezed off one shot and felled them both. At once the confused Germans opened fire wildly with all weapons, but DE MULLING succeeded in returning unharmed to find the patrol safely back from its mission. Company I was withdrawn from this area, and the mop-up mission taken over by the 10th Anti-tank Battalion. Pfc. LEROY F. KNOWLES was injured during the action.

Situation on the Eleventh and Twelfth Days

The regiment, all except Company I, rested and improved positions during the 24th and 25th. The companies fed up on eggs and *vino*, and ran the price of chickens up to three for \$24.00, all in a few hours. First Lieutenant GORDON ANDERSON, commanding Company G, was evacuated for his former wounds complicated by shock and fatigue, and Lieutenant DUTTWEILER took

over the company again. A German WAC surrendered to one company; she had been the secretary of an AA battery, and was the first female German soldier seen. Replacements caught up and Captain JULIAN R. SHARPE took over Company F on the 25th.

During the night of 23-24 April, DUKWs shuttled with supplies across the river, landing near Correggio. All day of the 24th, the prisoners (mainly captured near Bagnolo San Vito) unloaded these DUKWs and formed bucket brigades to get the ammunition and rations over the embankment. They loaded wagons, carts, and wheelbarrows, and manhandled the loads to the companies. The prisoners did a lot of useful work, and the GIs enjoyed resting, and watching them. Space was made available during the day for two jeeps per battalion to be brought across on the DUKWs.

Material for two bridges came up during the night, and by noon of the 25th, the treadway bridge was completed. The 85th Infantry had crossed in assault boats on the 23rd, following the 87th, and had expanded the bridgehead to the north. Now it was time for the 86th to go through on trucks to continue the dash of the Division to Verona on the Adige River. The 87th was to be assembled and alerted, ready to shuttle forward at the instant the trucks returned from Verona. The battalions came into new assembly areas west of Governolo shortly after noon of the 25th, and waited for news of the advance. A battalion of the 85th marched out toward Mantova and then toward Verona, and news of its steady advance came in regularly.

Apr 25

During the night of 24-25 April, an enemy plane tried to bomb the pontoon bridge across the Po. It was fired upon and hit. It flared up for an instant, but was able to fly away. Some rounds of heavy artillery came near the bridge at Governolo over which tanks, armored artillery, trucks of our own Division and the 85th Division were crossing. There was a possibility that the bridge would become a bottleneck, with the 87th on the wrong side. Hour after hour passed with no news of the progress of the 86th Infantry in trucks.

THIRTEENTH DAY—26 APRIL

At dawn of 26 April, no word having yet been received of the trucks to return from the 86th, the regiment was alerted and marched across the Governolo bridge in the order: 2nd Battalion, 1st, and 3rd. The column marched off on an unimproved road at La Salmistire, and halted for a quick breakfast of C-rations.

Apr 26

Almost at once, 1st Lieutenant WILLIAM C. MCGUCKIN, liaison officer with Division, came to the regimental commander with word that the trucks would arrive shortly. In a few minutes Captain CHARLES N. VAN HOUTEN, regimental motor officer, riding a captured German motorcycle, led the convoy of empty trucks. A quick breakdown was made to battalions, routes prescribed for each battalion, and in a few minutes the regiment was rolling to reassemble at Villafranca, for the next mission from the division commander. In the columns were captured German trucks of every type, and a tiny Fiat for the regimental surgeon, Major THOMAS P. CONNERS, and the regimental dental surgeon, Major ALBERT H. MEYER. All the trucks were overloaded to the fullest extent. The most important thing of all was to get the whole regiment north as rapidly as possible—to cut off the Germans and prevent them from getting back into the Alps.

At Villafranca, the situation was rapidly stated and the general mission prescribed. The Division was not to go into Verona after all, although some elements of the 86th had been inside the city, but it was to go north to the Adige River near Bussolengo. Consequently, the 1st Battalion was sent toward Bussolengo, and the 2nd Battalion turned off to the left and then north toward Pastrengo. The 3rd Battalion was to be in reserve. This new movement began in late afternoon.

2nd Battalion—Sega

In the 2nd Battalion column, Company G was in the lead. The truck movement continued from Villafranca, north through Sommacampagna, thence west and north to the town of Sega on the Adige River. There they detrucked and were ordered to secure the bridge near Leporte. Tanks had already been there earlier in the day. Lieutenant JOSEPH H. SHEPHERD's 2nd Platoon and one squad of machine guns led the company downhill toward the river. As they marched, a series of explosions shook the town as the Germans blew up the warehouses. At the same time, artillery opened up on the rear end of the company, the head being in Sega. Then, after the platoon halted, self-propelled guns from across the river shot armor-piercing shells through the buildings. There was also some sniper fire in the town. Lieutenant SHEPHERD, moving forward to reconnoiter the bridge, was fired on from across the river. A Quartermaster truck driver, alarmed by the shellfire, turned his 2½-ton truck around and drove off at a reckless speed, striking and seriously injuring Major PAUL TOWNSEND, executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, who had to be evacuated.

The town of Sega was apparently a German supply depot. The buildings were loaded with foodstuffs and equipment. Behind the fleeing Germans, the Italian natives had broken into the warehouses and were appearing from all sides. One group of six prisoners started marching up the hill out of town, and by the time they had cleared the town there were seventy in the column. Since the bridge was found to be blown, a withdrawal was ordered. S/Sgt. WARREN N. HART and Pvt. WILLIAM R. LEONARD were wounded during this action. The company spent the night in a town in this area. Captain SIDNEY C. PETERMAN of Company H was evacuated with illness, and Lieutenant ROBERT C. RENNIE took over the company.

1st Battalion—Bussolengo

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had entered Bussolengo, and joining forces with the 1st Battalion, 86th Infantry, and some armor, formed into a Task Force under Colonel WILLIAM O. DARBY, of Ranger fame, who had been assigned as assistant division commander on the 24th. Lieutenant Colonel ROSS J. WILSON, with his company commanders, crossed the Adige over a badly demolished bridge and made a reconnaissance, but by nightfall they were recalled to the south bank and the entire battalion billeted in Bussolengo.

In the driving rain, the first bad weather of the entire drive, the remainder of the regiment bivouacked or billeted: 2nd Battalion just south of Sega, 3rd Battalion in Sandra. Prisoners continued to be collected, seven being rounded up by Lieutenant GEORGE EARLE from houses around the regimental CP. At sundown a dud smashed into the CP and lay harmlessly on the floor.

Situation at the End of the Thirteenth Day

During this day the mountain troops had their first glimpse of the Alps. After dark, the regimental commander was called back to the Division CP at Villafranca for the mission of the 27th. General HAYS announced that, as a result of our actions of the afternoon, it was apparent that the Adige Valley was organized in strength, and he didn't propose to try to smash it head on. The Division would march west and then north along the east shore road of Lake Garda. He announced a novel plan to move the Division, on a single road, many miles in one day. The 87th would lead for eight hours, pushing at good marching speed. Toward the end of that eight-hour period, the 85th would be moved up by trucks, relieve the 87th, and lead by marching for the next eight hours. Then the 86th would come up by trucks, relieve the 85th and march steadily for eight hours. Theoretically, if the march were unopposed, the Division would advance an infan-

try regiment sixty miles in twenty-four hours. Troops not marching were to get maximum rest. It sounded too good to be true!

The regimental orders were issued by telephone and radio at about 0300 on the 27th. The march was to begin at 0800. The 3rd Battalion was to march from Sandra; the 2nd Battalion and the 1st were to march out from their respective areas in time to fall in behind the 3rd Battalion at Lazise on the shore of Lake Garda.

FOURTEENTH DAY—27 APRIL

3rd Battalion—Lake Garda

COMPANY K—ROADBLOCK

Company K, leading the regiment, marched to Lake Garda and then moved north along the eastern shore as far as Bardolino without incident. The entire population of Lazise was in the street, with wine and flowers, adding their enthusiastic cheering to the ringing of many church bells. Ahead of Bardolino, the shore swung out to the left where a ridge of hills pointed out into the long lake. To the north beyond, the real mountains could be seen, and even at Bardolino the hills were getting higher and crowding the road closer and closer to the lake. Ahead, the road swung around the point of hills just at the water's edge, hard up against rocky cliffs on one side, and the cypress-lined beach on the other. The town of Garda lay at the foot of the cliffs just before the road swung left to go around the point. A high butte-like bluff rose up from the town overlooking it from the south, and the cliffs walled it in from the north. The I & R Platoon had reported that German SS troops with self-propelled guns and artillery were waiting in Garda.

Apr 27

The 3rd Platoon, leading with attached machine guns, was fired on from a roadblock just south of Garda. Second Lieutenant JACK R. SCHNEIDER was hit in both legs, and Pfc. HAROLD A. VANDERWALL was wounded in the foot. The TDs, hearing of the roadblock, withdrew. At this point, a heavy stone retaining wall ran along the left of the road and below it lay a strip of land at the beach. The 1st Platoon dropped down here and moved along under cover of the wall. The 2nd Platoon was ordered up the steep bank to the right at the base of the butte-like hill. The 3rd Platoon stayed on the road in staggered column. The TDs from a distance began firing at the cliffs beyond the town, which did no harm except brightening up the cliff in patches, but did no good either. The enemy machine gun was silenced, and the company moved up under artillery support.

The 1st Platoon soon ran out of shore, as the water pinched all the way to the road's retaining wall, so they climbed up onto the road right in front of the roadblock. Soon a mass of people, including all kinds of higher divisional command and attached units, were in front of the vertically sunk steel rails. Suddenly a high-velocity shell from an SP gun cracked in. Eleven other rounds followed. A Corps engineer major was killed, and wounded men lay all over the road. Lieutenant CHARLES E. COUGILL, JR., S-2 of the 3rd Battalion, was wounded. From the 1st Platoon were Sgt. GEORGE M. FERRES, Pfc. WORLEY H. REAMS, Pfc. JAMES B. BRATTON, Pvt. RICHARD J. MURPHY, and Pvt. FRANKLIN G. GIBSON, all wounded. T/5 HYMAN KALFIN was killed by this 20-mm fire. The shells seemed to be armor-piercing, and much of the damage they did was from flying rocks, smashed from the rock outcropping facing on the right of the road, that dumped down into the ditch where many of the men sought cover. The TDs withdrew, and only by more threats of courts-martial did Colonel WORKS get one up to fire a few rounds. Then it pulled back.

Sgt. ROBERT W. MANCHESTER and thirteen men rushed forward under this fire and reached the shelter of buildings ahead. The first building was locked, so they got into the second. Then moving on from there, the first scout, Pvt. LOREN D. BLISS, picked off a German running into a garage. Then they set up a momentary defense. Multi-antiaircraft guns started firing point-blank at the roadblock, and the men decided to try to get close to the guns. They worked their way into the Terminal Hotel in the center of Garda. Then they crossed the square, entered a bar and on into another building. As they worked from building to building, they drew occasional fire, but finally Sgt. MANCHESTER, a BAR team, and two riflemen approached a building from which they knew they would have good observation on the AA gun. Here a German machine gun opened up on them from a nearby house, and they returned fire with the BAR from behind a stone wall. The two riflemen, Pfc. HUGH JOHNSTONE and Pvt. LOREN BLISS, under the covering fire of the BAR, got forward into this building. Then the BAR was hit by the machine gun, wounding the gunner, Pfc. JOHN A CLENIN, in the arm. While Sgt. MANCHESTER and the assistant BAR man were dressing CLENIN's wound, a rifle grenade struck the wall, wounding CLENIN again and also Pfc. ELISIO H. MENDOZA. MANCHESTER was slightly wounded but stayed in action to cover the scouts. Meanwhile the scouts had been shooting at the German positions, and had drawn artillery fire from the surrounding buildings. Sgt. MANCHESTER decided to withdraw them and return with their information to the company commander.

The 2nd Platoon during the action at the roadblock was climbing up the steep hill to the right of the road. Some of the replacements had trouble climbing up the steep outcroppings and boulders. First Lieutenant JOHN P. HUNTER, one of the veteran mountaineers who had just returned to the 87th after a long tour of duty elsewhere, literally pushed up some of the inexperienced climbers. As they climbed they could see the 20-mm stuff hitting the road below them where the 1st Platoon men were trying to move forward. As they came over the skyline, a road extending to the north away from the lake road could be seen. On the road were about 100 men, two field pieces, two trucks, and either a self-propelled gun or a tank. They were all pulling out. In place, however, by a white house was a 20-mm gun firing. All of this was 2,000 yards away, out of range for all the weapons on the hill. Lieutenant HUNTER scrambled down to Colonel WORKS, and led him back to an OP with Captain EDDY and a British artillery colonel. The British fired some airbursts and one truck turned over trying to escape the fire, and two 88s were destroyed by their crews. Sgt. PORTER SULLIVAN fired his mortars at maximum range, but they couldn't reach. Even the riflemen fired, and the 20-mm gun fired back at the hill as the men watched the column escape over the crest.

Down on the lake road other German vehicles, including a tank, a half-track, and two German 88s, escaped around the point to the west, in plain sight and range of the TDs. After they had gone, the TDs came up and fired on the now-empty road.

By this time, Company I had reached the top of the high butte-like hill overlooking the town and threatened the German rear, so they pulled their remaining men out, and the 1st Platoon of Company K moved into town without further resistance. T/4 ALFRED S. BALL of the 2nd Platoon had been wounded by machine gun fire during the action.

At 1830 the company moved on through, headed for Torri del Benaco around the point. Company I had moved across the point over a pass, and Company L was still getting down onto the road from the hill it had climbed. Company K got around the point without opposition, and had just reached P. Tenei, where the head of the column was fired on from Torri del Benaco—two 20-mm shells coming in. The company stopped, deployed, and the TDs were ordered forward. The officer in charge of the TDs said, "We won't go forward into town until we know

what's there!" After much bickering, name-calling, and threatening, they went forward and hit a German half-track, a 20-mm gun, an 88-mm gun, and set fire to an ammunition dump. They also fired at two 75s behind town up on the hillside.

At 1930, as the company prepared to billet in Torri del Benaco while the 85th went through to lead the Division march, Company M sent a billeting detail forward to look for suitable houses. They ran head-on into an 88 which fired at them point-blank. Sgt. JAMES C. TOOMEY, Pfc. EARNEST MULLINS, and Sgt. ROGER D. ROHRABAUGH, all of Company M, and their two jeep-mounted machine guns, commanded by First Lieutenant FRANCIS C. ANDERSON, roared up, and at 200 yards poured in such a stream of lead that the gun was abandoned. The TDs later moved up and hazarded a couple of rounds at it, and claimed that they knocked it out.

