

THIRD BATTALION 337<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY

BATTALION STAFF

BATTALION COMMANDER

Lt. Col. Earl A. Madsen

BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Major George J. Smith

PLANS AND TRAINING SECTION

Capt. William A. Moss

S/Sgt. Julius Wiener

PERSONNEL SECTION

Capt. George M. Boone, Jr.

T/Sgt. John F. Rose  
T/5 Thomas E. Fox

INTELLIGENCE SECTION

1st Lt. Cecil H. Cates, Jr.

S/Sgt. Louis Campagna  
Sgt. Cleverdon C. Croecker  
Pfc. Sol I. Sokolsky

SUPPLY SECTION

1st Lt. William R. Konrad

S/Sgt. A. F. Harding

MEDICAL SECTION

Capt. Max E. Cytryn  
Capt. Timothy P. Stone  
2nd Lt. Alexander Rozycki

CHAPLAIN SECTION

Capt. Thomas F. Nolan  
Capt. Anthony J. Connell

T/5 Peter A. Ridge

APO 85, U.S. Army  
19 June 1944

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

10 April 1944 to 30 April 1944

*Period 10-12 April 1944.*

Battalion at this time was alerted for combat action and was preparing for combat duty in Mondragone, Italy. On 12 April 1944, the initial warning order was issued. Prior to this time, Lt. Col. Earl A. Madsen, Battalion Commander, his Staff and Company Commanders and two non-commissioned officers per company had been attached to the 3rd Battalion, 351st Infantry, 88th Division as observers and had returned on the 11 April to move Battalion into its sector. Plans were to leave Mondragone bivouac as a base camp.

*Period 13-30 April 1944.*

On the night of 13-14 April, Battalion moved by truck to the Garigliano River Bridge. Upon arrival, at 2315, Battalion was met by guides of 3rd Battalion, 351st Infantry, a defensive position. Relief was completed by 0430, 14 April 1944. Disposition of companies were: Company "L" on the right and Company "K" on the left, with Company "I" in reserve. The HMG platoons of the heavy weapons company were attached to the front line companies, the mortar platoons remaining under company control. These positions were located along a ridge running east and west, frontage of Battalion 1500 yards. As there had been little activity in this sector for two months, positions were well prepared with signal communication to include platoons. On the right was the 349th Infantry, on the left of the 2nd Battalion, this Regiment. Observation posts were taken over by Battalion Intelligence Section. The OP's numbered three, established so as to cover the entire sector by being on the forward slope of the ridge line constituting MLR. The supply dump was located on the reverse slope of the next terrain feature to our rear at a distance of 1000 yards from the front lines.

The terrain to our front was a valley, open and grassy, with two shallow rivers running laterally and vertically to our MLR. The Reali River running east and west joined the Ausiento River, running north and south at a range of about 2000 yards to our front. Off to our left front and at a range of about 3200 yards ran a ridge running north and south. This ridge consisted of a series of steep, barren hills, each successively higher, known as (reading south to north) S104, N104, 151 and Mt. Brocchi, to the east and west of this ridge the terrain was that of open valley filled with irrigation ditches. From behind these hills were located the enemy's gun positions, emplacements and observation posts.

As the distance from our positions was out of small arms range, contact with the enemy was chiefly by patrolling. At first, these patrols were ambush and reconnaissance patrols to probe out the enemy's strength, positions, and routes of approach for future combat patrols and routes for larger attacks. As a result of these patrols it was revealed that the enemy's strength was on the previously mentioned ridge line. Also that although possessing few weapons, lightly manned, all weapons had excellent fields of fire and that prepared positions with covered routes of approach were built around the ridge.

Enemy activity was, due to his good positions, slight. He limited himself to harassing our forces with mortar and artillery from OP's S104, 151 and

Mt. Brocchi, and by wide use of pyrotechnics at night as an harassing element. Scarcely during the period covered by this report did he use patrols against our sector. G-2 reports revealed that the enemy opposing us at this time were elements of the 2nd Battalion, 274th Infantry Regiment, 71st Division, German Army, a unit with considerable combat experience. Although undermanned it was officered by experienced soldiers.

At the conclusion of the period covered by this report, Battalion had gained much knowledge of the basic rudiments of infantry combat. Officers and men, through ambush and reconnaissance patrols, became proficient at using maps and compass, moving silently and aggressively and locating enemy dispositions. Members of machine gun and mortar sections and platoons gained experience in the use and capabilities of their weapons through firing prearranged fires daily. The Staff and staff sections gained a thorough knowledge of radio procedure and capabilities of radio, making of overlay sketches, planned fires and proper use of supporting artillery fire by close liaison. However, of foremost importance, all troops were seasoned and conditioned to artillery fire, small arms fire and mines so as to be better prepared for the shock of offensive warfare. Casualties resulting from enemy action during this period were two Officers (wounded) and six EM (3 killed, 3 wounded).

The Battalion CP at the beginning of this period and at the end of the period was located on the reverse slope of the ridgeline constituting the MLR and at a distance of 800 yards southeast of Tufo.

APO 85, U.S. Army  
20 June 1944

### HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

1 May 1944 to 31 May 1944

#### *Period 1-10 May 1944.*

Battalion, at the time of the report, had been on a sector of the 5th Army Front known as the Gustaf Line. This sector was fifteen hundred (1500) yards in frontage located on a ridgeline running east and west and at a distance of approximately two thousand (2000) yards southeast of the city of Minturno, Italy. This sector was taken over by Battalion on 13 April 1944. Companies were disposed as follows: Company "L" on the right, Company "K" on the left and Company "I" in reserve; heavy machine gun platoons were attached to front line companies with the 81mm mortar platoons remaining under Company control.

The enemy continued to hold the ridge running north and south on which were located (reading south and north) S104, N104, 151 and Mt. Bracchi. Although few in number his automatic weapons, mortars and artillery were well emplaced behind hills S104, 151 and Mt. Bracchi with excellent fields of fire. In addition, although his MLR was lightly held, he had prepared positions with good covered approaches for a large force in a short period of time. The enemy's activity was that of harassing periodically with artillery and mortar fire. At night, in addition to artillery and mortar fire, pyrotechnics were used intensively as an harassing agent. In this period wide use was made of propaganda leaflets projected by artillery.

As described in a previous report, this Headquarters dated 19 June 1944, covering the period 10 April to 30 April 1944, the ambush and reconnaissance

patrols laid the foundations for combat patrols that were used during the period covered by this report. On the night of 2 May 1944, 2nd Lt. Joe E. Hughes of Company "M" and eleven enlisted men, same organization, under the cover of darkness moved to the base of S104. The next morning Lt. Hughes moved up S104 locating mortar positions in the saddle between S104 and N104 and several empty gun emplacements with deep, well-constructed dugouts nearby. Upon rounding the crest going south, two Germans were captured. It was learned that they were of Polish origin and were from the 2nd Company, 94th Reconnaissance Battalion and had just moved into the sector the night before. G-2 reports stated that the enemy was strengthening his line in this sector.

On the night of 6-7 May 1944, Battalion was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 349th Infantry. Battalion, less Company "I" which remained in position so as to perform patrol duties for 1st Battalion, 349th Infantry (this was to prevent enemy from knowing of a change of units in case of capture), and Company "M" which was attached to the 339th Infantry, located at Tremensuoli, Italy.

Battalion moved to a rest area in the vicinity of the Garigliano River Bridge on the same night. Battalion Commander, Staff, and Company Commanders reconnoitered positions in the vicinity of Tremensuoli in accordance with a Division Order received 4 May 1944 to the effect that in the forthcoming operation Battalion less Company "M" would be attached to the 339th Infantry and initially would be in Regimental Reserve of said Regiment.

On 9 May 1944, Battalion received verbal order from the Commanding General of the 85th Division to proceed to previously reconnoitered positions in the rear of Tremensuoli. Battalion moved by marching to this position on the night of 9-10 May 1944. 10 May 1944 was utilized in more detailed reconnoitering and awaiting the men.

#### *Period 11-14 May 1944.*

On the night of 11-12 May 1944, at 2300, the 339th Infantry moved out in the attack to take Hills 69, 66, 78, Cave Di Aguila and to contain the town of Scauri as per Division Field Order dated May 8 1944. A barrage of 30 minutes was laid on the positions enumerated. At 0430, "K" Company was committed to repel a threatened counter-attack on Hill 69 which had been taken by the 3rd Battalion of the 339th Infantry but only slightly held. During this time, Company "I" which had been relieved of its mission with the 1st Battalion, 349th Infantry, closed into the area and was alerted for possible moves to Hills 119 and 113. As the attack of the 339th Infantry had become disorganized, the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry was brought up as Regimental reserve to the 339th, arriving at 0730 and committed to the left of Company "K" shortly thereafter. Early on the morning of 12 May 1944, all contact was lost with "K" Company which at that time was on Hill 69. During this period (12 May 1944) casualties resulting from artillery and mortar fire were great. Replacements to companies were high. However, due to intense artillery fire, replacements to "K" Company were never able to join their unit.

Finally on 13 May 1944, contact was made with "K" Company by wire and the wounded were evacuated, rations, water and ammunition brought up. By the determined efforts of the Battalion Medics, wire section, members of the Battalion Intelligence Section, and replacements, the above was accomplished.

On the morning of 14 May 1944, the Battalion was issued a warning order relieving the Battalion from attached to 339th Infantry and ordering it into an assembly area in the vicinity of Mt. Natalie (two and one half miles north-



west of Minturno on the Minturno-Saint Maria Enfante Road). Battalion withdrew from its position minus Company "K" which was to remain until nightfall before withdrawing. The Battalion proceeded to the assembly area as ordered. Here the Battalion Commander received verbal orders to move to hill 108 at dawn on the left of 2nd Battalion, this Regiment, for a coordinated attack on Castellonorato.

During period covered above (11 May to 14 May 1944) the sector to the Battalion front was open, hilly ground with a number of draws and stream beds. The enemy who had gun emplacements and CPs on the high ground to the north-east continually dropped intense artillery concentrations on the crest and reverse slopes of Hill 69 and the forward slopes of 113 and 119 causing great casualties to our "K" Company. Although un-coordinated, he would launch counter-attacks immediately upon losing any high ground. These counter-attacks were supported with accurate mortar fire and artillery fire.

Casualties sustained as a result of this engagement were high in "K" Company. (As it is impossible to cite the total figure due to the report showing the great numbers MIA, it will be necessary to show only totals for the month of May 1944 which will be shown at the conclusion of this report.)

#### *Period 15-16 May 1944.*

On the 15 May 1944 at 0930, Battalion less "K" Company left assembly area in the vicinity of Mt. Natalie and proceeded to Hill 108. Companies were disposed as follows: Company "L" on the right, Company "I" on the left. Companies were in line of squad columns with two platoons forward, Company "M" with HMG positions in close support. One company of tanks was also in support. Battalion crossed line of departure at 1500. Upon reaching Mt. Penetro, the enemy, although softened by dive-bomber attacks and a one-hour artillery barrage, inflicted severe casualties on Company "I" with their mortars, 88mm guns and sniper fire. At 1200, Castellonorato was taken by this Battalion and 2nd Battalion, this Regiment.

The terrain to our front at the beginning of this operation was, from Mt. Natalie north-west to Castellonorato, open valley with intermittent streams and marshes running north and south rising into foothills that were barren, and the whole valley was overshadowed by Castellonorato and Mt. Penetro. It was from these two dominating features that the enemy's MLR was located. As a result of this observation and almost inaccessible heights, the enemy could with a few weapons inflict terrific casualties on our forces.

#### *Period 16-20 May 1944.*

At 0300 on 16 May 1944, the Battalion Commander received a verbal order to continue the attack in the sector surrounding the southern slopes of Castellonorato with contact with the enemy as the objective. At 0500 Companies cleared the line of departure with Company "I" on the left, and Company "L" on the right. Company "K" was in reserve. ("K" Company had moved up and rejoined Battalion late on the night of 15-16 May.) After having pushed approximately two and one half miles, the Battalion was pinned down by sniper fire and artillery fire from Mt. Campese. At 1500 a coordinated attack was launched against Mt. Campese. The enemy, due to their excellent observation posts on Mt. Campese, withheld their fire until Company "I" was within a few hundred yards of their MLR before bringing their mortar and automatic weapons into play. Despite losses, Companies managed to reach base of Mt. Campese before darkness caused the attack to terminate. The next

morning at daybreak, another coordinated attack jumped off. The enemy had however withdrawn and at about 1100, 2nd Battalion took the town of Maranola, while this Battalion came over the heights of Mt. Campese clearing pill boxes, dugouts and sniper posts, advancing to the highway running north and south with the right flank of the Battalion on the southern outskirts of the town. Positions were consolidated along the highway and contact made with the Regiment on our left at the outskirts of Formia. Defensive positions were occupied on Mt. Campese and a mountain just west of Maranola and outposts featuring AT guns, HMGs and Riflemen at RJ on the Regimental left flank. After entering the town, Battalion went into Division reserve and remained so until 20 May, during which time Battalion was re-equipped and platoons re-organized and replacements given instructions with Company weapons.

The terrain to our front during this phase of operation is that of the enemy holding Mt. Campese, a steep wooded mountain with a flat valley surrounding it. It was over this flat, sparsely wooded terrain that our forces had to advance after leaving the ridge on which Castellonorato was located. Again with but few well-emplaced weapons the enemy was able to inflict heavy casualties on our forces despite the repeated artillery concentrations dropped on him.

#### *Period 20-26 May 1944.*

At 1020, 20 May 1944, Battalion was alerted for a possible move to the vicinity of Formia. At 1500 Battalion moved by shuttling to an assembly area three miles west of Formia. At 0230, 21 May, the Battalion CO received a warning order to move the Battalion by foot north on Highway 7 towards Fondi until contact was made with the 2nd Battalion, this Regiment. After arriving in an assembly area north of Fondi on Highway 7, Battalion received the mission of taking high ground to the east of San Biagio, while 2nd Battalion this Regiment took the town of San Biagio. Battalion, with Company "L" on the right, Company "K" on the left, Company "I" in reserve, HMG platoons attached to leading Companies and mortars under Company control crossed LD at 1600. Battalion took its objective with ease, suffering only a few casualties from sniper fire. At 1900 Battalion CO received a warning that 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry, would relieve the Battalion that night. Relief was completed at 0145, 22 May. Early on the morning of 22 May, the Battalion CO received verbal order from Regiment CO to continue advance up Highway 7 (less Company "L") until contact was made with 1st Battalion this Regiment. Company "L" and the Battalion AT platoon were detached and proceeded to a railroad tunnel north-east of San Biagio. Battalion moved towards 1st Battalion which was in the vicinity of Terraccina by shuttling, arriving by 1030. Upon arrival at designated area Battalion was committed around right flank of 1st Battalion with Mt. Croece as the objective. Companies were disposed as follows: Company "I" on the left, Company "K" on their right, HMG platoons in close support and mortars under Company control. Due to the almost inaccessible mountains held by the enemy and the heavy underbrush, sniper fire made progress very slow. By nightfall Companies "I" and "K" with supporting HMGs of Company "M", had, after a furious battle, taken and consolidated positions on Mt. Stefano. The situation at nightfall was that Highway 7 was held by friendly troops but was under observation from Mt. Croece, which the enemy still held and Mt. Stefano still further to the right, but much lower than Croece, was held by the 3rd Battalion. Battalion's right flank was open but not dangerously because of

our position on the high ground which dropped down to a valley on the right. Due to conditions of terrain, supply of food, water and ammunition, evacuation of the wounded was entirely dependent upon mule and pack-carrying parties and was rendered very difficult. At 2230, Battalion Commander received a verbal order from the Regiment Commander that the attack would jump off at 0700, 23 May. Also that "L" Company was relieved and would be brought up as reserve Company at 0600, 23 May. Due to previously mentioned difficulties of terrain, it was 1300 when the three rifle companies of the Battalion were in position with "L" Company in reserve. "M" Company's mortars and HMG had been displaced forward to ideal firing positions. The attack jumped off at 1430 in conjunction with the 2nd Battalion on our left which had been unable to make headway all day until that time. At 0735 that morning 1st Battalion was placed in Regiment reserve and the 2nd Battalion had passed through them. Throughout the day Battalion moved slowly yet aggressively over open rocky slopes utilizing every weapon in the Battalion and supporting artillery to silence automatic weapons, snipers, mortars and 88mm guns firing direct fire. By nightfall the Battalion had reached a position overlooking the town of Terracina. The attack halted for consolidation of positions and reorganization preparatory to resuming attack at daylight. All units were subjected to intense enemy artillery fire all during the attack and until midnight at which time our Division artillery, firing a 50-gun counter barrage, effectively silenced enemy guns. A tank trail had been constructed during the day in the rear of the 2nd Battalion and tanks moved up at dark. At 2330, 23 May, Battalion Commander received a verbal order to the effect that 2nd and 3rd Battalions would send patrols into the town at 0500 and that they would return by 0700 to determine the strength and dispositions of the enemy. If light enemy forces were found, battalions without artillery support would attack at 0800. If strong opposition were encountered, an artillery preparation from 0730 to 0800 would be laid. Battalions attacked under cover of artillery at 0800 with tanks. All during the night our artillery fired concentrations into the town and the roads leading out of the town to the north. Upon returning, patrols reported no enemy remaining in the town. Battalion moved into the town, clearing house therein and at 1030 Battalion moved into an assembly area on the north-east side of town (less Company "L" which had been given the mission of securing Mt. Lena). Battalion remained here until 26 May as Regiment was in Division reserve. Time was spent in care and cleaning of equipment, reorganization and training of replacements.

The terrain to our front as Battalion left the assembly area north of Fondi along Highway 7, was a flat valley dotted with orchards and grain fields and many small farmhouses with the town of San Biagio located on the nose of a high ridge running generally north and south with a small valley and another ridge running north and south on their right at a distance of about 1500 yards. It was these two terrain features which formed the boundaries of the Battalion sector. Therefore, although on commanding ground, the positions held by the enemy did not make a good defense as a mountain chain running east and west (with no good routes to the north) was present and Highway 7 passed the town and followed the mountain chain to the east. As a result, the town and terrain to the right were taken with only light losses due to sniper fire.

The terrain, however, that faced the Battalion in the attack on Mt. Croce and Terraccina gave the enemy good observation and due to the underbrush

and ruggedness of the mountain which ran parallel to our line, artillery and sniper fire by a few men holding the position made progress difficult and slow.

*Period 26-31 May 1944.*

On 26 May 1944, Battalion, after having been placed on a two-hour alert by Division on 25 May, moved by motor to an assembly area in the vicinity of Proverno closing into this area at 2300. On 27 May, Battalion moved by motor south-east to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Sabaudia. Battalion remained in this area utilizing time for checking and getting re-equipped and training new replacements with companies and resting until 29 May. On 29 May, Battalion moved by motor to an assembly area in the vicinity of Guilianello, closing into the area at approximately 2330. On 30 May, Battalion Commander received verbal order from Regiment Commander that Battalion would relieve the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry of the 3rd Division which was on a defensive position approximately four miles north of Guilianello. At 1430 the Battalion Commander, Staff, Comapny COs and platoon leaders went forward to reconnoiter positions to be taken over. Battalion moved into this sector at 1830 on foot. Relief was completed at approximately 2330. Dispositions of Companies were (Company "I" on the left, Company "L" on the right, Company "K" in reserve, HMG platoons attached to front line companies and mortars under company control. Frontage of Battalion was about 1600 yards and located on a ridge running generally east and west. To the front the ground dropped off into a valley that fell off from the forward slopes of the ridge constituting the MLR, i.e., vineyards permitting only short fields of fire. Forward of this valley and running east and west was another ridge-line several hundred feet higher than our own. This ridge was covered by dense undergrowth. In the center of the valley ran a first-class highway running east and west. Previous reports of the unit relieved showed that several SP guns and snipers were in this valley and tanks were using the highway. Wide use was being made of patrols by the enemy in an effort to capture prisoners to find out our strength and intentions at this time. At 1130, 31 May, the Battalion CO received a verbal attack order from the Regimental CO to the effect that this battalion, crossing the line of departure at 1300, would take high ground to our front by by-passing the town of Lariano (town on the Battalion right flank). The attack jumped off at 1300 with companies in same positions as were held on the defensive line. In moving down the forward slopes of the ridge held by our troops, Battalion encountered a number of snipers who, due to the grape vineyards, slowed the rate of advance considerably. Company "L", running into more opposition of this nature, fell in the rear of Company "I" which pushed rapidly to the front. Darkness found Company "I" almost to the crest of the high ground to our front which commanded the area for miles around and in contact with the 1st Battalion 143rd Infantry of the 36th Division on our left. Company "L", who had met considerably more resistance, was echeloned to the right rear of Company "I" about 100 yards; and Company "K", the reserve company protecting our open right flank, was echeloned about 800 yards to the right rear of Company "L" and had been in trouble constantly the entire afternoon due to an enemy strong point in the town of Lariano which was by-passed by the 1st Battalion 337th Infantry on the right and also by this Battalion and which had not been cleaned out by the 2nd Battalion (in Regimental reserve as yet). Company "K", after a sharp fight along the highway out of Lariano, managed to clear out enemy resistance taking two AT guns, several vehicles and 31 prisoners, moved beyond the road 300 yards and consolidated

positions and prepared to reorganize and prepare to move forward at daylight. The day was highlighted by a German one-tank attack on "K" Company's rear at dusk which succeeded in wounding several of the Kraut PWs taken by "K" Company who were on the highway at the time. Patrols from Company "L" were sent forward to establish contact with Company "I" and did so. The 2nd Battalion, then in position just south of the road was ordered to take Lariano at dawn). Thus stood the situation at the conclusion of the period covered by this report.

During the period covered by this report this Battalion had participated in the capture of Castellonorato, San Biagio, and Terracina, capturing many prisoners and killing several hundred of the enemy in addition to the capture of stores of ammunition, weapons, and other supplies. Casualties of the Battalion amounted to a total of 442: Officers killed, 4; Officers wounded, 13; Enlisted Men killed, 46; Enlisted Men wounded, 285; Enlisted Men MIA, 84 (no reports as to status of MIA at the time this period closed). As shown by these figures, replacements had been high. However, the Battalion continued to show its aggressiveness of spirit in keeping with the highest traditions of the service.

APO 85, U.S. Army

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

1 June 1944 to 30 June 1944

### *Period 1-8 June 1944*

As covered in History of Operations period 1 May 1944 to 31 May 1944, this Battalion on 31 May 1944 was engaged against an element of the Hermann Goering Division on the sector of the Fifth Army Front in the vicinity of Lariano. As covered in the previous History of Operations, the dispositions, situations and terrain were as follows (Company "I" on the left, Company "L" on the right, Company "K" in reserve, HMG platoons attached to the front line Companies and Mortars under Company control. Frontage of Battalion was about sixteen hundred (1600) yards and located on a ridge running generally east and west; to the front the ground dropped off into a valley that fell off from the forward slopes of the ridge constituting the MLR, i.e., vineyards permitting only short fields of fire. Forward of the valley and running east and west was another ridge line several hundred feet higher than our own. This ridge was covered with dense undergrowth. In the center of the valley ran a first class highway running east and west. Previous reports of the unit relieved showed that several SP guns and snipers were in this valley and tanks were using the highway. Wide use was being made of patrols by the enemy in an effort to capture prisoners to find out our strength and intentions at this time. At 1130 31 May 1944, the Battalion Commander received a verbal attack order from the Regimental Commander to the effect that this Battalion crossing the line of departure at 1300 would take high ground to our front and by-passing the town of Lariano (town on the Battalion right flank). The attack jumped off at 1300 with Companies in the same positions as were held on the defensive line. In moving down the forward slopes of the ridge held by our troops, Battalion encountered a number of snipers due to the grape vineyards, slowed the rate of advance considerably. Company "L" running into more opposition of this nature fell in the rear of Company "I" which pushed rapidly to our front. Darkness found

Company "I" almost to the crest of the high ground to our front, which commanded the area for miles around and in contact with 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry of the 36th Division on our left. Company "L" who had met considerable more resistance was echeloned to the right rear of Company "I" and about 100 yards Company "K", the reserve Company protecting our open right flank, was echeloned about 800 yards to the right rear of Company "L" and had been in trouble constantly the entire afternoon due to an enemy strong point in the town of Lariano, which was by-passed by the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry on the right and also by this Battalion and which had not been cleaned out by the 2nd Battalion in Regimental reserve as yet. Company "K" after a sharp fight along the highway out of Lariano managed to clear out enemy resistance, taking several AT guns, several vehicles, and 31 prisoners, moved beyond the road 300 yards and consolidated positions and prepared to reorganize to move forward at daylight. The day was highlighted by a German one-tank attack on Company "K's" rear at dusk which succeeded in wounding several of the Kraut PWs taken by "K" Company, who were on the highway at the time. Patrols from Company "L" were sent forward to establish contact with Company "I" and did so. The 2nd Battalion then in position just south of the road was ordered to take Lariano at dawn). Orders were issued that Companies would not try to move that night but would join by 0500 and attack the Castle. The Chemical Company (4.2 mortars) would support this attack. A platoon of tanks would also be attached. Further, the Battalion of the 143rd Infantry that was on Company "I" left would be relieved after our Battalion passed through them. At 0315, 1 June 1944, Battalion Commander received a verbal order from the Regimental Commander as follows: Paragraph X of paragraph 2 of latest Field Order dated 5/31/44, which states Continuous Attack both day and night. Therefore time of attack 0500 rescinded. Each unit will attack when ready in its sector unless a serious gap in depth exists. Since no such gap existed 3rd Battalion will attack when ready. At dawn the next morning, 1 June 1944, Company "L" started up to get into position followed by Company "K". Sniper and automatic fire was so severe that it was noon before Companies "I" and "L" did come abreast and coordinated for the attack. At 1010 the Regimental Commander issued an order to the effect that this Battalion should push the attack and seize hill and assist 2nd Battalion, to take hills. However, from 1200 to 1600, the Battalion remained pinned down by heavy automatic and sniper fire. At 1705, the Battalion objective was changed. The sector was moved to the right. Here the Battalion was to be in with the 1st Battalion This Regiment with the 2nd Battalion to follow. Upon receipt of this order, the Battalion Commander moved the Battalion off Castel d'Ariano, put them in a column of Companies as it was getting dark and the heavy undergrowth permitted such a formation if strong flank security was out. The Battalion arrived at its new location which had been a move that followed the 1st Battalion east around the end of east-west ridge, that had confronted the Battalion. Battalion moved into this sector which was a densely wooded hill running generally north and south at 2230. During the movement down to this sector, in addition to the HMG platoons being already attached to front line Companies, one section of mortars was attached also to each of these units. Disposition of Companies was "I" on the left, "L" on the right, "K" in reserve At 0435, 2 June 1944, Battalion Commander secured attack order. Battalion was to attack and take Hills 631 and 657, push on to the north in a 330 degree azimuth and take Mountain 776. At 0715, Companies crossed the LD. Disposition of Companies was the same as the night before. At approximately 1000



Company "L," after bringing mortar fire on Hill 631, took the hill. Companies "I" and "L" skirted the base and took Hill 651. Leaving Company "I" as reserve Company holding Hill 651, Companies "I" and "K" continued to push forward up the forward slope of Mt. Cerasco. At approximately 1750 the front line Companies reached the crest of Mt. Cerasco. Reserve Company moved up and joined remainder of Battalion shortly thereafter. From the heights of Mt. Cerasco good observation of the terrain to the front was had and Companies made full use of it with mortar and machine guns. As the supply of mortar, small arms, ammunition, food and water were in dire need of replenishment, plus the fact that nightfall was coming on fast, Battalion halted for the night and put out security. The terrain to Battalion front on the morning of 2 June 1944 was to the immediate front along a ridge paralleling the direction of attack. This mountain, Mt. Tangroline, was a densely wooded mountain with steep slopes dropping off into a wide-open valley filled with grassy fields and marshes up off to the right. At the north and east of Mt. Tangroline rose Hill 631, with Hill 657 in the rear. These two hills were mound-like in appearance with trails running between the nose of Mt. Tangroline and Hill 631. Both Hill 631 and Hill 657 were densely wooded with deep draws leading off. All this terrain was overshadowed by mountains which were also heavily wooded and traversed with small logging trails on the forward and south slopes. It was on these slopes that were located the snipers and light automatic weapons of the enemy. The enemy also had several SP guns and nebelwerfers that made use of existing trails by constantly shifting their positions and firing a few quick rounds from each position. These were neutralized with accurate artillery and mortar fire—the sniper fire by our small arms fire and mortars (60mm).

At 0530 Battalion Commander received attack order from Regimental Commander to continue the attack giving Hill 600 as the initial objective, thence forward on a 330 degree Azimuth, by-passing the town of Rocca Priora and on to Monte Campatre and to capture said town with 2nd Battalion.

At 0700 the attack jumped off with but light resistance. Battalion with Company "K" on the left, Company "L" on right and heavy weapons as day before, took Hill 600 by 1030. Meeting no resistance Battalion was put in an approach march formation and pushed on toward Monte Campatre. Only a few scattered rounds of artillery and small arms fire detained the Regiment as they pushed into town. The fire came from SP and scattered snipers. Battalion went into an assembly area on the south side of town while 2nd Battalion moved in the direction of Highway 6. At about 1730 Battalion Commander received orders to follow 2nd Battalion in an approach march formation at 1945.

At 1945 Companies moved out. Order of march: "K," "L," "I," "M," Companies. One weapons carrier per company to carry weapons was moved in the column. Heavy machine guns were mounted and proceeded by bounds through columns as anti-aircraft protection.

At 2100 Battalion Commander received orders to halt for the night, go into an assembly area off the road, put out security, and remain until daylight before pushing on. Snipers were still active throughout the night; also a few enemy planes were strafing the roads and area to our rear. Due to the rapid movement and narrow zones of attack some snipers were always left in our rear to be disposed of by units in the rear. Although not presenting a serious menace they nevertheless were a source of annoyance and called for alert security. It will be noted that after having taken Monte Campatre the terrain to our front was gently dropping into a flat plain filled with fields of grain and scattered farms. Several highways ran parallel to the direction of the attack. For the first time

since the beginning of the campaign our forces had the commanding ground and as a result the enemy gave ground steadily. His artillery limited itself to SP and tanks that would throw a few random shots and pull out, leaving only a few snipers to slow our attack.

At 0120, 4 June 1944, Battalion Commander received a warning that Battalion would be alerted for attack within one hour after 0200.

At 0230, Battalion Commander received an attack order to the effect that this Battalion would pass through the 2nd Battalion and push through cutting Highway 6. At Highway 6 Battalion would swing northwest and follow on Highway 6 to a road junction approximately one mile east of the town proper. At 0500 Battalion moved off with the Companies disposed of as follows: Company "K," advance guard, Companies "I" and "L" in reserve, elements of heavy weapons disposed as before. Battalion pushed rapidly forward meeting only scattered resistance. Shortly after Battalion pushed off, Battalion Executive Officer was appointed Task Force Commander and one platoon of TD platoon of Engineers, one battery of artillery, and one I and R platoon. This task force had the mission, on Division order, preceding foot elements through Rome and securing three bridges across the Tiber River on the northwest side of Rome. Battalion reached designated road junction at approximately 1100; here "L" Company detached itself from Battalion. Battalion went into an assembly area near the road junction.

At 1300 Battalion Commander received an attack order to the effect that Battalion would move southeast from Highway 6 and cut Highway 7 and hold it against possible enemy action from the south.

At 1330 Battalion crossed LD with "K" Company as advance guard followed by "I" and "M" Companies, one section of mortars and a platoon of heavy machine guns. The task force remained in the assembly area awaiting commitment. Battalion pushed rapidly forward until it was within 1000 yards of Highway 7, when point was halted by sniper fire from a group of houses near the road junction. Just prior to this sniper fire a flank patrol from Company "I" had engaged some enemy in a tunnel and under some box-cars. After a brief flurry of rifle fire killed four of the enemy and captured 63. The snipers in the houses near Highway 7 were quietly disposed of by bringing up a few tanks and shelling the houses. When Battalion reached the road junction, contact was made with elements of the first Armored Division moving up Highway 7. "L" Company as part of the task force remained at the road junction, awaiting further orders. Task force was relieved at 0730, 5 June 1944. The Battalion Executive Officer and "L" Company returned to Battalion control. As has been stated previous to this, the terrain to Battalion's front shelved off into a brief plain. This plain included the city of Rome. As the Battalion neared Highway 6 and started up it the resistance was so light that the attack took the form of an approach march so that fighting was done by the platoon comprising the point and flank security of the advance guards. However, more use was made of the tanks and SP by the enemy as we approached Rome. These were routed quickly by our tanks and TDs which could manœuvre because of flat terrain. As we neared Rome the road net was much better as there existed several lateral roads as well as axial roads.

At 1200, 5 June 1944 the Battalion Commander received a warning order that Battalion would be in an approach march formation as part of the main body of the Regiment, and would move by marching through Rome and to the northwest to an assembly area to be designated.

At 1430 Battalion crossed the IP in a column of companies. Battalion closed



into the assembly area (northwest of Rome) in vicinity of Highway 2 approximately 3 miles northwest of Rome. Battalion spent the next day cleaning and checking equipment.

At 1630 Battalion Commander received a warning order to the effect that this Battalion would on the night of the 5 and 6 June 1944 relieve the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry which at this time was located near Highway 2 about 12 miles north of Rome and would at 0500, 6 June 1944, using Highway 2 as direction of attack and right flank limiting point, push to the north. At 1830 Battalion Commander, Staff, Company Commander and Platoon Leaders went forward to reconnoiter positions to be taken over. At 2200 Battalion cleared the assembly area and moved to positions by shuttling. Using organic vehicles as a means of conveyance, at 0500 Battalion crossed the line of departure. Dispositions of companies were Company "K" on the right, Company "I" on the left, Company "L" in reserve, the heavy machine gun platoons attached to the line companies, and the 81mm mortars remaining under the heavy weapons company control. Battalion pushed rapidly to the front meeting only scattered fire which was so light that it had no effect on the forward movement of the Battalion. At about 1030 Battalion went into an assembly area near Highway 2 about 20 miles north of Rome and eight miles north of the line of departure. At 1100 Battalion was mechanized and moved approximately six miles north of Highway 2. Upon detrucking Battalion was put in an assembly area near the road. At about 1400 Battalion Commander received an oral order to push northward on a 330 degree azimuth taking the high ground to the front and the town of Monterosi and the ground beyond until the fourth phase line (unnumbered highway about four miles north of Monterose) was reached.

At 1500 companies crossed the line of departure with Company "K" on the right, Company "L" on the left, Company "I" in reserve, the heavy machine guns attached to the front line companies and 81mm mortars under control of the heavy weapons company. Battalion pushed rapidly toward Monterosi meeting no resistance. The town of Monterosi was taken with no losses and Battalion continued to push northward. About two miles from the town and in the vicinity of Lago de Brucciano, Battalion was pinned down by machine gun and sniper fire from an enemy position near Highway 2. 81mm mortars were brought up ending this resistance. Battalion then moved on after capturing four enemy at this point. After reaching the fourth phase line Battalion halted for the night and set up security. The following day was spent in care and cleaning of equipment and rest for the men. Battalion was still on a two-hour alert for a possible move to the north. Battalion was relieved on 8 June. Training of replacements was begun, the cleaning of weapons was continued and squad tactics were rehearsed. Battalion Commander and Company Commanders realized that there was need for correction of certain shortcomings and that the newly acquired men were badly in need of training. The foremost consideration was the familiarization of the new men with their basic arm and with the weapons of the unit. There was also a need for the development of squads into close, coordinated teams. Several of the squad leaders were new to their job and this added to the problem of control of the squads.

#### *Period 9-30 June 1944.*

Upon relief of this Battalion from front line duty, the Battalion Commander and all Company Commanders of the Battalion realized that there existed several little discrepancies that needed correction and the need for training newly acquired men.

Battalion remained in the vicinity of Monterosi until 15 June at which time Battalion moved to Lido di Roma, and went into bivouac. During the time spent at Monterosi and Lido di Roma ranges were set up and preliminary marksmanship on the pistol and BAR were given. By dismounted drill and calisthenics, squad leaders were able to take hold of their new squads and gained confidence in leading and training members of their squads. A series of squad problems under Battalion control was set up. These problems were chiefly firing problems in which squad members learned how to advance up to a firing position, adjust sights and fire on point and area targets by means of oral fire orders using reference points. Squad leaders gained valuable information in the following: Estimates of the situation, enemy dispositions, fire orders, fire control, fire discipline, setting up a base of fire and maneuvering to the flanks, to get movement, security, and employing the fire power and supporting fires at his disposal to the maximum. Platoon problems of the same nature were set up under Battalion control and provided the same benefits for platoon leaders as did squad problems for squad leaders.

During this period orders from higher headquarters were received to the effect that assault teams would be set up and trained in the use of the Bazooka, flame throwers, bangalore, and explosive charges, as well as the T-O arms and weapons and in taking fortified positions. The men were thus, by practical demonstration, taught how to use the above weapons both mechanically and tactically. Assault teams underwent intensive training in assaulting mockups of fortified works. This training was brought to a completion by a Battalion assault on a fortified position. During the period covered by this report, several retreat parades and reviews, both Battalion and Regimental, were held to give men training in marching, alertness, and pride in their organization.

Troops also received much practical work in chemical warfare, especially in wearing of the gas mask, first aid, and use of the protective ointments, capes, and eyeshields. All men were put through the gas chamber to test the mask for fit. Along administrative lines, the Battalion Adjutant, the Sergeant Major, and the 1st Sergeants, working with the unit personnel, ironed out difficulties encountered in the last campaign regarding battle casualties, their records and dispositions, and, profiting by past experiences, set up agencies that in the future would give prompt and accurate information to both higher headquarters and companies. Men were sent to Rome on one-day pass and to the Fifth Army Rest Center for five days. In addition to these passes, periods during teaching were allotted to swimming and showers. Clothing exchanges were set up. Entertainment in the form of outdoor shows and motion pictures were provided. At the conclusion of this period, by hard training and careful planning, the problems brought out in combat were ironed out. Platoon leaders, squad leaders and squad members were trained into more compact, aggressive, fighting teams. In addition, passes and excellent recreational facilities provided all troops with rest.

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## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

1 July 1944 to 31 July 1944

*Period 1-13 July 1944.*

At the opening of this report and until 11 July 1944, Battalion was located in a bivouac area in the vicinity of Lido di Roma, Italy.

During this period training consisted of attacking fortified positions, attack of a river line, firing of crew served weapons, forming of a 50-caliber machine gun platoon and bazooka teams.

The training in the attacking of fortified positions consisted of instructing individuals in the use of the flame thrower, bazooka, satchel charges, bangalore torpedoes, forming assault teams and making them proficient by platoon, company and battalion firing problems on mockups.

Following the training in assaulting fortified positions, instructions were received to begin training in river crossings. Purpose of this training was to make all troops proficient in river crossings as it was contemplated that the Division would be called upon to make a crossing in north Italy.

Immediately upon receiving these instructions mockups were constructed and all individuals were oriented on the purpose and procedure of river crossing. Following this, squads and platoons were instructed and practical boat drills and formations adopted for river crossings. A series of company problems followed by a Battalion problem concluded this phase of training. A Regimental problem was planned but due to a movement order this problem was cancelled.

As a result of the previous campaign 11 May to 8 June 1944 experience showed that the 57mm Anti-Tank Platoon could not carry out its mission in rugged country due to the comparative immobility of this weapon. It was, therefore, Battalion and S-3 who saw it was necessary to find a substitute for this weapon in rugged country. The 50-caliber machine gun and Bazooka proved to be the desired substitute. The 50-caliber machine gun, a light but powerful weapon, was to be used on pill boxes. The Bazooka, a light but powerful weapon, was to be used to repel local tank attacks and to reduce pill-boxes.

A 50-caliber machine gun platoon was formed. This platoon was made up of five squads of men and a platoon leader and platoon sergeant. The plan was to keep the squad in the company as an attachment. Each company furnished one squad and Headquarters Company furnished the platoon leader and platoon sergeant; the platoon leader to supervise them. In a situation favorable to their operation as platoon the platoon would come under the platoon leader's control. The platoon leader would work them with heavy weapons company commander.

Immediately upon formation, members of the platoon were given instructions in nomenclature, functioning, care and cleaning, gun drill, preliminary marksmanship, firing on known ranges and finally on small firing problems. The training was conducted by the platoon leader and members of the heavy weapons company.

As stated before, the Bazooka was planned to replace the 57mm Anti-Tank to repel local tank attacks and to reduce pill-boxes. Up to this time the Bazooka was just an added piece of equipment, and no provisions were

made by the T-O as to whom was to be armed with it. Under the present plan each platoon was to have a Bazooka team comprised of three men. These men were in addition to the T-O strength of each platoon. They were taken from the basic's in the company headquarters. Upon formation these teams were trained under Battalion control. Individuals were given instructions in nomenclature, care and cleaning, and range practice. The tactics of the weapon were brought out in platoon and company problems by platoon and company commanders.

During this period although great stress was placed on training, recreation and athletics were provided, passes to Rome, swimming periods, U.S.O. shows and open-air movies every night.

On 11 July 1944 a movement order was received to the effect that this Battalion as a part of the 337th Infantry Regiment would move by motor to an area in the vicinity of Roccastrada, Italy, on 13 July 1944. The 11th and 12th was spent preparing for the move.

*Period 13-30 July 1944.*

At 1530, 13 July 1944, vicinity of Lido di Roma, this Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry Regiment moved by motor to Roccastrada, Italy. The route taken was Highway 8 to Rome, then Highway 1 to the destination. Distance traveled: approximately 150 miles. Battalion arrived at this area (Coord: 66.7-91.7) Sheet 128 IV Montepesculi, Italy, 1,50,000. Companies of this Battalion arrived at 0100, 14 July 1944.

On the 14th companies immediately began to take conditioning marches through the mountains. These conditioning marches were in the form of platoon problems in moving across country, making full use of concealment, dispersion and security.

Training of this nature was conducted through 18 July 1944. On the 17th, Battalion received a warning order (verbal) of a move on the 19th of July to an area in the vicinity of Valtina, Italy. On 18 July 1944 the Battalion S-1 and quartering party left for new area. At 2200, 18 July 1944, Battalion received a warning order to the effect that Battalion would move on an hour's notice.

Due to an order from higher Headquarters the area in vicinity of Volterra, Italy, was changed to an area in the vicinity of Rosignano, Italy. The 85th Division was changed from II Corps to the IV Corps for possible commitment, in the vicinity of Livoinio, Italy.

At 0045, 19 July 1944, the organic vehicles of Battalion departed for the new area. At 0650 Battalion, less vehicles, closed into this new area (13.2-34.8) Volterra 1/10,000 Sheet 112 at 1205, 19 July 1944.

After spending the 20 July 1944 in setting up a bivouac, Battalion continued training on conditioning, cross-country movement and security when moving. This training was accomplished by a series of platoon problems under Battalion control. On the 26 July 1944 Battalion was allotted five miles for training. Training was immediately given to members of the heavy weapons, 50-caliber machine gun platoon and the Battalion A&P platoon.

Training was given to all members of Battalion on the firing of German weapons.

On the 26 July 1944 Battalion received a warning order of an impending movement on 30 July 1944.

On 27 July 1944 all companies practiced and prepared for a review to be held on 28 July 1944 for King George VI of England. This Battalion had been selected to represent the Infantry of the 85th Division in this review in which

all the components of the 5th Army would be represented. The next morning at 0615, 28 July 1944, Battalion moved by motor to Cecina and was part of the review. While conducting his inspection of this Battalion the King spoke to several members of the Battalion who had been decorated for heroism and gallantry in action. The remainder of the 28th and the entire day of the 29th was spent preparing for the forthcoming move.

At 0945, 30 July 1944, Battalion moved by motor to an area in the vicinity of Volterra, Italy. Distance traveled was approximately 40 miles. Coor: (52.5-32.6) Volterra, Sheet 112, 1/100,000.

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### HISTORY OF OPERATIONS 1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944

#### *Period 1-15 August 1944.*

Battalion remained in the area just mentioned until 15 August 1944. After having spent the day setting up the camp, plans were drawn up for an intensive period of physical conditioning, squad and platoon tactics, weapons training and firing, firing and identifying fire of foreign weapons, and use of (pack) mule trains.

By Battalion scheduled route marches, squad and platoon problems calling for movement over rough and difficult terrain, all troops were brought to a high degree of physical fitness.

While in this area, by scheduled Battalion controlled squad and platoon problems, new squad leaders and platoon leaders not only gained leadership and a knowledge of their men, the lessons learned gave both leaders and men a store of tactical knowledge in mountainous warfare.

These problems consisted of moving over mountainous terrain, to make reconnaissance, take limited objectives, stressing security, dispersion, patrolling, and map reading.

In addition to the above training, a good portion of this training period was used for weapons firing. This was especially true of machine guns, both light and heavy 30-caliber and 50-caliber machine guns and mortars (both 60 and 81 mm). As a result new members of squads and sections were brought to the necessary degree of skill in the manipulation and firing of these crew served weapons. Bazooka teams through this firing period were given considerable firing practice. Rifle grenadiers were given firing training with all types of rifle grenades.

In the previous campaign, 11 May 1944 to 8 June 1944, the need for all men to be able to distinguish our weapons from the enemy's and the direction from whence the firing was coming from was evident to all Company Commanders. Therefore, during this training period by firing our weapons and the enemy's from different ranges (crack and thump method) the problem was solved.

As per orders from higher headquarters, the Division was contemplated to be used in mountain fighting in the near future, training was to be given in the use of pack mules. Therefore during this period, members of the heavy weapons company, the 50-caliber machine gun platoon, the A&P platoon and communications platoon were given instructions and practical work in loading and handling mules in mountainous warfare.

On the 14 August 1944 Battalion received a movement order to the effect that the 3rd Battalion, as part of the 337th Infantry Regiment, would relieve a Battalion of the 363rd Infantry, 91st Division, on the night of the 16-17 August 1944. The Battalion Commander and Staff (less Battalion Executive Officer), platoon leaders and one man per crew-served weapon were to go forward on the night of the 15-16 August 1944 as an advance detachment.