COMPANY L—THE ESCARPMENT

When Company K, in the lead, was fired on from Garda and was held up at the roadblock, Company L, according to a prearranged plan, swung up to the right. A very high, steep, butte-like hill, dominating Garda, rose from the edge of the road, and Company L climbed it without firing a shot, or being fired upon. Company K had driven the enemy out of Garda by this time, and Company L came on down and back into the column. Company K was fired on again near Torri del Benaco, and Company L was to go on through, but the 85th Infantry arrived at this time and took over the lead.

COMPANY I—OVER THE PASS

On the 27th of April, marching along the east shore of Lake Garda, in battalion reserve, Company I was held up south of Bardolino, as K fought its way into Garda, with L flanking. In stead of following the lake shore road from Garda around the point to the west, Company I was ordered to take the road to the north up over the ridge and rejoin the battalion where the lake shore road swung back on the north side of the point. Moving up the long slope from the lake, they were held up momentarily by a few shots of sniper fire. They sent out flanking scouts, but the snipers evidently withdrew. They halted for a break at the little town of Costa, up on the pass where the road turned to go back down to the lake.

Apr 27

The men were drawing water and eating rations when a truckload of Germans drove into town from the road to the right. T/Sgt. RALPH W. MASSEY and a BAR man opened up on the truck. MASSEY killed the driver, and ten Germans fled from the truck and then surrendered. On the truck was a 20-mm AA gun, loaded and in position to fire. Behind the truck they towed another one. Lieutenant ALFRED L WESTOL, a former antiaircraft man, fired three rounds to test the guns, and they were manned by Company I for future use. Then a bunch of Italian Fascists appeared, driving up the hill in a German ammunition truck. They were opened up on by the TDs down by the lake. The Italians jumped clear of the truck just before it was hit. The ammunition blew up, and Pfc. WILLARD M. NICHOLS, JR. was wounded again by flying shells, and this time evacuated. As the company moved downhill and approached Torri del Benaco, they saw enemy fleeing from the town. Company fire was brought on them and artillery called for. Very few artillery rounds were effective, and most of the enemy escaped. In Torri del Benaco the company got orders to stay in position. Here T/4 NICK M. FILIPPIS broke his wrist, and Pfc. CLARENCE J. DIERBERGER was hurt while working with the litter bearers.

2nd and 1st Battalions—Inland From the Lake

Late in the morning when the 3rd Battalion was held up by a roadblock south of the town of Garda, the 2nd Battalion, behind them in the column near Bardolino, was ordered to move up onto the high ground on the right (east) flank, and clear the ridge that ran east inland from Garda. The battalion advanced cross-country with Company F on the left and E on the right. As

Company E reached the top of the ridge and worked along to the right, they came under sniper fire. S/Sgt. WALTER S. KASABUSKI, whose brother had been killed on Mt. Pigna on April 15th, was instantly killed by this sniper fire. Company F worked to the left and Pvt. WILLIAM C. TURNER was wounded. The scattered enemy fled up the valley to the northeast, and both companies reorganized. Company E found one German dead, and four wounded on the ridge. Then in column the entire battalion marched down into the valley to the northeast, and billeted in the town of Pesina. This occupation protected the Division's right flank. Pvt. WESLEY A. SMITH, of Company G, was injured near Bardolino during the day.

When the leading 3rd Battalion was held up before Garda, the 1st Battalion followed right behind the 2nd Battalion, billeting for the night at Costermano, east of Garda in the mountain valley. During the day six Germans gave up, insisting that the war was over.

Situation at the End of the Fourteenth Day

The regiment, in accordance with the General HAYS' instructions, quickly got into billets on the evening of the 27th, to get maximum rest so as to be ready to lead again at 0800, relieving the 86th Infantry at the head of the column: 1st Battalion in Costermano; 2nd Battalion in Pesina; and the 3rd Battalion in the beautiful resort town of Torri del Benaco. The regimental CP as set up in the finest villa on the lakeshore at Garda.

During the night, the 85th led for a few hours covering several miles. The 86th at the proper time took over the relief and continued marching into the night. Some time before daylight the head of the 86th reached the first of six road tunnels about a mile north of Navene. Here the fears of the pessimistic were confirmed: the Germans had set off demolitions that would require a lot of engineer work to clear. Reconnaissance showed that two bridges just beyond had also been demolished.

FIFTEENTH DAY—28 APRIL

At dawn Colonel FOWLER went by jeep to Navene to learn the situation and the probable employment of the 87th Infantry. Small detachments of the 86th were already bypassing the demolished tunnel and bridges in DUKWs and they were as vulnerable as "sitting ducks on a pond" to the German SP guns on the west side of the lake, which narrows to about two miles in width. German strength and capabilities at the town of Torbole and Riva at the north end of the lake were unknown. Instructions for the 87th were to be ready about noon to move up toward Navene. Division CP at this time was already being set up in the advanced location of Malcésine.

Apr 28

Word was carried back and transmitted to the battalions that allowed them to rest a few hours more. In accordance with instructions, the 1st Battalion was in trucks and waiting in Garda at noon, and the 2nd Battalion was alerted in Pesina to get on the waiting trucks just as soon as the word should be given. There were not sufficient trucks to move the 3rd Battalion at the same time. Colonel ROSS J. WILSON and Colonel EMMETT L. NATIONS were at the regimental CP waiting for the instructions to move.

First Lieutenant WILLIAM C. MCGUCKIN, liaison officer, came from the Division CP (the distance being too great for reliable radio communication) with notes of the division commander's order, with the same goals in mind: Trento, Bolzano, and the Brenner Pass. The 86th was to send one battalion to cross over the high mountain ridge near Navene to outflank Torbole; the 87th was to send one battalion still farther to the east toward Mori.

The obvious route for the battalion was from Pesina, where the 2nd Battalion was waiting, on the valley road around the mountain mass through Spiazzi, thence along the high road with many switchbacks to Mori. But nothing was known of German strength in the towns between Pesina and Spiazzi. It might take one battalion considerable time to fight its way through this area. And there were reports, yet unverified, that an important bridge near Spiazzi was demolished. On the other hand, if a battalion were to march over the ridge from the west near Punta di Naoli, leaving its transport behind at the end of the winding mountain road, it might be impossible for the regiment to supply and support this battalion. (The Alpini mule Pack Company had been left behind on the south edge of the Po Valley, when the mad dash across the flatlands began, and had not yet rejoined the regiment.)

Consequently, a decision was quickly made to use two battalions. The 2nd Battalion to march over the ridge and strike north for Mori, and the 1st Battalion to clear out enemy resistance along the road through Spiazzi, so that Regiment could push supplies and supporting weapons to the 2nd Battalion. At about this time a report came from Lieutenant DAVID S. ARNOLD, of the I & R Platoon, who had been sent to make a reconnaissance by artillery plane, that the road to Mori looked to be passable for 2½-ton trucks its entire length, except that a bridge was out southwest of Spiazzi.

The 2nd Battalion entrucked at Pesina and was on the move by 1330, going rapidly through San Zeno di Montagna, where the road became narrower, steeper, and more rocky. There were many switchbacks, with turns so sharp that some trucks had to be maneuvered carefully back and forth two or three times to complete the turn. Some of the German diesels that had been captured had no front-wheel drive, and their progress was slow. The battalion did not close at the dead end of this road until 1700. Colonel FOWLER had trailed this convoy with his own jeep and a radio jeep from the Division's 110th Signal Company. Just as he was seeing the troops detruck to start the march over this ridge, the radio sergeant handed him a message, "Report to the Division CP at once." He took time to give last-minute instructions to Major BORIS T. VLADIMIROFF, executive officer at the rear of the column, and then return down the long mountain road. It was 1900 when he reached the regimental CP at Garda. Here he had a short conversation with Lieutenant Colonel JEFFERSON J. IRVIN, Division G-3. Colonel IRVIN said, "The General wants both battalions brought back." Colonel FOWLER replied, "You just can't move battalions around like pieces on a checkerboard. I haven't been able to get in touch with the 2nd Battalion by radio since I left them. The vehicles have already returned. It will take at least three hours to get them back up to the ridge. Furthermore, I can't afford to bring the 1st Battalion back until I am sure that the 2nd Battalion has gotten the word to come back." Colonel IRVIN held the high card: "The General wants them back."

Colonel FOWLER then made the eighteen-mile trip to the Division CP to report the situation to General HAYS. The General was insistent that the battalions be brought back as quickly as possible and moved nearer the north end of the lake; and Colonel FOWLER was just as insistent that the 1st Battalion would have to continue clearing out the resistance along the road through Spiazzi until he could be sure that the 2nd Battalion was on its way back.

On his return to the regimental CP, Colonel FOWLER met Colonel WORKS at Torri del Benaco just as the 3rd Battalion was entrucking to move north to the vicinity of Navene. This much of the regiment, at least, could comply with the division commander's desires. Then began a long night with a double mission for the regiment: first, to get word, by some means, to the 2nd Battalion to call off their march to the north; second, to push the attack of the 1st Battalion to clear the way through Spiazzi, in case the efforts to reach the 2nd Battalion should prove unsuccessful.

Radio relay teams spent the night transmitting from various places, in the valley, and on the mountain roads, but no reply came from the 2nd Battalion—nothing to indicate that they knew of the change in mission. Patrols were sent out from the 1st Battalion to catch up to the 2nd Battalion, but the night was black and rainy, and the mountain distances were too great. Lieutenant Colonel JOHN F. SCHMELZER, regimental executive, went to the 1st Battalion CP to insure that the second part of the mission would be carried out.

SIXTEENTH DAY—29 APRIL

1st Battalion—Spiazzi

On the 28th, the 1st Battalion, waiting in trucks at Garda, convoyed east to Caprino to begin the mission of opening up the road through Spiazzi. Company A was to attack Spiazzi frontally, after bypassing the blown bridge, while Company C was to move along the ridge to the west and come in on the town from the rear.

COMPANY A

The company moved out of Caprino at 0130 of the 29th, after waiting vainly in hopes that the 2nd Battalion could be reached and withdrawn. They moved through the rain in column of twos: 3rd Platoon leading, 2nd Platoon, company machine guns, attached heavies, company headquarters, mortars, and finally the 1st Platoon. They passed the blown bridge at 0330, and reached the town shortly thereafter. Partisans had reported earlier in the afternoon that there were about 200 Germans in Spiazzi. At first it appeared as though the Partisan forces might have cleaned it out, since the first few buildings of the town seemed deserted. Then Lieutenant WILFERD L. PHILLIPSEN of the 3rd Platoon was challenged in German as he passed a building. He didn't answer, but held the column up.

Apr 29

In German, the guard yelled, "Attention to the fire!" and opened up with a new German automatic weapon. It sounded very much like our own BAR, and our men feared that the 2nd Battalion might be occupying the town, so they didn't return fire. This misapprehension was further heightened by an erroneous impression widely circulated among the troops from a British radio message. The British artillery had radioed saying they would not fire support until assured that none of the 2nd Battalion were in Spiazzi. This was thought by some to mean that the 2nd Battalion was in Spiazzi, although there was no other reason to expect them to be within several miles of the town.

Consequently, S/Sgt. WILLIAM F. WHITEHEAD, who was with the company commander at the time, raised his voice and shouted, "Are you Americans?"

One shot—sounding like an M-1 rifle, was the reply.

Again, "Are you Americans?"

One more shot—like an M-1.

For the third time, "Are you Americans?"

Then the characteristic German "*Achtung!*" and a burp gun opened up.

Someone in the company yelled, "That's all, brother! Let's go!" and the fight was on.

The 3rd Platoon finally passed around to the right of the buildings where they had been fired on, and went into town. The 2nd Platoon built up a base of fire for them. Also the CP group from a higher ridge to the left fired into the town. Bazookas were used against the buildings, and the 3rd Platoon quickly cleaned out a half-dozen buildings. By 0700 the 3rd Platoon had taken the first part of town, including a former schoolhouse and a German hospital building. The 2nd

Platoon had taken three or four prisoners and killed a good many more. With daylight, however, the slightest exposure by the 3rd Platoon brought fire.

It was planned to move on through the town with the 2nd Platoon moving through the houses and the 1st Platoon abreast of them on the street. As they advanced along the road toward the center of town, machine gun fire opened up, cutting down several of the leading men. Pfc. EDWIN W. STANKE, the acting squad leader, and Sgt. WILLIAM H. FORESTER, were killed. First Sergeant GILBERT S. BATES, S/Sgt. LAWRENCE E. HOTALING, Pfc. WELDON E. STOREY, Pvt. JOHN B. MORGAN, JR., and Pvt. EDWARD E. LEICHLEITER were all wounded. A stream of bullets sprayed the men from all sides. STOREY was hit three times in the arm, and Platoon Sergeant HOTALING was hit by seven bullets. The men who were able withdrew to cover, and artillery fire was called for. The 604th Field Artillery laid in an effective barrage that neutralized the machine gun fire.

At 1100, however, the Germans counterattacked furiously and in strength from the high ground east of the town. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons and the company command group cut them down from positions in the school and hospital, but the remnants kept driving on and got close enough to hurl grenades. Large *Panzerfausts* were shot into the buildings, wounding two men from Company D. The riflemen learned to stand back four or five feet from the windows to fire.

All of Company A had been committed, and while scores of dead Germans lay scattered around, the situation did not look too promising. Suddenly Company C, attacking from the north with tremendous surprise, entered the far end of town, captured forty to fifty prisoners, and joined Company A.

COMPANY C

At 0100 of the 29th, Company C moved out in rain from Braga to support Company A, and moved up a road to a point 2,000 yards west of and overlooking Spiazzi. From this high ground they continued north to be behind the town when Company A should attack. Moving north and northeastward cross-country by azimuth, the 3rd Platoon hit the road north of Spiazzi. It was dark and stormy and no previous reconnaissance had been possible. There was some confusion when they hit the road on either side of a hairpin turn. The point, on the lower switchback with Lieutenant RICHARD C. POWERS, was challenged by four or five Germans. The point opened up with a BAR, rifles were fired, and grenades thrown. This advance element could dimly see and hear the balance of the company above them on the upper switchback, and at first feared they were Germans. To add to the confusion, the new German machine carbine sounded like the American BAR, making the men wonder if the 2nd Battalion wasn't already in the town.