The advance detachment and the S-1 and quartermaster party departed at 0850, 15 August 1944, as per orders received. The remainder of the Battalion cleared the area at 2150, 15 August 1944, moving by motor and closed into new area at 0130, 16 August 1944, after having traveled 22 miles. Coor: 478517 S. Casciano, in Val De Pesa, Sheet 113 1100/,000. This area constituted a final assembly area, prior to moving into the line. On the night of 16-17 August 1944, the Battalion moved forward to complete the relief of the 3rd Battalion 363rd Infantry, 91st Division.

#### *Period 15-31 August 1944.*

As covered in the previous "Report of Operations" 1 August 1944 to 15 August 1944, the Battalion on 15 August was located at Coor: 478517 S. Casciano in Val de Pesa, Sheet 113, 1/100,000 in vicinity of Strada, Italy. As previously stated this area was an assembly area before moving into the line to relieve the 3rd Battalion, 363rd Infantry as per order received on the 14 August 1944.

At 1430, 16 August 1944, Battalion moved by marching to a final assembly area approximately 1000 yards in rear of the front lines behind a hill mask. At this point, Company Commanders, platoon leaders, and the other members of the advance detachment met the Battalion. As soon as darkness fell the Battalion moved forward to complete the relief. The relief was completed without incident.

At 0430, 17 August 1944, Battalion officially took over this sector. The sector was located in the vicinity of Cigoli, Italy, Coor: 431602 Fuiacchio, Sheet 105 S.W. 1/25,000.

The area to the front was a wide flat river bottom dotted with farmhouses, small trails, running north to the river and throughout the area, cultivated fields and vineyards. About 1600 yards to the front and running parallel to the line ran the Arno River. The river at this point came to a saucer-like curve curving back toward our lines. Across the river looking from west to east lay the town of St. Croce and Fucchio. Immediately behind these towns the ground came or ran sharply into a high ridge running generally east and west running parallel and about 1200 yards in rear of the foothills ran another ridge. Located approximately in the center and to the southeast was the town of Cigoli.

The town of Cigoli, Italy, as stated, sat on the top of a ridge and was composed of about forty houses of two to three stories. It can be added that the civilian population inhabited the houses in Cigoli, and behind our lines.

In regards to the road net; two two-way secondary roads led north out of Cigoli, one running north toward the river and the other parallel to the front at the base of the ridge comprising the east-west ridge line, thence south (this road was used for an MSR.). At a distance of about 900 yards north of Cigoli ran another two-way hard-surfaced road also parallel to our lines. A few hundred yards further north and running parallel to our lines ran a single-track railroad.

The frontage of the sector was about 3000 yards. The dispositions of the companies on line were two Companies on line, one in reserve, heavy machine



guns platoons attached to front line companies, 81mm mortars under Company control. Company "I" was the right company, Company "L" the left, Company "K" in reserve.

The previous battalion had covered their frontage by means of strong points (platoons) with contacting patrols and a light outpost to the front. Company weapons were attached to platoons so as to cover all approaches and gaps between strong points. Heavy machine guns were kept on the forward slopes of east-west ridge so as to be able to fire on any break-through.

The 81mm mortars were on the reverse slope of a small hill that comprised part of the hill forming the east-west ridge line. In this position the 81mm mortar could not fire to the river.

The strong points were situated on the ground so that the flanks were echeloned to the right and left. The reserves were kept in the center and near the base of the ridge for quick commitment in case of a break-through.

The front line itself was just forward of the railroad track. Up to this time this battalion (3rd Battalion, 363rd Infantry) had never had patrols to reach the river. The enemy patrolling had been very aggressive. The enemy patrols had succeeded on several occasions been able to infiltrate through the lines and capture individuals.

This was the situation, terrain, and dispositions of this sector when this battalion, 3rd Battalion 337th Infantry took over the sector.

As stated before the Battalion formally took over at 0430, 17 August 1944. At 0800, 17 August 1944 "L" Company reported that Lt. Seabrook and fourteen men from "L" Company and four from "K" Company were surrounded and captured in a house on "L" Company's right flank. An adjacent squad tried to assist them but was unable to. It was believed a force of approximately 30 men.

The 17th of August was utilized to the fullest by Staff, Company officers, and Non-coms in reconnaissance and better acquainting of everyone with the sector. The Battalion Commander, S-3, and Company Commanders, were of the opinion that the present positions were not very satisfactory. They felt the distance between units was too far, no means of communication between adjacent units, too far from the river line permitting the enemy to keep patrols housed between our lines and the river; fire power of the heavy machine guns could not be utilized except for a breakthrough; the same held true for the 81mm mortars.

In addition to the above the installations in Cigoli, Battalion Aid Station, Switchboard, and reserve Company, CP, were thought unwise as there were too many civilians living in the town and some of them unfriendly. As a result of these observations it was decided to: one, move platoons forward by bounds; two, provide telephone communications from right to left plus contacting patrols; three, move two platoons of reserve Company up in center of sector on line (so as to reduce interval between strongpoints); four, attach heavy machine gun platoons to Companies "I" and "L"; five, when lines move out sufficiently move one section of 81mm's out on flats for daylight firing; six, utilize positions of reserve Company as a town guard to keep soldiers out of town, and watch civilians for subversive actions; seven, move Battalion Aid Station out of town along with switchboard, and reserve Company CP.

With the above decisions made the afternoon of the 17th August was spent finding covered routes of approach, sending out small patrols to clear houses to half mile west of Cigoli at base of east-west ridge.

That night, 17-18 August 1944 ambush patrols were sent out. One patrol

from "L" Company under Lt. Sneary became engaged in a fire fight. Result: our losses, three men WIA, casualties inflicted on enemy unknown. Other two patrols moved out as security patrols returned NTR. Throughout the night, intermittent artillery fire searched area in front of our position; no casualties.

On 18 August 1944 security patrols were sent forward while Companies moved forward through previously reconnoitered routes of approach. Location of the front lines was now a few hundred yards to the front of the railroad. It was found that throughout the area the enemy had left booby traps in the vineyards and drainage ditches, plus shu mines along the trails. To counteract this the A & P was divided into eight man teams and attached to patrols to clean up the trails: when not with these patrols they were utilized to clean up mines around and behind front line positions.

As had previously been decided, the heavy machine gun platoons attached to Companies "I" and "L" patrols were sent again by all Companies as reconnaissance patrols to gather data for further movement of the lines. Again mines were found by A & P and duly neutralized.

At about 2000 intermittent artillery fire started falling throughout the area. This fire fell all night at the rate of about three rounds every fifteen minutes, no casualties resulted.

19 August 1944 found the Companies improving their positions. Patrols were again sent out at 0900 to make further reconnaissance to the front. The patrol from "L" Company under Lt. Ceccinelli ran into sniper fire from a house about 800 yards south of the Arno. As a result Lt. Ceccinelli was wounded and evacuated. The other patrols returned with nothing to report, except more shu mines along the trail leading to the river. The remainder of the day was quiet except for an occasional shell landing in this sector.

As mentioned several times before in this report, the Battalion had formed a 50 caliber platoon (Machine Gun). Up to this time this platoon had never had a mission. It was decided at this time to utilize their fire power on suspected enemy OPs across the river. The site chosen for the 50 caliber was on the extreme left of the Battalion sector on a small knoll overlooking our positions. All five guns were to be used. Work was immediately started on entrenched positions with strong overhead cover on the reverse slope of the knoll. While these positions were under construction the firing data were compiled.

The night of 19-20 August 1944 was quiet except for an occasional shell falling in the area.

On 20 August 1944 patrols were sent forward to clear house and to reconnoiter closer to the river. At about 1350 "L" Company became engaged in a fire fight that lasted all afternoon. In addition to small arms fire the enemy used a great deal of mortar fire. Casualties by "L" Company were two EM killed, four WIA; casualties inflicted on the enemy unknown.

Late in the afternoon the Regimental Commander, after a visit with the Battalion Commander, decided to move some TDs down to the railroad track to reduce the group of houses in front of "L" Company left flank. This is where the sniper and mortar fire came from, also that small three man patrols would be sent as far as the river to find out just what the enemy had along the river line. At about 1800 a small German patrol was seen approaching one of "K" Company's strong points. "K" Company opened fire and succeeded in killing one and capturing one German. Interrogation revealed him to be an aid man of the 6th Company 2nd Battalion Grenadiers. He stated that he was part of a ten man patrol and that they had crossed the river by means of a foot-bridge. The night was quiet except for an occasional round falling in the sector.



The morning of 21 August 1944 was quiet and nothing unusual occurred. The 50 caliber machine gun platoon fired, however, into the town of St. Cruseo with good result on suspected enemy OPs. During the afternoon the enemy shelled the forward and rear sectors of the mortar positions. This shelling continued until about 1900. Our mortars fitted with adapters could fire over the river and had been plastering the river line and houses on "L" Company's left flank all morning. Results of this enemy shelling was one man wounded through right arm.

During the night the enemy pulled an SP gun up to the river opposite Company "I" and shelled our sector for about four hours, firing at irregular intervals. Artillery fire was brought to bear against the gun but results were unknown. As a result of this shelling two men were killed and three men wounded in Company "I". Ambush patrols were sent out at night and passed an uneventful night.

22 August 1944 passed uneventfully save for a small enemy patrol that hit "L" Company on the left flank at 1015 but were driven off by mortar and small arms fire.

As was the 22nd, the 23rd was spent quietly, routine patrols were sent out to reconnoiter. Majority of platoons utilized day improving positions and generally cleaning up. Intermittent mortar did, however, fall in "L" Company's left sector. No casualties, however, were sustained.

The morning of 24 August 1944 was quiet. Our reconnaissance patrols returned without having encountered any resistance. During the afternoon and evening at 1300, 2115, 2245 and 2330 German patrols engaged the left platoon and LMG section of "L" Company in a fire fight. They were, however, made to withdraw. Casualties to our forces none, the enemy unknown. As a result of the 50-caliber accurate fire the enemy began dropping heavy concentrations about their positions in an endeavor to silence them. Due to good covered positions the enemy could not knock these weapons out. Again, as the night before, the enemy at dark pulled a SP gun up to the river bank and shelled our sector. Friendly artillery was brought to bear against this gun with negative results.

On 25 August 1944, patrols from "K" and "I" Companies succeeded in reaching the river (each day these patrols had been working a little closer to the river) as it was the Battalion Commander's intention to clean out mine trails, houses, locate enemy strong points and gradually move lines up to the river line. The "I" Company patrol reported a small foot-bridge of wood and rock across the river near the bend in the river in the center of our sector. It was now determined for certain that the enemy kept a small garrison in the houses near the river and used them as a reconnaissance and ambush patrol after dark. That night our entire front line positions were raked with mortar fire. No casualties were sustained.

Throughout the morning of the 26th, mortar and artillery fire fell intermittently over our area. This fire continued throughout the day. Throughout the day plans were completed for the raiding party of platoon strength and at 1630, under the cover of the artillery mentioned in this report on 25 August, proceeded toward the river. On nearing the house from whence sniper fire had wounded Lt. Cecinelli a few days previous, the raiding party encountered enemy housed in the building. In the resulting fire fight, while endeavoring to surround and cut off the enemy, the raiders suffered one KIA and five WIA and two shock cases. The enemy suffered six KIA, five WIA and one prisoner. Owing to darkness, the remainder of the enemy, some six or seven, escaped. Booby traps in

the ditches and vineyards and around the house caused the casualties. Therefore, owing to the darkness, the remaining party returned with their prisoner. Interrogation revealed that he was a member of a fifteen-man patrol sent across the river a few days before. He was a rifleman of the 7th Company. At 2150, a portion of the advance party of the relieving battalion arrived and made plans for the relief of our battalion.

On the nights of 27 and 28 August 1944, the night was quiet save for an occasional round of enemy artillery.

The 27th was spent orienting members of the relieving battalion and sending the bulk of the company stores of supplies back to the original assembly area in the vicinity of Strada.

At nightfall, after having left a screening force to cover the relief, companies moved by shutting (by platoon as relieved) back to Strada. The Battalion (less screening force) closed into this area at 0530.

At 2240, 28 August 1944, Battalion moved by motor to new bivouac 1 mile southeast of Certaldo, Coor: 614423 Map San Casciano in Val de Pesa, sheet 113 IV 1/50,000. Cleared into new area at 0045, 29 August 1944. Distance traveled 13 miles.

29 August 1944 was spent setting up a tactical camp and cleaning equipment. At 1400, however, Battalion attended a formation by order of the Division Commander. The Division Commander congratulated the Regiment on its past record and spoke of the future tasks ahead. He also cautioned the men about looting and stealing from Italian civilians in combat areas. During the course of this formation, the Commanding General of the Brazilian forces was introduced to the Regiment.

The 30th of August was devoted to rest and supervised athletics. Plans were laid for an active athletic competition by companies.

After spending the 31st of August in physical conditioning, weapons training, laying out firing ranges, Battalion stood an informal formation at 1600 during which time the Regimental Commander presented Bronze Stars to five officers and eleven enlisted men.

In conclusion, during this period of operations, Battalion had fought another ten (10) days of front line duty in a defensive position and gained considerable experience. For the first time Battalion was faced by an enemy whose patrols were both active and aggressive. This factor made all concerned more alert and all realized that the enemy should never be underestimated. Through the wide use of patrols, of a reconnaissance and ambush nature, small unit leaders learned terrain appreciation as well as the tricks of booby traps and mines (up to this time, the battalion had never encountered booby traps and mines to this wide extent). In addition to the above, new platoon leaders and replacements were given a thorough battle indoctrination even though in a defensive position along a fairly quiet sector of the line, thus making them battle seasoned for the time when we would take the offensive.

During this phase of operations Battalion suffered the following losses in personnel:

	OFF	EM
KIA:	0	5
WIA:	2	21
MIA:	1	19
Losses inflicted on the enemy:		
Killed	20	(Definite)
Wounded	5	(Definite)
Prisoners	3	(Definite)

## HEADQUARTERS THIRD BATTALION

APO 85, U.S. Army  
26 September 1944

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS  
1 September to 30 September 1944

*Period 1-16 September 1944.*

As covered in previous History of Operations, period 15 August 1944 to 31 August 1944, Battalion had moved to a bivouac area east of Certaldo, Italy.

1 September found Battalion engaged in a training period in which physical conditioning, firing of crew-served weapons, and identifying foreign weapons by "crack and thump" method along with platoon problems involving movement over rugged terrain were to be covered to the fullest. Therefore, until 10 September 1944, when a warning order was received, this training program was carried out. During this period athletics, in the form of boxing tournaments and volley ball tournaments, provided Battalion with much recreational periods after training hours. It might be mentioned that in the Regimental boxing tournament Battalion came out second with the 2nd Battalion taking first place.

The physical conditioning phase was accomplished through two battalion route marches and the small unit problems operating over rugged terrain.

However, due to severe rains from 2nd to 12th September 1944, the other phase of training previously enumerated was greatly curtailed. The crew-served weapons got in two days of firing and a greater part of Battalion had the benefit of the foreign weapons firing.

Due to the severe rainfall, Companies "M", "K", and "L" suffered a great loss in individual and organizational equipment from a flood that raged through those companies. Consequently, 8 and 9 September were used for inspections and care and cleaning of equipment.

On 9 September Battalion observed "Salerno Day" by standing an informal formation of the Regiment. The Division Commander during this formation awarded several DSC's, Silver Stars and cited "C" Company of this Regiment for the work on 12 May 1944 on Hill 66, vicinity of Minturno, Italy. Of these awards, five members of this Battalion, T/Sgt. Norwood, of Company "L" received the DSC; one officer, Capt. John A. Banister, Commanding Officer of Company "K", four enlisted men, S/Sgt. Braun of 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company, S/Sgt. Perock of Company "K", Sgt. Edwin Richardson of 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company received the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Following the presentation of awards, each Battalion Commander presented Bronze Stars to members of their command. Fourteen officers and men were presented this award by the Battalion Executive Officer in place of the Battalion Commander, who was away on rest in Rome.

As stated before, on 9 September Battalion received an oral warning order. This warning order placed Battalion on a six-hour alert.

10 September 1944 being Sunday was given as a day of rest. Companies, however, utilized part of the day preparing for a move.

On 11 September, Battalion took a short conditioning march of about 10 miles in the morning arriving back at about noon. At 0830, 11 September 1944, however, the S-1 and quartering party left to select an area, north of Florence.

Upon return from the march, the remainder of the day was spent in policing up the area and completing plans for forthcoming moves, which was to be on 12 September 1944.

At 1145, Battalion cleared the area and moved by motor, north, to an area in the vicinity of Vaglia, Italy (Coor: 833831) Sheet 106 I, Borgo S Lorenzo, 1/50,000, closing into the new area at 1650 after having traveled approximately 35 miles. After posting local security, and serving a hot meal, Battalion settled down for the night.

Thus, as shown in the preceding paragraph, Battalion utilized this time in the rest area to the fullest extent by necessary training needs and yet tried to give the men a rest from the rigors of combat.

*Period 13-21 September 1944.*

13 September 1944 found Battalion in a bivouac area in the vicinity of Vaglia, Italy, awaiting commitment.

At 1030, Battalion received an oral warning order to the effect that Battalion was on a one-hour alert. Companies immediately made plans for this. At 1350 the S-1 and quartering party left to pick an initial assembly area in the vicinity of Scarperia.

At 1400, an oral march order was received to the effect that the 3rd Battalion, as a part of the 337th Infantry, would move by marching to an area two miles south of Scarperia.

At 1700, leaving the bivouac area, Battalion arrived at 2005 after having marched seven and a half miles. (Coor: 88659050) Sheet 106 I, Borgo S Lorenzo 1/50,000. Local security was put out and Battalion settled down to await further developments.

As kitchens were still with Battalion, a hot meal was served after day-break on 14 September 1944 and Companies improved trenches during the morning.

At 1100, a meeting of Company Commanders was held and latest developments of our own forces were given by S-3 along with tentative plans for the Regiment. The plan at that time was that our Regiment would be in Division reserve, until Giogio and Futa passes were taken by the 338th and 339th Infantry respectively, then our Regiment would complete the break-through. Overlays were passed out and all Company Commanders were instructed to pass this information down to the individuals. As this Battalion was a part of the Division reserve, officers from each company of the Battalion were taken as far forward as the Regimental CP's of the 338th and the 339th Infantrys, so that at least one officer in all companies would know the routes of approach in case of commitment, as the two other Regiments had not used their reserve companies and battalions in the fight. Orders from higher headquarters stated that no anticipated move could be seen for the 337th Infantry so the Battalion spent an uneventful night.

After spending an uneventful morning, the Battalion was placed on a one-hour's alert at 1445. At 1545 the Battalion Commander attended a meeting in which he was given the route the Battalion would use.

The plan was that the 3rd Battalion would move by marching to an area immediately to the rear of the British near the town of Grezzano.

At 1830, the Battalion in the order of "K", "I", "L", Headquarter and "M" Company's moved to this assembly area, arriving at 2050 and proceeded to dig in and put out local security. Coor: of this assembly area 921939 Sheet 98 II, SE Ronta 1/25,000, one half mile south of Grezzano, Italy.

At 2200, the Battalion Commander went to Regiment to receive the attack order. He returned at 2330 with the attack order. The order was to the following effect: The 3rd Battalion, as leading Battalion, would pass through the British forces and attack Hill #920 at dawn.

At 0200, 16 September 1944 Company Commanders were given Battalion plan of attack: Battalion would leave present area at 0500 in column of Companies "K", "I", "L", "M", less two machine gun platoons that would be attached to "K" and "L" pass through Hearts Battalion of the 66th Brigade British, take and hold hill.

At 0300, 140 mules were brought up and loaded with weapons, ammunition, radios, and litters. After having a hot breakfast, the Battalion cleared the assembly area at 0600 and proceeded northeast to pass through and relieve the Scots Brigade.

Since the rear CP remained in the assembly area it maintained constant communication with the forward CP by wire and radio and at half hour intervals reported in its progress. Due to the extreme ruggedness of the terrain and mortar fire it was 1043 before the Battalion was in position to move through the Scots Brigade.

As the situation was obscure the Battalion remained in this position until Battalion Commander could confer with the Regimental Commander.

At 1106, "K" Company of the 339th Infantry located on Hill 950 was attached to this Battalion per oral order from higher headquarters. Further, that the 1st Battalion followed by the 2nd Battalion would move up to support the 3rd Battalion and that the artillery could fire on any target desired. Shortly after the termination of this conference the Battalion received an oral attack order to the effect that the Battalion would attack at 1300 and take and hold Mt. Pratone.

At 1300, with "K" Company on the right, Company "I" on the left and "L" Company in reserve, machine gun platoon attached to assaulting companies, the Battalion jumped off. To protect the flank assaulting companies echeloned their platoons to the right and left. At the same time the objective was smoked and shelled by our artillery.

Moving over Hill 950, Companies pushed forward rapidly. However, on approaching Hills 973 and 885 located on the right of the Battalion sector, artillery fire was immediately laid down. Company "K" moved up under cover of this fire, and at 1500 took 885. Company "I", however, remained pinned down from a cross fire of machine gun fire.

Getting nowhere by moving to the front, Company "I" at 1502 moved off to the left and around Hill 928 located on the left flank of sector.

On moving around this hill, "K" Company 339th Infantry were located in saddle between Hills 928 and 938. Pushing on toward objective Company "I" was pinned down again by machine gun fire coming from Hill 780 which was in center of sector behind Company "K". Artillery was asked for but was refused for reason stated.

The situation remained the same until about 1725. At this time reserve company, Company "L" was committed and the 1st Battalion was displacing forward to be committed on Regimental right flank. Company "L", as per order, moved around the right flank halting after dark to reorganize and push forward in the morning.

The remainder of the night was utilized in evacuating wounded, bringing

rations forward, and contacting adjacent units. Casualties sustained by all Companies were moderate; the majority being caused by small arms and mortar fire.

The morning of 17 September 1944 found Companies "I" and "K" in the same positions with Company "L" moving around the right flank of Company "K".

At 0830, however, all contact was lost with "L" Company until about 1300.

At 0950, Company "K" began moving forward meeting no resistance. At the same time it was learned that the 1st Battalion was moved 1000 yards to the right rear and rapidly pushing forward.

"K" Company continued to move forward until about 1140 at which time they were pinned down over on the left flank.

Company "I" at this time started moving. Shortly after 1230 additional artillery support in the form of a Regiment of British Artillery was allotted to Regiment.

Up to this time 328th FA and other artillery units in general support had almost continuously harassed the enemy in the draws and hills between our lines and the objective.

At around 1240 a patrol was sent from "K" Company in an effort to obtain contact with "L" Company.

Continuing to move steadily forward Company "I", moving around left of Hill 928, was still moving at 0100. Company "K" at this time was holding up on east slope of Hill 885 near the crest. It was determined by observation that "L" Company, moving around the right, was about 400 yards north and about 900 yards east of "K" Company along southwest slopes of Hill 945, a steep mountain on the extreme right flank of the sector about 1200 yards southeast of Mt. Pratone. About a half hour later it was found that Company "A" of the 1st Battalion was in rear of Company "L".

All Companies continued to push forward steadily for the remainder of the afternoon.

At 1455, Regiment handed down instructions that this Battalion would organize ground on objective and 1st Battalion followed by 2nd Battalion would pass through and take next objective. At 1600, enemy on Hills 928 and 938 began surrendering and at 1630 the hills were taken by our forces.

Immediately upon the fall of these hills, Company "I" started moving toward Mt. Pratone and finding "G" Company of the 339th Infantry moving on Company "I" left flank, started for Hill 1036, a hill to the left of 1081.

The situation now was Hills 938 and 928 taken; however, a pocket of resistance was found on Hill 950.

At 1700, an order to flank Hill 1081, the Regimental Commander gave "L" Company the mission of taking Hill 1036, a hill on the right flank of 1081, followed by "A" Company; however, the order was quickly rescinded and "A" Company was to take the hill followed by "L" Company.

Company "I", which was moving all afternoon around the left, succeeded in taking the objective (Mt. Pratone) and immediately dug in to repel counterattacks.

Company "K", after clearing off resistance on Hill 973 at 2125, made contact with "I" Company.

The remainder of the night was spent in evacuating wounded and sending rations forward by mule train.

The 2nd Battalion initially moved forward and at 0714, 18 September 1944, contacted the 3rd Battalion with the 1st on the 3rd's right.



At 0913 the Regimental Commander gave an attack order to the effect that 1st Battalion, then located on Hill 945, would take Hills 1018, 1019 and 1037 followed by the 2nd Battalion. "H" hour 1000, 3rd Battalion would remain on Mt. Pratone, Italy.

The Battalion remained on Mt. Pratone resting, re-equipping, and reorganizing.

It was at this time that the 2nd Battalion had taken Mt. Acuto, a Regimental objective to our right about 2000 yards east of Mt. Pratone with the 1st Battalion moving up behind (mission of the Battalion having been changed after 1037 was taken).

On the basis of the above information, and information from higher Headquarters, the Regimental Commander gave Battalion the mission of taking Masheta (about 800 yards north Mt. Tonie at northeast line of Mt. Acuto) and sending contact patrol to 339th Infantry.

Rapidly pushing down Mt. Tonie, Battalion took Masheta and made contact with 339th at 668 both by 1230. Immediately following, the Battalion was ordered to take Hill 889 and Hill 849 (889 a hill overlooking Masheta to the west at about 800 yards distance. 849 was located at some 2500 yards northwest up a deep draw running just north of Mascheta to the northwest).

Moving off in a column of companies, in order "K", "L", and "I", with machine guns attached to "K" and "L" Companies, Battalion began attacking at 1330.

Moving in the above stated formation, the Battalion quickly overcame the resistance on Hill 889 (a small group of riflemen and automatic weapons). Leaving "K" Company on Hill 889 which dominated the terrain to the front, the remainder of the Battalion moved in about 1530. Encountering no resistance, the Battalion followed a small patrol from "L" Company, rapidly moving along the north slopes of Hill 889 and thence on to the next objective.

At 1930, the Battalion, less "K" Company, halted for the night on Hill 849 with the 2nd Battalion about 1000 yards northeast and rear of the 3rd; the 1st Battalion some distance in rear of the 2nd. The remainder of the night was spent trying to get the supply train forward. However, due to treacherous trails from Mt. Pratone and the darkness of the night, rations never got forward.

At 0230, 20 September 1944, Battalion received oral attack order to the effect that the Battalion at 0900, 20 September 1944, would take Mt. Montole (located about 2000 yards north of 849) and then assist the 2nd Battalion to take Hill 587. Moving off at 0700, Battalion, due to the sheer cliff and east-west draw between 849 and Mt. Montole, had to move south into the draw running northeast from Mascheta and then skirted east around the base of 849, then north to the objective.

After contacting the 2nd Battalion and picking up "K" Company at the south base of 849, Battalion at 0945 in a column of companies ("L", "I", "K", "M") pushed north.

At 1040, due to lack of observation, our own artillery fell on Battalion. This was quickly corrected, however, through prompt communication and liaison. After meeting no resistance Battalion took Mt. Montole at 1130.

This objective overlooked the east-west highway running out of Firenzola. At 1400 a column of troops moving south was observed. Identification revealed them to be a force of over 100 Germans. Immediately Battalion Commander contacted the CO of the 2nd Battalion and arranged a trap. This plan included one company from 2nd Battalion, one platoon from Company "I",

Battalion heavy weapons and 50-caliber machine gun platoon plus supporting artillery fire being brought down on this force.

Due to one artillery piece (friendly) that constantly threw short rounds into our positions, it was deemed necessary to stop the shelling after killing and wounding about 20 and capturing about 20.

The remainder of the day was quiet. At about 1530 the 1st Battalion moved up on the 3rd's right. Early in the afternoon word was received that the Regiment would be relieved that night by elements of the 350th Infantry 88th Division. This Battalion, however, would remain in position until relieving Battalion had passed through and was out of range of any fire we might assist them by.

Early in the evening the mule train arrived and all men were fed. The relieving Battalion arrived about 2200—halted and spent the night at the base of Mt. Montole and at daylight passed through Battalion.

At 1100, 21 September 1944, Battalion (less 1 platoon "L" Company) moved out after having received orders to move south to Mascheta. Arriving at Mascheta at about 1530 it moved by marching to a bivouac area about 4 miles northwest of Mascheta closing in at 1730. This bivouac area was in the vicinity of Muliniaccia, Coor: 908035 Sheet 98 II NE Firenzola 1/25000.

At 2400 the platoon from Company "L" left on a patrol and reached the area after having captured 1 officer and 7 enlisted men in the vicinity of Mt. Montale.

This concluded the period 17 September to 21 September 1944. During this period this Battalion had constantly been one of attacking Battalions.

During this period Battalion had captured Mt. Pratone which had been described as the key to the Futa Pass and Giogo Pass.

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS II

Throughout, all members of the unit, by untiring efforts over the roughest of terrain under heavy artillery fire, had kept the enemy falling back. Through these quick aggressive moves, the enemy had no time in which to get set once he had been beaten off Mt. Pratone.

Especially outstanding throughout this period were the efforts of the medics, supply personnel, and communication personnel.

Wounded men were promptly evacuated despite tortuous, treacherous mountains under constant shellfire through the efforts of the surgeon in keeping forward aid stations well forward and through the efforts of the litter bearers.

Due to the fact that everyone had received but little practical work in the handling of pack trains and the mule leaders were unable to speak English, the members of the Battalion supply kept rations, water, and ammunition to the troops.

Communications throughout this period were the best ever afforded the Battalion. Both radio and telephone communications were maintained throughout despite the fact that lines were constantly being knocked out by shellfire.

Through practical experiences many tactical lessons were driven home. Some of these were: (1) Extensive use of small patrols to secure keypoints before main force moving in (at times units could not utilize formation requiring wide frontages); (2) Night attack to cut down casualties; (3) Constant all-around security at all times; (4) Allowing platoon leaders to adjust artillery fire.



Battalion had through this period inflicted on the enemy heavy casualties in addition to having aided naturally in the break-through of the Gothic Line.

*Period 22-30 September 1944.*

Battalion on 22 September 1944 was in a bivouac area in the vicinity of Muliniaccia, Italy, having closed in on this area on 21 September 1944. Although just a few thousand yards behind the lines well in the zone of artillery fire, Battalion more or less rested and utilized the 22nd and 23rd for re-equipping and re-organizing.

PX rations and mail were also brought up during this period and met with wide approval.

Although Battalion had been alerted on the 22nd for a move in the vicinity of Firenzuola it was not until 24 September 1944 at 0900 that a movement order was received to the effect that Battalion would move by marching to an area north of Firenzuola at 1030.

Moving cross-country north from Muliniaccia to Firenzuola, Battalion was subjected to an intense observed artillery shelling that resulted in the death of 2 men and 9 wounded. Continuing to march, Battalion arrived at an assembly area about one mile in rear of the front line, about 6 miles north-east of Firenzuola.

Remaining in this position from 24 September 1944 to 1630 25 September 1944, Battalion rested having put out local security.

At 1630 Battalion moved by marching to an area 11 miles southwest of Montefrone where it relieved the 2nd Battalion 349 Infantry.

The relief was completed by 2400 with Company "K" on the left, Company "L" in the center, "I" on the right, one platoon HMG to each "I" and "K" Companies) and mortars under Company control.

At dawn 26 September 1944, it was found that there existed a gap between "K" and "I". Consequently one platoon from "I" Company was moved over to fill this gap. Remainder of the day was spent assisting the 2nd Battalion 349 Infantry with fire to take the objective Hills 811 and 822 (located about 1000 yards to the southeast and on the right of the sector). Result of this supporting fire aided mortar rally in this unit (2nd Battalion 349th Infantry) by not only taking the objective but also in taking or capturing of over 50 prisoners.

After having spent an uneventful night Battalion received an oral order stating that Battalion would remain in position throughout the day and night (27 September 1944). As it was raining constantly, companies improved their positions and stood fast.

At 1600 another oral order was received to the effect that Regiment would not move on the 28th of September 1944, but would remain in present position. However, another order was received to the effect that Battalion would be relieved in the morning by elements of the 88th Division.

With this information Battalion laid plans for executing relief. The night was quiet save for an occasional shell—one of which killed one man and wounded two others in "K" Company.

At 0230, 28 September, orders were received that Battalion would be relieved by 1st Battalion 349th Infantry at 0800, 28 September 1944, further a patrol of platoon strength would at dawn move to Il Poggio (a north-south ridge perpendicular to the position and at a distance of 1800 yards north) followed by remainder of Battalion in a column of Companies as they were relieved.

Upon receipt of this order, Company Commanders were summoned and oriented on the contemplated plan.

At 0800, 28 September 1944, relief began. The patrol mentioned above had been taken from Company "I" and had upon reaching Il Poggio found no resistance. At 0930, Company "I", having been relieved, followed route taken by patrol. At 0930 "K" Company followed the same route in turn followed by "L" Company at 1000. The relief itself was formally completed at 1130 at which time Battalion Commander moved forward to join the Companies.

Upon reaching Il Poggio, having sent a patrol of one squad from "K" Company forward to investigate town of Guignola, Battalion Commander contacted the Regimental Commander on possibility of moving forward to occupy the town. Having received this permission, remainder of Battalion followed this patrol with plenty of all-around security and moved into Guignola with "K" Company. This left "I" Company on the right and "L" Company on the left in position on forward nose of Il Poggio. Battalion reached Guignola at 1700, Coord: 96417898 I SE Passo Della Radicosa 1/25000.

With one platoon of heavy machine guns attached to "K" Company, Battalion quickly prepared the town for counterattack. At this time Battalion was well forward of any other elements of the 337th Infantry as well as the 350th Infantry on the right, having moved forward aggressively under cover of a heavy fog and rain.

The morning of 29 September 1944 was utilized in bettering positions and tying in weapons of Companies. Enemy activity in the form of several enemy seen digging in on high ground to the northeast of the town was observed. Artillery fire was quickly brought to bear against them, however, only a portion of them could be reached as our artillery was at this time out of range. An enemy patrol seen entering the town from the north was allowed to come within small arms range before fire was opened up. Result of our fire was 2 killed, 2 wounded out of a six-man patrol. No other patrols ventured near our positions for the remainder of the day.

U.S. Army  
22 Nov. 44

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944

*Period 1-31 October 1944.*

At the opening of this report this Battalion was located in Guignola, Italy, in a defensive position, having halted here to await units on either flank to come up abreast. Guignola was located on the north-south road between Highway 65 and Castel S. Pietro. The terrain to the north was that of high sloping barren mountains, held by the enemy, offering him excellent OP's and covered routes of withdrawal.

As previously stated, Battalion had been in this position for two days. On the night of 30 September 1944, an oral attack order was received to the effect that the 337th Infantry would attack at 0600, 1 October 1944. Direction of attack—north; 3rd Battalion on right, 2nd Battalion on left. 1st Battalion in reserve; Objective: Casoni Di Romagna (Objective 7) and Casa Del Monte (objective B; Battalion to go into reserve after taking

objective B. Attachments to this Regiment: Company "B" 752 Tank Battalion, one Company of TD's, one George B, combat aviation, and the 328th Field Artillery in support. The 403rd Field Artillery and the 329th Field Artillery in general support.

Immediately upon receipt of this attack order, Company Commanders were called to Battalion CP and Battalion Attack Order was issued. Battalion Commander planned to use two companies on line with heavy machine gun platoons attached to these companies. Company "K" was to be left attacking company and Company "I" the right attacking company. Company "L" in reserve. 81mm mortars initially to remain in present position (Guignola). Company "L" was already in an advance position on Gavina (603). Company "K" was to by-pass them on the right at which time "L" would follow in reserve.

As the objectives given Battalion were several hundred yards north of Guignola and there existed a series of ridges crossing the direction of attack, intermediate objectives were given. These were designated as follows: Objective "Y" (550) at C. Di Guzzo and objective "X" at 774.

At 0600, 10 October 1944, the companies crossed the line of departure. Company "K" pushed forward toward the objective "X" for about 600 yards. Upon reaching this point, the Company was pinned down by automatic weapons and despite all efforts to maneuver, remained pinned down for the remainder of the day. The first and second platoons suffered heavy casualties 400 yards to the southwest of objective "Y" in the draw.

The Company remained pinned down at base of Hill 550 throughout the day. During the entire night of the 1st and 2nd October 1944, the Company endeavored to take the hill but due to intense machine gun fire firing final protective line, were unable to occupy Hill 550.

Company "I" on their right pushing out rapidly at 0600, continued forward until 0945 when they became pinned down by mortar and machine gun fire coming from Hill 550. Despite all efforts to maneuver to the flanks, this Company also remained pinned down for the remainder of the day. The first platoon of Company "I" did, however, occupy Hill 504 on the northeast slope of which the Company was halted.

At dark, Battalion Commander ordered Company "L" to move around Company "K's" left flank and using a northeast and southwest ridge running to Casoni di Romagna, Company "K" was to withdraw and follow behind Company "L".

Proceeding as ordered at dark, Company "L" and two platoons of Company "K" moved as ordered in a column of platoons with strong security to the front, flanks and rear, cautiously pushing forward. The remainder of Company "K" failed to make liaison due to faulty communication and did not join their Company until the evening of the following day.

This move took the enemy by surprise and resulted in the capture of twenty-eight enemy, six machine guns and two tanks in addition to the taking of Casoni di Romagna. The objective was taken at 0430 on the 2nd of October 1944 and immediately both companies ("L" on the left and "K" on the right) dug in and prepared to repulse counter-attacks at dawn.

Company "I" as stated before had remained pinned down at the base of Hill 550 throughout the day. During the entire night of the 1-2 October 1944, the Company endeavored to take the hill but due to intense machine gun and mortar fire, firing a final protective line, were unable to occupy Hill 550.

At 0845, 2 October 1944, the first enemy counterattacks in strength (about

80 men) hit the two companies located on Casoni di Romagna. Through the use of supporting artillery and company weapons, this attack was soon broken up and both companies further improved their positions.

At about 1245, two companies of the 2nd Battalion, moving on the left, made contact with Company "L." Shortly after this, the enemy made another counter-attack using light tanks to support him. This attack was beaten off through the combined fire of artillery and all automatic weapons and rifles of the companies on the objective. Throughout the afternoon, under the cover of fog, the enemy kept units on Casoni di Romagna under almost constant fire from artillery, mortar and small arms.

On Battalion's right flank, Company "I", who had withdrawn to Hill 504, remained pinned down and unable to move forward. Company "I" sent patrols to locate and eliminate enemy machine guns on Hill 550. The attempt was unsuccessful. At this time, the 1st Battalion was committed to relieve Company "I" since the pressure was great on them. About 0900, 2 October 1944, Company "C" succeeded in taking Hill 550 by moving on it from the left of Company "I". That afternoon, Company "I" moved forward coming abreast of Company "C" and relieved same at nightfall.

Throughout the night of 2-3 October 1944, the units on Casoni di Romagna were again counter-attacked. Again the enemy was repelled and forced to abandon his hopes of getting this key piece of terrain.

Dawn of 3 October 1944 found Company "I" on top of Hill 550 with a patrol being sent to the north to an intermediate ridge (364). At the same time, the 3rd platoon of Company "K" was sent toward objective B (Casa del Monte 588) to clear houses on the west slopes. Company "I" was ordered to move forward to occupy the ridge and east slope of objective B. The "I" Company patrol, finding nothing at 564, moved northwest and down the southeast slope of the objective and the remainder of the Company occupied objective B, capturing several of the enemy. Companies "L" and "K" remained and consolidated positions on the Casoni di Romagna.

4 October 1944 was used to consolidate the positions and patrols were sent to the north to clear houses in draws north and northwest of objective B. The entire day was quiet and very peaceful.

Orders were received to remain in the present position until further orders while the 1st and 2nd Battalions took objectives B, C and D. Fifth and 6th October 1944 were spent equipping men with winter clothing and shoes.

On the evening of 6 October 1944, a tentative attack plan was received to the effect that Battalion would jump off at 0600, 7 October 1944 and move to the north taking the first ridge from Bellaia, Italy, to Hill 388. Formation: Column of companies in order of "L", "K" and "I" Companies; heavy machine gun platoons attached to Company "L" and Company "K". This was on the night of 6-7 October 1944. However, the hour was changed several times during the course of the evening and it was finally decided that the 3rd Battalion would attack on Regimental order. A platoon of Company "I" and a section of 50-caliber machine guns established a roadblock northeast of Villa di Sassonero against a possible counter-attack from that direction on the exposed flank.

At 1300, 7 October 1944, Company "L" moved forward and after meeting stiff opposition in the form of artillery coming from the right flank, took Hill 386 (a ridge north of Bellaia, at 1740). They immediately dug-in to repel any counter-attack that might come. At 2245, a counter-attack took place but was quickly beaten off.

Through 7 and 8 October 1944, Company "I" occupied position in and east of Villa di Sassonero, Company "K" on Casa del Monte and west of Villa di Sassonero and Company "L" Poggere Ridge.

At 1735, 8 October 1944, an attack order was received to the effect that Battalion would attack at 0600, 9 October 1944, take high ground in the sector, assist 1st Battalion in taking objective 9 (Montroenzo) and protect Regimental right flank. At about 1830, 8 October 1944, a strong counter-attack (80-100 men) struck at the center of Company "L's" line, driving a salient completely through at that point. All counter-measures by Company "L" were unsuccessful in wiping this out.

At 0600, 9 October 1944, Company "K" moved forward to be committed on Company "L's" left flank and to wipe out the enemy pocket that still remained in "L" Company's center. Company "I" remained in position. Company "K" met considerable mortar and small arms fire when they approached "L" Company's left flank and went on to assist this company in cleaning up the remaining opposition on Hill 386. Nightfall brought things to a standstill.

Early the next morning, 10 October 1944, Company "K" moved on to the north and took Hill 496. After getting into position, "K" Company received a counter-attack which was beaten off after a short but hot fire fight. At this time, the enemy, who had a number of SPs on Battalion's right flank in the 88th Division sector, began to place one intense concentration after another on Hills 496 and 386. These weapons were so well emplaced that our supporting artillery had little effect on them as they could move up and down a highway in this sector whenever counter-battery fire was brought against them. It was during one of these shellings that Captain Savacool (Company Commander of Company "L"), Captain Pierson (Company Commander of Company "M"), and Lt. Carlson (Platoon Leader of Company "K"), Lt. Ossellame (Platoon Leader of Company "M") were killed. Six other officers were wounded.

The next morning, 11 October 1944, Company "I" after having remained in reserve near Bellaia until this time, was committed with the mission of taking a small group of buildings called Zello (located about 1200 yards northeast of Hill 496). Moving forward by sending small patrols out to take key terrain features, Company "I" reached Zello and so surprising was their appearance that fifty-two of the enemy were taken before they could withdraw or offer more than a small show of resistance. The Company, upon taking this objective, immediately prepared it for counter-attack. These prisoners were re-enforcements who were ignorant of the situation. Their being thrown in indicated that the enemy intended to hold us south of Monterenzio and adjacent commanding ground.

The next morning, 12 October 1944, a platoon from Company "I" was sent north to Hill 418, a ridge running east from Objective 9 (Monterenzio). The patrol found the hill unoccupied and the Company followed and continued on another objective, Hill 356, five hundred yards to the north, where the ground was organized for defense to protect the Regimental right flank, since there was a twelve hundred yard gap in depth.

In the meantime, it was decided to have the remainder of Battalion take the high ground northeast of Objective 9. Company "K" moved from 496 and Company "L" from Poggere Ridge to join at Scaruglia. Company "L" reached this point first and proceeded on in a column of platoons followed by Company "K" in a similar formation toward Objective Poggioli.

After a brief fire fight, thirty prisoners were taken and the objective was in our hands at 0135, 13 October 1944. Immediately upon securing the objective

an all around defense was set up with Company "L" on the right and Company "K" on the left.

At 0700, 13 October 1944, the enemy attacked in a counter-attack of about company strength (50 to 60 men) but were driven off by small-arms fire and artillery. Again in the early afternoon another counter-attack of about re-enforced platoon strength (30 men) was repulsed by artillery.

Shortly after this counter-attack, word was received to the effect that Battalion less Company "I" would be relieved that night by the 1st Battalion 339th Infantry. With this in mind, two patrols were sent to two points, Hill 556 and Hill 537 (two points located on the east-west ridge about 1000 yards in front of the objective) as an outpost.

On the night of 13-14 October 1944, Battalion less Company "I" was relieved as planned by the 1st Battalion 339th Infantry and moved by company to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Borgo di Bisano some four miles southwest of Monterenzio. Headquarters Company 3rd Battalion closed into this area at 1300 on 13 October 1944. Companies "K" and "M" closed in around 0600, 14 October 1944, immediately proceeding to set up camp.

At 1900, 14 October 1944, Company "I" was relieved and returned to this area at 2400.

Battalion remained in this rest area until 23 October 1944. While in this rest area, men received change of clothing, showers and passes to Florence.

As the area was well forward, it nightly received a few shells of large caliber. The first of these caused four deaths and six wounded but by shifting around in the area few other casualties were sustained.

On 22 October 1944 Battalion moved by marching to an assembly area just south of Mt. Cuccoli closing in at 1900, 23 October 1944. Company "L" was sent to Mt. Cuccoli to set up an outpost from Mt. Cuccoli west to the 339th Infantry. At this time the plan was received that Battalion would, when Objective 12 (99.7-34.8) was taken by 2nd Battalion and Objective 13 (00.5-35.9) by 1st Battalion, move onto Objective 13 with the 1st Battalion and send patrols to the Green Line (a line about three thousand yards forward of Objective 13). On the morning of 24 October 1944, Company "K" occupied positions east and Company "L" along Cuccoli Ridge to Furneto.

The next morning, 25 October 1944, Company "K" was attached to 1st Battalion to assist in the taking of Objective 13 and immediately left to comply with the order.

At 0950, 25 October 1944, an order was received to the effect that units would not move from present positions but would assume the defensive. Upon receipt of this order, Company "I" was moved up along the right of Company "L" and there set up a defensive line extending from Furnato to a point about three hundred yards of Cuccoli. Company "L" improved their positions extending from Company "I" west to the 339th Infantry on the left. Mortars were put into position three hundred yards in rear of Company "L" position. The position now occupied by Company "I" was previously occupied by Company "K."