The company got oriented and tacked back to the south, so that at about 0800 they were just outside of town in the German rear. At 0900 they jumped off, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons on either side of the road, then the command group and weapons, and the 1st bringing up the rear. At this time Company A was moving north in Spiazzi. First Lieutenant ROBERT F. BOYER, by his successful maneuver, had the town sealed off. On the right, the 2nd Platoon spotted three Germans facing south in dugouts west of town. They got up to 75 yards behind them when the lead scout coughed, and the Germans swung around as the scout hit the ground. They then noticed for the first time the tail of the company column still on the road to the rear, and they opened fire. Lieutenant JOHN W. HAWK pitched his first grenade, scoring a bulls-eye and hitting the three Germans. The platoon moved up to the crest and fired down on the dugouts, while Lieutenant HAWK kept jumping to his feet and pitching grenades while covered by the fire. Pfc. HOMER G. IRVIN, the platoon runner, was hit in the arm, but nine Germans were wounded, eight of them by grenades. Lieutenant HAWK had been a great exponent of the hand grenade ever since the March campaign.

Finally a big *furst* charge came sailing up toward the crest like a football, and the men withdrew before it. Having located the enemy that were still firing, Lieutenant HAWK sent Sgt. RUSSELL B. HELMER's 3rd Squad up onto a small cliff to set up a base of fire. This was a difficult spot to reach, but the sergeant did an excellent job placing his men to cover the 2nd Squad as they moved into position. Pfc. ELMER T. PERKINS, a BAR man, got right up in full view and poured fire into the dugouts. Then the 2nd Squad set up the base of fire on the right while the 3rd assaulted from the left, firing as they ran. Sgt. THOMAS P. HOLLAND and two men jumped down into the long dugout trench system and flushed out ten Germans. Pfc. KENNETH A. SPERRY had just stepped across a dugout opening when a Kraut stuck his head out of the dugout behind him. Sgt. WILBUR R. MORROW tossed a grenade, disposing of the German.

The platoon reorganized. The 3rd Platoon had been stopped up on a hill to the left during the firing, so the 3rd now went down into the rear section of Spiazzi, which had five or six houses around a square. Sgt. HOLLAND and the 2nd Squad flushed thirteen Germans from one building, and there was no other resistance here. The platoon then moved to the main part of town, and after subduing some upper-story machine gun fire, spread out in town and awaited the rest of the company.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Platoon was firing into dugouts with a BAR and rifles, and taking prisoners who were confused by the attack from the rear. Seven men of the platoon with Sgt. CASIMIR POVELAITES were fired on by rifle fire from the left. They flushed out a Fascist and threw him in with the prisoners, while he protested violently. Another German was knocked off his bike by rifle fire, and he and two others in a ditch beside him ran into a building. A bazooka shell in the doorway produced a white flag, and five Germans surrendered from the building. This ended resistance in Spiazzi as the company closed in and met Company A.

The company had captured 38 Germans, and these were "fighting" Germans of the quality encountered during the initial phase in the mountains. The company, coordinating with Company A's frontal attack, had circled completely around the town in a difficult maneuver executed during a dark, stormy night. In the morning they had caught the Germans completely by surprise, reaching hand-grenade range in his rear before discovery. Company C had but one man slightly wounded. It was a brilliant action.

COMPANY D

Company D took part in the fight for the mountain town of Spiazzi. The mortars were unable to reach the objective from the line of departure, so they took no part in the engagement. Lieutenant ANTSELM BRADLEY's platoon was attached, one section each to Company A and C. Lieutenant WILLIAM SPINNEY's platoon was kept in reserve. Lieutenant BRADLEY with Company A set up a machine gun on a table inside a building, and was firing from a window. A direct hit with a large *Panzerfaust* grenade struck the machine gun and smashed it against the wall. Miraculously, no one was seriously hurt. Then they set up a gun in another room and fired through a doorway. They were so exposed to direct fire that Lieutenant BRADLEY moved all men but the gunner away from the gun. Then lining the men up in a place of safety, each man took his turn firing. This gun killed twelve Germans one after another as they came around the corner of a building. During this engagement in the town, Company D was able to set up crossing bands of machine gun fire for the first time, when they placed two guns to fire down corridors at right angles to each other in a large building. Wounded in this action were Pfc. JOHN G. KAPUSTINEC, COLEMAN B. KELLY, and Pvt. CLYDE H. DALTON. Cpl. JOOS DEN HERDER was injured.

MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATION

Early in the morning of the 29th, all attempts to reach the 2nd Battalion having been unsuccessful, Colonel FOWLER and driver, Pfc. JOHN MRENKO, the radio jeep of the 110th Signal Company, and two jeeps of the regimental I & R Platoon, one under T/Sgt. EDWARD WILLFORD and the other under Sgt. BENNETT L. BOGGESS, set out to find a route to the 2nd Battalion. Without difficulty they reached the cluster of shepherders' buildings called Pradonego, at an elevation of about 3,000 feet. From there they had a most difficult, rocky path climbing another 1,000 feet to the top of a lateral ridge. In several places, all men except the driver had to dismount to lift and push a jeep. It took two hours to go the last mile to the top. It was about 1300 when they finally reached the better road on the other side, and began rolling north to overtake the 2nd Battalion. In a few minutes, the head of the battalion column was met wearily plodding the way back. They had finally received one of the regiment's urgent messages recalling them.

2nd Battalion—March Toward Mori

The 2nd Battalion, on the afternoon of the 28th, rode in trucks up the mountain to the end of the road west of Punta di Naoli. Here in the ruins of an old monastery, they ate their supper rations as a fog closed in on the mountain. Each man was issued a blanket just before the march began over the ridge in the dusk.

It was a strenuous climb over the ridge, with its elevation of 5,000 feet, and it took a long hunt to locate the beginning of the trail on the east side of the ridge. It was dark and rain was falling at this time. However, they were finally on the main road, and they marched north until 0330 with the blankets wrapped around them like shrouds as protection against the cold rain. Higher on the ridge that night, considerable snow fell. Company G led the march and set up all-around security at a cluster of buildings where the battalion halted. Behind them, they felt assured, the 1st Battalion was moving up beyond Pesina, past the blown bridge, to clean out the Germans in Spiazzi and reestablish a supply route to them.

At 0800 of the 29th, in broad daylight, a German officer and two enlisted men walked up and through the door of the 1st Platoon CP. The whole platoon and machine gun squad were in the building. In the building next to it was the mortar section. The vigilance had been relaxed with the coming of daylight. However, from the mortar section building, Pfc. JULIUS HILL saw the three Germans as they entered the building. The German officer demanded that the whole platoon surrender as the surprised men reached for their weapons. One of the Germans fired two shots, killing Pvt. EVERETT G. MANTHEI and wounding Second Lieutenant PAUL M. GOLDEN, who had received his battlefield commission and reported for duty the day before. Pfc. JULIUS HILL opened up on the Germans with a Tommy gun from the next building, as they tried to escape. The two enlisted men were cut down, but the officer escaped. The two wounded prisoners were interrogated. They revealed that 200 SS troops, in this area to attend an NCO school, were waiting half a mile away.

Apr 29

The battalion started to march north again, but received the radio message from Regiment about 1000 that the mission had been changed. The 2nd Battalion was to return at once. Colonel NATIONS, puzzled by this unexplained change, began the march to the south, and had returned about five miles on the road overlooking Spiazzi when he met the regimental commander.

MINUTES TOO LATE

As soon as Colonel FOWLER's party had crossed to the north side of the lateral ridge, radio communication to the 1st Battalion died out, although T/5 MATTHEW R. FABER called continuously. Consequently, when Colonel FOWLER met Colonel NATIONS and was assured that the 2nd Battalion, complete, was returning, he was unable to call Colonel WILSON direct to

withdraw his troops from Spiazzi. However, by using the “300” set of Company E, he was able to talk to Captain KLEMME of Company A. He asked, “Is Spiazzi clear of Germans?” The answer, “Yes. We are in control of Spiazzi.” Then, “Get word to the battalion commander to withdraw.”

At that very instant, while Colonel FOWLER was observing Spiazzi through glasses, a large building blew apart in a great cloud of smoke, dust and paper. Colonel FOWLER asked, “Did you have men in that building?” The answer, “Just a minute, sir. Yes, we did have men in that building.”

1st Battalion—Spiazzi Tragedy

The battle was over, but tragedy struck just as they received the order to withdraw. It is thought that the safe was booby-trapped, for thousands of records were scattered far and wide. In any case, the building occupied by Company A was mined by the Germans who must have foreseen their defeat, and left their treachery behind them. The whole wing of the building fell. S/Sgt. HAROLD M. CREGER was killed. He was the platoon sergeant of the 3rd Platoon, Company A, and his work in the campaign had been superior. Wounded in the blast were Second Lieutenant WILFERD L. PHILLIPSEN, of the 3rd Platoon, and Sgt. RAOUL J. CLOUTIER, Pfc. ROBERT A. UTTER, Pfc. CLIFFORD G. ABNEY, JR., Pfc. LEO HACKNEY, JR., Pvt. DANIEL O. FIKE, Pvt. LOWELL E. GIBSON, and Pvt. WILLIAM P. ANTHONY. Three men of Company D were wounded: Pfc. GRANVILLE BROWN, Pfc. WILLIAM J. LALLY, and Pfc. ROBERT J. STILLER.

Apr 29

The action at Spiazzi, apart from the tragedy of the explosion, was an outstanding example of a night approach, and a surprise attack from two directions against a fanatical enemy. The garrison at Spiazzi was in reality an NCO school, consisting of about 200 men. The surrounding area was well organized with model emplacements. The defenders counterattacked repeatedly and viciously to throw out the attacking Americans. An estimated seventy Germans were killed; about forty were captured. The remainder are believed to have escaped down the steep bluffs to the east toward the Adige River.

The prisoners and the two jeeps of the I & R Platoon were used to evacuate the wounded to the site of the blown bridge, then carried across the streambed to an ambulance on the far side. The four jeeps of the colonel's party were able to negotiate the bypass, where Lieutenant DALLAS BEAMAN's Pioneer Platoon was working on the mission to open up a supply route. There was no longer any need for this route. Both battalions were assembling near Pazzon for truck movement to Torri del Benaco. The battalions arrived about dark, and found billets in the lake-shore village.

END OF THE CAMPAIGN—30 APRIL - 2 MAY

Despite the frantic efforts that had been made to recall the 1st and 2nd Battalions, there was really no point to pushing them further north than Torri del Benaco, because the engineers were still having their troubles repairing demolitions of the tunnels and bridges. The 86th Infantry, having bypassed the obstacles by DUKW or by tortuous mountain trail, was having some grim sessions with the Germans at the north end of the lake. Although they suffered some bitter losses, they fought with determination and skill, drove the Germans out of Torbole and then Nago, then swung left and gained the much larger town of Riva, and finally pushed a company northeast to Arco.

Apr 30

The Germans were still retreating. They put up a desperate show of resistance, took some losses, and pulled back. Where did they intend to fight to the finish? Where could there be any better place than in these rugged mountains? The 85th Infantry was making raids, usually of one company strength, in DUKWs across the lake. The raid most publicized after it was over was the one to Gargnano to search a villa of Mussolini.

There was little the 87th could do until there was more room to fight. Most men needed rest. Now was the time for it. They needed to clean up. The lake was at the front door. We needed winter equipment if we were going to fight the Germans in the high mountains. Major DON R. HARRIS, Regimental S-4, had to get it, and get it quick. The Alpini Pack Company caught up again, and made ready for the campaign in the mountains.

One little episode is typical of the inveterate mountaineer. Being in reserve with nothing official to do, Second Lieutenant RICHARD A. ROCKER, 3rd Battalion Headquarters, and a few others of the same category, viewed the majestic range of mountains towering at their back door, and took up the challenge. A four-hour climb brought them to a pass, Bocca di Navene, elevation 4,410 feet, close to the winding mountain road leading northeast to Mori. Approaching from the north was a small group of Germans, apparently a security force for a formation of about sixty fully equipped Germans 300 yards farther back. Around a bend marched a similar large group. As the point came close, ROCKER's party called to them to surrender, but the point was in a mood to fight. The Americans opened fire, and killed and wounded some of the lead men, but the larger group of Germans came quickly to the rescue, and there was nothing to do but withdraw. They were able to accomplish this without casualty.

The next day a large group climbed toward the pass again, but was fired on before reaching the top. Obviously, the Germans had established observation posts overlooking the lake road. On the return of this patrol, attempts were made to reach the pass with a concentration of 81-mm mortar fire, but the range and elevation were too great.

May 1

The next day, 2 May, a party from the 3rd Battalion reconnoitered a trail along the ridge high above the lake that would bring troops out to the east-west road between Torbole and Mori, near Lago di Loppio. On the 3rd of May, one battalion with mules would take this mountain route; the remainder of the regiment would go by motor and marching through the cleared tunnels and over the repaired bridges; and the Division would begin the drive on Trento, Bolzano, and the Brenner Pass.

VICTORY — 2 MAY

After several false rumors among the Italians, and after some very good indications, such as the refusal of the Air Force to fly any more missions, and the withdrawal of certain artillery support, the official news of the capitulation of all German forces in Italy broke over the radio at about suppertime on the 2nd of May 1945.

May 2

The Presidential Message sent to General MARK W. CLARK, Commander of the 15th Army Group, follows:

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE FINAL BRILLIANT VICTORY OF THE ALLIED ARMIES IN ITALY IN IMPOSING UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER UPON THE ENEMY, I WISH TO CONVEY TO THE AMERICAN FORCES UNDER YOUR COMMAND AND TO YOU PERSONALLY THE APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE OF THE PRESIDENT AND OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. NO PRAISE IS ADEQUATE FOR THE HEROIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND

MAGNIFICENT COURAGE OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL UNDER YOUR COMMAND DURING THIS LONG AND TRYING CAMPAIGN.

AMERICA IS PROUD OF THE ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTION MADE BY YOUR AMERICAN ARMIES TO THE FINAL ALLIED VICTORY IN ITALY. OUR THANKS FOR YOUR GALLANT LEADERSHIP AND THE DEATHLESS VALOR OF YOUR MEN.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

The Italians were jubilant and noisy as only Latin peoples can be. They sang, yelled, and crowded the streets firing their weapons. All the church bells clanged jubilantly. Some of the tankers fired their .50-calibers at a dangerous angle.