As the line now held by Battalion was to the left rear of the 2nd Battalion by about twelve hundred yards, ambush patrols of re-enforced squad strength were put out forward of Company "I" and Company "L" at the noses of north-south ridges that ran north from Battalion's main line of resistance at points number 386 and Il Sopra. The next day was devoted to the digging on better positions, setting up defensive fires and registering them in, making reconnaissances for placing a protective barbed wire and installing a communication sys-



tem to include platoons. However, at 1600, 26 October 1944, due to the intense artillery concentrations and strong counter-attacks on 1st Battalion, it was deemed necessary to use another company of this Battalion to aid the 1st Battalion to hold their high ground. Company "I" and all the heavy weapons company save one section of 81mm mortars were immediately dispatched to the aid of the 1st Battalion. Company "K", 339th Infantry, immediately moved into the positions vacated by our Company "I". Upon reaching the sector of the 1st Battalion, Company "I" was committed to the right flank of the 1st Battalion and took up a sector between Company "C" on the left and the 351st Infantry on the right.

The next day, 27 October 1944, after having put through a night of intense artillery shelling, Battalion received orders that Company "I" would return at nightfall to original position near Cuccoli. After covering the withdrawal of the 1st Battalion, Company "K" was to withdraw some thousand yards to the south and take up a defensive position running to Rovine on the east to the 2nd Battalion at (99.0-33.7).

At dark this withdrawal started and at 2100 Company "I" and two sections of 81mm mortars started back to Cuccoli leaving Company "K" attached to the 2nd Battalion. Upon reaching Cuccoli, Company "I" went into an assembly area just in the rear of Cuccoli and the next day under the cover of fog relieved Company "K," 339th Infantry.

From this day, 28 October 1944, to and including 31 October 1944, companies remained in these positions constantly improving them with barbed wire, trip flares and mines in the approaches to their positions. Throughout this period the enemy subjected the sector to constant artillery and mortar fire.

During the period covered by this report, Battalion captured the following number of prisoners: Two hundred twenty four (224).

Casualties sustained to this Battalion for this period were as follows:

	Officers	Enlisted Men
KIA:	6	54
WIA:	8	174
IIA:	3	10
MIA:	0	137
TOTALS:	17	375

APO 85, U.S. Army,  
19 June 1944

#### HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944

This report will be divided into two phases, namely:

- I. Defensive phase in the vicinity of Farneto, Italy, 1 November 1944 to 9 November 1944.
- II. Training and rest period near Gagliano di Mugello, Italy, 10 November 1944 to 30 November 1944.

At the opening of this report Battalion was located in the vicinity of Farneto, Italy, as covered in "Report of Operations" period 10-31 October 1944—a defensive position. As covered in the above report, the disposition of the companies were as follows: Company "L", with three platoons on line, held a line running east from the 339th Infantry along forward slope of east-west ridge to within 200 yards of Mt. Cuccoli where it tied in with Company

"I", 337th Infantry; Company "I", with three platoons on line, held a line along the forward slopes of Mt. Cuccoli east to Farneto where it tied in with the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry.

Company "K" was at this time attached to the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry, holding a line from Ravine where it tied in with the 351st Infantry east to a point 500 yards northwest of Ravine where it tied in with the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry (1st Battalion having been moved back to Regimental reserve near Monterenzio). The heavy weapons company was deposed as follows: one section HMG's to "I" and "L" Companies, one platoon attached to "K" Company; 81mm mortars under Company Control behind Mt. Cuccoli.

As the line held by Battalion was to the left rear of the 2nd Battalion by about 1200 yards, ambush patrols of reinforced squad strength were put out forward of Company "I" and "L" at the noses of north-south ridges that then ran from Battalion MLR at points number 386 and II Sopra.

The day of 1 November passed without incident save for the constant harassing fire from one or two 75mm SPs and mortar throwing about four or five rounds at houses in the Battalion sector. Due to the heavy fog, counter-battery could only be fired by sound and direction. Towards evening, as had been true for about a week, shelling would increase at nightfall and would continue at irregular intervals throughout the night.

As the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th November 1944, the enemy continued to harass all day taking advantage of the poor visibility due to the fog and incessive rain. That night wire obstacles were being improved in the draws forward of Company "I" and "L". Routine patrol at dark moved out to 386 and II Sopra and again the enemy kept up his harassing all night.

On 5 November 1944 Battalion received a special patrol mission calling for a patrol of squad strength to move out at nightfall to Casa del Broglio, some 1600 yards north of our positions where higher headquarters had information to the effect that the enemy had a strongpoint and OP.

Moving out of our lines at 1915 the patrol taken from Company "I" moved down the nose of 386 and then northwest to their objective. Moving in behind the objective, the squad listened for about half an hour at a range of about 20 yards from the house. Hearing nothing they returned with the information that the buildings were unoccupied.

Battalion, however, had spent the day much the same as the previous days with the enemy continuing to harass the positions. Still wishing more information concerning Casa del Broglio, higher headquarters once again gave Battalion the same patrol mission on 6 November 1944. This time the mission was given to Company "L".

Moving out at 1915, this twelve-man patrol, moving by the same route, moved down 386. Unlike the previous patrol, they moved directly toward the objective. Upon nearing it they stopped for a few minutes to listen. After remaining perfectly still for about twenty minutes they heard someone cough. As if it were a signal about twenty enemy started moving around and whispering. Remaining perfectly still the patrol leaders detected two machine guns sighted along the trail he was on. Having fulfilled its mission, the patrol steadily withdrew and moved back into our lines.

Reaching our lines at about 2130, the patrol leader gave his report and immediately arrangements were made to fire a TOT on Casa del Broglio. Three TOT's were fired on this target at 0105, 0200 and 0315, 7 November 1944 with excellent results.



The day of 7 November 1944 passed without incident other than the harassing fire. At 1900, however, part of the advance detachment of the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry, arrived and plans were prepared for the relief of be effected on the night of 8-9 November 1944. It was planned that the 1st Sergeants and ten men per company would at 0700, 8 November 1944, accompany the S-1 back to the rest area in the vicinity of Monterenzio and prepare area for occupation. Company Commanders were also informed that advance party of the relieving battalion would arrive early on the 8th and were to be oriented.

On the morning of the 8th, plans made previous night were followed. After a brief discussion it was planned that Companies would leave their crew-served weapons, less sights, on position for the relieving unit. Purpose being that due to mud, roads were almost unpassable and entire Regiment would shortly be relieved. After having moved such equipment as could be moved during daylight hours, Companies were relieved by 2100, and started towards the rest area. Battalion closed into this area at 0210, 9 November 1944, having marched some five miles over rough and difficult terrain. Coord: 947282, Map. Montrenzio 1/50,000.

Remaining in this area throughout the day and night of 9 November 1944, Battalion utilized the time in resting. Cleaning up and absorbing some 96 replacements. After having spent a quiet night, Battalion, on 10 November 1944, spent the morning preparing for the forthcoming move that night to the Division Rest Area.

At approximately 1500 a concentration of large caliber artillery fell on the area. So accurate was the fire that it could have been only observed fire. This fact was further strengthened by the fact that the ground to the east was held by enemy on dominating terrain. Consequently, Battalion, moving out in small groups, cleared the area, and as soon as artillery stopped, moved to the truck point some four miles to the southwest.

At 2130 Battalion moving by vehicle and cleared the vehicle point enroute to Division Rest Area at Gagliano di Mugello arriving at 0210, 11 November 1944. The Coord: 82459720 Borbernio di Mugello 98 11 SW 1/25,000 Vicinity of Gagliano di Mugello.

Casualties sustained by Battalion for period 1-10 November 1944 were:

	KIA	HA	WIA	MIA
Officers:	0	0	0	0
Enlisted Men:	0	0	4	5

## PHASE II

12 November 1944 was utilized in setting up a formal camp. Plans previously set down by higher headquarters called for showdown inspection and re-equipping of troops. This was to be followed by a training period so as to absorb replacements and train new small unit leaders; at the same time passes were given to members of the command. This training program was to be followed by a four-day rest in Montecatini (a rest area 25 miles northeast of Florence) where troops do two hours a day drill and then be free to spend their leisure time at such recreational facilities as movies, dances, service clubs and canteens.

Following the rest at Montecatini the Regiment would return to the Division Rest Area in vicinity of Gagliano di Mugello and go into an intensive training program to bring all members to the highest degree of physical fitness.

Following the plan outlined, Battalion on 13 November 1944 started the showdown inspections. All individual, organizational, and TE property was checked and requisitions for shortages and battle losses were submitted to Regimental S-4.

These showdown inspections were completed on 15 November 1944. On 15 November 1944 all companies received a sufficient amount of hospital tents and stoves to house the troops. These tents were at once pitched and straw, provided by the Regiment, was used to make beds so as to keep the men off the ground as much as possible.

Having completed the first phase of the required work set down by higher headquarters, training formally started on 16 November 1944. This training was carried out to and including 22 November 1944.

To bring replacements up to the necessary proficiency, all replacements were given one hour training per day in addition to the six-hour schedule followed by the remainder of the company.

While in this area troops were all given showers and clothing exchange; also provided were such recreational facilities as movies and passes to Florence.

On the afternoon of 23 November 1944 Battalion, moving in two groups, cleared the Division Rest Area enroute to Pistoia, Italy, for planned four-day rest. As previously mentioned, the rest area was to be Montecatini; however, higher Headquarters changed the area to Pistoia, Italy. After traveling 51 miles, Battalion closed into the area at 1900 and proceeded to set up camp (Coord: 53028815 Map Italy, 1/25,000). The troops were housed in two-storied brick Italian military barracks. Immediately upon closing in, cots were issued to every individual along with sufficient stoves and fuel.

Battalion remained in this area until 30 November 1944. After the required two hours of training, a half hour of calisthenics, dismounted drill and one hour orientation lecture, troops were free to take advantage of facilities provided.

At 0700, 30 November 1944, Battalion, moving in to groups by vehicle, returned to the Division training area in vicinity of Gagliano di Mugello, closing in at 1000, 30 November 1944. Camp was immediately pitched and preparations were made to follow training program to bring troops to highest degree of proficiency before going to line again.

APO 85, U.S. Army  
19 June 1944

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

*Period 1 December 1944 to December 31, 1944.*

At the beginning of this period, 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944, Battalion was in a bivouac in the vicinity of Gagliano di Mugello, Italy—a Division rest area. As per instruction received from higher headquarters, Battalion at this time was undergoing an intense training program. Phases of training to be covered were: Range practice (familiarization) for all individual arms and crew-served weapons; small unit-firing problems (squad, platoon)

issuance and instructions on winterized clothing and equipment; technical training on weapons, radio and telephone procedure; Battalion conditioning marches, and orientation lecture to stress USAFI courses.

Following a six-hour training schedule (seven for replacements) the first week, old members as well as new further improved their teamwork and skill by applying lessons learned. Other phases such as chemical warfare, technical training on weapons, orientation lectures stressing USAFI courses and current events, and military courtesies were covered by lectures and practical work as a review to insure that all members of the command were brought to the standards of the Division. Special units of the Battalion (Headquarters and the Medical Section) conducted specialist training in their respective fields; i.e., communication, mine warfare, tactics and technical training of the 57mm AT Gun, anatomy and first aid.

The second week of training dealt primarily upon squad and platoon problems covering methods and applications of house-to-house fighting, cover and concealment, reconnaissance patrolling, and compass and map study. Firing attack problems of platoon strength were conducted on Battalion firing range under Battalion control. The weapons platoon of Battalion utilized much time in technical training of weapons technique of fire and tactics were given training in elementary radio and telephone procedure so as to give all members a working knowledge of the proper usage of radio and telephone when on line. Also a seven and half mile conditioning march was made by all companies with men wearing their shoe pacs in order to determine fit and reaction on men's feet after a march of this length over rugged country.

On the third week of training, demonstrations of the crack and thump of weapons to determine their range on location were given all troops as a review and as a lesson to the new members of the command. As in previous weeks training, problems of squad and platoon, both defensive and attack, were again taken up along with a company attack problem (firing problems) to further perfect the all-important teamwork of every man, squad and platoon that plays the major role in combat. To further perfect squad and platoons, one night-problem, calling for a combat patrol of platoon strength, was conducted by all platoons of the Battalion. Also at this time plans were being made to have a Christmas party for all members of the Command. However, at 0330, 22 December 1944, Battalion received an oral warning to the effect that Battalion was on a three-hour alert for a move to the vicinity of Lucca. Consequently, the entire day of 22 December was devoted to policing up the area and preparing surplus such as extra tentage, stoves, etc., for storage, and general preparation for a move. After spending the day as mentioned, a march order was received to the effect that Battalion, as part of CT-7, would move at 0830, 23 December 1944, by motor to the vicinity of Lucca, Italy. At 0900, 23 December 1944 (due to a change in time element) Battalion, moving in their respective march units, cleared Gagliano di Mugello enroute to an area in the vicinity of Lucca. After an eighty-mile trip by motor, Battalion closed into the new bivouac area at 1615. (Coor: 195837, Sheet 105 IV, Lucca, Italy, 4½ Milo. N. of Lucca). The remainder of the day was spent putting up local security. At 1900, Battalion Commander and S-3 went to the Regimental CP for a meeting. Result of the meeting was that 3rd Battalion would, if the enemy located on the coast north of Fiumetto were to break through, as a part of the 337th Infantry, do one of the following upon order from higher headquarters: (1) Counter-attack from one of the two assembly areas (to be explained later in report) and drive the enemy back; (2) defend from high ground

in vicinity of Pietrasanta; (3) delay in successive positions until sufficient reserves could be brought up.

With these instructions in mind, at 0730, 24 December 1944, Battalion Commander and S-3 left the bivouac area enroute to the coast near Fiumetto and Pietrasanta for the purpose of a ground reconnaissance so as to be able to launch counter-attacks: (1) from Fiumetto, southeast, if the enemy was to attack from northeast of Pietrasanta; (2) from vicinity of Pietrasanta, northwest, if enemy attacked south towards Fiumetto. Also, to reconnoiter high ground forward of Pietrasanta for a defensive position and thence south from Pietrasanta for successive delaying positions. At the same time, S-1, S-2, and the A&P officer made route reconnaissance and reconnoitered the assembly areas in Fiumetto and Pietrasanta for a CP and temporary company dispositions. Returning from these reconnaissances, a Company Commanders' meeting was called and all key unit leaders were oriented to the situation.

Having received only this information from higher headquarters, the men were given a small Christmas party limited by the three-hour alert and a Christmas dinner on 25 December 1944.

Early in the evening of 25 December 1944, an oral message was received to the effect that Battalion Commander and S-3 would make a reconnaissance of the Serchio River Valley in the vicinity of Pian d Rocca in the morning of 26 December 1944. Instructions as to the details were: Primary mission, reconnoiter for defensive positions in vicinity of Mt. Alle Paine so as to be able to set up a Regimental reserve line; secondary missions, reconnoiter for defensive position on the Mt. Dellondi Hill massing so as being able to occupy the left sector of the Regimental zone of defense. The purpose of these reconnaissances as a tentative plan of defense from higher headquarters using the 337th Infantry in case the enemy succeeded in a break-through in strength down the Serchio River Valley, forcing the elements of the 92nd Infantry Division to withdraw.

The next morning at 0730, Battalion Commander, S-3, and the Motor Transport Officer left by vehicle to reconnoiter the two areas. The remainder of Battalion devoted the day to such subjects as technical training, weapons, military courtesies, care and cleaning, and critiques after battle—staying within the company area so as to be ready at a moment's notice. At approximately 1900 the reconnaissance group returned and a Company Commanders' meeting was called to orient Company Commanders on the tentative plan and the result of reconnaissance.

Again in the next morning, 27 December 1944, Battalion Commander and S-3 left by vehicle to make a more detailed reconnaissance of the tentative defensive positions on the Mt. Dellondi Hill mass as the reconnaissance of the previous day had been primarily to locate de-trucking areas and routes to the positions. Returning at approximately 1630, a definite plan of defense as to sectors, dispositions of companies and locations of installations was drawn up. Having formulated the defensive plan, Company Commanders were called on to discuss the plan.

Word from higher headquarters indicated that if the Regiment was called upon to set up a defensive line this Battalion would occupy the left sector of the Regimental Reserve line. The plan of defense was as follows: Three rifle companies on the line reading from "K", "I", "L"; heavy machine guns in close support of line companies, one platoon on the right sector, and one on the left sector so as to cover the frontage (some 6000 yards) of the Battalion sector. The 81mm mortars were to be broken down into two groups: two sections on

the left, one section on the right so as to cover the assigned sector. The MLR was to be an east-west ridge running east from the 1st Battalion, this Regiment, at Giaviano to Mt. Sette Fonte. The Battalion CP was to be located in Di Diecino and the supply DP and rear aid station at Vorminano. Later in the evening an oral message was received to the effect that Battalion Commander and S-3 would on 28 December 1944, make reconnaissance of the area in the vicinity of Fornoli to pick a de-trucking area and an assembly area in the vicinity of Vitiana for a counter-attack to the northwest. This anticipated an enemy break-through down the west flank of the Serchio River. The message further stated that at the same time the Company Commanders would reconnoiter their positions on Mt. Dellondi Hill mass. Early the next morning these two reconnaissance groups left by vehicle to fulfill their assigned missions. A Company Commanders' meeting was held to discuss the day's reconnaissance. Meanwhile, Battalion spent the day in company training in company areas.

Up to this time, Battalion had been on a two-hour alert for commitment on either the coast or in Serchio Valley but late on 28 December 1944 word was received placing Battalion on a thirty-minute alert for commitment. However, dawn found Battalion still in the bivouac area. Early in the morning of 30 December 1944 word was received that Battalion Commander and S-3 would make another reconnaissance of the area in the vicinity of Pietstanta to reconnoiter for defensive positions and successive positions east and southeast of Pietrasanta to Comoice. Consequently, at 0730, Battalion Commander and S-3 left for this area. Arriving at this area, Battalion Commander and S-3 reconnoitered for positions along a line running west from Mt. Gegoli to Mt. Del Fonte. It might be added that Lt. Col. Madsen was now in command of the Battalion having been reassigned to Battalion on 29 December 1944 after a period of sickness. Major G. J. Smith resumed his duties as Battalion Executive Officer. However, further reconnaissance and plans for this area were not carried out as another regiment of the 85th Division was given the coastal sector as its primary mission in case of an enemy break-through, thus making the mission a secondary one to the 337th Infantry.

Battalion remaining on the thirty-minute alert continued to carry on company training, stressing chemical warfare, military courtesy, technical training of weapons and preventive measures concerning trenchfoot.

APO 85, U.S. Army  
7 February 1945.

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

Period 1-31 January 1945

At the beginning of the period covered by this report, Battalion was located northwest of Lucca, Italy, by two miles. Battalion had been in this area since 23 December 1944 per an order from higher headquarters, alerted for possible commitment in case of an enemy counter-attack in force down the Serchio River Valley of the Coastal plain north of Viareggio. During this period Battalion Commander and his staff and the company officers had by numerous reconnaissances become familiar with the localities enumerated and were conversant with several tentative attack plans sent down by IV Corps (Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry had been transferred from II Corps

to IV Corps for this operation). Battalion remained on this alert until 6 January 1945. Training, however, was carried on in the form of a six hour daily schedule stressing individual and small unit training in the company areas. Range firing was conducted to give replacements additional practice and to find the zero of their respective arms. Great stress was placed on the care of the feet and footgear through lectures and daily physical checks by squad and platoon leaders to indoctrinate everyone with the seriousness of trench foot. On 1 January 1945, Battalion formation was held at which time the Regimental Commander presented a number of awards for meritorious service, gallantry in action and heroic achievement in combat and spoke briefly on the Battalion's record and welcomed all new members of the Battalion.

After having been relieved of the alert on 6 January 1945, an oral message at 0100, 7 January 1945 was received to the effect that Battalion as a part of the 337th Infantry would, by motor, move to the vicinity of Gagliano di Mugello, the first unit of the Regiment moving at 1100, 7 January 1945. At 0450, 7 January 1945, another oral message was received to the effect that Battalion would move at 1030, 7 January 1945 to Gagliano di Mugello and be prepared to go back into the front lines on the night of 8-9 January 1945. At 1030 Battalion cleared the area enroute to the new area. After having travelled some 81 miles, Battalion closed in by 1515, 7 January 1945. Having been in the area previously, bivouac was quickly set up before nightfall closed in. The next morning at 0600, Battalion Commander and S-3 attended a meeting at the regimental CP and received an oral order to the effect that Battalion would relieve elements of a British brigade on the night of 10-11 January 1945 in the same sector previously occupied by Battalion during the first week in November 1944, in the vicinity of Farneto, Italy. At 1100, Battalion Commander, Executive Officer, S-3 and Special Staff and Company Commanders departed by vehicle to the front lines to make a ground reconnaissance and arrangements for the relief. At 1530, 8 January 1945, a written field order was received to the effect that Battalion as a part of the 337th Infantry would, early on 10 January 1945, move by motor to an assembly area in the vicinity of S. Clemente, Italy and prepare to take over positions in the sector held by the Recce Battalion, the North Stafford Battalion and the Buff Battalion of the 58th Brigade on the night of 11-12 January 1945. The advance party would precede Battalion by one day (10 January 1945) and be prepared to guide the remainder of Battalion into position on the night 11-12 January 1945. With this field order in hand, the Battalion Commander and party upon arrival back to the bivouac area at 2230, 8 January 1945, made necessary plans for the storing of extra supplies and equipment as well as a plan of movements. Early the next morning as a result of the above mentioned meeting, Battalion S-3, S-1, and Company Executive Officers left for the front lines to pick a de-trucking and assembly area and routes to the companies.

Battalion meanwhile utilized the day preparing to move and storing equipment. The next morning, preceded by the advance party by half an hour, Battalion, moving by motor, cleared the bivouac area enroute to S. Clemente. Reaching the de-trucking area at 1330 after a trip of 39 miles over treacherous ice-covered roads, Battalion proceeded on to the assembly area located due south of Mt. Grande by some one thousand yards. After having dug in and eaten a hot meal, Battalion spent the night in the assembly area without incident save the attachment of 85 mules from the 12th Indian Company at 1635.



As there existed a high east-west ridge constituting the front line positions immediately north of Battalion, troops and mule trains could move during daylight hours without observation. Consequently it was decided that a greater part of the relief could be made during daylight. With this in mind, Battalion Commander moved the Headquarters Company and Company "I" into position starting at 0830, 11 January 1945, followed by Company "L" at 1330 and mortar platoons of Company "M" and Company "K" at 1730 (machine guns platoons of Company "M" moved with Companies "K" and "L" respectively). At 2030, 11 January 1945, the relief was completed and Battalion Commander formally took over the sector. As the numerical strength of Battalion exceeded that of the British and the fact that the sector occupied by the Battalion had been held by elements of three British battalions, the relief had been quite complex and, in addition, required a formal exchange of ammunition and stores of the two nations. Dispositions of the companies were: Company "K" on the right, Company "L" on the left, Company "I" in reserve, with the HMG platoons supporting the two front line companies and 81mm mortars under company control. The deployment of the companies on the ground was Company "K" with two platoons on line running west from the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, to a point three hundred yards west of Farneto; Company "L" with three platoons on line running west to a point three hundred yards west of Mt. Cuccoli and one platoon of HMG in support with positions within company sectors of Companies "K" and "L" and Company "I" in reserve. The positions held by the companies consisted of day positions and night positions; the day positions were on the reverse slope constituting the MLR and the night positions were on the forward slopes. The British had left quite elaborate dugouts in the day positions which enabled men good protection against the weather and heavy snow. However, initially upon taking over the sector there were not sufficient dugouts to house everyone; consequently, immediate steps were taken to remedy the situation. Having made the relief without any casualties incurred, Battalion began immediately to better the positions. Plans were drawn up that included: prepared defensive positions on Hill 455; installing wire obstacles forward of all the company positions; a re-check of the trip flares put in by the unit relieved to ascertain if they would work despite the heavy snow; improvement in existing trails to the mule head which was established in Casaleno, south of Mt. Grande; and thorough orientation of all officers and NCO's in regard to adjacent troops and terrain features to the front. With the plans above in mind, Battalion spent the first eight days, 12 January to 20 January 1945, carrying them towards completion.

Throughout this period enemy activity in this sector was very quiet. Only occasionally would a shell fall in the sector and with the exception of innumerable enemy flares and machine gun fire searching along the trail leading to Company "K's" positions on the forward slope of Mt. Grande at night, the enemy remained quiet and indisposed. Activity on the part of Battalion, other than that enumerated above, was limited to two screening patrols and contact patrols between adjacent units. Other than that patrol activity was nonexistent. Due to an order from Corps, only limited ammunition was allowed for supporting artillery and mortars of the Battalion; however, two basic loads and Corps reserve of 210 rounds per 81mm mortar were brought on positions. Throughout all units of the Battalion there was the daily SOP of "Stand to" prior to daylight and dark in which every member of the command was alerted. During the hours of darkness half of the command was

alert and during daylight two men in every rifle squad and one in each weapons squad remained alert and in position. Daily foot inspections and recurrent changes of socks were also held during this period to insure that trench foot be held at a minimum. As a result, only one case of trench foot occurred during this period.

As perviously planned, on the night of 20-21 January 1945, a relief of companies within Battalion took place. The purpose of the relief was to rotate the companies so that each company would be in reserve for a period of ten days. The company occupying the right sector of the Battalion sector was limited to movement after dark only; consequently, this burden was to be equally divided by companies. After officers and key NCO's had been given an opportunity to make a reconnaissance, the relief took place after dark on 20-21 January 1945. The relief of Company "I" relieved Company "K" in the right sector, and Company "K", as dawn approached, relieved Company "L", which moved back into reserve positions on Hill 455. As a result of careful planning and prior reconnaissance, the relief was made without incident.

The relief having been completed, companies again resumed the task of further improving the positions. On 21 January 1945, a 50 caliber MG platoon of three guns, that had been organized by a portion of the 57mm AT platoon and having constructed emplacements on the forward slopes of Hill 455, began firing indirect fire on targets of opportunity within Battalion's sector. The enemy, however, received this harassing fire on his supply lines and dugouts without serious attempts to silence them with counter-battery.

Throughout the period 21 January 1945 through to 31 January 1945, enemy activity in the form of artillery or patrols was at an absolute minimum in this sector. However, observation posts began to see more and more frequently individual enemy walking around near suspected dugouts. At night the enemy used his pyrotechnics frequently shooting up amber flares at regular intervals. In the right adjacent unit, however, the enemy activity in the form of patrols was more active. At the close of this report the companies were once again preparing to make another relief as had been previously planned.

Throughout the period covered by this report, passes in the form of five men per day to Montecatini for four days and six per week to Rome for four days were in effect thereby giving deserving individuals a rest. Also a shower unit was set up on 23 January 1945 to the rear of the Regimental CP at Parrocchio di Sassimo and allowed small groups to leave positions and avail themselves with a shower and a change of clothes.

APO 85, U.S. Army,  
20 March 1945.

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

Period 1-28 February 1945

During the period covered by this report, Battalion as a part of the 337th Infantry, was located in the vicinity of Farneto, Italy, in a defensive position. As enemy activity was light, limited primarily to long range two-man patrols and our activity was that of light patrolling at irregular intervals so as to establish identity of enemy units and locate enemy strong-points, minefields, and observation posts, this report will cover the periods of inactivity lightly.

Supply and supply routes will be greatly stressed in this report to bring out the lessons learned of supply under winter conditions in mountainous country using mule trains.

As covered by this "History of Operations", 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945, Battalion occupied a sector of approximately some two thousand yards extending along a ridge line running generally east-west. The right boundary of Battalion sector was located on the west side of the forward slope of Mt. Grande with the 1st Battalion, this Regiment, as the right adjacent unit. The left boundary, with the 2nd Battalion, this Regiment, as the left adjacent unit, was located approximately three hundred yards west of the crest of Mt. Cuccolli. As the positions were on dominating ground and the terrain to the front dropped sharply down into a deep east-west draw, the sector was divided into two company sectors, the remaining rifle company located in Battalion reserve some six hundred yards to the rear on a commanding hill, known as Hill 455, that completely covered any route of enemy approach from any direction. Initially upon taking over the positions occupied by the British elements in this sector, Company "K" had occupied the ground from Mt. Grande to Farneto, Company "L" the ground from Farneto to Battalion's left boundary, three hundred yards west of Mt. Cuccolli, and Company "I" Battalion reserve line on Hill 455.

Heavy machine guns of Company "M" were under company control located in Farneto and in rear of the right company in the vicinity of Mt. Grande; 81mm mortars were also under company control, in position to the west of Casalina, the mule and ration DP.

Soon after taking over this sector, Battalion Commander decided to rotate companies in order to enable each company to spend some time in reserve. The primary reason for this was that the positions occupied by the right company could be reached only after dark making daylight moves impossible. Having reached this decision, a plan was made that every ten days companies would be rotated. Therefore, on the night of 1-2 February 1945, Company "L", then in reserve, relieved Company "I", in position on the right sector. Immediately following this relief, Company "I" relieved Company "K", then occupying the left sector, allowing Company "K" to go into reserve on Hill 455.

During daylight of 2 February 1945, a similar relief was accomplished within the heavy machine gun platoons of Company "M" and the Anti-tank squads of the Anti-tank Platoon (Anti-Tank Platoon had upon Battalion's taking over sector been divided into two groups, one gun on Mt. Grande, the other two at Farneto).

The relief having been made without incident, as Platoon Leaders and key NCO's were conversant with all company sectors, dispositions and installations within the Battalion sector from ground reconnaissance prior to relief, the Battalion again resumed the duties of a front-line interior Battalion on a static front throughout the first eleven days of February 1945.

As a result of the heavy snow, and at times perfect observation, the enemy limited his activity to firing flares at night and lightly harrassing the trail running the ridge leading to Mt. Grande—also during the dark hours.

During this period enemy artillery was light, limited to only an occasional round of mortar or artillery, firing from positions in rear on Mt. Castelar, a high east-west ridge to Battalion's front by some one thousand seven hundred yards. Although the right adjacent unit had been harassed by small combat patrols, the enemy during this period never sent a patrol through Battalion's sector due to the deep snow-filled draws and steep forward slopes compromising Battalion sector.

Activity on the part of this Battalion with regard to harassing fires and patrolling was light. Due to the limited quota of mortar and supporting

artillery ammunition, and orders from higher headquarters calling for fixed amounts of ammunition of all types to be brought on position, counter-battery fire was the primary use made of the ammunition allotment.

Harassing fire in the form of three 50 calibre machine guns and the heavy weapons company's 30 calibre heavy machine guns firing indirect fire was used extensively during this period with suspected enemy dugouts and supply trails as the primary targets.

Patrolling consisted only of screening patrols to the noses of the small ridges running north off the east-west ridge composing the MSR, and contacting patrols between adjacent units making full use of the cover afforded by the east-west ridge which compromised the daylight positions of the left company and the reserve company, elaborate comfortable dugouts were constructed to enable all troops to endure the rigors of the cold and the snow.

To be mentioned later in this report will be the plans and work done in regard to the supply and supply trails.

Again on 12-13 February, after detailed reconnaissance by platoon leaders and key NCO's, another relief within the Battalion was made. This time Company "K" relieved Company "L", and Company "L" during the daylight of the 13th relieved Company "I", which then went into the reserve position. This relief, as the others, had been executed without incident or casualty.

The first two days of this second week of February 1945 passed without any enemy activity save the usual nightly use of flares and very light harassing fires. However, on the day of 14 February 1945, orders were received from higher headquarters that Lieutenant Colonel Earl A. Madsen was relieved of the command of the Battalion to assume the duties of Regimental Executive Officer.

Upon Lieutenant Colonel Madsen's departure, Major George J. Smith assumed command of the Battalion, and Captain John A. Banister, Company Commander of "K" Company assumed the duties of Battalion Executive Officer. 1st Lieutenant James J. Purdon assumed command of Company "K".

After a period of relative inactivity in the way of active patrolling on our part, word was received from higher headquarters on 13 February 1945, that Battalion would secure prisoners. Profiting by the results of patrols sent out by other Battalions of the regiment, and close scouting of enemy positions by the Battalion OP's twenty-four hours a day, Battalion S-2 immediately laid plans to comply with this order. After careful consideration the objective assigned to the raiding patrol was a place called Di Sopra. Di Sopra was located at the north base of a long east-west ridge compromising Battalion MLR and about one thousand six hundred yards due north of Mt. Cuccolli. Di Sopra was so situated as to cover the draws leading from the east-west ridge and was dominated by Mt. Castellaro to its rear a known strong enemy position. By the aid of field glasses, Di Sopra was known to be occupied by the enemy during darkness. To insure surprise and a thorough knowledge close up, the patrol leader and key NCO's of the raiding party were sent down on the night of 14 February 1945 to acquaint themselves with the terrain, enemy dispositions, and probable enemy strength.

That night Lt. Cloackner and two NCO's from Company "I" passed through our lines at 2000. Returning 0400, 15 February 1945, this officer reported that he had approached very near Di Sopra and after remaining there some six hours had heard no enemy movement and had picked up only two enemy machine guns, one on either flank and a few hundred yards to the right

and left of Di Sorpa. He had, however, found a good route of approach but stated that the mud and slush of the melting snow was knee deep making progress very slow and difficult. With this information and previous information based on OP reports and intelligence summaries, elaborate plans were made to support this raiding party, which was to go out the night of 15-16 February.

It was planned to move two 50 caliber machine guns forward of the outpost line, one to set up on Hill 382, a finger like spur running north from Mt. Cuccolli, and along the only trail leading from Farneto toward Di Sorpa at a point approximately five hundred yards south of Di Sorpa. Also one section of light machine guns from Company "L" were to set up in the same vicinity as the 50 caliber machine guns and give supporting fire.

The above mentioned weapons were to be hand carried into previously prepared positions, and were to fire upon signal—a white 60mm mortar flare (to be fired on Battalion order from the 60mm mortar position behind Mt. Cuccolli) on the suspected machine gun positions on Mt. Castellaro and opportune targets as presented themselves elsewhere on Castellaro. In addition, the 328th FA the 4.2 chemical mortars, Cannon Company this Regiment, the 81mm of all three Battalions of this Regiment, were given targets that completely bracketed Di Sorpa on the flanks and rear as well as all suspected enemy mortar and artillery positions. All the above mentioned fires were to be on call for the patrol leader via the Battalion Command Post using the SCR 300 as a means of communication. With these plans drawn up the next day, 15 February and the entire night of the 15-16 was spent spotting concentrations with a few rounds for corrections, digging machine gun emplacements and hiding the spoil.

As nightfall of 16-17 February 1945 approached, everything was ready to carry out the plan. At approximately 1800, under the cover of fog, the patrol of 1 officer and 12 enlisted men passed through our lines followed by the machine guns. Everything remained quiet with no enemy found at the first three suspected machine gun positions enroute to Di Sopra. When the patrol reached Di Sorpa they found everything quiet and no enemy movement whatsoever. After waiting some twenty minutes the patrol closed on the building comprising Di Sopra. However, as the patrol was within a few yards of the building three machine guns firing from both flanks, and the rear of the house as well as from machine pistol from the cover of the roof and 50mm mortar shells falling around the house, struck the platoon. Reacting quickly the patrol returned fire and requested all supporting fire to be brought down. Finally, after losing one man killed and three wounded, the patrol withdrew back to our lines reaching the MLR at approximately 0158, 17 February 1945. Although no prisoners were taken it was ascertained by the critique that followed that the patrol killed or wounded some five enemy, and that Di Sopra constituted a strongpoint in the enemy's OPLR.

Although no prisoners had been taken as a result of this raid, Battalion was not assigned the mission again of taking prisoners by raiding patrols for the remainder of the period covered by this report as this mission was rotated within the Battalion of the Regiment. However, an ambush patrol equipped with both a 300 and sound-powered phones would at nightfall move at darkness to a point some five hundred yards south of Di Sopra and set up an ambush. Thus for 17 February 1945 to 28 February 1945, there was no other combat patrolling other than a long range patrol under Lt. Boyle, Company

"K", that patrolled as far as Di Sopra on 25 February 1945. This patrol noted that there were no enemy at that time immediately around Di Sopra.

During this period, however, enemy mortar and artillery fire in-so-far as enemy fire was concerned began to increase daily. The supply route or trail on the reverse of the east-west ridge began to come under harrassing mortar fire as well as the buildings in Farneto. As a result of the fire, all command posts and other installations formerly in the houses at Farneto were moved into dugouts on the reverse slope. On a basis of an increased quota of ammunition, harrassing and counter-battery mission of the Battalion mortars and supporting artillery were increased per orders from higher headquarters, six more 50 caliber machine guns were brought into Battalion position and used to further harrass enemy installations and supply trails.

As stated previously in this report another relief of companies was expected within the Battalion on the night of 23-24 February 1945 so as to relieve the men in the most difficult positions. This time Company "I" relieved Company "K" on the day of 24 February. Company "L" went into Battalion reserve positions on Hill 455. Thus, at the end of the period covered in this report, Battalion was still on the front lines in the vicinity of Farneto, Italy, utilizing each day to better the positions and installations within the sector.

Mentioned early in this report was the important job played by the supply agencies of the Regiment and Battalion and the lessons learned in regards to supply. Snow lay some twelve inches upon the ground creating difficult transportation problems. To overcome this two supply DP's were created within the Battalion sector, one was easily accessible to jeeps and here was set up Battalion supply DP proper. Then immediately behind the east-west ridge at a place known as Casalina was the forward Battalion DP and mule head. Here Battalion attached Indian Mule Companies were bivouaced and only such ammunition and rations that were to go forward that day were kept.

From this forward DP to company positions ran narrow slippery treacherous trails with only one way traffic.

Immediately upon taking over, an extensive road and trail improvement program was put into effect. The heretofore one-way road from the Battalion rear DP to Casalina was widened to accompany two-way passage by company "A", 310th Engineers.

At the same time Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon, with help from the reserve company, began widening the existing trails digging stairlike steps in the hard packed snow and ground.

The tasks mentioned were continuous plus the trail patrols located at points along the routes to keep the paths free of drifted snow. To facilitate speedy transportation of supplies, supply sergeants and an NCO liaison agents were established with the attached Mule Company and a control system via Battalion Command Post was set up to insure that the flow of traffic was free of snarls and tieups. However, when the snow began to melt rapidly in the middle of February, the roads and existing supply trails began to become veritable quagmires.

To surmount this threat to the flow of supplies, the supply trails were deeply ditched on both sides piling the spoil in the route itself and on the spoil laying a felt mat with a wood mat from slats of wood wired together in the form of a cat walk over the felt and staking both down.

Working long hours despite the bitter cold and rain the trails were kept open at all times. As a result of keeping existing trails passable and creating new ones, it was possible to permit sock exchanges to all members of the com-



mand on an average of three times a week. The final analysis of these frequent sock exchanges was that during the month of February there were no cases of trench foot in the command. Also note-worthy in regards to supply was the fact that a total of 4,594 rounds of mortar ammunition and over 44,292 rounds or 50 caliber machine gun ammunition were brought on position despite the difficulties of transportation.

At the conclusion of the period covered by this report, the supply agencies of Battalion had, through experience and initiative, mastered supply in mountainous country under severe winter conditions. Experience was gained in the proper manner of loading mule trains properly, the need for close liaison between Battalion Command Post and the DP's, to facilitate an uninterrupted flow of supplies, the creation and maintenance of Company DP's on position and accurate records of them. Also from experience was the importance of frequent sock exchanges to keep down the trench foot rate.

Thus this period left Battalion with a vast store of knowledge of the fundamentals of winter warfare in mountainous country.

Casualties incurred during this period were:

	Officers	Enlisted Men
KIA	0	2
WIA	0	5
MIA	0	0

For the Battalion Commander

APO 85, U.S. Army  
11 April 1945

### HISTORY OF OPERATIONS 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945

At the beginning of the period covered by this report this Battalion was still on the front lines in the sector extending from Mt. Grande on the east to a point three hundred yards west of Mt. Cuccolli, Italy. The Battalion had taken over this sector from the British on 11 January 1945 to 1 March 1945, enemy activity had been very light in regards to patrolling and was marked by only sporadic artillery. Activity on our part in regards to patrolling and artillery fires were as that of the enemy's. During the previous month however, an extensive construction program in regards to dugouts and supply trails was put into effect. Consequently at the beginning of March 1945, elaborate dugouts and supply trails were to be found in all installations and routes to all companies of the Battalion bettered every day by work details from the reserve company and the Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer platoon.

Shortly after the Battalion had taken over the sector in January 1945 it was decided upon that every ten days a relief within the Battalion would be put into effect to relieve the strain of the monotony and lack of movement of the front line companies. As covered in the previous Reports of Operations for the months of January and February 1945, the right company sector of the Battalion sector was on the forward slope of Mt. Grande under direct enemy observation restricting daylight movements altogether. Consequently the Battalion Commander planned to rotate the companies in such a manner that each company would receive ten days in reserve on the Battalion Reserve

Line, Hill 455, for every twenty days on the front line. Thus as the period covered by this report commenced, 1 March 1945 Company "K" held the left sector from three hundred yards west of Mt. Cuccolli to Farneto, Company "I", the sector from Farneto to Mt. Grande, and Company "L", the Battalion reserve line, on Hill 455. The heavy machine guns and heavy mortars of Company "M" were still disposed as they had been upon occupation of the sector. One platoon of heavy machine guns in the vicinity of Farneto, 2nd platoon in positions along the ridge leading to and on Mt. Grande, and the 81mm mortars in position west of Casalina. Similarly the Anti-tank platoon retained the same positions, with two 57mm guns at Farneto and one on Mt. Grande.

The Battalion had also in the way of additional supporting weapons nine 50 caliber machine guns located around Farneto and Hill 455 manned by skeleton squads of the Battalion Anti-tank Platoon and an attached platoon from the Regimental Anti-tank Company. Having occupied this sector for forty-eight days and all individuals being conversant with all sectors and installations within the sector, the Battalion utilized the first week of March 1945 to continue the bettering of dugouts, trails and other installations, thus taking advantage of the static condition that prevailed. Static in the sense that the enemy limited his activities to the nightly use of pyrotechnics and harrassing machine-gun fire along the trail leading east from Farneto to Mt. Grande. Occasionally, at night, a few rounds of artillery and mortars would harass the supply trails immediately in rear of Farneto and in vicinity of the rear Battalion DP, south of Casalina some one thousand yards. Enemy patrolling in the sector was nonexistent with the exception of long range patrols, that according to higher headquarters were said to be operating in the vicinity. Constant vigilance was maintained by friendly screening patrols and ambush patrols to intercept any such patrols but these patrols never during the first week attempted to infiltrate through our lines. Activity on the part of the Battalion in regards to harassing and counter-battery fire was accomplished by the daily use of all nine 50 caliber machine guns harassing suspected enemy positions and supply trails as well as the fires of the 30 caliber heavy machine guns on similar targets. Mortar and artillery fire was primarily used as a counter-battery measure, although, under Regimental control the new rockets assigned to the Regimental Anti-tank Company, the harassing time fire, using the new fuse by the 328th Field Artillery on suspected enemy supply trails nightly harassed the enemy within our sector. Patrolling on our part was limited to ambush patrols on the forward slope of the east-west ridge comprising the MLR and screening and contact patrols between adjacent units. At this time there existed a Regimental Rangers Platoon comprised of selected men from the three Battalions of the Regiment that handled patrol missions involving attempts to penetrate enemy positions. It can be noted that though quite seemingly dormant the enemy was extremely sensitive to any patrols trying to enter his lines.

Thus after spending a quiet period in the positions occupied by the companies on 23-24 of February 1945, the companies executed another relief on the night of 6-7 March 1945. This relief, accomplished without incident, called for Company "L" to relieve Company "K", holding the sector in vicinity of Mt. Grande and Company "K" relieved Company "I", in the vicinity of Mt. Cuccolli, next morning at dawn, allowing Company "I" to go into reserve on Hill 455. So acquainted with the sectors were all members of the command that this relief was executed speedily but correctly.

Shortly after having executed this relief the Battalion received an oral order that the Battalion as part of the Regiment would be relieved on the night of 11-12 March 1945 by British elements. Immediately preparations were made for the necessary transfer of such British supplies as rations, small arms ammunition, stoves, water cans, and shelter halves taken over by the Battalion upon its occupation of the sector, as this relief involved an exchange of supplies of two nations. Orders from higher headquarters also stated that the Battalion upon being relieved would immediately move back to the bivouac area occupied by the Battalion on 10 January 1945, at Gagliano Di Mugello, Italy. Further the Battalion would on 13 March 1945 move from Gagliano Di Mugello to Montecatini for a four day rest. With this information and the fact that all the extra equipment (winter) and the existence of a shortage of transportation aside from the Battalion's organic vehicles, the Battalion Commander planned to send the S-1 and a work detail back to the area Gagliano Di Mugello prior to the Battalion's being relieved to prepare the camp site and store the extra supplies so that a speedy move could be made from the line thence to Montecatini on 13 March 1945. Therefore, on 8 March 1945, this plan was put into effect. The remaining portion of the time that the Battalion remained in position after having received the order of a relief was spent in making accurate DP reports, shuttling such equipment as could be spared to the Battalion rear DP by mule train and gradually reducing the harassing fires by taking down the 50 caliber machine guns one by one so as not to arouse suspicion on the part of the enemy.

On 9 March 1945, the advance party of the relieving unit, the 25th Brigade, 10th Indian Division, arrived. Immediately upon reaching the Battalion CP, Company Commanders of the Battalion took that portion of the advance party as pretained to them and oriented them as to boundaries, sectors, installations, minefields, troop dispositions and all information pertaining to the enemy within the sector that they had at their disposal. Throughout this period from 8 March 1945, to the time of the relief and during the relief itself, the enemy kept his activities the same as he had for the two previous months. Starting at nightfall on 11-12 March 1945, the relief began and was accomplished by 0125, 12 March 1945. The Battalion marched to an entrucking area two miles west of San Clemente and loaded on trucks at this point for Gagliano di Mugello, at 0400, 12 March 1945. Immediately upon closing into the area, troops received a hot meal as the kitchens had been moved down the night before. The remainder of the day was spent in turning in winter equipment and issuing the duffel bags. The next morning at 0550, 13 March 1945, the Battalion cleared Gagliano di Mugello enroute to Montecatini for a four day rest at the Fifth Army Rest Center. Reaching Montecatini at 0820, the troops were immediately billeted in houses previously selected for that purpose. During the Battalion's stay at Montecatini, training was limited to one hour a day, for the purpose of roll call and arms inspection. Recreational facilities provided the men were the Enlisted Mens' Club, the NCO's Club, the Red Cross Club, theaters, and two dances sponsored by the Battalion. After a four day rest, the Battalion cleared Montecatini at 1130, 18 March 1945, enroute to Gagliano di Mugello. Closing into the bivouac area at Gagliano di Mugello at 1430, 18 March 1945, the remainder of the day was devoted to setting up camp and preparing a training program for the next week in conjunction with the forthcoming Division inspection of all T/O and T/E property.