But by and large, the infantryman was soberly relieved. The next phase of the attack over the mountains had been scheduled to get under way the next morning. He was too weary in a cumulative way, too stunned to believe the full import of this news. He knew he ought to feel more elated than he did. Almost mechanically he realized that he'd made it, that now he would have a chance to get home. Then he thought of those who didn't make it, and wouldn't go home. Three hundred and eleven from the 87th had been killed since moving up to the front on the 2nd of February, just exactly three months previously. During the same period, 1,281 had been wounded. Only a small percentage had come back from the hospitals; more would return from day to day. The regiment wasn't the same. After a while things would renew themselves, but for the night of the peace, the mountain infantryman was thoughtful.

Commendations

During the following weeks, several commendations recognizing the outstanding battle record of the 10th Mountain Division were received. Two of them are here shown:

From Major General WILLIS D. CRITTENBERGER, Commander of IV Corps:

The splendid performance of the officers and men of the 10th Mountain Division while a part of IV Corps attack in the Fifth Army offensive from 14 April to 28 April, inclusive, was such as to evoke unqualified praise in all military circles, and it is my desire hereby to commend you and your officers and men in the very highest terms..

In fifteen days of arduous fighting the 10th Mountain Division covered 105 miles in a northerly direction, an average advance of seven miles per day. During that period you broke through the enemy Apennine defenses in your front with such impetus as to split three enemy divisions, inflicting heavy losses in men and material and throwing these enemy units into a state of utter confusion.

On the seventh day of your attack, debauching into the Po Valley with admirable speed, you cut Highway 9 and threatened Bologna by thrusting beyond it well to the north. The infantry and armor under your command raced on to seize the southern bank of the Po River in zone, and by the evening of 23 April, with scarcely a pause, you had established a firm bridgehead across that important obstacle. Allowing the bewildered and beaten enemy forces no respite, the 10th Mountain Division then thrust on northward to seize the Villafranca airport and the city of Verona, which your elements had cleared by early afternoon of 26 April.

Bearing northwestward in accordance with your new mission, you continued the pursuit of the enemy with such relentless speed that by the evening of 28 April your leading elements were a good three-fourths of the way up the eastern shore of Lago di Garda. At this time the 10th Mountain Division was detached from IV Corps, but we

continued to watch with the greatest admiration your further northward progress, which demonstrated conclusively the fine physical condition and offensive spirit which still obtained even though your offensive had continued by this time without cessation for more than two weeks.

The story of the fifteen days from 14 April to 28 April, inclusive, establishes for the 10th Mountain Division a record of which every officer and man can be justly proud. These battlefield accomplishments are now known to the entire Army. Seldom has a Division contributed more effectively to an offensive which has so decisively thrown German forces completely off balance.

The IV Corps was fortunate to have had the stalwart 10th Mountain Division available to deliver its main attack in this final offensive and this Headquarters is fully aware of the important contribution which that Division made to our success in overwhelmingly defeating the enemy forces in northwest Italy, and bringing about the speedy cessation of hostilities.

WILLIS D. CRITTENBERGER

Major General, U.S. Army

From General MARK W. CLARK, Commander of the 15th Army Group:

Our great offensive which ended in the unconditional surrender of the German forces was spearheaded by the 10th Mountain Division under your brilliant leadership. Will you please convey to all your officers and men the fact that I look upon the action of the 10th Mountain as one of the most vital and brilliant in the campaign.

From the Apennines you drove ever northward with the Fifth Army until the Germans laid down their arms.

You plunged ahead, exploiting the severing of Route 9, and to you came the well-deserved honor of being first across the Po. Nothing, it seemed, could stop your drive, and you went forward to Villafranca, to Verona, up and across Lake Garda, to Bolzano and up the Resia Pass to meet the Seventh Army. This is the aggressive spirit of which victory is made. It was a privilege to have you in this command. Good luck to you.

Sincerely,

MARK W. CLARK

General, U.S. Army

OCCUPATION DUTY AND RETURN TO THE STATES (2 MAY — 14 AUG)

As Division planned the continued advance to the Brenner Pass, the war in Italy ended on 2 May. The night before, a 100-vehicle German convoy tried to escape from Milano along Lake Garda, but was captured by the 2nd Battalion. The peace news was officially confirmed from Fifth Army by way of 10th Mountain Division at 2315. Colonel FOWLER visited all of the battalions in their areas around Lake Garda on the morning of the 3rd of May. General HAYS at the same time officially addressed each battalion on the occasion of victory.

On 4 May, "Task Force Works" headed for Trento, Bolzano, Merano and Passo di Resia. This force was made up of the 3rd Battalion, with attached artillery, TDs, engineers, and medics; all motorized.

The rest of the regiment started a reconversion to peace program. On the 5th, training schedules were requested with reveille, drill calls, and retreat. Military courtesy was required once more.

On the 6th, duffle bags were sent for and ammunition was turned in. Blackout regulations were lifted. Conditioning marches and exercises were held.

The remaining two battalions left lovely Lake Garda on May 8th, moving north through the valley to Rovereto and then east up onto a beautiful mountainside. The battalions were bivouacked in and around Folgaria. After the memory of the seared browns of the Apennines and the recent dust of battle, the May colors in the foothills of the Alps seemed unbelievably fresh and vivid. The towns were pastel-colored, and more picturesque in architecture than the Italy of further south. Every view seemed like a children's book illustration.

The troops listened on the 8th of May to Prime Minister Winston Churchill proclaim the complete victory of the Allies. He declared that the victory would be celebrated the next day on the 9th. The 9th was proclaimed a holiday for all Fifth Army troops.

Censorship was lifted on the 11th. A big regimental picnic was held for the natives and soldiers in celebration of victory. Hundreds of Italians were driven in GI trucks from miles around for the food, games, and music.

"Task Force Works" in the Alps

Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion had a fabulous tale to tell. Quoting from Colonel ROBERT C. WORKS' letter to Colonel FOWLER on May 6th:

Dear Colonel FOWLER:

I thought you would be interested in the "Lost Battalion" and I'll give you a brief picture of our situation.

As you know, our trip north was uneventful; it only caused my hair to turn grey—no other casualties. From Trento to our present location, we ran the gauntlet of thousands of armed Krauts who, in their oafish German way, insisted on maintaining roadblocks; manning 88-mm scout cars, and mountain guns; and stopping and checking our convoy. No harm was done, but they tested the temper of a man who would have liked nothing better than to open up a broadside with all tanks, TDs and artillery.

We arrived in the area at 4:30 AM, but had to immediately start the job of billeting and military government. Last night I would have gladly taken over some easy

job, such as the attack of Madna di Rodiano. We now maintain roadblocks: Company I at Tubre, Company L just north of Malles, Company K at Sluderno, Company M is at Tarces, the tanks at Landes, the 1125th FA at Sluderno. The areas assigned were more a result of billeting expedience, for initially they were put in to defend the valley south of Malles and to block the three roads entering the area. But later we had to move to our present positions to allow the Krauts to assemble in the valley around Glorenza.

As usual, we have received no clear-out orders from Division. Yesterday, as late as 2:00 PM, I could get no policy from the task force commander, except that "saluting would be improved," "the pile liner will not be used as an outer garment," and that "Krauts and civilians will not be evacuated from billets to let our men in out of the rain." On handling the Krauts, civil government, AMG duties, I could get no answer.

The civil population is 95 percent Austrian and hates the Italians. The Italians are the former fascists who are now ardent partisans. The gendarmerie are mostly Krauts. The Krauts consist of AAA, AP, MPs, Poles, Todt, SOS, etc., with fifteen or twenty different units, including WACs in groups of two or three up to seventy-five. The latter were living in the same houses as my men.

So at noon yesterday I called in the senior officer in the area, a Colonel, and ordered him to organize a provisional Regiment and move his troops to Glorenza where there are some old barracks. I laid down the law on drinking, curfew, fraternizing with Americans, etc. He is an old Prussian, Iron Cross in World War I, monocle, right out of Hollywood. When he saw I meant business, he saluted, clicked his heels, bowed, and left. About three hours later, the queerest assortment of Krauts started pouring out of the hills into the assembly area. Today most of them are gathered together, doing close order drill, etc., preparing for the next war, I suppose.

The civilian problem hasn't been so easy. I called together the local mayors, all Tyroleans, and told them they were still in charge, and that I expected them to maintain law and order. I called together all the partisan leaders and read them the riot act. So far no trouble, except that the partisans stole the key to the mayor's office and he wants me to get it back.

My staff is as busy as bird dogs, but my troops have no entertainment or recreation, except the local vino shop. The Germans assure me that the VD rate is very low in this area. To kill time I have started training in the morning with a retreat formation in the afternoon. We do quite a lot of guard duty, but still there is too much time on the hands of the men. The training consists of mountain training: rock climbing, skiing (not very good), marching, and a dozen other subjects. Will enclose training schedule.

ROBERT C. WORKS

After the date of the colonel's letter, Company K moved into a large ski resort at Solda. Here with excellent skiing every day, they lived in every luxury, with maid service, excellent beds and showers, and the army chow served up expertly. Strangest of all, they had champagne to drink three times a day. German warehouses of it came to their disposal. Over the bar a sign read: "Champagne Free! Beer 20 Cents. Only you wealthy guys drink beer!" They also had found a warehouse of German radios, and just about any other merchandise to be thought of up to and including pianos and Fiat cars.

I Company was at Merano in another hotel just as happy. They were nearer the warehouses and besides it was a lovely city, untouched by bombs because of its many hospitals. All of the

fashionables and wealthy Nazis and near-Nazis left in Europe had fled to this former resort city. To veterans of Italy the women were beautiful.

The battalion executive officer, Major JOHN C. MCKAY, acted as mayor of Merano. His function among other things was to coordinate between German and Allied commands. In the town were 15,000 German troops (mostly service) and scores of wanted Nazi "Bigwigs." The loot of Europe was stored here, too. Twelve kilometers away was a great cache of paintings and other art treasures from Florence. There were bales of silk stockings, warehouses of liquor, 5,000 commercial radios, 1,000 tons of food, and millions in Italian currency.

During a thirty-minute period, the following typical problems entered Major MCKAY's office:

1. The disposition of Baron Kemeny, former head of the Austrian Nazi party, was determined.
2. Twenty priests told of being forced into the German army to do menial work in hospitals and wanted to get out of the German army immediately.
3. A German officer came to see about getting protection for his Italian family against Partisans.
4. A German brewery called for regulations on beer.
5. The German military complained of Americans driving off their cars.
6. A British colonel came in regarding some \$12,000,000 lire in currency which wouldn't fit into his car for the trip to the Bank at Bolzano. He wanted a trailer.
7. A woman pregnant by an unknown German soldier wanted to know what to do.
8. A French movie actress desired to go to Switzerland.
9. Arrangements were ordered for the removal of the 25-man Jap embassy to Montecatini while the 100-man German embassy remained in immunity.

It was all soon over. By the 14th the regiment was in their new area southwest of Lake Garda on the flat plain near Montichiari (F145550) prepared to guard the thousands of surrendered Germans assembling at the Ghedi Airport.

Trouble With Tito

On 16 May, Division was put on a 48-hour alert and reverted to full censorship status.

Tito's occupation of the Trieste and Klagenfurt areas drew the 10th Mountain Division over east to the vicinity of Udine. The regiment moved administratively on 19 May, driving through Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, Panzenone, and Udine, to a bivouac area near Tarcento. Tito's men were billeted all around the troops and the two armies drilled in front of each other. For the next two months the Yugoslav troops were in close association with the Americans and both sides felt the other both friend and enemy. Tito's men tried to impress the people with a show of strength, his soldiers and pictures were everywhere, and the Italian town names were changed to Slavic, the Italian language dropped. The Allies were trying to impress Tito with a show of strength: planes overhead, tanks on the road, trucks everywhere. Some towns were pro-Italian, some pro-Yugoslavian. Geographically it made no sense. But there were other strong feelings in the area; there were other bands besides Tito's partisans. There were "Garibaldi's" and hated "Chetniks" and "Ossopo Frinlie," and several more. Whole villages nearby had been sacked and burned in retribution for a killed enemy.

The 1st Battalion moved on the 20th to Plezzo in the historic Valley of the Isonzo north of Caporetto where the regimental CP was established. The other two battalions settled in the long green valley running west from Caporetto toward Udine, the valley where the Italian army was

cut off by German and Austrian mountain troops in World War I and 30,000 of them killed or captured between the steep green walls.

Then commenced a series of international incidents with the Partisans that seem comic opera-like in retrospect but seemed as dangerous as a powder chain at the time. It was discovered after moving into the CP building that its basement was the Yugoslav ammo dump. Guards from both armies walked post for that night. Yugoslav troop movements were made of record but not stopped.

Ammunition went up and down the road with the Yugoslavs. The Italian Partisans accused Tito's men of holding the people up for cattle and food. Tito's men called the Partisans ex-fascists and put up posters claiming this area "freed by Yugoslav blood and that blood alone." Signals by church bells, flares, small arms shots, and the appearance of Russian Cossacks cast alarms.

On the 27th of May a parade was held in the 3rd Battalion area. The troops were in excellent physical shape. Athletic fields were being groomed in all areas. Many of the wounded were returning to their outfits. The Army point system was being discussed avidly.

On the other hand, an American soldier in the Yugoslav area injured himself and started a rumor that he was shot. A personnel man was shot at, but not hit, while bathing in a creek. A drunken truckload of armed partisans went Italian-hunting one evening. Roadblocks appeared on all sides manned by both sides. The local girls were afraid to talk to Americans after one girl's head was shaved in Caporetto. More cows were taken without payment by Tito's men. Their army had to eat.

At the end of the month things seemed to be reaching a climax when Tito ordered the 91st Division to leave Gorizia or be interned. The 91st ignored the order and nothing but a wild demonstration developed.

Memorial Day—Italy, 1945

The month ended with a memorial day ceremony attended by the men of the regiment. The executive officer of the 87th Mountain Infantry, Lt. Col. JOHN SCHMELTZER, gave the following remarks to the 2nd Battalion:

"On Memorial Day we do not honor the glorious deeds of the living or rejoice in the fruits of victory. It is a day set aside to honor American dead, of all wars. We honor particularly our close comrades, those that helped us in battle, those that gave their lives so that we might push on not only to military objectives but also to a life of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear. Never let us forget that our dead comrades made the supreme sacrifice not only for us, but for those at home—not only for the living but for the children yet unborn. Always remember the cause for which they fought and for which they died, so that you may live a life worthy of their great sacrifice."