After the regular SOP hour on 19 March 1945, the companies of the

Battalion began an inspection of individual clothing and equipment, making use of the squad leaders' check list system. This system was a check list in three copies showing all clothing and equipment that could be issued to an individual and made out by the squad leader under the supervision of the platoon leader. a code system was used to designate whether the specific article listed was authorized for the particular individual and if it was on hand. When finished the copies were distributed in the following manner: one per squad leader, one per platoon leader, and one per company supply. Upon completion of these check lists, shortages were ascertained and the appropriate supply action taken. A number of the existing shortages were taken care of by the excess supply that collects within the supply agencies of a battalion when in combat due to casualties and battlefield recovery. The remainder of the excess was turned in to R.S.O.

Having completed the individual inspections, the Battalion launched into a training program that was to stress small unit tactics, firing of all weapons, and physical conditioning. Also, such subjects as dismantled drill, military courtesy, wearing of the uniform, interior guard, and chemical warfare training was to be given to bring the new replacements up to the standards of the Division as well as a review of all troops. However, this training was cancelled at 1230, 21 March 1945 by oral order from Regiment to the effect that the Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry would, on 22 March 1945, move to the vicinity of Pisa, Italy, to undergo training of an amphibious nature. The remainder of 21 March 1945 was devoted to storing duffel bags and preparing for the forthcoming move. Late in the afternoon another order was received to the effect that all unit designations, either on the individual or vehicles, would be removed as the move was to be secret and individuals were warned not to disclose any information in conflict with these orders to anyone.

At 0740, 22 March 1945, the Battalion cleared the bivouac enroute to an area in the vicinity of Pisa. Closing into this area at 1240, 22 March 1945. (Coor: 030654 Map 1/25000, Italy S. Rossore, Sheet 104 II SW). Having closed into this area and receiving clearance from the 404th Combat Engineer Battalion that the area had been checked for mines, the Battalion devoted the remainder of the day setting up camp. At 1900, 22 March 1945, the Battalion Commander, Staff, and Company Commanders attended a meeting at the headquarters of the 39th Combat Engineers group to be oriented on the forthcoming training program. The training was to be that of river crossing. Four days were to be devoted to this training and was to be under the supervision of 404th Engineer (Combat) Battalion with the assistance of the officers and NCO's of the 337th Infantry. To be stressed primarily was acquainting the individual and squad with the different types of river craft and their use by demonstration and practical work. Three days were to be devoted to this phase followed on the fourth day by an actual Regimental combat team daylight crossing. The next morning, having been thoroughly oriented and supplied with maps and a training schedule, the Battalion, along with the attached Engineer Company, Company "C", 404th Combat Engineer Battalion, moved to the river site to undergo training in river crossing. At the river site, the Battalion was divided into three groups, consequently the Heavy Weapons Company and Headquarters Company were divided and attached to the three groups formed by Companies "I", "K" and "L". Each group then received training on one of the three primary types of craft namely: Assault boat, storm boats, and rafts, both infantry raft and Quonset barge. Within each group a further subdivision was made; four hours training was given on

each of these three basic types of craft two hours of which was practice on dry land and two hours on the water. The training was that of an orientation of the purpose of the craft, its tactical use, how to carry, launch, paddle, and disembark from the particular craft. At the same time drivers of vehicles and squads of the Battalion Anti-tank platoon received practical work on use of the infantry raft, Quonset barge and the DUKW for loading and firing the 57mm Anti-tank gun. Additional piece of river crossing craft was also demonstrated during the first two days of training to acquaint all troops with it,—the Amtrack, a tracked personnel carrier. Due to the secrecy of this craft, great emphasis was placed upon its presence in Italy and the need for maintaining of the secrecy.

Stated previously the training of the individual and the squad was to have taken three days, however, it was decided that to receive the maximum amount of training a Battalion daylight river crossing should be included in the training program. Primary reason for this being to show the individuals and small units how they fitted into the tactical plan and to gain all important knowledge of the phase. A Battalion lecture was given in which the purpose, tactics, and phases of river crossing were given and these phases fitted on a blown up map of the sector in which the problem was to be conducted. That afternoon, commencing at 1300, the problem was conducted giving the individual and all units valuable knowledge of the practical application of the prior training. The next morning commencing at 0500, 26 March 1945, the Regimental combat team problem was conducted. On this problem this Battalion was in Regimental reserve and had the opportunity by practical work to learn the mission and methods of a reserve Battalion in such a situation. Immediately upon return, at 1300, from this problem a critique was conducted wherein many of the problems and errors usually committed in river crossing were discussed and ironed out to insure against their occurrence in actual combat.

Early in the afternoon of 26 March 1945, an oral order was received to the effect that this Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry would on March 1945 make another move to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Altopascio, Italy. Great stress was placed on the secrecy of the move and the maintaining of the secrecy upon closing into the bivouac area. The next day at 1400, 27 March 1945, moving by motor the Battalion cleared the bivouac area at Pisa enroute to the new bivouac area arriving at the new area at 1700, 27 March 1945. (Coor: 226-730 Map Italy, 1/25000, Monte Serra, Sheet 105 III, NW). The companies immediately went into billets previously selected and awaited further orders. Late in the evening of 27 March 1945, orders were received that the Battalion would carry on a training program set up while in Gagliano Di Mugello and be prepared for the Division inspection previously cancelled as all duffle bags and equipment at Gagliano Di Mugello were to be brought to the new area. The next morning, 28 March 1945, was devoted to setting up in the billets followed by the Battalion march of seven miles in the afternoon. Late on 28 March 1945, an order was received to the effect that the S-1 and driver would on 29 March 1945, leave on a quartering party for an unannounced area.

Following the schedule, the Battalion conducted the training set forth to review and bring up to standard all troops with regards to small unit tactics and technical training of weapons in conjunction with the Division inspection on 31 March 1945.

Throughout the month of March in Battalion, as shown by this report, made several motor moves and gained considerable training especially in river crossing as well as a period of recreation. Although not previously mentioned, but perhaps best listed under the term of benefits for the troops, was a Battalion bakery set up and maintained by the Battalion while on the front lines. This bakery was in the Battalion rear DP, and run by the cooks of the companies of the Battalion. As a result of this, all troops periodically received cakes, pies and other niceties as a change in diet.

## CASUALTIES

	Officers	Enlisted Men
KIA	0	0
WIA	0	8
MIA	0	0

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

*Period 1-30 April 1945.*

The Battalion at the beginning of the period covered by this report was located in the vicinity of Pieve Di Compito, Italy, and had been in this area since 27 March 1945. As covered by "History of Operations" for the month of March 1945, a training program was drawn up and followed, that was to cover such subjects as small unit problems, range firing of all weapons on both known and combat ranges. Training of this nature was conducted throughout the first two weeks of April. The training was conducted on a six day schedule of seven hours per day. To train the new platoon leaders and replacements, a series of platoon and company problems were conducted under Battalion control, to include training during daylight and dark. Purpose of this phase; to teach and acquaint all personnel with operations in mountainous country and the manner in which the Battalion operated in combat.

On 14 April 1945, a warning order was received to the effect that this Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry would, when the 10th Mountain Division had taken Mt. Vignola, Italy, be committed into action in the current drive—the drive in this section having started on 12 April 1945. Having received this information, training nevertheless continued in conjunction with the necessary preparation for entry into combat. On 16 April 1945, an oral order was received to the effect that this Battalion, as part of the Regiment, would move by motor to the northwest at 0320, 17 April 1945. The Battalion, moving by motor, cleared the bivouac area in the vicinity of Pieve di Compito. Prior to moving out, billeting forms previously filled out by the Company Commanders and owners of the billets were signed, clearing said officers and units of any responsibility of the billets occupied. After having traveled some fifty miles, the Battalion closed into a bivouac area in the vicinity of Pietro Colora, Italy (590219) Map, Italy, RIOLA, 1/25000, 98 IV SW, at 0920, 17 April 1945.

Immediately upon closing into this area, kitchens prepared a hot meal after which all troops were rested pending further orders. At 1520, 17 April 1945, the Battalion Commander and S-3 were called to Regiment and there received an order to the effect that the Battalion would, at 2030, 17 April 1945, move by motor to an assemble area in the vicinity of Ceraglio.



In preparation for the relief of elements of the 10th Mountain Division in their present sector so as to permit the 10th Mountain Division to swing off to the left according to the IV Corps plan (The 85th Division at this time was attached to IV Corps). At 2030, 17 April 1945, the Battalion cleared the bivouac area after having sent some 64 men to the casual company as per previous plans for the establishment of a Regimental Replacement Pool. At 2145 the Battalion cleared into an assembly area in the vicinity of Cereglio, Italy, (661281) Map. Italy 1/25000, Sheet 98 IV NW, Castel D'Alano, and rested while plans were made for the forthcoming relief. Immediately upon closing into the area a liaison officer was dispatched to the Command Post of the 85th Mountain Regiment of the 10th Mountain Division to select routes to be taken and secure such information needed to effect such a relief. Upon return of the liaison officer and receipt of information from the Regimental Command Post, Company Commanders were summoned and given the details of the relief. The Battalion was to start marching at 0600, 18 April 1945, north to an assembly area in the vicinity of Mt. Vignola, and there awaited further orders. After having eaten a hot breakfast and dropped rolls, the Battalion cleared Cereglio in route march enroute to Mt. Vignola.

After a ten mile march, the Battalion closed into an assembly area on Mt. Vignola to await further orders. A written message was received stating that this Battalion would at 1400 move northwest from Mt. Vignola, pass through elements of the 2nd Battalion this Regiment, and take Objective "I". At 1400, the Battalion in column of companies order "I", "K", "L", "M", Headquarters, organics with companies, cleared Mt. Vignola. Making use of existing trails to the northwest, the Battalion made steady progress in a formation of two's with a five yard interval between men to avoid presenting too much of a target to enemy mortar fire as the right flank was open. Earlier in the morning the 2nd Battalion as the leading assault Battalion had taken Mt. Medelena (Objective "D"), and Calvana, (Objective "E"). Thus, as the Battalion moved northwest on the existing trails in the direction of attack, the Regiment was in a long salient with an exposed right flank by-passing untold number of enemy strong-points. On the Regimental left flank, the 10th Mountain Division, attacking on open terrain and making use of tanks and tank-borne infantry, had pushed some two thousand yards north of the 2nd Battalion, this Regiment.

Progressing steadily to the northwest the leading element of the Battalion, Company "I", contacted Company "G" this Regiment, at approximately 1900.

Located on a high knoll dotted with several stone buildings, one platoon of Company "I" was ordered forward to probe the position and if possible take it. Darkness was rapidly approaching as the platoon moved forward and by the time the platoon neared the crest visibility was very poor. Just as the platoon prepared to clear the first group of houses they met with an intense crossfire from some three machine guns and several rifles. Withstanding this fire, the platoon immediately took up the fight striving to get superiority, until forced to withdraw, having suffered five casualties. With the information learned of the position, the Company Commander attempted to flank the position, but again, like the first platoon, this platoon met with heavy small arms fire. This strong-point threatened to hold up the advance of the entire platoon, as it completely dominated the sector of both assaulting battalions; to by-pass it would seriously endanger the MSR. Realizing this, the Battalion Commander decided to take the position before dawn by making a co-ordin-

ated attack, using Companies "I" and "G", as both companies had seen the terrain in daylight and were familiar with it. Also, there was a decided lack of maneuvering space to warrant moving another company of this Battalion in position to attack. After having made a radio call to the Battalion Commander of the 2nd Battalion to obtain the use of "G" Company, an attack order was issued. The order was as soon as both companies were in position and had been supplied with ammunition, they would attack. At about 0200, 19 April 1945, both companies assaulted the hill. Again they met with intense machine and rifle fire and grenades from the houses dotting the crest of the hill and the reverse slopes. At 0500 all further attack on the position was stopped, as a written order from higher headquarters to the effect that the entire Regimental sector was to shift several hundred yards to the left. Complying with this order, an immediate withdrawal of the 3rd Battalion was initiated. As the last elements of the 3rd Battalion were withdrawing over the trail running south from Laguno to Medelena, the enemy dropped several concentrations of mortar and light artillery on the trail, wounding six men. The Battalion however, continued moving southward until the trail leading northwest from Medelena was found, then moved northwest. At approximately 0930 the Battalion, now in reserve, was halted on orders, and went into an assembly area some twelve hundred yards northwest of Medelena. The Battalion Commander, Staff and Company Commanders went on a reconnaissance shortly after reaching the assembly area to reconnoitre the positions now held by the 1st Battalion in order to effect a relief of this unit upon order.

The remainder of the Battalion utilized the remainder of the day for rest and re-issuance of rations and water. Upon return of the Battalion Commander and his group, a meeting was called to receive the written order, received shortly before the group returned at 1020. This order called for the Battalion to pass through the present positions of the 1st Battalion at Rosiglo, to take Mt. Fignano (Objective B), Mt. Copra, (Objective D) and the right half of Malgotta (Objective G) and there await further orders. At the same time, the 1st Battalion was at 0600, to take Casetto (Objective A), Mt. Roca (Objective G) and the left portion of Mt. Malgotta (Objective F). To be attached to the 3rd Battalion were a platoon of tanks and a platoon of TD's. With the information at hand, the Battalion Commander issued his attack order. This order called for the Battalion to attack in a column of companies in the order of "L", "K", "I" and Headquarters. The attached tanks and TD's were to join Company "L" at Rosiglo and follow along with this company. Organics were to remain under company control until it became necessary for weapons to go off carriers and then they were to revert to Battalion control and fall in the rear of the Headquarters Company. The next morning, at 0430, 20 April 1945, moving in the order described above, the Battalion cleared the assembly area crossing the LD at 0600, making steady progress along this road leading toward the first objective, Mt. Fignano. This objective was a high barren hill with a church and a group of some ten houses on its crest. Its heights completely dominating the road along which the Battalion was approaching as well as the open meadowland from its base to the highway itself. Pushing forward in an open formation, Company, "L" began the attack at approximately 0830. Moving up the west side of the objective, Company "L" met with fire from the vicinity of the church and dugouts located along the military crest as well as heavy mortars firing from the rear of the church. Immediately upon receiving this fire from effective range, Company "L" took up the fire fight striving to get fire superiority, making maximum use of the supporting

artillery, tanks, and TD's. The objective was kept under constant fire while individuals and squads inched forward. Finally at 1030, when it became apparent, however, that further movement forward on Company "L's" part would cause needless casualties, Company "K" was committed. Utilizing the cover of existing cover on the right flank and supporting fire, Company "K" began its attack at 1100. Approximately a platoon of Company "K" and one tank reached the crest of this mound-like objective. At 1530 the enemy under the pressure of the converging fires of the two companies and the effect of the supporting fires of the mortars, artillery, TD's and tanks plus the fact that his route of withdrawal had been cut by both the platoon from Company "K" and elements of the 351st Infantry on the right, surrendered. A check of the number of prisoners taken revealed the capture of three officers and 112 enlisted men plus some 18 wounded and several pack mules. Quickly effecting a re-organization, the Battalion again moved out in a column of companies in the order of "I", "L", "K", "M" and Headquarters to take Objective D.

While the 3rd Battalion had been engaged in taking Objective B, the 1st Battalion, as the left attacking Battalion had taken Objective A by 1000 and on the basis of a report from the I & R Officers indicating that he had contacted units of the 10th Mountain Division at Gezzo in the Po Valley itself some two thousand yards north of the 3rd Battalion and had met no resistance between Gezzo and the 1st Battalion. The Regimental Commander moved one company of the 1st Battalion with the 2nd Battalion following northwest along the road to Gezzo by-passing Objective C and D in an effort to get behind these objectives. Also, on the 3rd Battalion's right, elements of the 351st Infantry had come abreast of the Battalion at approximately 1300 and were making steady progress to the north cutting off the enemy facing the 3rd Battalion. Thus as this Battalion moved toward Objective D it was discovered that elements of the 351st Infantry had taken the objective a short while before. With this objective taken, the Battalion continued north reaching Mt. Malgotta, Objective G, at approximately 0001, 21 April 1945. Shortly before reaching this objective, an order was received to the effect for the Battalion to set up a defensive position on Objective G to protect the Division right flank and await further orders. Making a quick reconnaissance of the terrain, a defensive position was set up with all-around defense with Company "I" on the left and Company "K" on the right and Company "L" echeloned to the right-rear along the saddle-like ridge running south on Objective D. Heavy machine guns were broken down to furnish direct support to all companies. Whereabouts of friendly troops to the right, left and front were at this time very uncertain. Mortars were given targets close-in to fire only if an enemy counter-attack was to be repelled. Throughout the remainder of the night units of the 351st Infantry continued to push by the Battalion's positions thereby causing all outposts to be doubly alert to apprehend any enemy groups attempting to infiltrate back toward his lines. After having spent a quiet night the Battalion received a written order at 1030 to the effect that this Battalion, as part of the 337th Infantry, would continue to the north, following the 338th Infantry by marching. Further details of the order called for this Battalion to start marching as soon as possible to a town on Highway 9 by the name of Anzolo dell Emilia and upon arrival at this town to go into an assembly area in the vicinity to await further orders. At 1230, moving in the order of "I", "K", "L", "M" and Headquarters, organics, the Battalion started on foot for Anzolo dell Emilia some ten miles by road to the northwest. At 1515, the Battalion closed into Anzolo dell Emilia to await further orders,

utilizing the time to issue rations and water and to rest pending further marching to the north.

Shortly after 1700, an order was received to the effect that the Battalion would at 1900, 21 April 1945, start marching to the north to an assembly area in the vicinity of Butre and be prepared on order to pass through the 338th Infantry and continue the attack to the northwest. After a seven mile march, the Battalion closed into the assembly area at Butre to await further orders. At 2300 hours, a meeting of Company Commanders was called to make plans for the next day's mission, as a result of the meeting of Battalion Commander and Regimental Commander and his subsequent attack order. The order called for the Battalion to become a motorized task force and at 0700, 22 April 1945, move northward to pass through the 338th Infantry and continue to the north until forced to stop. The 338th Infantry was at the time moving north with the mission of establishing a bridgehead across the Panora River Camposanto so as to permit this Battalion to move to the north as fast as possible. If the 338th Infantry was at the time moving north with the mission of establishing a bridgehead across the Panora River Camposanto so as to permit this Battalion to move to the north as fast as possible. If the 338th Infantry was unable to reach this river then the mission of establishing the bridgehead would become the mission of the 3rd Battalion. Attached to the Battalion for this task was a company of tanks, a platoon of AAA's on half-tracks, and a platoon of Engineers and some thirteen cargo trucks for carrying personnel. Having briefed the Company Commander on the plan, the Battalion Commander issued his attack order. This order called for Company "K" to furnish an advance guard of some five jeeps carrying some twenty men followed by the remainder of company "K" riding the attached tanks with the remainder of the Battalion in the order of "I", "K", "L", "M", and Headquarters organics following riding TD's, organics, and attached personnel carriers. To be noted is that the tanks and TD's to be picked up in the vicinity of the 338th Infantry positions when the Battalion reached the 338th Infantry transportation to this point, was to be that of Battalion's organics and the attached personnel carriers. In order to locate the route and establish the necessary liaison and coordinations with the 338th Infantry and the attached tanks and TD's, a Battalion Staff Officer and guides were immediately dispatched to the 338th Infantry. In order to carry out the mission assigned, a great part of the night was used to brief attachments, assemble carriers, and to feed troops so as to clear the assembly area at 0530, 22 April 1945. At 0600, due to traffic tie up, the Battalion cleared the assembly area enroute to the north following the route marked by the liaison officer, sent forward previously. At this time it was found that the 338th had reached the Panora River Comosanta but were short of it by some two thousand yards. Proceeding according to plan, the Battalion continued on toward the river. As the leading elements reached the vicinity of the river, they were met with sniper fire from the near shore. Pushing forward with elements of the Division Reconnaissance troops and a platoon of Company "K" reached the bridge spanning the Panora to find the bridge intact but fixed for demolition. Immediately upon seeing the leading elements of the task force approach, an enemy group attempted to demolish the bridge by setting off the charge. Quick to engage the enemy the platoon drove off the enemy force holding them back while one of the attached Engineers sprawled across the bridge on his stomach cutting the wires to the charge. While this fight was going on at the bridge the remainder of Company "K" crossed the river further to the west by swim-

ing and proceeded up the banks on the far shore attempting to outflank the bridge and eliminate enemy small arms and observation from the bridge. The tanks, meanwhile held at bay by enemy SP gun in the town, awaited commitment on the near shore. As the far shore consisted of a high level restricting observation the enemy taking opportunity afforded constantly shifted his troops and left remaining under cover of the buildings making the progress of Company "K" very slow. Shortly after the fire fight at the bridge on the left the enemy using a 40mm AAA gun for ground targets and two tiger tanks began firing point blank range at the positions occupied by Company "K". In an effort to envelop the enemy around the bridge, Company "I" was committed on the right of the bridge. Company "I" upon reaching the river near the bridge met with intense fire from the far shore in the form of machine guns, rifles, 40mm fire, and considerable sniper fire, companies had to be re-supplied twice with small arms ammunition.

There was noted throughout this campaign a marked increase in the use of small arms fire by rifle units of the Battalion. This, primarily due to the fact that in terrain of this nature enemy artillery and mortar fire, could not be used at ranges of several thousand yards as was so of fighting in the mountains, thus allowing the platoon leader to make maximum use of his platoon's fire power when he suddenly met an enemy force as was the case.