Summary of Occupation

June-July 1945

During the entire month the regimental combat team continued to occupy the sector along the Isonzo River from Plezzo to Tolmino. Conditions improved, points of friction with Yugoslavs were smoothed over. On the evening of 9 June, Major JOHN C. MCKAY, S-3, represented the regimental commander at a banquet given by Captain Sergei, commander of the Yugoslav force in Tolmino.

The Yugoslavs persisted in their practice of regularly relieving the garrison at Oltrasonzo. This involved a march on the main highway west of the Isonzo River from Tolmino to a point just north of Saga. This was considered totally unnecessary from a military standpoint, and it was assumed that the Yugoslavs were simply using this expedient to parade their troops west of the Morgan Line. Our guards simply reported numbers of men and vehicles and principal types of supplies, as the nondescript troops passed our checkpoints.

On 1 June, Lieutenant General Sir Richard McCreery, commander of the British Eighth Army, visited the regimental sector and had lunch at the regimental officers' mess. Two days later, Sunday, 3 June, he drove through the area with Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, commander of the Mediterranean Theater, making short visits inspecting representative formations of the regiment. He spoke briefly to the officers at Pulfero and in the square at Caporetto, but to all of the troops of the 3rd Battalion at Robic and the 1st Battalion at Plezzo, the Field Marshal spoke informally in words of highest praise for the 10th Mountain Division.

On Sunday, 24 June, at a ceremony of American troops and members of the Difesa Popolare, Yugoslav Police, the regimental commander made the following speech in English, which was interpreted by Pvt. JAMES MAMARCHEV, 87th Mountain Infantry:

"Members of the Difesa Popolare, you have guarded your towns and defended your homes against our common enemy. You have fought heroically for four long years. The British, Russian, and American armies have also fought to destroy the common enemy. We have provided you with some fighting equipment so you could fight better. You have fought side by side with us. Fighting together we have destroyed the armed might of the Fascists of Italy and Germany. We have been fighting to restore peace. Now we want an end of fighting. We want an end of shooting.

"An Allied Military Government has been established in this area. The Allied Military Government has only one police force. No other police force has any authority in this territory now. Your authority therefore has come to an honorable end. Each one of you may now choose:

"1. To turn your rifle and ammunition over to my troops. If you choose to do this, you may get a pass to go back to the town where you were on duty. We will take you back by truck. Or you may volunteer for the Allied Military Government Police force to be trained and equipped in Gorizia. Or:

"2. You may choose to take your weapon to Tolmino. If so, our troops will escort you there in trucks. Then we must ask you not to come back across the Morgan Line.

"Now the time has come for you to choose. We thank you for what you have done in the years of fighting. We will continue to be friends."

The outcome was not as simple as hoped for, but eventually most of the Yugoslavs turned in their rifles and the remainder were escorted to Tolmino.

In early June the officers and enlisted men of the unit having ASR scores in excess of eighty-four points, who did not elect to remain with the unit, were transferred to the 85th Infantry Division for return home. In this transfer, the regiment lost many of the officers and men longest with the regiment, including the regimental executive officer, S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, surgeon, dental surgeon, one battalion commander and nine company commanders. These vacancies were filled within the regiment.

Quotas from Division for officers and enlisted men to various rest centers were filled. Venice, Florence, Rome, Allasio, Stresa, Cannes became familiar to many. A truck convoy was sent each day to Venice so that practically every man of the regiment spent from 1000 until 2100 in the famous city of canals.

Mountaineering instruction began during the month with two platoons per week at Lago di Fusino on the north side of Mt. Mangart, and a reinforced company per week at Passo Pordoi near the Marmolada.

The occupation duties of the regiment continued into July, with steadily improving conditions. Under the tentative plan for return to the United States in November, much work was done to put into effect the Army Educational Program. Officers and enlisted men signed up for various courses, books were requisitioned and distributed, and school classes began. Much enthusiastic work was done by all units toward improving recreational facilities: playing fields, swimming pools on the river Natisone, an outdoor stage.

One final occasion remained for the regiment before its occupation phase was abruptly terminated. An elaborate and enthusiastic old-fashioned Fourth of July picnic was staged in the 3rd Battalion area at Robic, with sports competitions, games, music, food, and beer. It was a fitting and thoroughly American celebration of Independence Day, an independence more than a century and a half old for these Americans but an independence still being fought for. In the beautiful mountain-surrounded valley where these men were gathered on July 4th, independence was strange and new. Throughout the period of occupation it was only too obvious that it would take these newly liberated peoples many years to learn how to use their hard-won independence and freedom. The olive-drab soldiers in the foreign valley had done all that men can do to free these people, but as a great American pointed out, freedom has not only to be won but continually renewed and defended wherever it is to grow old.

In Conclusion

During July the War Department gave the 10th Mountain Division an assignment in the Pacific. They were scheduled for immediate redeployment, with reorganization and training in the United States followed by shipment to the Far East. General HAYS, the division commander, arranged for assignment to Camp Carson, Colorado, the camp most preferred by the officers and men of the Division.

The regiment left Caporetto, Italy, on the 17th of July. The men moved by truck to Udine and entrained there on Italian four-wheeled boxcars. Two days later, on the 19th, they closed at the Florence Redeployment Training Area. On the 28th of July they entrained again on the uncomfortable boxcars, this time bound for Naples. The staging area at Naples was reached on the 30th and on the morning of 2 August the troops filed up the gangplank of the *Mount Vernon*, the peacetime *Washington*, a large (30,000 ton) comfortable liner. General MCNARNEY gave the troops a farewell speech in which he commended them on their fine battle record in Italy and promised them that the name "Mountain Infantry" would never be dropped from the unit. The great ship sailed at 1500 and moved out into the peaceful Mediterranean. The rock of Gibraltar was passed at 1600 of the 4th of August and in beautiful calm seas the *Mount Vernon* moved out into the Atlantic. The weather remained fine throughout the crossing; the men sunned themselves and enjoyed the three meals a day offered by the ship, one of the few transports serving all three meals. In mid-Atlantic the first reports of the atomic bomb landing on Japan startled the troops and set up wild hopes that the war might be nearly over. The next day Russia was reported to have joined the fight against Japan. Peace seemed nearer. Rumors of peace came over the ship's radio the day before landing. On the 11th of August at 1330 the 87th Mountain Infantry docked at Newport News, Virginia, as a welcoming band played on the pier. An hour later the regiment was entrained for Camp Patrick Henry. Within twenty-four hours they were off again by train for separation centers and thirty-day furloughs.

On August 14, three days after the regiment's return to the United States, the wonderful, incredible news was announced. Japan had unconditionally surrendered to the Allies! The war was over.

BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY
TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR
EXTRACT PERTAINING TO THE FINAL OFFENSIVE IN ITALY

The entire campaign was slow and bitter. The Allied troops did not have the superiority they enjoyed in western Europe, where geography had compelled us to make the great effort. Nonetheless, the Italian campaign made a heavy contribution to the successes on the western front, pinning down German forces which Hitler needed badly to reinforce his weakened armies, both in the east and west. The troops participating in the Italian campaign should feel as great a satisfaction in the defeat of the Axis enemy as those of the larger forces which drove into the heart of Germany from the west and made contact with the Red armies.

ARMY GROUND FORCES
Washington, D. C.

20 October 1945

TO: Commanding General, 10th Mountain Division

Expert employment of special combat skills enabled the officers and men of the 10th Mountain Division to destroy a stubborn enemy on Europe's most difficult battleground and to make a magnificent contribution to our glorious victory over the Nazi threat to America's cherished way of life.

The proud history of Army Ground Forces must always contain the colorful chapter written by the 10th Mountain at Mount Belvedere, in spearheading the Fifth Army's Apennines offensive, in the sweeping drive across the Po Valley, and in helping to smash final enemy resistance in Northern Italy.

It is fitting at this time, with the 10th Division scheduled for inactivation, to pay tribute to soldiers whose valor, willing sacrifice and staunch devotion to duty won the undying esteem of a grateful nation. I consider it a privilege to commend your organization for a job well done.

JACOB L. DEVERS
General, USA, Commanding

TO: Personnel of the 10th Mountain Division.

1. I share with you pleasure and gratification that the splendid achievements of this Division during the latter phases of the Italian Campaign are recognized as an important part of the glorious history of our ground forces during World War II.

2. We all regret that this splendid Division with its high morale and esprit de corps is not to be maintained as part of the Post War Army. As each of you leave to join other Army units or return to civil life, I hope you will retain a feeling of lasting satisfaction in your contribution to the war effort. I trust that the future will extend to you a happy and prosperous life which you so richly deserve. I extend to you my gratitude and best wishes.

GEORGE P. HAYS
Major General, U.S. Army

COMBAT ORGANIZATION of the 87th MOUNTAIN INFANTRY REGIMENT

10th Mountain Division

Major General George P. Hays, Division Commander
 Brigadier General Robinson E. Duff, Asst. Division Commander
 Wounded in action April 22
 Colonel William O. Darby, Asst. Division Commander
 Killed on action April 30

Brigadier General David L. Ruffner, Division Artillery

87th Mountain Infantry Regiment

Colonel David M. Fowler, Commander
 Wounded in action February 22
 Returned to regiment March 28
 Lieutenant Colonel John F. Schmelzer
 February 22 to March 28

1st Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Ross J. Wilson

2nd Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Emmett L. Nations

3rd Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel John F. Schmelzer - to February 22
 Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Works - from February 22

The 10th Mountain Division was part of IV Corps, which was commanded by Major General Willis D. Crittenger. IV Corps was part of the Fifth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott.

CASUALTIES of the 87th MOUNTAIN INFANTRY REGIMENT

The total number of men who fought in Italy in the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment was 4,781. Of these, 1,727 (36%) were replacements who joined the regiment in Italy.

Total casualties in the 87th were 1,593: 311 killed or died of wounds incurred in action, 1281 wounded, and 1 taken prisoner of war.

The Italian campaign can be divided into nine phases. The table below identifies the phases and the number of 87th Regiment casualties in each phase.

CAMPAIGN PHASE	DATES	KIA/DOW	WIA	POW	TOTAL
1. Early Patrols	Jan 6 - Feb 18	2	13		15
2. Riva Ridge	Feb 18 - Feb 25				0
3. Mt. Belvedere	Feb 19 - Mar 2	34	162		196
4. March Offensive	Mar 3 - Mar 6	51	170		221
5. Consolidation	Mar 7 - Apr 13	13	58		71
6. Spring Offensive	Apr 14 - Apr 16	110	436		546
7. Breakout	Apr 17 - Apr 20	48	198		246
8., Po Valley	Apr 20 - Apr 26	46	177	1	224
9. Lake Garda	Apr 26 - May 2	7	58		65
	Unknown dates		9		9
TOTALS:		311	1281	1	1593

ROLL OF HONOR 87th MOUNTAIN INFANTRY REGIMENT

NAME	RANK*	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
MANUEL G ABASTA JR	PFC	A	4/15/45		LE COSTE
CHARLES W ADKINS	PVT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
JAMES A ALDAHL	PFC	A	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 903
LESTER L ALLISON	T/SGT	H	4/17/45		MT SERRA
FRED J ANETSBERGER	PFC	H	4/17/45		MT SERRA
MAURICE E AUCOIN	S/SGT	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
HERMAN S AUSTIN	S/SGT	K	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
EUGENE H BAGNESKI	PFC	B	4/23/45		GOVERNOLO
GLENN R BAILEY	PFC	C	3/5/45		MONFENARO
AREL BAJKAN	PFC	MED	4/14/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
FRANK P BAKER	2ND LT	H	3/8/45		TAMBURINI
RAFAEL BALDOR JR	PFC	L	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
ROBERT S BARR	2ND LT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
JUAN BARRIENTOS	PFC	C	2/27/45		VALPIANA
ANDREW R BATTILORO	PFC	K	4/19/45		IL POGGIO
FEDOR H BENJAMIN	PFC	E	3/7/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
SYDNEY W BENNETT	PVT	A	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
JOHN P BENSON JR	1ST LT	F	2/20/45		C FLORIO
ROBERT A BERGENDORFF	PFC	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
ELMER A BERLIN	SGT	HQ 3RD	3/4/45	2/28/45	MALANDRONE
MELVIN BERNSTEIN	PFC	G	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
WILLIAM J BETTENBERG	SGT	B	4/15/45		MT PIGNA HILL 834
GEORGE J BLAKER	S/SGT	G	3/4/45		MADNA DI BRASA
JOHN B BLANCHARD	SGT	L	2/28/45		MALANDRONE
WILLIAM B BLOCKER JR	2ND LT	D	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
ROY F BREITENBACH	PFC	A	4/15/45		LE COSTE
LOUIS O BROWN	S/SGT	C	3/7/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
HECTOR W BRUNEAU	PFC	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
PAUL J BUCHANAN	PFC	MED	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
ARTHUR H BURGESS JR	SGT	L	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
MANFRED BUTLER	PFC	C	4/17/45		C BACUCCHI
GEORGE E CABEZUT	PFC	I	4/21/45		MANZOLINO
JOHN CAMILLO	PVT	K	4/21/45		MADNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA
CLARENCE E CAMPBELL	PFC	F	2/20/45		C FLORIO
ROBERT E CAMPBELL	PFC	K	4/19/45		PALZO MUSICO
WILLIAM CAMPBELL JR	PFC	I	2/24/45		VALPIANA
MOSE CAREY	PFC	A	4/21/45	4/14/45	LE COSTE
JAMES R CAUDILL	PFC	A	3/6/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
LEE H CHEW	PFC	A	2/20/45		CORONA
GLENN L CHRYSLER	PFC	L	4/15/45		TREVISO
WAYNE C CLARK	S/SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
WALTER R COCHRAN JR	PVT	SVC	4/23/45		PO RIVER
WILLIAM R CONNER	T/5	MED	3/3/45		MERLANO (RIOLA)
NORMAND W CONNOLLY	T/SGT	G	2/21/45		POLLA
WILLIAM S CONTINO	1ST LT (CHPL)	HQ	3/3/45		ABETAIA
WID R CORN	SGT	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
HARVEY F CORN JR	SGT	F	3/5/45	3/3/45	MALANDRONE
HAROLD M CREGER	S/SGT	A	4/29/45		SPIAZZI

* Rank shown is the highest rank attained while serving in the 10th Mountain Division.