At 1430, the Battalion Commander, having learned through his liaison to Regiment that the 2nd Battalion this Regiment had successfully crossed the Panora River some three miles to the west at 1030, decided to commit his reserve company Company "L", with an attached platoon of tanks, using the 2nd Battalion's crossing as means to outflank the enemy. Company "L", plus "B" Company attached, immediately set off on this mission and at 1500 were across the river moving from the west toward Camposanto. As this group neared Covazzo, friendly civilians warned the Force Commander, Captain Bannister, of the presence of an enemy group blocking the road to Composanto at Solara. As reports from these sources had hitherto proven reliable, the company moved forward on foot along with the tanks. As the leading platoon came within effective range at Solara, the enemy opened fire with his machine guns and rifles. The enemy, some fifty strong, were immediately engaged with fire. Finally, after half an hour, the enemy was forced to surrender. During the fire fight, however, one friendly tank had been knocked out by an enemy bazooka. Meanwhile the enemy confronting Companies "K" and "I" launched a strong counterattack, about one hundred strong on "K" Company's left, supported by two tanks and a 40mm Anti-aircraft gun. The attack was repelled by the combined fire of Company "K" and supporting mortar and artillery fire called to within fifty yards of Company "K's" positions. Finally, at 1800, the enemy made a hasty withdrawal to the north leaving behind him two knocked out tiger tanks and several wounded. A short time before this, elements of the 6th South African Armored Division had come up abreast of Company "I" and were the first to cross the bridge in Camposanto and proceed northeast. The Battalion with its attachments less Company "L" and its attachments, after re-organizing, went into an assembly area approximately one and one half miles northwest of Camposanto to await further orders, in accordance with orders from higher headquarters. A short time later Company "L" and its attachments, having cleared a road from Solara to Composanta, closed into the assembly area. At approximately 2000, 12 April 1945, an order was received to the effect that the Battalion, mechanized, would continue the attack to the north to the Po River, by-passing all towns,

namely Mirandola and numerous other small towns along Highway 12 using side-roads as generally paralleled Highway 12 to Quingetola. As the personnel carriers attached to the Battalion had been released upon occupation of the assembly area to carry other troops forward, it was not until 2400 that the Battalion could again start on the move. Travelling throughout the night, preceded by elements of the Division Reconnaissance Troop, dawn found the main body of the Battalion Task Force some three miles north-west of Mirandola. Throughout the night move, no enemy resistance had been encountered but due to dust and extreme fatigue on the part of the vehicle drivers, progress was slow but none the less steady. With the coming of dawn the task force increased its speed immensely, pausing only enough to drop off guards to conduct the enemy who at this time was surrendering by groups of twenty to fifty.

At 1050, 23 April 1945, the leading units of the task force reached the Po at Quingetola as per orders. Upon reaching the river, orders were received to the effect that the Battalion task force would swing east paralleling the river move on Reveri and there set up a defense to protect the right flank of the Division. Quickly complying with this latest order, the task force swung down the road paralleling the river to the east and by 1315 had entered the outskirts of Reveri and proceeded to set up a defensive position some four miles in length. Using all three rifle companies on line reading from right to left "L", "I", "K", the Battalion Commander moved this L-shaped line that extended from a point some two thousand yards east of Quintentole along the Po River to Reveri and then south along Highway 12 to a crossroad eight hundred yards north of Ghestone. Throughout the remainder of the day the enemy in whole platoons were conducted to the Battalion PW cage at Pieve di Coriano until 111 officers and 1134 EM had been captured. Everywhere in the vicinity were to be found motor pools intact, hospitals, Command Posts, Ordnance shops and numerous large artillery pieces. At dark, however, the enemy counter-attacked supported by tiger tanks and mortars striking the center company, Company "I" in an endeavor to face a route of withdrawal for units trapped south of Reveri. This fight continued long into the night and was terminated only by an order from higher headquarters ordering the Battalion to an area west of Quingetole for a river crossing at a time to be announced early on 24 April 1945. Effecting a withdrawal, the Battalion cleared the vicinity of Reveri by 0230, 24 April 1945, and after a seven mile march closed into a final assembly area in the vicinity of St. Lucia at 0530, 24 April 1945, to await further orders.

In the meantime, the Battalion Commander and Staff had attended a meeting at the Regimental Command Post to receive an attack order. The order received gave the 337th Infantry Combat team the mission of crossing the Po River opposite Sustinetta, seize Susinetta and push to the north to a point approximately eight thousand yards to the Regiment. Other than the usual units making up the Regimental Combat team were a company of tanks, a platoon of TD's and a company of Corps Engineers. Formation initially was to be two Battalions abreast; 1st on the right, 3rd on the left, and 2nd in reserve. The 3rd phase line (a road about two thousand five hundred yards north of the river). This maneuver was to be performed by two flank Battalions making a slight turn to the right and left respectively (to be covered in more detail later in report). Means of crossing the river was to be in the form of seventy-two double assault boats less engines and two infantry support rafts to transport priority vehicles. Upon the Battalion Commander's return



to the Command Post, then in the vicinity of St. Lucia, Company Commanders and attached Engineers platoon leader were summoned to receive the attack order. The order given was as follows: Company "I" on the right, Company "L" on the left, Company "K" initially in reserve one section of HMG (carrying LMG's) attached to each assaulting company, remainder of Company "M" under Company control. The Battalion was to cross in three waves with companies "I" and "L" plus attachments in the first wave. 2nd HMG platoon and mortar platoon and advanced Battalion CP in second wave, and Company "K" and the remainder of Headquarter's Company in the third wave. Upon reaching the opposite shore, assaulting companies were to push rapidly to the north, take left portions of Sustinetta and continue to the north. At the second phase line, an east-west canal some two thousand yards north of the river, Company "I" was to halt. At this time, Company "K" was to move to the left of Company "L" and as soon as this was accomplished to attack to the north-west followed by Company "I". Assaulting Companies were to continue to the north-west until they reached the third phase line, about two thousand yards north of the second phase line, another east-west canal, and there halt, awaiting a Corps order. To insure communication, wire was to be laid across the river. To provide anti-tank security, anti-tank guns were to be in position on the near shore, covering the road on the far shore along the dike and the road west out of Sustinetta. Battalion Aid Station was to initially evacuate patients across the river to the rear shore where an aid-station was to be set up. Having received the attack order, Company Commanders immediately broke down their companies and attachments into boat groups on the basis of thirty-six boats assigned to the Battalion. Guides were sent to the river line to contact the Engineer's guides to locate the boats. Due to the lack of time to make detailed reconnaissances, only the Battalion Commander and Company Commanders had time to reconnoitre the river line to prepare the jump off. Therefore Regiment moved H-hour up to 0830.

The reconnaissance made by the Battalion Commander of the river site revealed that the river at this point was approximately two thousand yards wide with current estimated to be approximately three miles per hour. Both banks had steep barren levees approximately forty feet high above the water and sloping down at an angle of between 60° and 80°. At 0825, as planned, both assaulting companies were at the line of boats (located just behind the levee). At 0830 the first wave pushed off under cover of artillery using smoke and VT fuse. Crossing at top speed while the smoke and artillery screened their movement, both companies reached the opposite shore without having received fire. Once on the opposite shore, both companies pushed rapidly toward Sustinetta. Reaching Sustinetta at approximately 0905 and encountering no resistance, they pushed on toward the second phase line. Again no resistance was encountered and by 0945 both companies had reached the second phase line. There Company "I" halted as ordered. Following close behind, Company "K" took its place and once again the attack resumed. The entire time required for Battalion to cross the river, without vehicles, had been approximately one hour. As stated above, immediately upon reaching the second phase line, the maneuver outlined was put into effect and the Battalion continued to the north-west against no resistance. Upon reaching the third phase line the Battalion halted and awaited orders to be handed down from Corps. At approximately 1200 an order was received to proceed to the fourth phase line, the east-west road leading into Rocca Ferrara Road, and there wait for the 338th Infantry to pass through. Once again starting

off, the Battalion reached this phase line at 1400 and halted as ordered, again having met no resistance. Meanwhile, back on the river line the infantry support rafts had been built at the river sites and vehicles were being shuttled across in order of priority. The order of priority being: the anti-tank vehicles and guns, radio (284) 1/4 ton Battalion Commander's vehicle, liaison vehicle, (attached artillery and Cannon Company), wire vehicles, company weapons carriers, and the remainder of the organics. However, due to the strong current and the steepness of the banks, this work was slow; it was 1200 before the first anti-tank gun and vehicle were landed on the opposite shore. Also, as there was a critical shortage of military bridges, no pontoon bridge was started on the 24th April 1945.

Finally at 2100, elements of the 338th Infantry, having crossed the river in DUKWS, passed the Battalion, allowing this Battalion, as part of the 337th Infantry to go into Division reserve. None-the-less, outposts were put out by the line companies until the morning of the 25th April when this order was changed to one of local security around the Battalion bivouac area in the vicinity of Nosedole.

The entire day of 25 April was used in the servicing of equipment, resting, and in care and cleaning. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Battalion's vehicles were being shuttled across the Po by means of infantry support rafts and DUKWS, to transport supplies such as rations and ammunition. By the combined effort of the Battalion S-4, Motor Officer, and Ammunition Officer in maintaining constant supervision of the work on either side of the river, all vehicles of the Battalion were across the river early on the 25th April 1945. At 2000 that night an oral order was received to the effect that at 0600, 26 April 1945, this Battalion, moving as the lead Battalion of the Regiment, would march to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Castelbelfonte; fifteen road miles to the north-west. At 0600, 16 April 1945, the Battalion in column of companies, order "I", "K", "L", "M", Headquarters, organics crossed the IP at Nosedole, with Company "I" the leading company putting out an advance guard. At 1120 the Battalion closed into the new area in vicinity of Castelbelfonte, Coor: (597310 Map Italy, Castelbelfonte sheet 62-1 1/50000) to await further orders. A short while later, 1150, an order was received to the effect that the Battalion as part of the 337th Infantry would at 1415, 26 April 1945, move by motor to the north to an area in the vicinity of Verona and there await further orders. At 1415, with transportation pounded by Regiment, the Battalion cleared its present bivouac near Castelbelfonte enroute to the new area. After having traveled some twenty minutes, an order was received by motor messenger that stated that due to a change in the orders the Battalion was to go into an area approximately two miles north of Vigasio and there await further orders. Complying to this order the Battalion closed into this area (Coor: 612323 Map Italy, Castelbelfonte, Sheet 62-1 1/50000), at 1515, 26 April 1945. The Battalion remained in this area until 30 April utilizing the time to continue the servicing of equipment, resting and in care and cleaning started in the area at Nosedole. On 29 April 1945 a Regimental showers was set up allowing a major portion of the Battalion to bathe. At 1600, 30 April 1945, an order was received to the effect that the Battalion as part of the Regiment would make a move to a bivouac area north of Trevisio a distance of some eighty road miles northeast of the present area and there to await orders. At 2015 the Battalion cleared its present area enroute to the area north of Trevisio. When the Battalion had reached a point along highway 56 named Alto Villa (Coor: 029608 Map Italy, Vicenza, Sheet 50, IV 1/50000)

at approximately 2400, 30 April 1945, orders were received to halt at this point and go into an assembly area as the highway between Vicenza and Treviso had been cut by an unknown number of enemy. Thus, as the period covered by this report came to a close, the Battalion was located in an area in the vicinity of Alto Villa awaiting further orders before continuing to the north.

During the campaign covered by this report the Battalion's through experience gained a wealth of combat knowledge in regard to a number of combat operations. The first of these being the transition from mountain warfare to warfare across the broad, open flatland. It was learned that in offensive warfare in flat land against the enemy encountered that enemy artillery and mortar fire were not as effective due to the lack of observation on the enemy's part resulting in more frequent use of small arms. This factor calling for the maximum use of fire power and maneuver in the squad and the platoon. Another combat lesson learned was in the use of tanks, TD's, and AAA on halftracks in conjunction with a task force operating on a fluid front. Application of the tactics set forth in current field manuals and directives proved to be the solution giving all concerned increasing confidence in their previous training. Operation with such supporting weapons as those enumerated above pointed to the need of close liaison between the Infantry Commander (both Company and Battalion) and the tank and TD Commanders. This was solved by attaching SCR 500 to each tank or TD Commanders at each respective Command Post to insure that when needed these weapons could be brought to the right place to the right troops. Another valuable lesson learned was the employment of all the fire power attached or in support on opportune ground targets as was the AAA on halftrack on the 21 April 1945. During the attack on Camposanto these attached weapons were used to drive the enemy from a church steeple that the enemy was using as an OP. As this steeple was at too great a range for effective machine gun fire, and the tanks and TD's were employed elsewhere at the time, the 50 caliber machine gun on the halftrack proved to be the proper solution. Still another valuable lesson learned was in the application of the river crossing training technique previously given the Battalions while at Pisa, Italy. Especially noteworthy of the sound training was indicated by the fact that the actual time allotted to the Battalion to make the crossing was less than three hours. Yet the steps taught were carried out in the proper sequence with the maximum of success. Also learned was the need for close supervision by the supply and motor officer personnel of the Battalion at the near and far shore of the river to facilitate shuttling of priority equipment. Still another lesson learned in this campaign was the handling of PW's in great numbers; heretofore prisoners taken in one day rarely exceeded two hundred but on 23 April 1945, for example, well over a thousand were in the PW cage at one time. The need for trained interpreters in the Intelligence Section at times was evident.

Fortunately, the Battalion S-2, having previously trained several men in each company and having at his immediate disposal trained interpreters in the Intelligence Section, was able to quickly search, separate and march to the rear, prisoners received. Also learned by experience in regards to prisoners was the tremendous supply problem regarding the feeding and the transportation of prisoners in great numbers. The problem in the case mentioned above was solved by locating captured enemy ration dumps and utilizing captured vehicles after first tying on identification panels to avoid being strafed by friendly planes and making maximum use of enemy officers and

NCO's to assist in forming up groups easy to handle. Perhaps outstanding of the lessons learned was the need for security at all times of any unit within an Army area. This fact was indicated by the large number of enemy installations far to the rear, captured before they could put up any organized resistance, clearly stressing that where ever opposed by an enemy strongly mechanized, constant vigilance must be mentioned. Thus as the period ended the Battalion profiting by the success enjoyed, emerged from the campaign with a wealth of practical experience in two more types of military operations; namely, the pursuit (Motorized) and river crossing.

Number of Casualties during this period were:

	Officers	Enlisted Men
KIA	0	3
WIA	1	27
MIA	0	0

Prisoners listed above included many from the 94th Infantry Division, 8th Artillery Division, 29th Grenadier Division, 4th Parachute Division, 1st Parachute Division, 334th Infantry Division, numerous hostile battle groups and Service troops. Note that these prisoners included those processed through the Battalion PW cage. Several hundred more were marched directly to the Regimental PW cage and are not shown.

Prisoners taken were:

Officers	26
Enlisted men	1,368
Nurses	2
Collaborationist	1
Prisoners friendly	26

APO 85, U.S. Army  
4 June 1945.

## HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

### *Period 1-31 May 1945.*

As covered in the "Report of Operations" for April 1945, the Battalion had on 30 April 1945 received an order to move to an assembly area north of Treviso and there await further orders. During the resulting motor move on the night of 30 April 1945, the Battalion had received a change in orders to the effect that the Battalion would go into an assembly area in the vicinity of Vicenza as the highway from Vicenza to Treviso had been cut by an enemy force of unknown strength. Early in the morning of 1 May 1945, orders were received to the effect that the Battalion's mission was changed to that of moving as a part of the Regiment to an area in the vicinity of Feltre and there relieve units of the 88th Division. Clearing the area at Alto Villa at 1245, 1 May 1945, the Battalion moved out on the new mission. Traveling until 1830, 1 May 1945, the Battalion was moved into an area in the vicinity of Fener, Italy, to await further orders. The previous mission of moving into Feltre had to be changed due to the fact that Feltre had as yet not been

reached. Shortly after reaching the area, a Company Commander's meeting was called for the purpose of receiving the new mission assigned. This new mission called for the 337th Infantry on the morning of 2 May 1945 to push through Feltre (8 miles to the north) and move on Belluno by way of the highway to Belluno. The mission of the Battalion was to follow the 2nd Battalion, which was to be mechanized, protecting the flanks and searching out side roads. To be attached to the Battalion was to be a platoon of tanks, platoon of TD's, and a platoon of Reconnaissance troops. To accomplish the mission assigned, the Battalion Commander gave Company "I" minus (mechanized) the mission of clearing the side roads on the left to a depth of three miles. The remainder of the Battalion was to follow on foot with the organics of the Battalion following. The next morning at 0965, the Battalion, following the Company "I" task force, started its advance to the north following the 2nd Battalion. Following the highway towards Belluno, the Battalion marched until 1530, 2 May 1945, until ordered to move into an assembly area to await transportation as the 2nd Battalion was at the time some twenty miles ahead of the Battalion and making steady progress. Loading on the vehicles at 1600, the Battalion less Company "I", which at the time was some five miles further to the north, again moved toward Belluno. Meanwhile, Company "I" and its attachments were ordered into an assembly area at Mis, Italy, to await further orders and the remainder of the Battalion as the 2nd Battalion had halted due to the wholesale numbers of enemy surrendering and word received from higher headquarters that the forces opposing the 85th Division had surrendered unconditionally.

1815, 2 May 1945, the Battalion closed into the assembly area at Mis, Italy, (Coor: 523310 Sheet 23 III, 1/50,000, San Giustina) to await further orders. A short while later orders were received to the effect that this Battalion would as soon as possible take over the Division PW cage to be set up one and one half miles south-east of Mis, Italy. At 2200, 2 May 1945, using the weapons and personnel of Company "M", prisoners amounting 3,530 enlisted men, 117 officers, 485 horses and 85 wagons of all types were taken over from the 2nd Battalion, this Regiment. Rotating all companies every twenty four hours, the PW cage guard was maintained, prisoners were fed, watered, searched and made ready for shipment, until 4 May 1945. At this time, word was received to the effect that the enemy personnel would be transported to the II Corps PW stockade at Bassano, under the supervision of personnel from this Battalion; the horses and wagons were to be moved to Mas and there join elements of the 73rd German Corps enroute to Bassano. At 0800, 4 May 1945, using 85th and QM vehicles totaling eighty-five in all and guard detail from "K" Company of some fifty men, began moving these prisoners composed of units of the 73rd German Corps to Bassano, while the horses, wagons, and wagon drivers under similar detail were conducted to Mas. On 5 May 1945, another group of some 3000 enemy from the 73rd German Corps were brought out to the PW cage to await transportation to Bassano. This group remained at the cage until 7 May 1945 and then were loaded in cargo trucks and transported to the II Corps PW stockade at Bassano.

On the evening of 6 May 1945, orders were received that this Battalion would send one company to Calalzo, (some forty miles north of Mis) to take charge of the assembling and disarming of units of the 73rd German Corps located at Calalzo and Vodo. The next morning at 0900, Company "K" (motorized) under the charge of the Battalion Executive Officer, cleared Mis enroute to an area in the vicinity of Vodo. Upon reaching the area and after

a short reconnaissance, the Battalion Executive Officer billeted Company "K" in the town of Borca, some two miles north-west of Vodo and then went to Calalzo to get the details of its mission. As a result of a meeting with the representative of the 85th Division Staff and the Commanding General of the 73rd German Corps, the purpose and task of the mission was made clear. The situation was: the 73rd Corps Headquarters was to continue to act as a headquarters and was to group all scattered and remnants of units into groups. These groups were to be commanded by Provisional Commanders who would be responsible for the feeding, housing, disarming and discipline. Each headquarters was to be allowed enough arms for guard duty and its officer personnel and passes were to be issued by the American Commander to permit such necessary enemy personnel to carry out their duties in assembling and processing their groups. All other enemy were to remain in the area assigned them. With this plan in mind, the Battalion Executive Officer broke Company "K" down into two groups, one group to guard the town of Calalzo and all German installations, the other, the enemy in and around Vodo. Purpose of the guard was to be twofold, that is, supervise disarming of personnel and preventing any equipment from being destroyed or stolen, and to prevent friction between the enemy and the Italian Partisans.

Meanwhile, the Battalion, minus "K" Company, had been utilizing the time in checking equipment, care and cleaning, and conditioning troops. This program was carried on until 10 May 1945, at which time the Battalion, moving by motor, moved north to join Company "K". Upon reaching a point called Tai di Cadore, the convoy was split, with Company "L" moving to the town of Venas di Cadore (midway to Borca), Company "I" moving Calalzo and Company "M" and Headquarters Company moving to Pieve di Cadore (midway between Calalzo and Venas di Cadore). Purpose of this movement was to better enable the Battalion to guard and disarm the 73rd Corps which was daily increasing in strength and assembling in groups between Borca and Calalzo along Highway 51. Thus, from 10 May 1945, to 21 May 1945, the Battalion supervised the assembling and disarming of the 73rd German Corps. Finally, on 21 May 1945, the last groups were transported to the south along with the arms, munitions and other impedimenta previously turned over to higher headquarters.

During the period from 10 May 1945 to and including 21 May 1945, a training and athletic program was carried out in conjunction with the mission assigned. Training consisted of weapons training, dismounted drill, military courtesy and physical conditioning. The purpose of this training was to make all personnel familiar with all infantry weapons, regain snap and precision in marching and drilling, emphasize military courtesy to the maximum and to keep troops at the highest peak of physical efficiency. Training was conducted six days a week, three hours a day, with the afternoon devoted to athletics. Upon reaching this area, plans were immediately drawn up and put into effect which called for the forming of baseball, softball and volley-ball teams in companies that were to participate in inter-company, Battalion and Regimental games. Recreational facilities and activities during this period were also excellent. Several company-sponsored dances were held at this time, using both the Division and local bands. Making use of the theaters in Venas di Cadore, Pieve di Cadore and Calalzo, moving pictures were shown to troops on three occasions. In addition, under Regimental control, a rest area at Alleghe was set up whereby each company in the Regiment was to spend a few days on a general outing. At this rest area, located on Lake D' Alleghe,



were facilities for swimming, boating, fishing, dancing and other forms of recreation and entertainment. Shortly after, arriving in the area, passes of four day duration were given to deserving officers and men to Venice, Florence, Milano and the Italian Riviera, based on the quota from higher headquarters, in addition to one day passes to Venice to one hundred deserving men of the Battalion. As stated previously, the above training, athletic, and recreational program was carried out throughout the time the 75rd Corps was being assembled and disarmed and continued until the Battalion received an order on 27 May 1945, calling for a motor move back to an assembly area in the vicinity of Susin on 29 May 1945. Prior to the motor move, however, a Battalion Memorial Service, commemorating personnel of the Battalion killed in action was conducted at 1000, 29 May 1945. Following the Memorial Service, the Battalion moved by motor to the new area, clearing the IP at Tai di Cadore at 1430, 29 May 1945. Closing into the new area (Coor: 509290, Sheet 23, Belluno 1/100,000) at 1600, 29 May 1945, the Battalion spent the remainder of the day setting up camp. For the remaining two days of May, the same program initiated at Pieve di Cadore was carried out.

During the period covered by this report, the Battalion spent much of its time in the necessary re-adjustment when all combat ceases, i.e., regaining the necessary high degree of proficiency in snap and precision, keeping troops in condition, stressing athletics and recreation and encouraging personnel to take better advantage of the educational program as set up by the USAFI. There were no battle casualties during this period.

COMPANY COMMANDER  
Capt. George M. Boone, Jr.

*First Sergeant* Robert H. Glover,      *Company Clerk*, T/4 John E. Kuras

COMMUNICATION PLATOON

*Communication Officer*, 1st Lt. Anthony A. Sylvester  
*Communication Chief*, S/Sgt. Frank J. Braun

ANTI-TANK PLATOON

*Anti-Tank Officer*, 1st Lt. Henry W. Kosowsky  
1st Lt. Gilbert Villareal  
*Platoon Sergeant*, T/Sgt. Srthur K. Leeward

AMMUNITION & PIONEER PLATOON

*Ammunition & Pioneer Officer*, 1st Lt. Howard M. Kreager  
*Platoon Sergeant*, T/Sgt. Joseph J. Hennek

TRANSPORTATION SECTION

*Transportation Officer*, 1st Lt. Charles E. Kettle, Jr.  
*Motor Sergeant*, Sgt. Harris J. Booth