NAME	RANK	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
LEONARD C CRISP	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
ANDREW E DALTON JR	CPL	H	4/18/45		C BACUCCHI
PRENTIS F DAVIDSON	PFC	C	4/3/45		BARDALONE
GEORGE T DAVIS	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/19/45		BADIA DI SOPRA
GEORGE H DAY JR	SGT	M	2/21/45		CORONA
RAYMOND V DE SORCY	PFC	MED	4/16/45		MT PIGNA AID STATION
OKEY C DEAN	PFC	A	4/14/45		LE COSTE
DAVID T DEANE	SGT	HQ 2ND	4/17/45	4/16/45	SECCADELLA
LUCIEN T DEETER	PFC	B	3/4/45		BACUCCO
JOHN P DELGADO	PFC	B	4/23/45		GOVERNOLO
DAVID H C DENNIS	PFC	K	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
CAMILLE J DESCHAINE	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
FREDDIE DICKENS	PFC	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
HERBERT W DILKES	PVT	C	2/20/45		QUERCIOLO
WALTER W DILLER	PFC	B	4/15/45		LE COSTE HILL 838
LUTHER E DOANE JR	PFC	I	4/16/45		MT MOSCA
WILLARD W DORA	1ST LT	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO HILL 765
LOUIS M DORSEY	PFC	D	4/23/45		S BENEDETTO PO
JOSEPH J DUNCAN	CAPT	L	4/17/45		C COSTA
DALE W DUNHAM	PFC	L	2/28/45		MALANDRONE
HARRY H DUNN	PFC	A	4/15/45		LE COSTE HILL 802
PIERRE B ERHARD	PFC	K	2/20/45		CORONA
GORDON D ERICKSON	PFC	E	4/20/45		MT AVEZZANO
LESTER S ERLAND	1ST SGT	C	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
GENE FANNING	PFC	HQ 2ND	4/12/45		CORGNOLE
JOSEPH C FARRELL	PFC	A	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
GEORGE A FELCH	MAJ	HQ 3RD	2/21/45		VALPIANA
OWEN W FLIGG JR	2ND LT	D	4/15/45		LE COSTE HILL 802
WALTER O FLOWE	PFC	D	3/7/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
FRED FLOYD	PFC	D	2/20/45		MT BELVEDERE
WILLIAM D FLOYD	1ST LT	M	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
THOMAS A FOLEY	SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
EARL A FOLSE	SGT	C	4/19/45		SULMONTE
WILLIAM H FORESTER	SGT	A	4/29/45		SPIAZZI
EAGAN L FOSTER	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
BETTA FOTAS	S/SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
LOREN M FRANK	SGT	HQ	3/1/45		LA SERRA
WILLIAM H FRICKE	SGT	HQ 3RD	7/14/46	4/21/45	BAGAZZANO
ELMER FRISTOE	PFC	C	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
THEODORE J FRITCHIE	PVT	G	2/22/45		PRADA
PAUL N FRYE JR	SGT	B	2/21/45		CORONA
SAM GALLEGOS	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
HAROLD E GARFINKEL	1ST LT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
ALFRED A GARNEAU	PFC	F	4/14/45		MT PIGNA
ROY G GAY	PFC	MED	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
JACK GOLDBERG	PFC	D	4/20/45	4/19/45	MONGIORGIO
EDWIN R GORDON	SGT	A	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
LLOYD A GORMAN	SGT	A	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
HAROLD R GOULD	PFC	K	4/21/45		MADNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA
ROBERT W GRABOWSKY	PFC	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
CHARLIE I GREEN	PVT	G	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
ALBERT F GROEGER	PVT	G	5/1/45	4/16/45	C BACUCCHI
ALEX GUSKO	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		CAVAZZONA
ROBERT W GUSTAFSON	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
RANDOLPH J HABURNE	S/SGT	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
DONALD G HAIGHT	S/SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI

NAME	RANK	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
JOHN W HAINES III	SGT	I	4/24/45		ZAMMARCA
MARVIN G HALE	SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
LEE L HALL	PFC	A	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
ERIK H HAMILTON	PFC	A	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
WILLIAM L HAMILTON	T/5	K	4/21/45		MADNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA
JOSEPH G HANCE	PFC	I	3/4/45		PIETRA COLORA
LEO T HANDWERK	PFC	E	4/19/45		CASTELLO
HAROLD S HARRIS	T/5	MED	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
EDMON E HATHAWAY	PFC	E	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
JOHN L HEICHEL	PVT	C	4/19/45		SULMONTE
RUDOLPH W HEINS	PFC	MED	4/14/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
OSCAR W HEMMER	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/22/45	4/21/45	BAGAZZANO
WILLIAM E HEMSTREET	PVT	C	4/17/45		C BACUCCHI
WAYNE E HERMON	PFC	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
GEORGE H HEYDENREICH	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
MARVIN E HINER	PFC	C	2/20/45		QUERCIOLA
EDWARD G HINSHAW	PFC	L	4/23/45		GOVERNOLO
WALTER W HODGE	PFC	L	4/16/45		MT CROCE
MARVIN H HOFFMAN	PFC	F	2/23/45		C FLORIO
JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH	CPL	H	2/20/45		POLLA
PALMER W HORTON	PFC	M	4/19/45		IL POGGIO
GILBERT G HOUSLEY	2ND LT	B	4/15/45		LE COSTE HILL 838
DAVID C HOYT	CPL	A	4/15/45		LE COSTE
RALPH HUBBARD	PVT	E	4/17/45		MT SERRA
WALTER R HUCKABEE	S/SGT	M	4/14/45		TORA
WILLIAM D HUFF	PFC	C	4/3/45		BARDALONE
CARL P HUJANEN	SGT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
ALAN HUNTLEY	CPL	HQ 2ND	4/15/45		MO DOZZONE
SAMUEL L IRVIN	PVT	SVC	4/16/45		MT PIGNA AID STATION
STANLEY F JAZWINSKI	2ND LT	G	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
CASIMIR F JILKA	PFC	K	4/19/45		IL POGGIO
RICHARD D JOHNSTON	PFC	A	4/14/45		LE COSTE
HOMER P JUMP JR	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
HYMAN KALFIN	T/5	K	4/27/45		GARDA
JOHN A KASABUSKI	PFC	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
WALTER S KASABUSKI	S/SGT	E	4/27/45		S ZENO
MOSE KEARSE	PFC	M	4/16/45		LOCARI SCUOLA
WILLIAM M KENNEDY	SGT	L	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
JAMES C KENNETT	CAPT	F	4/23/45		BAGNOLO SAN VITO
JAMES P KENNEY	PFC	E	3/4/45		CANEVACCIA
ARTHUR L KERSTING	PFC	A	3/19/45		PIETRA COLORA
HARRISON H KING	2ND LT	M	4/20/45	4/17/45	CAVARINE
PAUL L KLEIN	PFC	A	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
LARRY KOLKKA	PFC	C	5/4/45	4/23/45	S BENEDETTO PO
RUDOLPH W KONIECZNY	T/SGT	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
EDWARD J KOSA	PFC	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
FRANK S KOVAR	PFC	F	4/15/45		MT PIGNA HILL 840
MORRIS J KRIEGER	PFC	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
ROBERT J LA BOMBARD	PFC	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
LAWRENCE J LA BONTE	S/SGT	L	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
FRANCIS A LA FOUNTAIN	PFC	M	3/4/45		C DEL FABBRO
WESLEY E LAHTI	PFC	F	3/3/45		FLIZZONE
WARNER F LAKEWAY	PFC	K	2/27/45		BELLAVISTA
CECIL D LARGENT	PFC	F	4/14/45		MT PIGNA
ROBERT H LATHROP	PFC	E	4/17/45		MT SERRA
GEORGE J LAWRENCE	PFC	F	4/14/45		TABOLE HILL 868

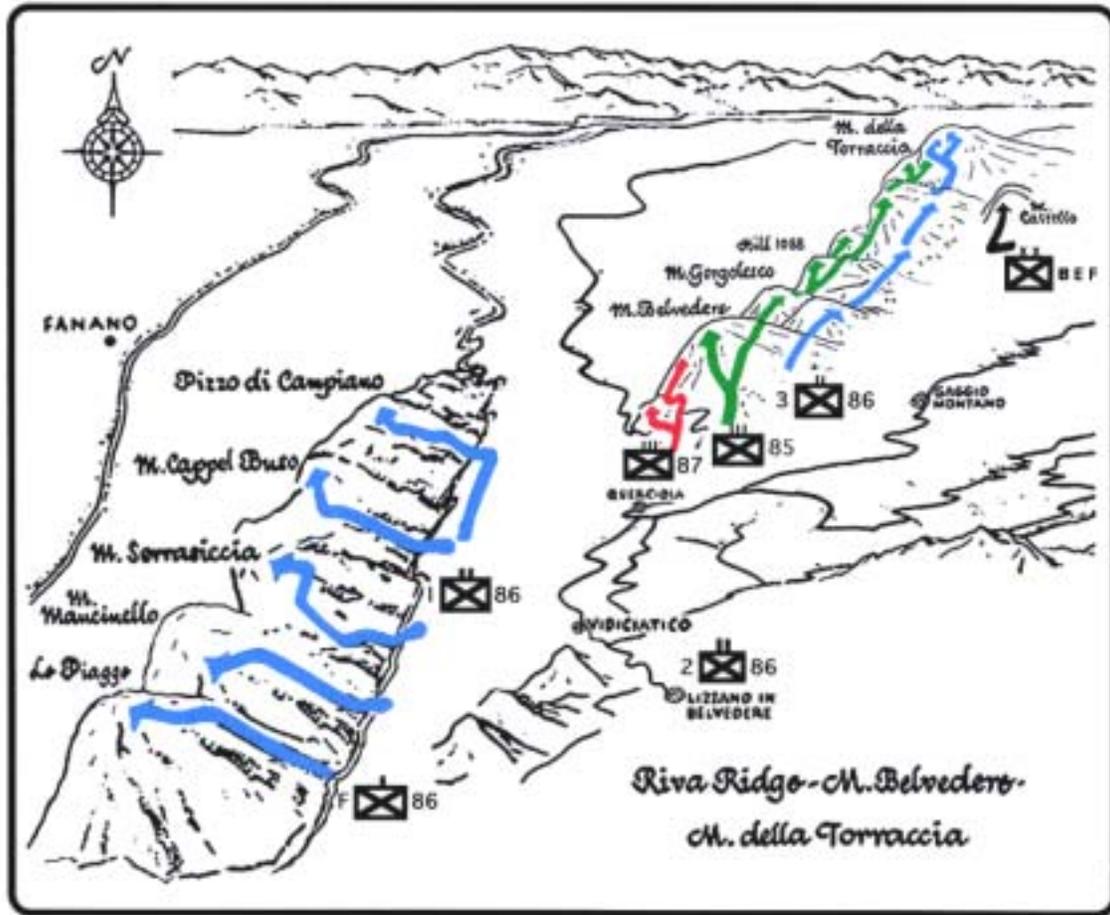
NAME	RANK	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
MARION F LAY	S/SGT	C	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
MARVIN D LEDBETTER	PFC	M	4/14/45		TORA
TOIVO H LEINONEN	PFC	F	4/15/45		MT PIGNA HILL 840
SYLVESTER J LEPPEK	PFC	C	4/23/45		GOVERNOLO
CHARLES W LEVITT	SGT	I	2/21/45		VALPIANA
LUTHER P LEWIS	PFC	A	3/6/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
MERVIN H LEWIS	T/5	L	4/15/45		TREVISO
HENRY LEYMAN	PFC	D	4/14/45		LE COSTE
SOLOMON R LINDSEY	CPL	I	4/21/45		BASTIGLIA
CLARENCE W LINN JR	PFC	H	4/14/45		MT DELLA SPE
JOHN LOWATTI	PFC	I	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
HOMER H LOWE	PFC	I	4/16/45		MT MOSCA
FRANCIS E LOWERY	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
FRANK J LUIF	PFC	L	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
FLOYD H LUNSFORD	PFC	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
MARVIN C LUTZ	PFC	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
BRAINERD E LYNCH	PVT	G	3/4/45		MADNA DI BRASA
WILLIAM C MAAS III	PFC	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
ROBERT L MACWILLIAMS	PFC	L	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
WARREN F MAIN	PFC	G	2/17/45		RONCORAVECCHIA
THOMAS I MALLOY	PFC	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
ALBERT MANCHIO	T/5	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
EVERETT G MANTHEI	PVT	G	4/29/45		MT BALDO
HARRY F MARKSON	PVT	G	4/20/45		TOMBA
JOHN C MARRONE	S/SGT	K	4/15/45		VEDETOLA
JOSEPH M MARTINEZ	PFC	I	4/21/45		BASTIGLIA
NYERAY O MATHEWS	PFC	G	4/23/45		VILLA CORREGGIO
LAWRENCE E MCARDLE	PVT	G	4/23/45	4/22/45	BASTIGLIA
ROY L MCBRIDE	PFC	I	4/21/45		BASTIGLIA
DONALD M MCCOY JR	PFC	F	4/15/45		MT PIGNA HILL 840
ORVAL R MCDANIEL	SGT	I	4/16/45		MT CROCE
ALFRED C MCDONALD	PVT	G	4/22/45		BASTIGLIA
HOWARD MCMILLIAN	PFC	MED	4/14/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
CHARLES R MEISER JR	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
WILLIAM C MERRILL	S/SGT	D	2/19/45		MT BELVEDERE
JOSEPH C MILLER	T/5	HQ 1ST	3/4/45		MT ACIDOLA
LEO E MILLER	S/SGT	HQ 2ND	3/3/45		ABETAIA
WILLIAM G MILLER	PFC	MED	4/16/45		MT PIGNA AID STATION
WILLIAM H MILLMANN	1ST LT	MED	2/21/45		CORONA
HARRY MONTGOMERY	CAPT (CHPL)	HQ	3/3/45		ABETAIA
ROBERT D MOOTZ	PFC	G	4/15/45		SASSOLETTO HILL 807
BARTON C MORRISON	T/5	MED	4/16/45		SECCADELLA
FORREST N MUELLER	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
JOHN C MURPHY	PFC	A	3/9/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
WILLIAM F MURPHY	SGT	D	2/20/45		MT BELVEDERE
CLARENCE K MUSICK	2ND LT	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
MICHAEL G NENNIG	T/5	L	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
JAMES F NEVERGALL	PFC	I	3/26/45		LE BORRE
MICHAEL NICOSIA	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
RICHARD B NOCITRA	PFC	L	4/18/45		C BIDGINI
HOWARD R NORLIN	PFC	C	4/19/45		SULMONTE
LEE ROY NORRIS	PFC	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
EUGENE C NORTON	PFC	F	3/3/45		FLIZZONE
JACOB R NUNNEMACHER	S/SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
EVERT L NYLUND JR	SGT	K	4/19/45		IL POGGIO
GERARD E O'HARA	PVT	I	3/3/45		PIETRA COLORA

NAME	RANK	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
THOMAS O'NEIL	S/SGT	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
LOUIE A ORDAZ	PFC	I	2/24/45		VALPIANA
CARL H ORTWEIN	PFC	C	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
FRED M PALMER	PFC	K	3/5/45	3/3/45	CIMON DELLA PIELLA
PETER A PANTSARI	PFC	B	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
JACK PEHR	PFC	C	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
HAROLD J PERDUE	PFC	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
KENNETH D PERKINS	PFC	MED	3/4/45		PIETRA COLORA
MARLIN A PERKINS	PFC	B	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
CHARLES L PFEIFFER	2ND LT	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
ROBERT B PFUSCH	1ST LT	E	3/6/45	3/5/45	CASONE
WILLIAM PHILP	1ST LT	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
FRANK J PIAZZA	PFC	MED	3/3/45		PODELECCHIA
BURTON E PIERCE	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
EUGENE J PIOTROWSKI	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
JOSEPH A POIRIER JR	S/SGT	K	2/21/45		CORONA
ROBERT M POST	PFC	B	2/21/45		CORONA
ALEXIS POUTIATINE	PFC	C	3/17/45		PIETRA COLORA
CARL C PRATER	PFC	I	4/21/45		BASTIGLIA
PAUL T PUSKARICH	PFC	L	4/24/45	4/16/45	MADNA DI RODIANO
KENNETH D RAFFETY	SGT	M	4/16/45		LOCARI SCUOLA
HORACE H RAINEY	PFC	C	3/5/45		BACUCCO
WILBUR D REDDING	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
ROBERT P REICHE	PFC	L	4/16/45		LOCARI SCUOLA
CHARLES H REYNOLDS JR	PFC	L	4/16/45		LOCARI SCUOLA
ALAN H RINFRET	CPL	L	3/25/45		SASSOMOLARE
EDWARD J RINGLEIN	PFC	H	4/23/45		VILLA CORREGGIO
JAMES H ROGERS JR	PVT	L	2/28/45		ABETAIA
HENRY F ROSE JR	PFC	G	3/4/45		MADNA DI BRASA
ZALE R RUBINS	PFC	B	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
JAMES P RYAN	S/SGT	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
WILLIAM S RYBERG	2ND LT	C	3/5/45		MONFENARO
JESUS M SALAZAR	PFC	A	4/14/45		LE COSTE
FRANCISCO L SANTIESTEBAN	PFC	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
ABRAHAM J SANTONI	S/SGT	A	3/5/45		CASTEL D'AIANO
ALBERT L SAYER	PFC	E	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
HARRY Y SCHAEDLER	PFC	F	3/12/45		CAMPO DEL SOLE
PAUL F SCHILLER	PFC	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
CLAUS S SCHROEDER	S/SGT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
ANTHONY S SCUTO	PFC	I	3/3/45		PIETRA COLORA
WARREN H SEEBADE	S/SGT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
MACK O SELF	PVT	SVC	5/2/45		GARDA
JAMES C SERAKOS	PFC	B	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
HARRY M SHEVCHIK	S/SGT	B	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
ANDREW F SIMPSON	PFC	F	4/15/45		TABOLE HILL 868
ANTHONY L SKOMP	PFC	A	4/14/45		LE COSTE
GEORGE SMITH JR	PVT	SVC	4/16/45		MT PIGNA AID STATION
WALTER F SMITH JR	PFC	L	4/17/45		C COSTA
EDWARD SNYDER	PFC	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
HERBERT C SPAULDING	S/SGT	L	3/3/45		MT DELLA VEDETTA
HERBERT W A SPAULDING	T/5	K	4/21/45		MADNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA
JOHN G SPRENG	PFC	I	4/21/45	4/16/45	MT MOSCA
ROBERT L STANGER	PFC	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
EDWIN W STANKE	T/4	A	4/29/45		SPIAZZI
EARL H STEVENS	PFC	I	4/15/45		SECCADELLA
JAMES M STEVENS	PFC	K	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO

NAME	RANK	CO	KIA/DOW DATE	DOW WIA DATE	PLACE
WILLIAM F STEYERT	SGT	C	4/23/45		GOVERNOLO
CHARLES G STICE	PFC	E	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
SAMUEL H STONER	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
FREDERICK B STRAUSS	PFC	I	3/3/45		PIETRA COLORA
JOSEPH E STREUMEYER	SGT	C	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
ROBERT W STROMBERG	CPL	M	4/14/45		TORA
ALLEN C STROMER	S/SGT	L	4/16/45		LOCARI SCUOLA
WALTER R STRUBEL	SGT	F	2/20/45		C FLORIO
WALFRED F SUTHERBURG	PFC	D	4/30/45	4/23/45	GOVERNOLO
BILLY J THAXTON	PVT	G	2/17/45		RONCORAVECCHIA
HARRY THOMAS	SGT	K	3/3/45		CIMON DELLA PIELLA
LEWIS M THOMAS	PFC	F	4/14/45		TABOLE HILL 868
STEVE TOBIS	T/4	K	4/19/45		IL POGGIO
JOHN J TOMICH	PFC	B	4/15/45		TORRE IUSSI
LEWIS S TRAUTWEIN	T/5	HQ 2ND	3/3/45		ABETAIA
SIDNEY B UTTER	PFC	F	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
EDWIN G VAN AUKEN	PFC	G	2/20/45		POLLA
JOHN F VAN DE PUTTE	PFC	HQ	3/1/45		LA SERRA
CHESTER W VEST	PFC	C	4/24/45	4/23/45	GOVERNOLO
MELO VUKOVICH	2ND LT	F	4/17/45		MT SERRA
SYLVAN D WALDRIP	SGT	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
THEODORE E WALL	PFC	L	3/2/45		MALANDRONE
WILLIAM H WEBB JR	T/SGT	A	4/14/45		TORRE IUSSI
JOHN J WELCH	S/SGT	K	4/15/45		MT CROCE
WILLIAM E WELLS	PFC	B	4/15/45		LE COSTE HILL 838
THEODORE W WENDERS	PFC	I	3/2/45		BELLAVISTA
WILLIAM H WENTWORTH	PFC	K	4/21/45		MADNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA
JAMES C WHYTE	S/SGT	D	4/15/45		MT PIGNA
JOHN M WILBUR	PFC	B	4/21/45	4/14/45	TORRE IUSSI HILL 860
WAYNE WILLIAMS	PFC	HQ 3RD	4/21/45		BAGAZZANO
DAN M WILSON	PFC	K	3/9/45	3/3/45	CIMON DELLA PIELLA
PAUL T WILSON	T/4	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
WILLIAM J WOLFGRAM	2ND LT	L	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
GROVER P WOODS	PFC	A	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO
EDWARD O WOZENCRAFT	CPL	B	4/19/45		C SILVESTRI
HERBERT G YARNELL	PFC	B	2/23/45		CORONA
ORLON J YODER	PFC	K	4/16/45		MADNA DI RODIANO
CHARLES YUPA	PVT	C	2/20/45		QUERCIOLA
FRED E ZARLENGO	PFC	C	4/19/45		MONGIORGIO

MAP 1. RIVA RIDGE

February 18 - 25

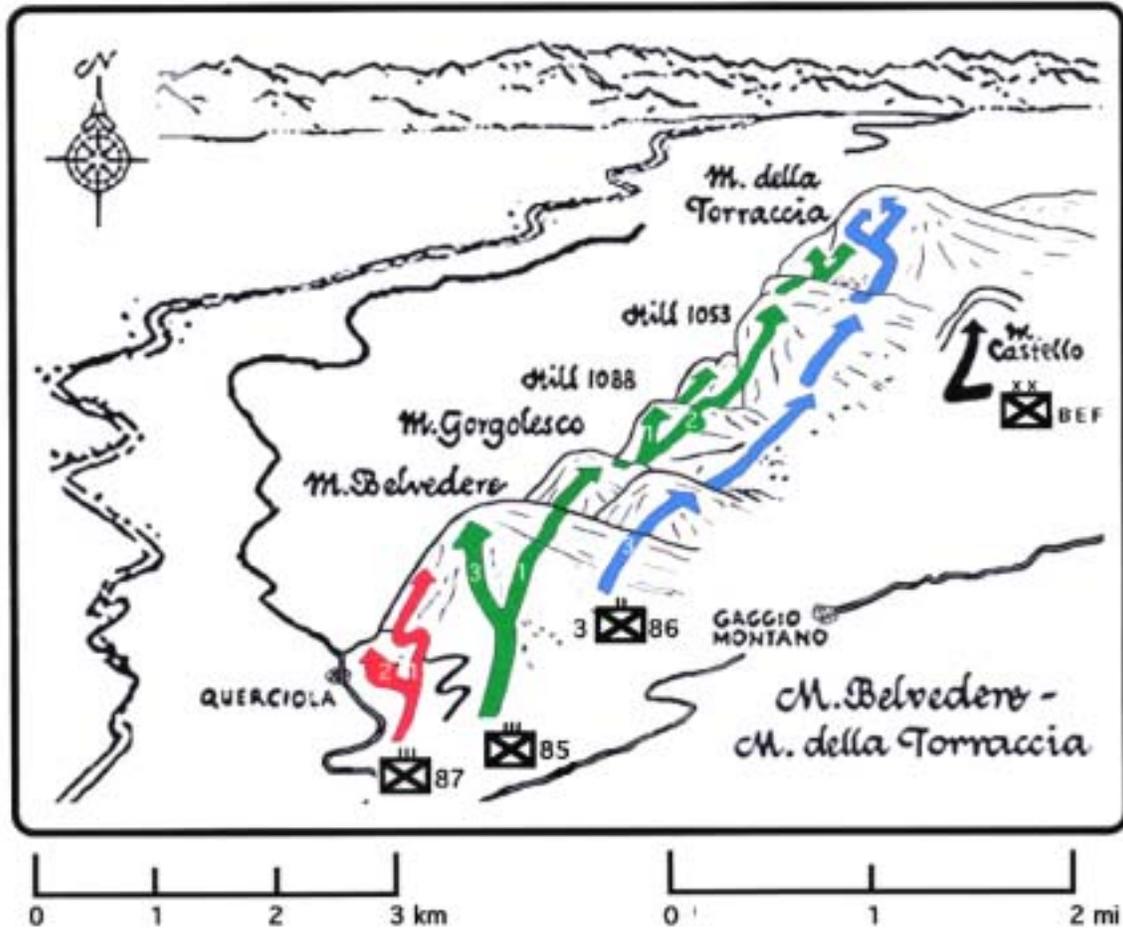


- 85th Regiment
- 86th Regiment
- 87th Regiment

- Infantry Company
- Infantry Battalion
- Infantry Regiment
- Infantry Division

- F Company 86th Regiment
- 1st Battalion 86th Regiment
- 87th Regiment
- Brazilian Expeditionary Force (1st Infantry Div.)

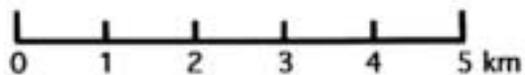
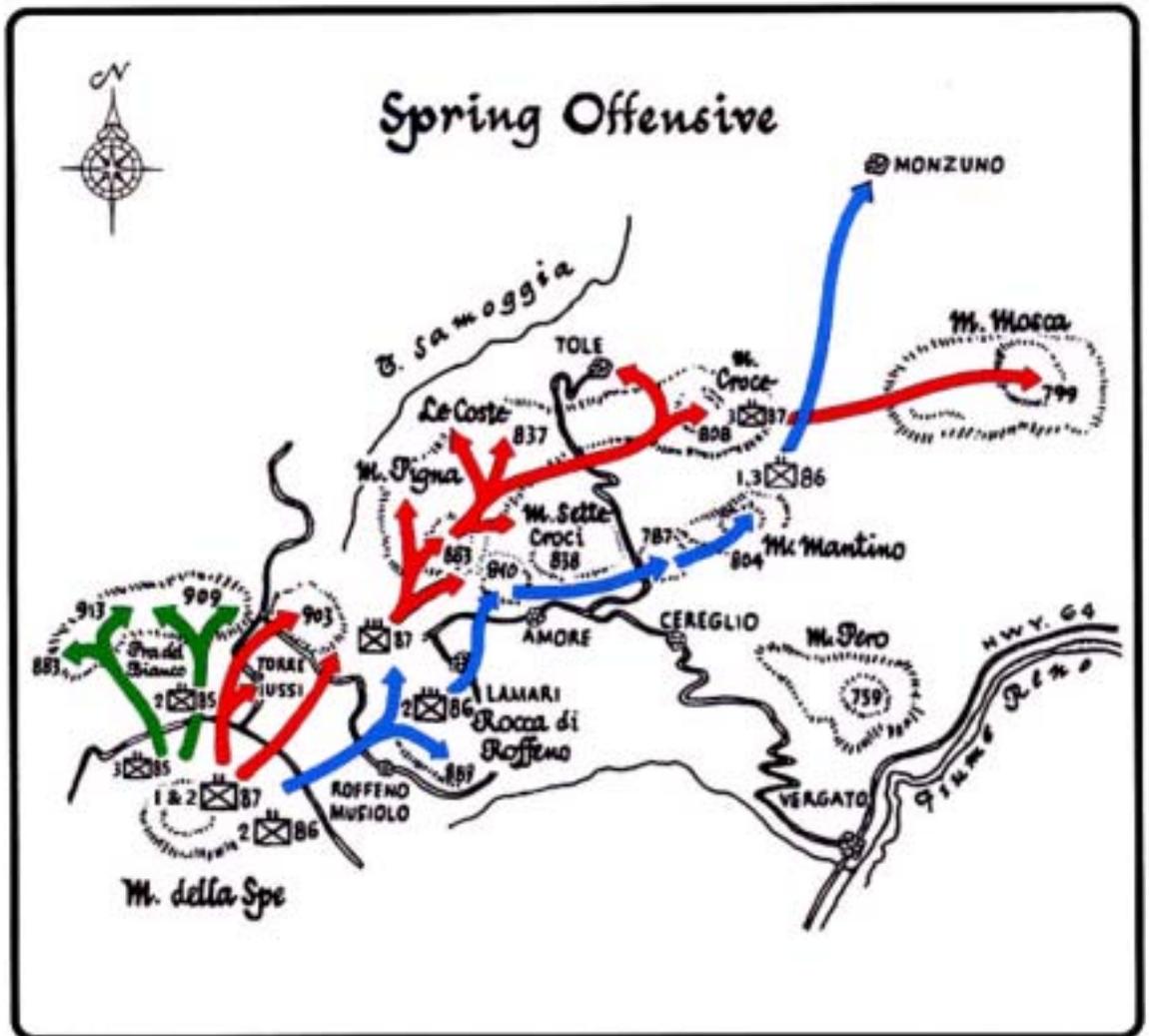
MAP 2. MT. BELVEDERE RIDGE February 19 – March 2



- | | | |
|-------------|--------|------------------------------|
| III
☒ 87 | 1
→ | 87th Regiment, 1st Battalion |
| | 2
→ | 87th Regiment, 2nd Battalion |
| | 1
→ | 85th Regiment, 1st Battalion |
| III
☒ 85 | 2
→ | 85th Regiment, 2nd Battalion |
| | 3
→ | 85th Regiment, 3rd Battalion |
| 3
☒ 86 | 3
→ | 86th Regiment, 3rd Battalion |

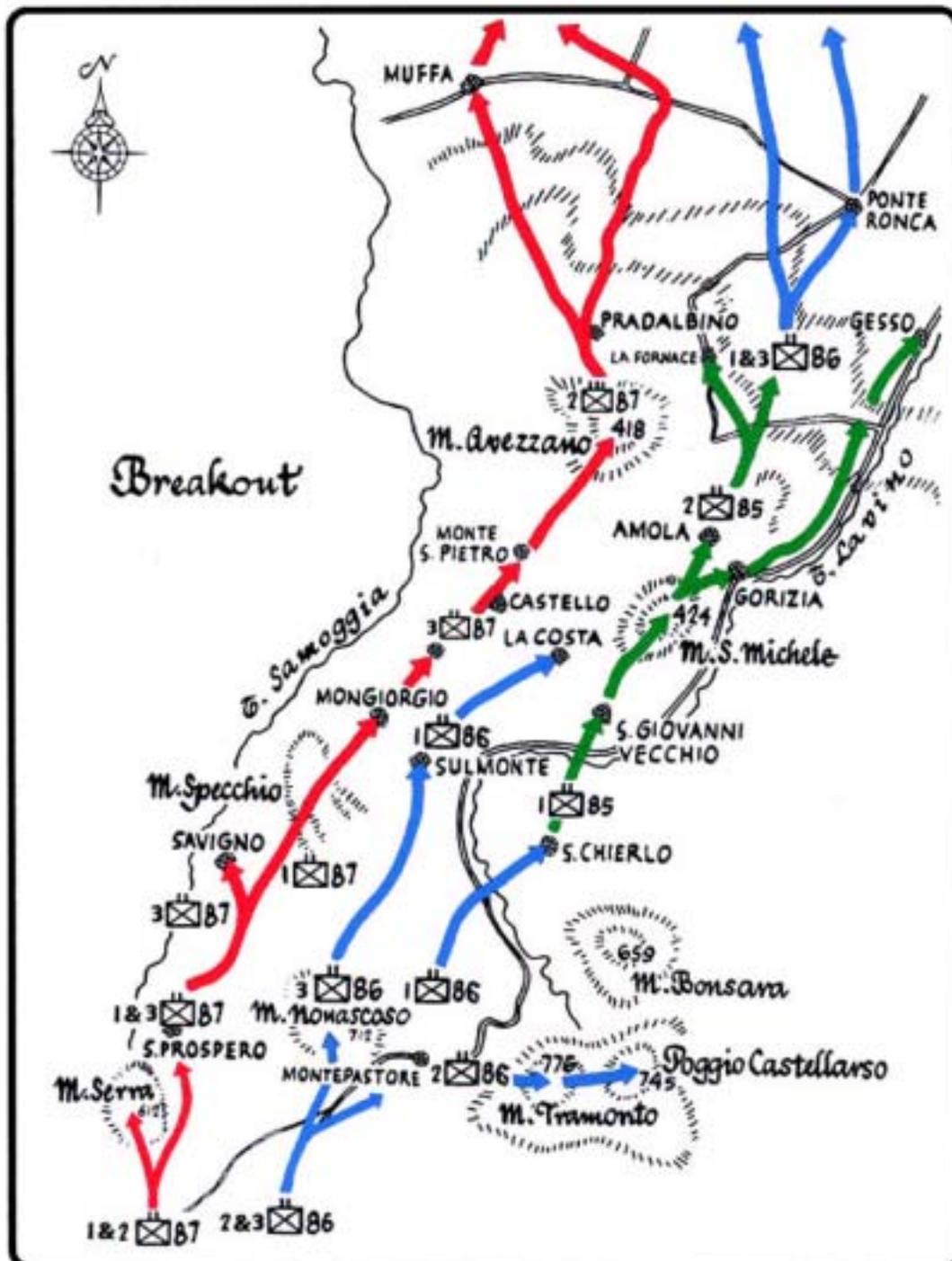
MAP 4. SPRING OFFENSIVE

April 14 – 16



- 85th Regiment
- 86th Regiment
- 87th Regiment

MAP 5. BREAKOUT April 17 - 20

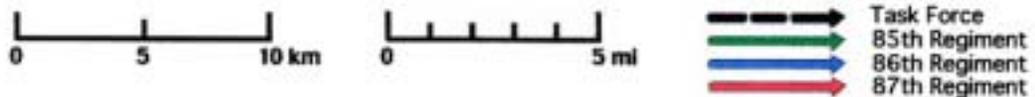
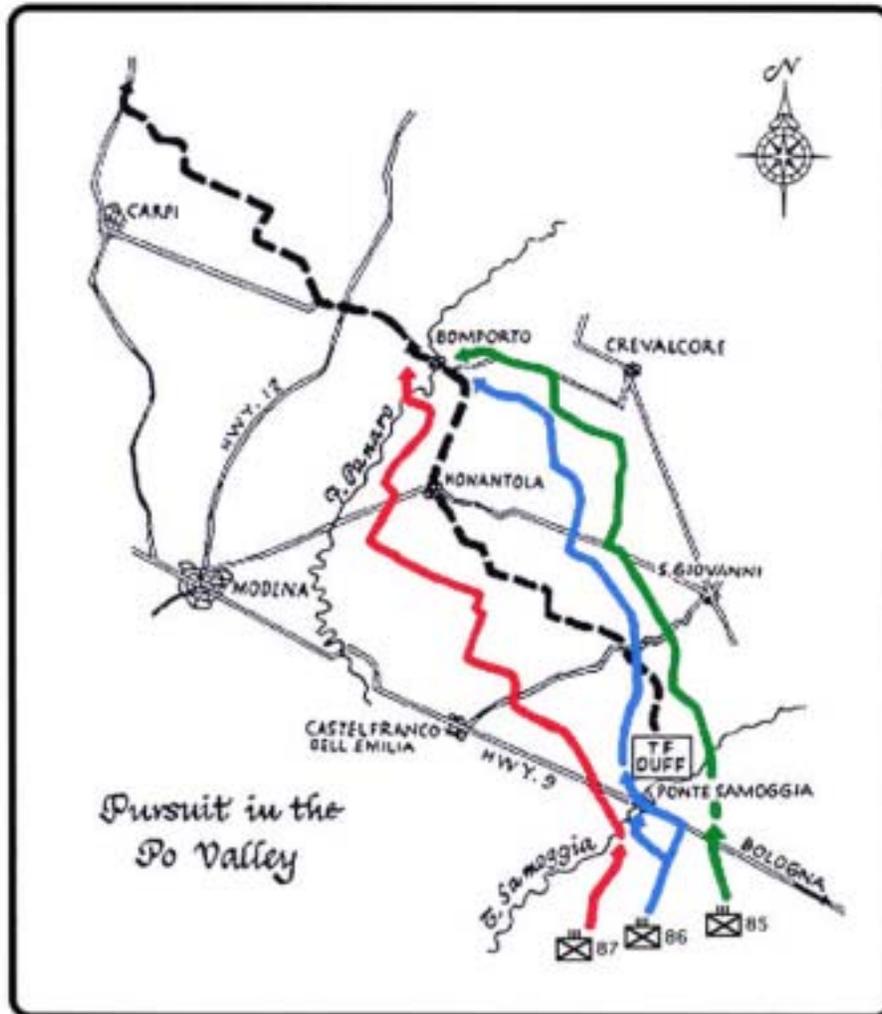


0 1 2 3 4 5 km

0 1 2 3 mi

- 85th Regiment
- 86th Regiment
- 87th Regiment

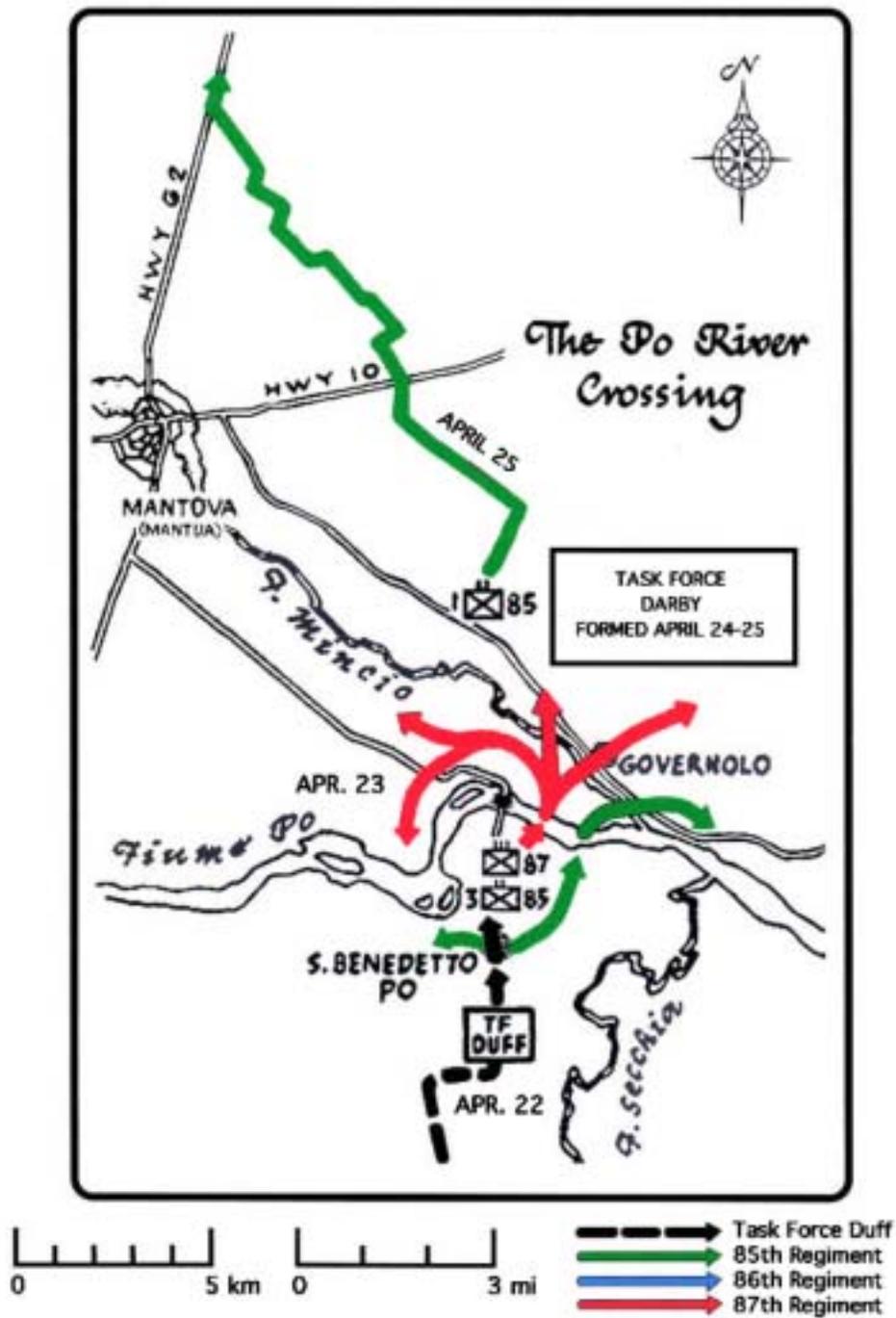
MAP 6. PO VALLEY SOUTH
 April 20 – 22



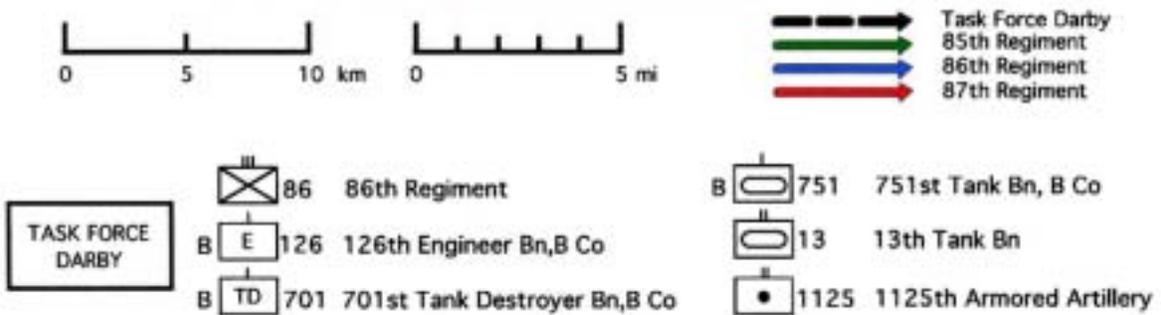
10TH DIVISION UNITS		ATTACHED UNITS	
2	 86 86th 2nd Bn (April 21)	B	 701 701st Tank Destroyer Bn, B Co
3	 85 85th 3rd Bn (April 22)	D	 751 751st Tank Bn, D Co
B	 126 126th Engineer Bn, B Co		 91 91st Recon Squadron

TASK FORCE DUFF

MAP 7. PO RIVER CROSSING
 April 23 – 24



MAP 8. ADVANCE TO LAKE GARDA April 25 – 29



MAP 9. LAKE GARDA: THE FINAL BATTLES
 April 28 – May 2

